

# Puer natus est

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS FROM BUCKFAST ABBEY



The Choir of Buckfast Abbey  
Philip Arkwright





TRADITIONAL

*arranged by David Willcocks*

7 Unto us is born a Son ..... 2' 59

RICHARD RUNCIMAN TERRY (1865–1938)

8 Myn lyking ..... 3' 28

GEORGE MALCOLM

9 Sanctus (Missa ad Præsepe) ..... 2' 52

10 Benedictus (Missa ad Præsepe) ..... 1' 43

11 Agnus Dei (Missa ad Præsepe) ..... 2' 04

GREGORIAN CHANT

12 Communio: Viderunt omnes ..... 7' 02

GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934)

13 In the bleak midwinter ..... 4' 17

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA (1548–1611)

14 O magnum mysterium ..... 3' 53

GREGORIAN CHANT

15 Sequence: Puer natus in Bethlehem ..... 7' 30

TRADITIONAL

*arranged by David Willcocks*

16 Of the Father's heart begotten ..... 4' 57

GEORGE BAKER (b.1951)

17 Toccata-Gigue on the Sussex Carol ..... 5' 10

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

The process of selecting repertoire for a recording is surely one of the most creative and enjoyable tasks for a choir director. So many factors come into play: what music will suit the strengths of the choir, organ, and acoustic; what music will add something fresh to the vast treasury of music already committed to disc; what succession of music will allow for contrasts in mood, texture, and tonality. In any assortment of Christmas music, the aforementioned criteria are amplified in importance, if only to avoid a sequence of unrelenting ‘joyful’ music, mainly in D major, as much Christmas music is!

By choosing to faithfully reproduce all musical elements of a liturgy, the structure is pre-framed, whilst the natural peaks and troughs of the festivity are inherent and evident within the ritual texts. This recording is therefore an authentic presentation of the choral and organ music that one might encounter during Solemn Mass on Christmas

Day, sung by the Choir of Buckfast Abbey. The selected music draws also upon our ‘unique selling factor’ (to coin a modern marketing phrase): a liturgical choir within the context of a Roman Catholic, Benedictine monastery. This is revealed primarily by the inclusion of the Gregorian chants proper to the Mass of the day, sung by the Choir and Monastic Community.

The concept of ‘bringing something fresh’ is apparent from the start, with the processional *Adeste fideles*. The hymn is a favourite at Buckfast, in part no doubt due to a paper written by Buckfast monk and amateur musicologist Dom John Stephan (1886–1976) in 1947, entitled ‘Adeste fideles – A study on its origin and development’. Dom Stephan examines the chance discovery of a small musical manuscript book from the Harmsworth Library, dating most likely from c.1687, during the reign of King James II of England. The melody, written in red and black musical notation appears directly after the prayer ‘Regem nostrum

*The Wade Manuscript  
of Adeste fideles  
(1760)*

Infra Benedictionem. ccvij

6. T. **A**deste fideles, laeti triumphantes:  
venite, venite in Bethlehem: \* Natum vi-  
dete Regem Angelorum: venite, adore-  
mus: Venite, adoramus: Venite, adore-  
mus Dominum. V. Deum de Deo, lumen de  
lumine gestant Puella viscera: \* Deum  
verum, genitum, non factum: venite, a-  
doramus: Venite, adoramus: Venite, a-  
doramus Dominum. V. Cantet nunc i-cho

Jacobum,' a prayer for King James. Dom Stephan suggests this predates the earliest known manuscript of the melody by 50 years. Unfortunately, the title page of the book is missing, meaning valuable information about the origin of its contents is unavailable. Many cite the Wade Manuscript when referencing the *Adeste*. This source, located in St Edmund's College, Ware, in Hertfordshire, was compiled by John Francis Wade (1711–86), an English Catholic layman who fled to Douai, France, after the Jacobite rising of 1745. His name is often quoted in relation to the authorship of the *Adeste*; however, Dom Stephan suggests that Wade may simply have collated the hymn into his own manuscript with other pre-existing melodies, used as a resource to teach other exiled Catholics in France. If so, this would put to waste the theory that the *Adeste* was composed as a birth ode to Bonnie Prince Charlie, the son of James Francis Edward Stuart often nicknamed 'the Old Pretender' – or James III of England to those who support the Jacobite Succession!

