

THE CHOIR OF



ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

THE TREE

HILL | NETHSINGHA | ROBINSON



THE TREE

[1]	O pastor animarum	Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)	[1.31]
[2]	The Tree	Jonathan Harvey (1939-2012)	[4.23]
[3]	sicut aquilae *	James Long (b.1987)	[6.31]
	Preces and Responses	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)	
[4]	The Preces		[1.44]
[5]	The Responses		[7.31]
[6]	The Spirit of the Lord	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)	[7.20]
[7]	A Hymn for St Cecilia	Herbert Howells	[3.27]
[8]	A Song of Wisdom	Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)	[4.59]
[9]	Jesu, grant me this, I pray	Christopher Robinson (b.1936)	[2.42]
[10]	Hear my words, ye people	Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)	[16.25]
[11]	God so loved the world	John Stainer (1840-1901)	[4.16]
[12]	Hymn – Love Divine, all loves excelling	Tune: Blauenwern William Rowlands (1860-1937) Descant: Christopher Robinson	[4.37]

Total timings:

[65.33]

* Commissioned for the College Choir

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM TRACKS 4-6

FORMER MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE CHOIR TRACKS 7, 10, 12

JOHN CHALLENGER ORGAN TRACK 3 GLEN DEMPSEY ORGAN TRACKS 7, 10, 12

JOSEPH WICKS ORGAN TRACKS 2 & 6 JACK ROSS TRUMPET TRACK 3

DAVID HILL DIRECTOR TRACKS 4-6 ANDREW NETHSINGHA DIRECTOR TRACKS 1-3, 8, 9, 11

CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON DIRECTOR TRACK 7, 10, 12

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THE TREE

*There is hope,
there is hope for a tree if it be cut down,
there is hope that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease
Though its roots grow old in the ground,
Yet at the scent of water, it will bud,
And put forth branches like a young plant.*

All of us hope that choirs and orchestras will be like the tree described in the *Book of Job*, as we seek to rebuild after pandemic and political upheaval. Taking the idea of new growth as a starting point, this album develops from the seed of a single treble line, gradually adding organ, then lower voices, a second choir, 150 additional singers, and eventually combining nearly 500 voices together.

Several pieces on the album are directed by my predecessors, Christopher Robinson and David Hill. The album is released as a tribute to them, celebrating their 85th and 65th birthdays respectively. Some of my most moving and inspiring experiences in Cambridge have been watching them return to conduct the present choir. In an interview with Martin Cullingford for *Gramophone* fifteen years ago, David spoke

of 'a process of osmosis really. They pass on – in a way that they don't even talk about, no one ever discusses it – a tradition of how to phrase, a tradition of how to sing a particular thing. Listen to the choir from 20 years ago, and go into the building now, and you will hear that they're two Burgundies from the same valley, probably on the same chalk, but tasting slightly different.' Well, I do talk about it to the choir, but in other respects I hope that what David said is still true! Alternatively, one might think of the choir itself as a tree, constantly growing new branches.

The works by Elgar, Rowlands, Parry, Stainer and Stanford date from a short period around the turn of the twentieth century. To these I've added three St John's composers – Howells, Harvey and Robinson – as well as the beautiful monodic writing of Hildegard. All tracks but one are taken from live services in Chapel. These include an Evensong in which we combined with *Yale Schola Cantorum*. There are also tracks from a special service in July 2019 sung by countless generations of former choir members, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the College Chapel. Having singers close to the congregation inevitably generates background noise. My hope is that listeners might feel the 'liveness' of these archive recordings compensates for the

lack of studio conditions. As I write, pandemic restrictions only allow us to sing services in an empty Chapel; we should never take for granted the joy of having a real (if occasionally noisy!) congregation with whom to share our music-making.

Many of the composers featured on the recording were well-known for their melodic gifts. The visionary German Abbess, **Saint Hildegard of Bingen**, conjured up extraordinary beauty using one note at a time. She was one of the most prolific composers of the Middle Ages. As the head of a religious community, it was her responsibility to ensure the spiritual well-being of all the nuns in her care. For Hildegard, music and philosophy went hand-in-hand with her sublime liturgical poetry, creating an ideal method of expressing her faith. She has also been described by Clemens Jöckle as the founder of scientific natural history in Germany. She wrote nine books covering the medicinal properties of animals, plants and stones. Hildegard was an extraordinary self-taught polymath. **O pastor animarum** is made up of memorable long-breathed shapes, which evoke a sense of mysticism, prayerfulness and purity.



Illumination known as *The Cosmic Tree* from Hildegard of Bingen's *Liber Divinorum Operum*, f.38r, sec. XIII, Biblioteca Statale di Lucca, ms. 1942. By permission of the Ministry of Culture – Lucca State Library

Jonathan Harvey felt a close affinity to Hildegard's writing; indeed we were asked to start his Memorial Service in College with a work by Hildegard, soaring into the high spaces of the Ante-chapel. The first two works on our recording share a certain weightlessness. The trebles begin with a single vocal line but branch out into four parts, intertwining with the organ part. The organ is used without pedals, and it is to be played on stops sounding (at least) an octave higher than the printed pitch.

The Tree (1981) was commissioned by the *Church Music Society* for its 75th anniversary. The first performance was given at the *Southern Cathedrals Festival* in Winchester. The work was completed just ten days after the premiere of Harvey's church opera *Passion and Resurrection*, also written for Winchester. Harvey was a student at St John's, having started his musical training at St Michael's College, Tenbury, where he was a chorister alongside Christopher Robinson.

When St John's College celebrated its 500th anniversary, we commissioned five new works for the occasion – from James MacMillan, James Long, John Rutter, Judith Weir and Jonathan Harvey. **sicut aquilae** (2011) was in fact the second of three works which **James Long** wrote

for us in consecutive years. *Get Wisdom* (2010) had been composed during our inaugural New Music partnership with *Choir & Organ* magazine; it was also James's first choral work. *Vigilate* (2012) features on our *Advent Live* album. Long graduated from King's College, Cambridge, in 2009. I am extremely grateful to his final-year composition teacher, Giles Swayne, for recommending James to me. Long describes how Swayne *really knocked me into shape, teaching me to think critically and to take stuffy academic models with a pinch of salt*.

When commissioning I have always encouraged composers to consider using a different instrument with the choir – either in place of the organ or in addition to it. Long's exhilarating trumpet writing creates a pleasing parallel with the *Trompeta Real* part which Michael Tippett wrote in his own commission for the College's 450th anniversary.