The melody appears in chant notation in the 1923 *Liber Usualis*, which is the version used here for verse one, accompanied by harmony suitable for the Gregorian mode VI. For the subsequent two verses, use is made of the harmonisation by Dom Gregory Murray (1905–92), a monk of Downside Abbey, Somerset, which is an attractive variant to the well-known and much-used harmony of William Henry Monk. The harmony can be found in the Westminster Hymnal (New and Revised Edition), and is a fitting link with another monastic foundation. The verse ‘Cantet nunc io’ (Sing choirs of angels) gets its customary treatment of a substantial arrangement for choir and organ; this time the premiere recording of a newly composed version by our own Organist, David Davies. Verse five will perhaps sound more familiar, and jubilantly concludes our novel form of this much-loved carol.

Words of the Prophet Isaiah are assigned for the proclamation of scripture in the *Introit* for Christmas Day

Mass: ‘Puer natus est nobis’ (A child is born to us). This mode VII Gregorian proper begins with a commanding interval of a rising fifth, much akin to a trumpet call, perhaps a musical indication of the solemn nature of the festival. The syllabic composure of the chant is occasionally interrupted with the intensity of short rising melismas, characteristic of mode VII, with the effect of meandering, or perhaps the raising of heart and mind aloft to the divine. The Antiphon is declared by all voices, whilst the psalm verse and a doxology are sung *in alternatim* by upper and lower voices of the choir, before the Antiphon is chanted a final time.

For the Ordinary of the Mass – the *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei* – the charming setting entitled *Missa ad Prasepe* (Mass at the Crib) by George Malcolm was chosen for its unassuming yet highly emotive character. Malcolm himself prefaces the score with these humble words:

*'This Mass is intended to be simple and pastoral in effect. It requires an artistic but entirely unsophisticated performance. The angels and the shepherds are singing, at the Crib'.*

It is quite easy to imagine shepherds in their fields, tending to their flocks, playing soothing wind instruments as in the introduction to the *Kyrie*. The repeated pedal drone at the interval of a fifth becomes hypnotic, whilst the minimalism of rising and falling thirds in the clarinet evokes the serenity required for a tranquil form of pleading for mercy from the Christ child; hushed, and never rising above the dynamic of *mezzo piano*, so as not to wake the new-born lying in the crib. The homophonic scoring reinforces the sense of calm and simplicity inherent in Malcolm's musical intentions.

Then the *Gloria* – the song of angels at Christ's Nativity – requires an innate joyfulness, portrayed in the organ accompaniment. Leaps of an octave with dance-like staccato phrases, which conjure the image of shepherds



*George Malcolm (1917–1977)*

and angels rejoicing at the birth of their Saviour. An explosion of ecstasy before the words 'Laudamus te, benedicimus te' (We praise you, we adore you) contrasts suitably with all the music heard beforehand. Then at last, a thrilling *crescendo* through the words 'Adoramus te, glorificamus te' (We adore you, we glorify you). The vast host of angels has appeared above the stable in Bethlehem, and heaven is united with earth in veneration of the incarnate God.

Malcolm, known foremost as a harpsichordist, composed this Mass setting for the Choir of Westminster Cathedral during his tenure as Master of Music there. Of his small number of liturgical compositions, the Mass is the most substantial. It was under his guidance that the Cathedral Choir developed its now familiar 'continental' sound; a full-throated tone, which contrasted greatly with that of the traditional Anglican cathedral choirs of the period. This distinctive way of singing – especially by the

boy choristers – is known to have inspired Benjamin Britten to compose his own *Missa Brevis* for the Choir.

Between the Old and New Testament Scripture readings at Mass is placed a psalm, on Christmas morning *Psalms 97*. Sung here in responsorial fashion, an antiphon precedes each portion of psalmody. Composed by Philip Duffy for the Choir of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, the psalm consists of through-composed verses, in contrast to the more simplified recitation formula which is commonly used for psalmody. The first three metrical verses are sung either in unison by the full choir or with the addition of an interval of a fourth by half the voices on important textual phrases. The addition of the fourth in parallel motion has a strong effect upon the ear, reminiscent of the medieval organum, a compositional device used extensively in the choral and organ works of twentieth century composers Kenneth Leighton and William Mathias, amongst others. The final verse is given a

more lavish treatment with choral writing in four parts. A flourish of word-painting occurs during the phrase ‘with trumpet and the sound of the horn’ with a declamatory fanfare upon the Pontifical Trumpet of the Abbey’s Ruffatti organ. Duffy served as Master of the Music at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral for over thirty years, and was a pioneer of composition for the post-Vatican II liturgy, sung mainly in the vernacular. Undertaking the colossal task of composing each Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation text for use in the new three-year lectionary cycle, he also wrote settings of the Ordinary of the Mass for choir and congregation, in addition to the chants to accompany the Office of Vespers. His enduring legacy is a characteristic style of well-crafted composition for the liturgy, much of which is retained at the Cathedral today.

The second Gregorian proper to feature is the *Alleluia*, sung whilst the ceremonial in preparation for the Gospel



*Christmas Midnight Mass viewed from the organ gallery,  
with the Pontifical Trumpet in the foreground*

takes place. Mode II, despite its penchant for fervent seriousness, is assigned widely to the chants for festive occasions, including the Introit for Christmas Midnight Mass, the Alleluia for the Dawn Mass of Christmas and the Introit for Epiphany Sunday. This particular Alleluia melody is used multiple times to varying texts throughout the liturgical year, such as on the feasts of St Stephen and of St John the Baptist. The melody itself is of ancient origin and can be sourced in many early European manuscripts. The Austrian musicologist Egon Wellesz (1885–1974) devoted several pages to this melody in a study of Eastern influences on Western chant, noting that occasionally the chant appears in Gregorian notation but with Greek text!

A popular classic *Unto us is born a Son*, to the melody 'Puer nobis nascitur', appears as the Offertory Carol. The tune, dating from as early as the thirteenth century, is found in the German *Moosburg Gradual*, a collection of chants for

Christmas. Sir David Willcocks' noble arrangement appears here, making full use of dramatic contrasts between the voice parts and accompaniments to effectively colour this ancient text.

As an Offertory Motet, the gentle and unassertive *Mynlyking* gives a welcome contrast to its carol predecessor. The music by Sir Richard Runciman Terry sets a fifteenth century Middle English lyric poem, the narrative of which describes an encounter of the Nativity scene, as the Virgin Mary lulls her infant to sleep. The lullaby is a common medieval English formula, often used as a refrain to prose. No manuscript of music of the period survives for this text. Terry was prominent in the early twentieth century rediscovery and reconstruction of English Tudor music, which had fallen somewhat out of fashion. During his time as Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral he directed many of the first modern performances of much of this polyphonic music. His research sparked a revival amongst

musicians and academics alike in this lost genre, now commonplace amongst the repertoires of cathedral choirs. Likewise, modern compositions abound of ancient English texts.

A return of the shepherds' piping opens Malcolm's *Sanctus*, in triple time, offering a calming lilt in preparation for a sustained and muted homophonic entry by the choir. The third 'Sanctus' – marked *fortissimo* – leads to a climactic unison passage with a subtle but unsettling hemiola on the word 'Sabaoth,' before a return to the soothing ebb and flow of the time signature, appropriate for the gentle rocking of a cradle. The *Benedictus* has the effect of one long and carefully crafted *crescendo* with stretto choir entries, leading to a culmination in the ascent at the words 'qui venit' (he who comes), before a gradual *diminuendo* leading to two soloists descending in thirds, ending with the dynamic marking *pianissimo* – quite rare in settings of this powerful text. Throughout the *Benedictus*, Malcolm



introduces, and makes continuous use of, the flattened seventh degree of the scale. This is quite unlike the previous movement, which straightforwardly uses purely diatonic harmony without any accidental of any kind. It is, in itself, quite a feat of skill to maintain interest and variety without such complexity of harmonic progression.