The eagle is a traditional symbol for St John the Evangelist, the College's patron saint. Hence Long's choice of text from Isaiah 40, a Biblical chapter which has been much used by composers, not least by Handel in *Messiah*. The work employs a wide range of characters and textures, from the arresting opening to a passage



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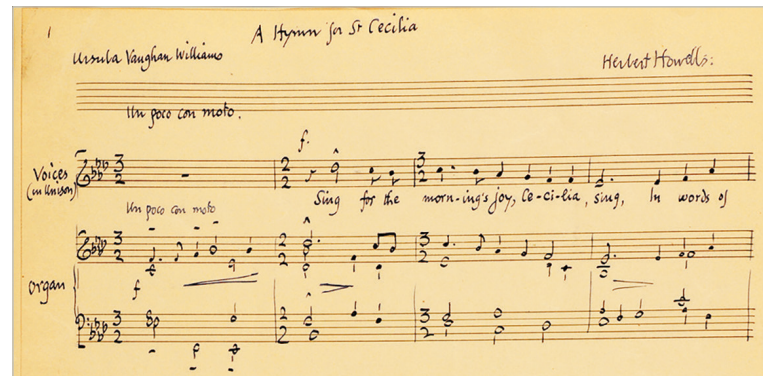
Andrew Nethsingha, David Hill, and Christopher Robinson at the Quincentenary of St John's College, 27th April 2011. Long *sicut aquilae* was one of the five works composed for the Quincentenary.

marked *fragile* in the score, *Even the youths shall faint*. As a means of generating material, the composer used a number of musical cyphers in the piece, spelling out words like *College* and *Eagles* in the trumpet part – though the listener is not expected to detect these!

Until the Covid pandemic the Choir had never previously been silenced – not even during the Second World War, when **Herbert Howells** served as Acting Organist while Robin Orr was away on active service. Howells continued his

connection with St John's for the rest of his life. Orr's successor, George Guest, described how Howells *loved coming up into what we called the song school, where rehearsals would take place, and talking to the boys, who adored this great man – small, dapper, with a wonderful head of white, curly hair*. George, who loved all things Welsh, was always keen to point out the Welsh origins of the composer's surname!

29th May 2015 was a red-letter day for us here at St John's – the only time that David Hill's



The opening bars of Howells' manuscript for *A Hymn for St Cecilia*. The full score can be viewed at: www.wcomarchive.org.uk/---a-hymn-for-st-cecilia

Yale Schola Cantorum has ever combined with his former choir. **Preces and Responses** (1967) are late Howells, written for the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral and its Director Allan Wicks, a great advocate of contemporary music. The Preces and Responses are a series of short prayers, alternating between the officiant and the choir, used twice a day in the Anglican Church in the services of Matins and Evensong. The short fragments of text are based on, or at least resemble, verses of psalms – one of the oldest forms of Jewish, Old Testament prayer. Though Howells wrote twenty settings of the Evening Canticles, also sung daily at Evensong, he wrote only one set of Responses. Most settings of the Responses, from Tallis to Radcliffe, assign just one note to each syllable. Howells, however, is much more expansive. The parts for Cantor and Choir dovetail into one another harmonically, sometimes even overlapping, creating a sense of long unbroken paragraphs rather than separate pithy sentences.

The Spirit of the Lord (1903) is the Prologue of *The Apostles*, which was to be complemented by *The Kingdom* three years later. The two oratorios by **Edward Elgar** form a huge canvas; they were originally conceived as a single work and are bound together by over sixty leitmotifs. One of the most striking of these is a

three-chord sequence heard beneath the words *anointed* me, labelled in his friend A.J. Jaeger's analysis as Christ, *The Man of Sorrows*. Elgar's desire to compose a work about the Apostles can be traced back to the remark of a school teacher when the composer was in his early teens: *The Apostles were young men and very poor. Perhaps, before the descent of the Holy Ghost, they were no cleverer than some of you here*. Michael Kennedy has asserted that it was this observation which first interested Elgar in the disciples as human beings. When Elgar was approached to write an oratorio for the 1900 Birmingham Festival he first thought of an Apostles theme, but then dropped it in favour of setting John Henry Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Elgar knew his Bible well and spent a great deal of time fashioning the text from the King James Version. In this anthem he starts with words of the Prophet Isaiah as quoted by Jesus in Luke's Gospel, before reverting to the subtly different original words in the Old Testament. Although originally conceived for a chorus of hundreds alongside one of Elgar's largest orchestras, the movement has become popular as an anthem with organ accompaniment.

Our second work by Howells is **A Hymn for St Cecilia** (1961). While he was Master of the Musicians' Company, Howells invited Ursula Vaughan Williams, widow of Ralph, to write a text in honour of Music's patron saint. She later recalled:

My St Cecilia is a girl in one of those magical gardens from Pompeian frescoes, a romantic figure among colonnades and fountains; Herbert's tune takes her briskly towards martyrdom. The first performance was in St Paul's Cathedral. Herbert led the Livery Club of the Worshipful Company of Musicians (for whom he had written the work and to whom it is dedicated) up the aisle, singing as they marched. I was so bemused by this procession... that I did not realise until the third verse that it was 'our tune'.

Paul Andrews draws our attention to another possible version of events. A letter from Cedric Thorpe-Davie to Howells in 1961 says:

We agreed that the choir should no longer process and should sing the Hymn in their stalls, whilst the company and clergy do the processing.

In the same letter an excellent suggestion comes from John Dykes Bower, Organist of St Paul's

Cathedral, requesting a descant for the final verse. The Hymn is a joyous stream of melody, imbued from the start with freshness and momentum – a perfect marriage of words and music.

Charles Villiers Stanford published his six *Bible Songs* two years before Howells came to study with him at the Royal College of Music. **A Song of Wisdom** (1910) is the sixth of the set. Each song was paired with a short anthem based on a well-known hymn, perhaps influenced by Lutheran cantatas. The text, from Ecclesiasticus, continues our theme of growth – not only with roots, trees and branches, but also with a stream becoming a river which becomes the sea. In writing extensive solo (or unison) arias for church use, Stanford may have been thinking of movements from big S.S. Wesley anthems, such as *Who can express* from O give thanks. Stanford's Song is wonderfully responsive to its text, with glorious sweeping architecture, ecstatic climaxes and a billowing accompaniment.

The last four tracks on the album feature fine authors of hymns as well as composers of hymn tunes. Henry W. Baker played a seminal role in the creation of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861). **Jesu, grant me this I pray** is Baker's translation of a Latin hymn *Dignare me, O Jesu,*

rogo te, most often sung to *Song 13* by Orlando Gibbons. The heartfelt setting by **Christopher Robinson** (1985) was composed in memory of John Porter, Assistant Organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor from 1972 until 1985. Along with Stanford, **Charles Hubert Hastings Parry** led a renaissance in British composition. **Hear my words, ye people** (1894) was written for the Diocesan Choral Festival at Salisbury Cathedral, an annual British choral tradition which continues in dioceses around the country to this day, albeit with smaller numbers now participating. In Parry's era special trains were run, at reduced fares, to bring singers to the festival. Jeremy Dibble writes that almost a hundred local choirs took part – around 2000 singers! The work is a through-composed cantata, with passages for solo voices or semi-chorus, contrasting with music for the massed choirs and solo passages for the famous 'Father' Willis organ (then just 17 years old). The work is part of a tradition that extends from seventeenth-century Symphony Anthems such as Purcell's *O sing unto the Lord*, Wesley's nineteenth-century anthems like *Ascribe unto the Lord*, and on to such twentieth-century works as Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Walton's *The Twelve*.