Psalm 97 makes an appearance once again in the final Gregorian proper, the *Communio* or Communion Antiphon, sung at the beginning of the distribution of Holy Communion. The relatively short Antiphon in mode I is repeated several times, interspersed with psalm verses. Since the distribution of Holy Communion can take an incredibly long time on occasions when large numbers of people are present, the *Communio* may be extended as long as required by the inclusion of extra portions of psalmody, or it may be as short as simply singing the Antiphon alone. The addition of *In the bleak midwinter* gives the opportunity for the faithful to sing a softer and more

reflective congregational carol at this most sacred moment within the service, compared to the more stirring melodies present at other points. Gustav Holst sets to music the words by the English poet Christina Rossetti.

*O magnum mysterium* by Tomás Luis de Victoria constitutes a fitting Communion Motet for Christmas Day Mass, and showcases the ‘bread and butter’ repertoire of the Abbey Choir. The motet unfolds in a tranquil manner, with enchanting cadence points leading to a long homophonic chord to begin a new phrase, allowing three or four beats of *crescendo* to express the vehemence of this intensely passionate music. Perhaps the influence of Palestrina is present here within the long interweaving part-lines. Victoria, a Spanish priest, learned his musical trade as a chorister of Avila Cathedral, before further study in Rome, after which he entered the service of King Philip II’s sister, the Empress Maria, as *Maestro de Capilla* to the Descalzas Reales in Madrid. This motet, published early in his career (1572) was composed during Victoria’s period of study at



the Jesuit Collegio Germanico, where he was a choral scholar.

Little is known of the strophic melody *Puer natus in Bethlehem*, other than that the Latin prose is of thirteenth century origin and the melody dates from the fourteenth century. The mode I chant, which can be found in the *Liber Cantualis*, makes use of the B flat throughout, much akin to a modern D minor scale, and is wholly syllabic in construction. A joyful refrain ‘In cordis júbilo’ (in the joy of our hearts) follows each verse. The fourteen verses allow for various combinations of voices and solos.

The rousing carol *Of the Father’s heart begotten* is sung as a Post-Communion Hymn of thanksgiving. The text, a translation of the Latin poem ‘Corde natus’ by the fourth century Roman poet Aurelius Prudentius, encompasses a complete theology of the doctrine of the Incarnation, and is paired with the Gregorian melody ‘Divinum mysterium’ which appears in manuscripts as early as the tenth century.



*Matthew Searles at the Quire console of the Ruffatti organ during a recording session*

The modern metrical version in triple time extends the first note of each group of two neumes in a long–short pattern. Recorded here is Sir David Willcocks’ arrangement with its exhilarating last verse for double choir.

The contemporary American composer and dermatologist George Baker’s *Toccata-Gigue on the Sussex Carol* (2008) was brought to the attention of English organists through its performance as the closing voluntary of the 2009 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in the chapel of King’s College, Cambridge, played by Peter Stevens. This joyous postlude combines the traditional seventeenth century melody of the Sussex Carol, popularised by Vaughan Williams and noted down by him in Horsham, Sussex (hence its title), and the opening motif of J. S. Bach’s *Fugue à la Gigue* (BWV 577), which first appears in the pedal part and subsequently makes cameo appearances throughout the piece. Imbued with the harmonic language and panache of Baker’s Parisian *maitre*,





## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

- 1 Adeste fideles,  
lati triumphantes,  
venite, venite in Bethlehem.  
Natum videte  
Regem angelorum:  
Venite adoremus  
Dominum.
- Deum de Deo,  
lumen de lumine  
gestant puellæ viscera;  
Deum verum,  
genitum non factum.  
Venite adoremus  
Dominum.
- Æterni parentis  
splendorem æternum  
velatum sub carne videbimus  
Deum infantem  
pannis involutum:  
Venite adoremus  
Dominum.
- O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him  
Born the King of Angels:  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*
- God of God,  
Light of light,  
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God,  
Begotten, not created:  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*
- The splendour eternal  
Of eternal Godhead  
Veiled with infirmities of flesh  
we shall see: Hiding his glory,  
Swaddling clothes he wearth:  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

Cantet nunc io,  
chorus angelorum;  
Cantet nunc aula cælestium,  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Venite adoremus  
Dominum.

Ergo qui natus  
die hodierna.  
Jesu, tibi sit gloria,  
Patris æterni  
Verbum caro factum.  
Venite adoremus  
Dominum.

- 2 Puer natus est nobis,  
et filius datus est nobis:  
cuius imperium  
super humerum eius:  
et vocabitur nomen eius,  
magni consilii angelus.

*Pf.* Cantate Domino  
canticum novum:  
quia mirabilia fecit.

*Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:  
Glory to God in the highest!  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesu, to thee be glory given!  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing:  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*A child is born for us,  
a son is given to us:  
dominion is laid  
on his shoulder:  
and he shall be called  
Wonderful-Counsellor.*

*Sing a new song  
to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.*

Gloria Patri, et Filio,  
et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio,  
et nunc, et semper,  
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

3 Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

4 Gloria in excelsis Deo  
et in terra pax hominibus  
bonæ voluntatis.  
Laudamus te.  
Benedicimus te.  
Adoramus te.  
Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex cœlestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite,  
Iesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris,

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

*Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.*

*Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people  
of good will.  
We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks  
for your great glory.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father,*

qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis;  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram;  
qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus,  
Iesu Christe,  
cum Sancto Spiritu,  
in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

*you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the  
Father, have mercy on us.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.*

5 All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.

℣. Sing a new song to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation.

℣. The Lord has made known his salvation;  
has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love  
for the house of Israel.

¶. All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your justice.

¶. Sing praises to the Lord with the harp,  
with the sound of music.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
acclaim the King, the Lord.

6 Alleluia.

¶. Dies sanctificatus  
illuxit nobis: venite gentes,  
et adorate Dominum:  
quia hodie descendit  
lux magna super terram.

*Alleluia.*

*A hallowed day has  
dawned upon us: come you nations,  
worship the Lord,  
or today a great light has  
shone down upon the earth.*

7 Unto us is born a Son,  
King of quires supernal;  
See on earth his life begun,  
Of lords the Lord eternal.

Christ, from heaven descending low,  
Comes on earth a stranger;  
Ox and ass their owner know,  
Becradled in the manger.

This did Herod sore affray,  
And grievously bewilder;  
So he gave the word to slay,  
And slew the little childer.

Of his love and mercy mild  
This the Christmas story;  
And O, that Mary's gentle child  
might lead us up to glory!

O and A, and A and O,  
*Cum cantibus in choro;*  
Let our merry organ go,  
*Benedicamus Domino.*

8 I saw a fair mayden sytten and sing,  
She lulled a lyttel childe, a sweete Lording.

Lullay myn lyking, my dere sonne, my sweeting.  
Lullay my dere herte, myn own dere derling.

That same Lord is he that made alle thing;  
Of alle lordis he is Lord, of alle kynges Kyng.

There was mickle melody at that chylde's birth.  
All that were in heavenly bliss, they made mickle mirth.

Angels bright sang their song to that chyld;  
Blyssid be thou, and so be she, so meek and so mild.

9 Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt cæli et terra  
gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are  
full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

10 Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

11 Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata mundi:  
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world:  
grant us peace.*

12 Viderunt omnes fines terræ  
salutare Dei nostri.

*All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.*

*Ps.* Cantate Domino  
canticum novum,  
quia mirabilia fecit.

*Sing a new song  
to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.*

Salvavit sibi dextera eius,  
et brachium sanctum eius.

*His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation.*

*Ps.* Notum fecit Dominus  
salutare suum;  
in conspectu gentium revelavit  
iustitiam suam.  
Recordatus est  
misericordiæ suæ,  
et veritatis suæ domui Israel.

*The Lord has made known  
his salvation;  
has shown his justice  
to the nations.  
He has remembered  
his truth and love  
for the house of Israel.*

*Ps.* Viderunt omnes  
termini terræ salutare  
Dei nostri.  
Iubilate Deo, omnis terra;  
cantate, et exsultate, et psallite.