Parry drew his libretto from the Books of Isaiah, Job and the Psalms. The soprano aria uses passages that Elgar was later to set in *The Spirit of the Lord* – the musicality of the text inspires extraordinary melodic richness from both composers. The work ends with a metrical version of Psalm 150 by Henry W. Baker; Parry's setting was to become the greatly loved hymn tune *Laudate Dominum*. It is hard to imagine a more perfect work for the festival in Salisbury. Parry's organ introduction builds up to an exhilarating first choral entry, foreshadowing his 1902 coronation anthem *I was glad*. At the Salisbury premiere the organ was supplemented by the Band of the Royal Marine Light Infantry (Portsmouth Division.) *The Lord is full of compassion* portrays the contrast between heaven and earth, between God and his subjects, as well as the vastness of God's mercy and of the world He created; small and large forces are pitted against each other with masterly dramatic effect. A dominant pedal point, a stirring unison hymn tune, and an inexorable build-up of antiphonal Amens – all these elements ensure that the choirs will have returned home on their trains deeply inspired and motivated for the next year of singing.

John Stainer was Parry's predecessor as Professor of Music at Oxford. He had previously held the posts of Organist at St Michael's College, Tenbury (at the age of 16!), Magdalen College, Oxford and St Paul's Cathedral. He sang in the first English performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1854 and later introduced the work into the Holy Week music at St Paul's. *The Crucifixion* (1887) was an oratorio designed to be well within the capabilities of parish church choirs, and easily accessible to congregations. The work contains five new hymn tunes, some of which have become greatly-loved in their own right. *The Crucifixion* was the third LP that St John's College Choir released, back in 1961, featuring the tenor Richard Lewis. **God so loved the world** is a sublime miniature from the oratorio, scored for unaccompanied choir.

The great hymn-writer Charles Wesley was grandfather of organist-composer S.S. Wesley, and brother of John Wesley, founder of Methodism. He was immensely prolific, writing and publishing over 6500 hymn texts, of which **Love divine, all loves excelling** is one of the best-loved.

The stirring hymn tune *Blaenwern* was written in 1905 by Welsh school-teacher and composer **William Rowlands** (known as 'Penfro'.) He named it after a farm in Pembrokeshire where he once sent his son to convalesce from illness. It is fitting to end with this tune, as the world seeks to repair itself from the horrors of the pandemic. As I write, it is well over a year since we last experienced the sensation of a congregation singing live in our Chapel. It moves me to tears to hear 500 people joined in communal singing. This was also the last ever service for eleven leaving choir members; you can hear the emotion of a unique occasion. Christopher Robinson's descant adds frisson to the final verse.

Hymn-singing has been special in St John's for a long time – the particular shape and acoustics of the Chapel heighten the cumulative effect of massed singing. George Guest encouraged an uninhibited passion in hymn-singing, inspired by his Welsh roots. It is good to end with one of George's favourite hymns; our recording is released exactly seventy years since George Guest became Director of the Choir, planting a tree which continues to grow.

Andrew Nethsingha



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David Hill conducting the Choir whilst Director of Music, October 2003.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

[1] O pastor animarum

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

O pastor animarum et O prima vox
per quam omnes creati sumus,
nunc tibi, tibi placeat ut digneris nos
liberare de miseriis
et languoribus nostris.

*O Shepherd of our souls, O primal voice,
whose call created all of us:
Now hear our plea to thee, to thee, and deign
to free us from our miseries
and feebleness.*

Antiphon for the Redeemer

[2] The Tree

Jonathan Harvey (1939-2012)

There is hope for a tree if it be cut down,
There is hope that it will sprout again,
And that its shoots will not cease
Though its roots grow old in the ground,
Yet at the scent of water, it will bud,
And put forth branches like a young plant.

Job 14 vv. 7-9

[3] sicut aquilae

James Long (b.1987)

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard,
That the everlasting God, the Lord,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Fainteth not, neither is weary?
There is no searching of his understanding.

He giveth power to the faint; and to them
That have no might he increaseth strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall:

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew
their strength;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles;
They shall run, and not be weary;
And they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40: 28-31

[4] - [5] Preces and Responses

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
*As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.*

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's Name be praised.

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.
*Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.*

Our Father,
*which art in heav'n,
Hallowed by thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heav'n.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil. Amen.*

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.
And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.
*Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but
only thou, O God.*

O God, make clean our hearts within us.
And take not thy holy Spirit from us.

God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of
thy faithful people, by the sending to them the
light of thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same
Spirit to have a right judgement in all things, and
evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through
the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth
and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same
Spirit, one God, world without end.
Amen

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good
counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give
unto thy servants that peace which the world
cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to
obey thy commandments, and also that by thee
we being defended from the fear of our enemies
may pass our time in rest and quietness; through
the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils
and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only
Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

*The Book of Common Prayer
Collects: The Collect for Whit-Sunday, the Collect for Peace,
and the Collect for Aid against all Perils*

6 The Spirit of the Lord
Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he hath anointed me
to preach the Gospel to the poor:
He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
to preach deliverance to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to preach the acceptable year of the Lord;

to give unto them that mourn
a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he might be
glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
and as the garden causeth the
things that are sown in it to spring forth;
So the Lord God will cause
righteousness and praise to
spring forth before all nations.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because He hath anointed me
to preach the Gospel.

Isaiah 61 vv. 1-3, 11

7 A Hymn for St Cecilia
Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Sing for the morning's joy, Cecilia, sing,
in words of youth and praises of the Spring,
walk the bright colonnades by fountains' spray,
and sing as sunlight fills the waking day;
till angels, voyaging in upper air
pause on a wing and gather the clear sound

into celestial joy, wound and unwound,
a silver chain, or golden as your hair.

Sing for your loves of heaven and of earth,
in words of music, and each word a truth;
marriage of heart and longings that aspire,
a bond of roses, and a ring of fire.
Your summertime grows short and fades away,
terror must gather to a martyr's death;
but never tremble, the last indrawn breath
remembers music as an echo may.

Through the cold aftermath of centuries
Cecilia's music dances in the skies,
lend us a fragment of the immortal air,
that with your choiring angels we may share,
a word to light us thro' time-fettered night,
water of life, or rose of paradise
so from the earth another song shall rise
to meet your own in heaven's long delight.

Ursula Vaughan Williams (1911-2007)

[8] A Song of Wisdom

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and covered the earth as a mist.
I dwelt in high places, and my throne is in the

pillar of the cloud.

Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven, and
walked the depths of the abyss.

In the waves of the sea and in all the earth, and in
ev'ry people and nation I got a possession,
With all these I sought rest.

And I took root in a people that was glorified, in
the portion of the Lord's own inheritance.

I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a
cypress on the mountains of Hermon.

I was exalted like a palm tree on the sea shore,
and as a fair olive tree in the plain.

And my branches are branches of glory and grace,
and my flowers are the fruit of glory and riches.

Come unto me, ye that are desirous of me, and
be ye filled with my fruits.

And I came out as a stream from a river,
I said, I will water my garden, and will water
abundantly my garden-bed; And lo, my stream
became a river, and my river became a sea.

For my thoughts are filled from the sea, and my
counsels from the great deep.

Ecclesiasticus 24 vv. 3-7, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 29-31

[9] Jesu, grant me this, I pray

Christopher Robinson (b.1936)

Jesu, grant me this, I pray,
ever in thy heart to stay;
let me evermore abide
hidden in thy wounded side.

If the evil one prepare,
or the world, a tempting snare,
I am safe when I abide
in thy heart and wounded side.

If the flesh, more dangerous still,
tempt my soul to deeds of ill,
naught I fear when I abide
in thy heart and wounded side.

Death will come one day to me;
Jesu, cast me not from thee:
dying, let me still abide
In thy heart and wounded side.
Amen.

Anonymous Latin, 17th century

Tr. H.W. Baker (1821-77)

[10] Hear my words, ye people

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

Hear my words, ye people,
give ear unto me all ye that have knowledge.
Let us choose to us judgement,
let us know among ourselves what is good.

Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any,
He is mighty in strength and in wisdom.
Behold, He is great, and we know Him not,
neither can the number of His years be
searched out.

The Lord's seat is in heaven.

Clouds and darkness are round about Him,
righteousness and judgement are the habitation
of his seat.
He decketh himself with light as with a garment,
and spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain.

He layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters,
and maketh the clouds His chariots,
and walketh upon the wings of the wind.
He bowed the heavens, and came down,
And it was dark under His feet.
He rode on the Cherubim, and did fly,
and came flying upon the wings of the wind.

The Lord's seat is in heaven, His kingdom ruleth over all.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on them that fear Him,
and upon them that put their trust in His mercy.
To deliver their soul from death,
and to feed them in the time of dearth,
Our soul hath patiently tarried for the Lord,
For He is our help and our shield.

He delivered the poor in his affliction,
the fatherless and him that hath none to help him.
He shall bind up the broken-hearted,
and proclaim liberty to the captives,
and comfort to those that mourn.
He shall give them beauty for ashes;
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
and as the garden causeth things that are sown to spring forth.
So the Lord God will cause righteousness and peace to spring forth before all nations.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
nor rewardeth us according to our wickedness,
For look how high the heaven is in comparison

of the earth,
so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him:
Look how wide also the east is from the west,
so far hath He set our sins from us.

O praise ye the Lord,
Praise him in the height,
Rejoice in his word
Ye Angels of Light!
Ye heavens adore Him
By whom ye were made,
And worship before Him
In brightness arrayed.

O praise ye the Lord,
Praise Him upon earth,
In tuneful accord,
Ye sons of new birth,
Praise Him who hath brought you
His grace from above,
Praise Him who hath taught you
To sing of his love.

O praise ye the Lord!
Thanksgiving and song
To him be outpoured
All ages along;
For love in creation,
For heaven restored,

For grace of salvation,
O praise ye the Lord.
Amen.

From the Books of Isaiah, Job, and the Psalms
Final hymn: H. W. Baker

[11] God so loved the world
John Stainer (1840-1901)

God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whoso believeth in him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world
to condemn the world;
But that the world through him might be saved.

John 3 vv. 16-17

[12] Hymn – Love Divine, all loves excelling
Tune: Blaenwern
William Rowlands (1860-1937)
Descant: Christopher Robinson (b.1936)

Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,

All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us thy pure salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place.
Till we cast ourselves before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)



© Nic Marchant

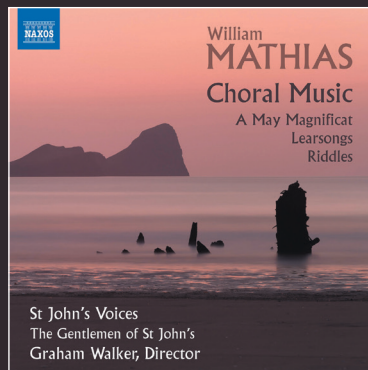
Christopher Robinson conducting the reunion choir in rehearsal, 12th July 2019



© Nic Marchant

Andrew Nethsingha in rehearsal, 12th July 2019

WILLIAM MATHIAS – CHORAL MUSIC ST JOHN'S VOICES | GRAHAM WALKER THE GENTLEMEN OF ST JOHN'S



Our sister choir St John's Voices' debut album, presenting familiar and less well-known material alongside two first recordings: *Riddles*, a setting of texts from the Exeter Book of Riddles, written for SATB choir, piano, bells and close-harmony sextet (the Gentlemen of St John's, on this recording); and *Learsongs*, a setting of five poems by Edward Lear for SA chorus and piano duet, in music by turns quirky, nostalgic, tuneful, achingly sad and hugely entertaining.



Gramophone Critics' Choice 2020

"The singing is first-class throughout: a fine recording!"

Andrew MacGregor, *BBC Radio 3 Record Review*

★★★★★ "The whole programme is thoughtfully chosen, superbly executed, beautifully recorded – and, best of all, hugely enjoyable" Philip Reed, *Choir & Organ*

"Highly impressive... a matchless and hugely entertaining display of dazzling choral singing"

Gramophone



Evensong with Former Members and Friends of the College Choir, 12th July 2019

© Nic Marchant

5TH JULY 2011
LONG SICUT AQUILAE

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
DIRECTED BY ANDREW NETHSINGHA

Trebles

Ethan Bamber
Alexander Bower-Brown
Francis Bushell
Jason Cobb
Alec D'Oyly
Julius Foo
Peter Hicks
Matthew Holman
Alexander Jones
Andrew Jones
Robert Murray-John
Rufus Pawsey
Justin Stollery
Matthew Supramaniam
Michael Tuft
Jed Upjohn

Organ Scholars

John Challenger *
Freddie James

Counter Tenors

Thomas Blackie
Dominic Collingwood
Nicholas Edwards
James Imam
Timothy Teague

Tenors

Guy Edmund-Jones
Julian Gregory
Samuel Oladeinde
Bradley Smith ³
Pablo Strong

Basses

Geoffrey Clapham
George Dye
Huw Leslie
Daniel Macklin
Basil McDonald
Henry Neill ³

** This organist was playing at the service.*

Numbers indicate soloist credits for each track

29TH MAY 2015

HOWELLS PRECES AND RESPONSES & ELGAR THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE & YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM
DIRECTED BY DAVID HILL

Trebles & Sopranos

George Balfour
Maximilian Boorman
Joel Branston
Matthew Brown
Oliver Brown
David Bryson
James Buttery
Meghan Chartrand
Blake Chen
Jaylen Cheng
Adam Chillingworth
Charles Cobb
William Collison
Marissa Glynias
Alfred Harrison
Ariadne Lih
Cara Meyer
Peter Nethsingha
Molly Netter
Nola Richardson
Alexander Tomkinson
Stephanie Tubiolo
Sebastian Wade
Samuel Williams
Sarah Yanovitch

Altos & Counter Tenors

Mindy Chu
Mary Copeley
Jack Hawkins
Thomas Lilburn
Hamish McLaren
Daniel Moody
Sarah Paquet
Valerie Rogotzke
Alexander Simpson
Jonathan White

Tenors

William Ashford
Nathaniel Barnett
Michael Bell
John Clapham ^{4 & 5}
Christian Crocker
Mark Fedronic
Benedict Flinn
Xavier Hetherington
Tyler Ray
Gene Stenger
Will Watson

Basses

James Adams
Quintin Beer
Mark Biggins
Christopher Fistonich
Brendan Fitzgerald
Stephen Matthews
Edmund Milley
Oliver Morris
Andrew Padgett
Aaron Peisner
Augustus Perkins Ray
Theodore Platt
Michael Weinberg