*All the ends of the earth  
have seen the salvation  
of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your joy.*

*Ps.* Psallite Domino in cithara,  
in cithara et voce psalmi;  
in tubis ductilibus,  
et voce tubæ corneæ.  
Iubilate in conspectu  
regis Domini:  
moveatur mare,  
et plenitudo eius;  
orbis terrarum,  
et qui habitant in eo.

*Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,  
with the sound of music.  
With trumpets  
and the sound of the horn  
acclaim the King,  
the Lord.  
Let the sea  
and all within it thunder;  
the world  
and all its peoples.*

*Ps.* Flumina plaudent manu,  
simul montes exsultabunt  
a conspectu Domini:  
quoniam venit iudicare terram.  
Iudicabit orbem terrarum in  
iustitia, et populos in æquitate.

*Let the rivers clap their hands  
and the hills ring out their joy  
at the presence of the Lord,  
for he comes to rule the earth.  
He will rule the world with justice  
and the peoples with fairness.*

- 13 In the bleak midwinter  
Frosty wind made moan;  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter  
Long ago.
- Our God, heaven cannot hold him  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When he comes to reign:  
In the bleak midwinter  
A stable place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty,  
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.

Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air;  
But only his Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss.

What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him,  
Give my heart.

14 O magnum mysterium,  
et admirabile sacramentum,  
ut animalia viderent Dominum  
natum, iacentem in præsepio!  
Beata Virgo,  
cuius viscera meruerunt  
portare Dominum  
Jesum Christum. Alleluia.

*O great mystery  
and wondrous sacrament,  
that the animals beheld the new-born  
Lord, lying in a manger!  
Blessed Virgin,  
whose womb was worthy  
to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Alleluia.*

15 *Ps.* Puer natus in Bethlehem,  
alleluia:  
unde gaudet Ierusalem, alleluia.

*A child is born in Bethlehem,  
alleluia,  
and so Jerusalem rejoices, alleluia.*

In cordis iubilo  
Christum natum adoremus,  
cum novo cantico.

*In the joy of our hearts  
let us adore the new-born Christ,  
with a new song.*

*Ps.* Assumpsit carnem  
Filii, alleluia:  
Dei Patris altissimus, alleluia.

*The most high Son  
of God the Father, alleluia,  
has taken flesh, alleluia.*

*Ps.* Per Gabrielem nuntium,  
alleluia: Virgo concepit Filium,  
alleluia.

*By the message of Gabriel, alleluia,  
the Virgin has conceived a Son,  
alleluia.*

*Ps.* Tamquam sponsus  
de thalamo, alleluia:  
processit Matris utero,  
alleluia.

*Like a bridegroom  
from his chamber, alleluia,  
he proceeds from his mother's womb,  
alleluia.*

*Ps.* Hic iacet in præsepio,  
alleluia:  
qui regnat sine termino, alleluia.

*Here in a manger he lies,  
alleluia,  
the one who reigns for ever, alleluia.*

*Ps.* Et angelus  
pastoribus, alleluia:  
revelat quod sit Dominus,  
alleluia.

*And an angel reveals  
to the shepherds, alleluia,  
the one who is Lord,  
alleluia.*

*Ps.* Reges de Saba veniunt,  
alleluia: aurum, thus, myrrham  
offerunt, alleluia.

*The kings from Saba come, alleluia,  
offering gold, incense and myrrh,  
alleluia.*

*Ps.* Intrantes domum invicem,  
alleluia:  
novum salutant Principem,  
alleluia.

*Entering the house in turn,  
alleluia,  
they greet the new-born King,  
alleluia.*

*Ps.* De Matre natus Virgine,  
alleluia:  
qui lumen est de lumine,  
alleluia.

*Born of a Virgin Mother,  
alleluia,  
the one who is light from light,  
alleluia.*

℣. Sine serpentis vulnere,  
alleluia:  
de nostro venit sanguine,  
alleluia.

℣. In carne nobis similis,  
alleluia:  
Peccato sed dissimilis, alleluia.