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Edward Picton-Turbervill

Junior Organ Scholar

Joseph Wicks*

** This organist was playing at the service.*

Numbers indicate soloist credits for each track

27TH APRIL 2016

ROBINSON JESU, GRANT ME THIS, I PRAY

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DIRECTED BY ANDREW NETHSINGHA

Trebles

George Balfour
Joel Branston
Matthew Brown
David Bryson
James Buttery
Alan Chen
Blake Chen
Jaylen Cheng
Adam Chillingworth
Charles Cobb
Lewis Cobb
Alfred Harrison
James Lewis
Alexander Tomkinson
Philip Tomkinson
Samuel Williams

Counter Tenors

Hugh Cutting
Jack Hawkins
Thomas Lilburn
Hamish McClaren

Tenors

William Ashford
Michael Bell
Benedict Flinn
Xavier Hetherington
Gopal Kambo

Basses

James Adams
Peter Lidbetter
Louis Marlowe
Stephen Matthews
Theodore Platt

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Joseph Wicks

Junior Organ Scholar

Glen Dempsey

4TH OCTOBER 2016

HARVEY THE TREE

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE (TREBLES ONLY)

DIRECTED BY ANDREW NETHSINGHA

Trebles

George Balfour
Matthew Brown
James Buttery
William Buttery
Alan Chen
Blake Chen
Jaylen Cheng
Adam Chillingworth
Charles Cobb
Lewis Cobb
Alfred Harrison
James Lewis
Alexander Tomkinson
Philip Tomkinson
Thomas Watkin

Assistant Organist

Joseph Wicks*

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Glen Dempsey

** This organist was playing at the service.*

27TH MAY 2018

STANFORD A SONG OF WISDOM

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE (TREBLES ONLY)

DIRECTED BY ANDREW NETHSINGHA

Trebles

Felix Bamford
Matthew Brown
James Buttery
William Buttery
Alan Chen
Jaylen Cheng
Adam Chillingworth
Lewis Cobb
George Ducker
Alfred Harrison
Harry L'Estrange
Toby L'Estrange
James Lewis
Jonathan Mews
Lucas Nair-Grepinet
Ewan Tatnell
Philip Tomkinson
Thomas Watkin

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Glen Dempsey *

Junior Organ Scholar

James Anderson-Besant

** This organist was playing at the service.*

10TH MARCH 2019¹ & 17TH JULY 2019²

¹ STAINER GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD

² HILDEGARD OF BINGEN O PASTOR ANIMARUM (TREBLES ONLY)

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DIRECTED BY ANDREW NETHSINGHA

Trebles

Adam Ahmad
Felix Bamford
William Buttery
Angus Crichton-Stuart
Jaylen Cheng
Lewis Cobb
Joshua Davidson
George Ducker
Lorenzo Granado
Alfred Harrison
Harry L'Estrange
Toby L'Estrange
Jonathan Mews
Kieran McGurran
Lucas Nair-Grepinet
Ewan Tatnell
Philip Tomkinson

Counter Tenors

Hugh Cutting
Richard Decker
Alec D'Oyly
Laurence Trowsdale-Stannard
Thomas Watts

Tenors

Jack Bazalgette
Benedict Flinn
Gopal Kambo
Henry Laird

Basses

James Adams
Thomas Butler
Jamie Conway
Matthew Gibson
Simon Grant
Oliver Morris
William O'Brien

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Glen Dempsey

Junior Organ Scholar

James Anderson-Besant

12TH JULY 2019

HOWELLS A HYMN FOR ST CECILIA, PARRY HEAR MY WORDS
& ROWLANDS LOVE DIVINE

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
FORMER MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE CHOIR
GLEN DEMPSEY ORGANIST JAMES ADAMS BASS SOLOIST
DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON

All members of the College Choir as of 10th March & 17th July 2019 (previous page) also performed at this event, with the addition of treble Caspar Johnson.

Sopranos

Sophie Alabaster
Lydia Allain Chapman
Katharine Ambrose
Mollie Betts
Amy Butterworth
Katie Care
Sarah Cattle
Tiffany Charnley
Jasmine Coomber
Fiammetta Fuller Gale
Susannah Hill
Jessica Hopkins
Amanda McHugh
Amanda Pitt
Lucy Roberts
Serena Shah
Harriet Spring
Louisa Stuart-Smith
Gemma Taylor
Sophie Westbrooke

Counter Tenors

Thomas Blackie
Daniel Brown
Patrick Collin
Dominic Collingwood
Peter Crawford
Hugh Cutting
Tim Dallosso
John Granville Walker
Rupert Griffin
James Gumpert
Peter Hicks
Oliver Hunt
James Lewis
Adrian Martin
Hamish McLaren
James Morgan
John Robinson
Christopher Royall
Alexander Tomkinson
Tom Verney

Tenors

George Balfour
Michael Bell
Peter Birts
Kieran Brunt
Adam Chillingworth
John Clapham
William Collison
Ben Cooper
Tim Copsey
Declan Costello
Peter Davis
Anthony Dawson
Rupert Forbes
David Gwynne-Evans
Roger Harrison
John Naylor
John Newman
Tom Roach
David Roy
Stephen Shorter

John Thompson
David Thomson
Hugo Tucker
Jed Upjohn
Jonathan Vaughn
Sebastian Wade
Toby Watkin
Francis Williams

Basses

Joseph Ataman
Laurence Beard
Quintin Beer
Max Boorman
Conrad Boyle
David Bryson
Gabriel Burchell
Peter Burtt Jones
Francis Bushell
Hugh Bushell
James Buttery
Harry Cheate
Mark Chichester-Clark
William Clements
Charlie Cobb
Tom Cogan
David John Coulton
Ed de Minckwitz
Tony de Rivaz
Nick Edwards
Laurence Fischer
Julius Foo

Christopher Gabbittas
Nick Gedge
Mal Green
Henry Grose
Benedict Gummer
Ben Gumpert
Thomas Guthrie
Alexander Hardy
Ben Hardy
Jonathan Hellyer Jones
Jonny Hyde
Ed Jones
Dan Jordan
Gareth Keene
Piers Kennedy
Nigel King
Patrick Lee-Browne
Ollie Lepage-Dean
Huw Leslie
Huw Lewis
Alan Loader
Daniel Macklin
Alexander Martin
Stephen Matthews
Richard Mayo
Basil McDonald
Alan Miller
Peter Nethsingha
Nicholas Odom
Stephen Odom
Will Pargeter
Augustus Perkins Ray

Richard Pleming
James Quilligan
David Salmon
Tim Scott
Simon Scott Plummer
Adrian Smallwood
Robin Smallwood
Richard Suart
Reuben Thomas
Anthony Vines
Sam Williams

The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge is one of the finest collegiate choirs in the world, known and loved by millions from its broadcasts, concert tours and recordings. Founded in the 1670s, the Choir is known for its distinctive rich, warm sound, its expressive interpretations and its breadth of repertoire. Alongside these musical characteristics, the Choir is particularly proud of its happy, relaxed and mutually supportive atmosphere. The Choir is directed by Andrew Nethsingha who follows a long line of eminent Directors of Music, recently Dr George Guest, Dr Christopher Robinson and Dr David Hill.

The Choir is made up of around 20 Choristers and Probationers from St John's College School and around 15 Choral Scholars who are members of St John's College, its primary purpose being to enhance the liturgy and worship at daily services in the College Chapel. The Choir has a diverse repertoire spanning over 500 years of music. It is also renowned for championing contemporary music by commissioning new works, including recent compositions by Judith Bingham, Julian Anderson, Anna Semple, Katrina Toner, Ignacio Mañá Mesas and Cecilia McDowall. Each term the Choir sings Bach Cantatas

liturgically with St John's Sinfonia, its period instrument ensemble. This Bach series has now entered its second decade.

The Choir brings the 'St John's Sound' to listeners around the world through its weekly webcasts (available at www.sjcchoir.co.uk). The Choir has also live-streamed video broadcasts of Chapel services on Facebook, in association with Classic FM. In addition to regular radio broadcasts in this country and abroad, the Choir releases multiple recordings each year. In May 2016 the College launched its 'St John's Cambridge' recording label (in conjunction with Signum Classics). Since then 11 Choir albums have been released. These include single composer albums of Jonathan Harvey, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Michael Finnissy. There have also been two 'Magnificat' albums of varied Evensong Canticles, an anthem compilation *Locus Iste*, masses by Poulenc and Kodály, and seasonal albums for Advent, Christmas and Ash Wednesday.

The Choir also performs concerts outside of Cambridge and tours internationally each year. Recent destinations have included the USA, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Hong Kong and

Singapore. It also performs regularly in the UK, with venues including Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, London.

YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM

Yale Schola Cantorum is a chamber choir that performs sacred music from the sixteenth century to the present day in concert settings and choral services around the world. It is sponsored by Yale Institute of Sacred Music and conducted by David Hill; Masaaki Suzuki is principal guest conductor. Open by audition to

students from all departments and professional schools across Yale University, the choir has a special interest in historically informed performance practice, often in collaboration with instrumentalists from Juilliard⁴¹⁵.

Schola was founded in 2003 by Simon Carrington. In recent years, the choir has also sung under the direction of internationally renowned conductors Marcus Creed, Matthew Halls, Simon Halsey, Paul Hillier, Stephen Layton, Sir Neville Marriner, Nicholas McGegan, James O'Donnell, Stefan Parkman, Krzysztof Penderecki, Grete Pedersen, Helmuth Rilling,



Yale Schola Cantorum 2014-15

and Dale Warland. In addition to performing regularly in New Haven and New York, the ensemble records and tours nationally and internationally. Most recently, Hyperion released Schola Cantorum performing a chamber version of the Brahms Requiem and recordings of the music of Roderick Williams, Tawnie Olson, and Reena Esmail. Schola's 2018 recording on the Hyperion label featuring Palestrina's *Missa Confitebor tibi Domine* has garnered enthusiastic reviews. A live recording of Heinrich Biber's 1693 *Vesperae longiores ac breviores* with Robert Mealy and Yale Collegium Musicum received international acclaim from the early music press, as have subsequent CDs of J.S. Bach's rarely heard 1725 version of the St. John Passion and Antonio Bertali's *Missa resurrectionis*. A recording on the Naxos label of Mendelssohn and Bach Magnificats was released in 2009. On tour, Schola Cantorum has given performances in England, Hungary, France, China, South Korea, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Japan, Singapore, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, India, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway.

ism.yale.edu/academics/ensembles/yale-schola-cantorum

JOHN CHALLENGER

John Challenger was an Organ Scholar and, latterly, Assistant Organist at St John's between 2008 and 2012. He returned to St John's for the Lent Term of 2017 to act as Director of Music during the sabbatical of Andrew Nethsingha.

John received his early musical education as a chorister at Hereford Cathedral under Dr Roy Massey and Geraint Bowen. A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, he was taught the organ by Frédéric Blanc, Geraint Bowen, David Briggs, Jeremy Filsell, Mark Williams,



© Ash Mills

and the late David Sanger. Since 2012, John has held the role of Assistant Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral, where he accompanies the majority of Cathedral services on Salisbury's famous 'Father' Willis organ, and assists in the running of the Cathedral choirs.

Working regularly as a conductor with Salisbury Musical Society and Salisbury Symphony Orchestra, recent performances have included Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Haydn's *Missa in Angustiis*. Alongside organ teaching work, John has been responsible for many recent initiatives at Salisbury Cathedral including Organ Vespers, the Organ Prom, the Cathedral's 'virtual' Father Willis Organ, and several solo albums which have won critical acclaim. Most recently, he recorded the album *Salisbury Meditation* to raise funds for NHS Charities Together, following widespread coverage of the organ music which was provided during COVID-19 vaccinations inside Salisbury Cathedral.

JOSEPH WICKS

Born in 1993, Joseph Wicks is a prize-winning organist, conductor and tenor. He is a founder member of The Gesualdo Six and has also sung for several other groups including Tenebrae, Alamire and Polyphony. He is an early graduate of Genesis Sixteen, a training scheme for young singers run by The Sixteen and its director Harry Christophers, and credits to date include several of Bach's Cantatas, St Luke Passion (evangelist), St John Passion (arias), Handel's Messiah and the role of Sellem in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (Cambridge University Opera Society).



© Patrick Allen

appearance in ITV's 'Britain's Got Talent'. He was also Musical Director of St Mary's Singers with whom he conducted performances of Bach's Magnificat & St John Passion, Finzi's In Terra Pax, and Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols.

Prior to this Joseph was Assistant Organist of St John's College, Cambridge, having been its Herbert Howells Organ Scholar. Whilst at St John's, Joseph accompanied the world-famous College Choir in services, on broadcasts and tours to countries across the world. This is his fifth CD release with the choir, the other four including works by Kodály, Vaughan Williams, and various live radio broadcast performances for BBC Radio 3. Joseph was also Musical Director of the Gentlemen of St John's with whom he recorded a CD of Christmas music.

Joseph's own chamber choir The Beaufort Singers was founded in 2016, and it is now resident at the annual Boxgrove Choral Festival founded by Joseph in 2018.

www.joseph-wicks.co.uk

GLEN DEMPSEY

Born in Suffolk in 1994, Glen's formative musical experiences were centred around the English choral tradition – as a chorister in St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds and later in the choirs of St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Organ lessons with Michael Nicholas led to his being awarded a scholarship as a répétiteur to study



© Louis Marlowe

at the Purcell School of Music. During this time Glen performed in all the major concert halls of London as a soloist and chamber musician on the organ and piano, and also conducted at the Wigmore Hall.

In 2013, Glen was appointed Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. In this role he took a share in accompanying and directing the choir's daily services and assisted in the training of the choristers; he played for events attended by the British Royal Family.

Alongside his organ studies with Ann Elise Smoot he maintained a varied performance profile as organist, conductor and tenor.

During the academic year 2014/15 he resided in the Netherlands and was the Assistant Organist of St Nicholas's Basilica, Amsterdam. Under the mentorship of Michael Hedley, Glen accompanied the majority of the choral services in the Basilica, as well as having responsibility for conducting the Basilica's various choirs and ensembles. During this time he studied with Jacques van Oortmerssen.

Glen then spent four years as Organ Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge under Andrew Nethsingha, where he accompanied the Choir in the daily services, as well as for its busy schedule of tours, broadcasts and recordings; he also assisted in the training of the Choir. Gordon Stewart and Ann Elise Smoot were his organ teachers. Glen's interest in contemporary music has been developed through premiering several choir and organ, and solo organ works at St John's College, including a three-year collaboration with Michael Finnissy. After graduation Glen took up the roles of Assistant Director of Music at Ely Cathedral and Organist at King's Ely, where he plays the famous 1908 Harrison and Harrison organ, directs the Ely Cathedral Octagon Singers and teaches the boy choristers and pupils at the school. He is also active as a freelance organist, conductor and teacher.

DAVID HILL
PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR,
YALE SCHOLA CANTORUM
FORMER DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
(2003-2007)
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE

Renowned for his fine musicianship, David Hill is widely respected as both a choral and orchestral conductor. His talent has been recognised by his appointments as Musical Director of The Bach Choir, Music Director of Leeds Philharmonic Society, Associate Guest conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and International Chair in Choral Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music. He was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers from September 2007 to September 2017 and is a former Music Director of Southern Sinfonia.

Born in Carlisle and educated at Chetham's School of Music, of which he is now a Governor, he was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists at the remarkably young age of 17. Having been Organ Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, David Hill returned to hold the post of Director of Music from



© Nick Rutter

2003-2007. His other appointments have included Master of the Music at Winchester Cathedral, Master of the Music at Westminster Cathedral and Artistic Director of the Philharmonia Chorus. He holds an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Southampton for Services to Music, and in March 2018, he was honoured with the prestigious Royal College of Organists medal, in recognition of distinguished achievement in choral conducting and organ playing.

David Hill has a broad-ranging discography covering repertoire from Thomas Tallis to a number of world premiere recordings. As well as achieving prestigious Grammy and Gramophone Awards, many of his discs have been recommended as Critic's Choices, with his ongoing series of English choral music for Naxos, and discs for Hyperion with the Yale Schola Cantorum receiving particular acclaim.

Hill has appeared with the BBC Symphony and BBC Philharmonic orchestras, London Philharmonic, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera, the Orchestra and Chorus of Opera North, Ulster Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, R  al Filharmonia de Galicia, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Omaha Symphony, and Portland Baroque Orchestras as well as the Netherlands Radio Choir and RIAS Chamber Choir, Berlin.

In January 2019 David Hill was awarded an MBE for services to music.

rayfieldallied.com/artists/david-hill

ANDREW NETHSINGHA
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE

Performing in North America, South Africa, the Far East, and throughout Europe, Andrew Nethsingha has been Director of Music at St John's College, Cambridge since 2007. He helped to set up the recording label, 'St John's Cambridge', in conjunction with Signum Classics. The first release on this label, *DEO* (music by Jonathan Harvey), was a 2017 BBC Music Magazine Award winner. Six recent albums have been 'Editor's Choice' in Gramophone Magazine.



© James Beddoe

Andrew Nethsingha was a chorister at Exeter Cathedral, under his father's direction. He later studied at the Royal College of Music, where he won seven prizes, and at St John's College, Cambridge. He held Organ Scholarships under Christopher Robinson at St George's Windsor, and George Guest at St John's, before becoming Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral. He was subsequently Director of Music at Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals, and Artistic Director of the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival.

Andrew's concerts conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra have included: Mahler's *8th Symphony*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Kingdom*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, Poulenc's *Gloria* and Duruflé's *Requiem*. He has also worked with: the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Britten Sinfonia, Orchestra of St Luke's (New York), Aarhus Symfoniorkester, and BBC Concert Orchestra. Venues have included the BBC Proms, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Verbier Festival, Tokyo Suntory Hall, Konzerthaus Berlin, and Singapore Esplanade.

CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON
FORMER DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
(1991-2003)
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE

Christopher Robinson was born in 1936 and educated at Rugby and Christ Church, Oxford, where he was Organ Scholar. After a period as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Worcester Cathedral from 1963-75, he moved to St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where he was Organist and Choirmaster until 1991, when he succeeded George Guest as Director of Music at St John's College. He



© Stephen Stokes

was conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir from 1976 to 1997 and of the City of Birmingham Choir from 1964 to 2002. As well as conducting most of the large-choir repertoire with the City of Birmingham Choir, there were also concerts of special note. For example, Christopher Robinson's expertise in and affinity for Elgar's music produced several highly praised performances of *The Dream of Gerontius*. In 1981 he conducted Messiaen's *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ* and in 1989 two highly acclaimed performances of Tippett's *Mask of Time*. The Choir gave a widely praised first performance in England of *The Jacobite Rising* by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

He holds honorary degrees from Birmingham University and the University of Central England and is an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music. He has been Chairman of the Elgar Society and President of the Royal College of Organists. In 1992 the Queen bestowed on him the honour of Commander of the Victorian Order for his services at Windsor Castle, and in the summer of 2002, the Archbishop of Canterbury made him a Lambeth DMus. He became an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians in

Autumn 2003 and received a CBE in the 2004 New Year's Honours List. Since retirement in 2003 he has continued to be active as a conductor, composer, keyboard player and mentor to young musicians. In 2006 he was Acting Director of Music at Clare College and from 2015-17 was Mentor to the Organ Scholars at Downing College. In 2019 he continued to work with various college choirs, including Queens', King's and Caius. He was Interim Associate Director of Music at King's during the Lent Term and Acting Precentor at Caius in the Easter Term.

JACK ROSS *Trumpet*

Jack Ross has played his trumpet in some unlikely places. He has played newly commissioned sinfonietta works in Tate Modern gallery, Gabrieli brass music from the towers of Trinity College, Cambridge, and has improvised in the centre of Stonehenge for summer solstice.

His playing encompasses numerous solo performances, orchestral works, music for brass quintet, stage and jazz bands. Highlights include Telemann's trumpet concerto, Britten's *War Requiem* in St Paul's Cathedral under Richard Hickox, and Bach *Magnificat* on the natural



trumpet alongside Robert Vanryne. He is even known to offer counter-melodies to reels and jigs within a ceilidh band.

Since graduating from Warwick University, he has played and taught trumpet in numerous settings. He currently lives and works in Bristol.

Acknowledgements

The Choir thanks those who continue to support the 'St John's Cambridge' recording label through **The Album Recording Fund**, in particular Mr Archie Burdon-Cooper.

The 'Minute of Music Campaign' for *The Tree*

His Honour Peter Birts, The Rev'd Tony Bushell, The Rev'd Peter and Mrs Sian Cobb, The Rev'd David Coulton, Mr Peter de Vile, Mr David and Mrs Rosie Garrett, Mr Rodolphe Grepinet, Mr David Gutman, Mr Ed Jones, Mr Tim Jones, Mr Gareth Keene, Mr Nigel King, Mr William James Lawson, Mr Christopher Lipscomb, Mr Neville Miller, Mr Simon Robson Brown, Mr John Thompson, Mrs Olga Tomkinson, Dr Will Watkins, Mr Francis Williams, Mr David Wheeler (in memory of his brother, Mr Peter Wheeler) *and other donors who wish to remain anonymous.*

Publishers:

The Canterbury Press (*Love Divine*)
Hildegard Publishing Company (Hildegard)
Novello (Elgar, Howells x 2, Parry, Robinson descendant, Stainer) Chuch Music Society/OUP (Harvey) Roger Dean Publishing Company (Robinson) RSCM (Stanford)
Unpublished (Long)

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Recorded in St John's College Chapel, Cambridge, UK, on the following dates:

5th July 2011 (Long)
29th May 2015 (Howells *Preces and Responses* & Elgar)
27th April 2016 (Robinson)
4th October 2016 (Harvey)
27th May 2018 (Stanford)
10th March 2019 (Stainer)
12th July 2019 (Howells *A Hymn for St Cecilia*, Parry & Rowlands)
17th July 2019 (Hildegard)

Mixing & Mastering – Will Brown & Dave Rowell
Producer (Hildegard only) – Chris Hazell
Recording Engineer (Hildegard only) – Simon Eadon
Editor (Hildegard only) – Matthew Bennett
Recording Archivists – Simon Grant & Stephen Stokes
Vocal Consultant – David Lowe
Dean – The Rev'd Canon Mark Oakley
Project Manager – James Beddoe

Cover Image – Premm Design/Shutterstock
Design and Artwork – Woven Design www.wovendesign.co.uk

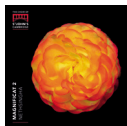
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AWARD-WINNING RECORDINGS FROM THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Latest Release



Magnificat 2 SIGCD667

The second release in our Magnificat series features nine settings of the Evening Canticles, sung daily at Evensong. The recording includes Howells Collegium Regale and Julian Anderson's St John's Service, as well as settings by Berkeley, Jackson, Pärt, Sumsion, Swayne, Walton & Watson



Advent Live - Volume 2 SIGCD661

"It is a real album, the mystery and expectation of Advent coursing through a repertoire that never stoops below this ensemble's judicious idea of what constitutes high-quality music, whatever the century... The qualities of the choir hardly need repeating" *Gramophone*

"The fantastic balance of anthems, hymns and organ music leaps out in this arresting, fabulously performed Advent programme" *BBC Music Magazine*

Gramophone
Editor's Choice

Michael Finnissy – *Pious Anthems & Voluntaries* SIGCD624

★★★★★ "The sequence maintains a powerfully communicative grip... The choir makes the music sound as lived-in as Byrd or Howells" *BBC Music Magazine*

"Essential listening" *Planet Hugill*

★★★★★ "Exquisitely beautiful, sensual music" *Choir & Organ*

"An 84-minute work that might well change your listening life" *Classical Music*

"This is some of the most compelling music written for the 'English choral tradition' in many years... the results are infinitely rewarding" *Europadisc*

BBC Music Magazine
Choral & Song Choice

Top Ten Recording
of the Year
Europadisc

Ash Wednesday SIGCD605

"The malleable, sensitive trebles have what seems to me an unparalleled ability to invest text and phrase with meaning" *Gramophone*

"It's the most glorious, glorious music making" *BBC Radio 3, Record Review*

„Vor allem das *Misere mei, Deus* von Allegri und Byrds überwältigende Motette *Ne Irascaris, Domine* gehen unter die Haut, genau wie das zum Schluss erklingende *e-Moll Präludium für Orgel* von Johann Sebastian Bach" (Above all, the *Miserere mei, Deus* by Allegri and Byrd's overwhelming motet *Ne Irascaris, Domine* get under the skin, as indeed does Johann Sebastian Bach's *Prelude in E minor*, heard at the end) *Südwest-Presse* (Germany)

★★★★★ "Exceptionally satisfying. Bravo. Bravissimo" *AllMusic*

Gramophone
Editor's Choice

Magnificat SIGCD588

"extreme perception of blend (vowel and timbre), words and phrasing; a true ensemble" *Gramophone*

★★★★★ "A fascinating hour's music" *Choir & Organ*

« Superbe. Les petits trebles sont en grande forme » *Diapason (France)*

"A finely calibrated sense of tone colour. Don't miss it" *Limelight (Australia)*

Gramophone
Editor's Choice

Locus Iste SIGCD567

★★★★★ "a glint of sunlight, inspired and inspiring" *BBC Music Magazine*

"Beautifully captured" *BBC Radio 3, Record Review*

"This disc really soars" *Gramophone*

Advent Live SIGCD535

“Under Andrew Nethsingha’s inspired direction, the choir has retained its renowned clarity, flamboyance and readiness to take risks” *Gramophone*

“Sung with typical St John’s verve and character, this superbly programmed collection will take your Advent listening in unexpected, but entirely apposite, directions” *BBC Music Magazine*

BBC Music Magazine
Choral & Song Choice

Vaughan Williams – Mass in G Minor SIGCD541

★★★★★ “Formidably attractive” *BBC Music Magazine*

“Director Andrew Nethsingha shapes a performance of profound dignity and power, beautifully sung by this always impressive choir” *The Guardian*

“The choral recordings that St John’s College Choir have released on this label so far have been uniformly excellent, and this is another golden string to add to their bow” *MusicWeb International*

Poulenc | Kodály | Janáček – KYRIE SIGCD489

“The treble voices of St John’s bring an ineffably poised gravity... a signal virtue of this new recording is the moulded caress of every luscious harmony in what are predominantly homophonic works” *Gramophone*

“These two contrasting masses and Janáček’s *Lord’s Prayer* (Otče náš) are sung with characteristic ‘European’ ripeness of tone and precision by the choir of St John’s College” *The Observer*

★★★★★ “...a superb reading from Nethsingha and his forces... Throughout, the choir sing with their justly famed blend and perfect intonation. An essential disc...” *Choir & Organ*

BBC Music Magazine
Award Winner

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

Christmas with St John’s SIGCD458

“Under Nethsingha, St John’s Choir rides high among the Cambridge colleges... Nethsingha’s programming is eclectic while retaining a ‘traditional’ core”

The Sunday Times

“A fine showcase of a choir on the top of its form” *planetuhgill*

“proving yet again, they are as good as it gets” *Classic FM*

“it’s a sign of how classy and successful a programme has been compiled, that Michael Finnissy’s John the Baptist fits so well into the weave of Christmas with St John’s” *Gramophone*

“showcases a choir and its director who are currently in very fine fettle indeed.” *MusicWeb International*

“a meticulously sung carol collection from the always classy choir of St John’s... shimmering tone clusters and delicious suspensions” *The Guardian*

“an evocatively sung collection...glowing with devotional joy, wonder and a kaleidoscope of colours and emotions” *Choir & Organ*

BBC Music Magazine
Award Winner

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

Jonathan Harvey – DEO SIGCD456

★★★★★ “ecstatic...the Choir tackles it all with confidence and clarity”

The Observer

★★★★★ “characterful yet authoritative performances of which they can be justly proud” *Choir & Organ*

THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

DEO | HARVEY
NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

CHRISTMAS WITH ST JOHN'S
NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

ASH WEDNESDAY
NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

PIOUS ANTHEMS & VOLUNTARIES
FINNISSY | NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

LOCUS ISTE
NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
MASS IN G MINOR
NETHSINGHA



THE CHOIR OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

KYRIE
POULENC | KODÁLY | JANÁČEK
NETHSINGHA



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A BBC recording