℣. Ut redderet nos homines,  
alleluia:  
Deo et sibi similes,  
alleluia.

℣. In hoc natali gaudio, alleluia:  
Benedicamus Domino, alleluia.

℣. Laudetur sancta Trinitas,  
alleluia:  
Deo dicamus gratias, alleluia.

*Untainted by the serpent,  
alleluia,  
he comes from our own blood,  
alleluia.*

*Like us in flesh,  
alleluia,  
but unlike us in sin, alleluia.*

*That he might restore to us men,  
alleluia,  
the likeness of God and himself,  
alleluia.*

*Rejoicing in this birth, alleluia,  
Let us bless the Lord, alleluia.*

*Praise be to the Holy Trinity,  
alleluia,  
let us give thanks to God, alleluia.*

16 Of the Father's heart begotten,  
Ere the world from chaos rose,  
He is Alpha: from that fountain  
All that is and hath been flows;  
He is Omega, of all things  
Yet to come the mystic close,  
Evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;  
He commanded and 'twas done;  
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,  
Universe of three in one,  
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,  
All that breathes beneath the sun,  
Evermore and evermore.

He assumed this mortal body,  
Frail and feeble, doomed to die,  
That the race from dust created  
Might not perish utterly,  
Which the dreadful law had sentenced  
In the depths of hell to lie,  
Evermore and evermore.

O how blest that wondrous birthday,  
When the Maid the curse retrieved,  
Brought to birth mankind's salvation,  
By the Holy Ghost conceived;  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,  
In her loving arms received,  
Evermore and evermore.

This is he, whom seer and sybil  
Sang in ages long gone by;  
This is he of old revealed  
In the page of prophecy;  
Lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;  
Let the world his praises cry,  
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;  
Angels and Archangels, sing;  
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,  
Let your joyous anthems ring,  
Every tongue his name confessing,  
Countless voices answering,  
Evermore and evermore.

ALSO AVAILABLE BY  
THE CHOIR OF BUCKFAST ABBEY



**Ave Maria: First Vespers of the  
Solemnity of Our Lady of Buckfast (AF005)**

*The choir presents music for Buckfast's patronal feast. The Gregorian chant of the Monastic Rite is interspersed with glorious polyphony by Anerio, Byrd, Guerrero and Victoria.*

*visit [www.adfontes.org.uk](http://www.adfontes.org.uk) for more information*

*Christmas Midnight Mass, during the Abbey's millennium celebrations in 2018, televised live on BBC One*



## THE CHOIR OF BUCKFAST ABBEY

The Abbey Choir in its present form was founded in 2009. The choir has since developed a wide repertoire, specialising in the early polyphonic music of the sixteenth century – notably the English school of composers such as Taverner, Byrd, and Tallis, as well as composers of the continental schools, including Palestrina, Victoria and Philips. Complementing this early music, the choir also sings a repertoire from the French Romantic tradition by such composers as Widor, Vierne, Langlais and Duruflé. In addition, the choir enjoys performing the contemporary Roman Catholic music of composers MacMillan, Panufnik, and our composer-in-residence, Dom Sebastian Wolff OSB.

In 2018, at the conclusion of Buckfast's millennium year, the choir sang Christmas Midnight Mass, which was televised live on BBC One. In addition to singing at the weekly Solemn Mass and on feast days, the choir gives a number of concert performances per year.



## SOPRANO

Alison Burnett  
Hannah Deasy  
Louise Hardy  
Denise Kehoe  
Sally Leger  
Sally Reeve  
Alicia Stolliday  
Jane Suckling  
Josie Walledge  
Elle Williams

## COUNTERTENOR

Laurence Blyth  
Clive Dickinson  
Peter Oakley  
Chris Tipping  
Martyn Warren

## TENOR

Peter Beamish  
Jason Bomford  
Jonathan Harris  
Jonathan Wood

## BASS

Bob Humphrys  
Tony Kehoe  
Tim Mirfin  
Richard Mitchell  
Julian Sutton



## PHILIP ARKWRIGHT

Philip Arkwright is Organist & Master of the Music at Buckfast Abbey. Born in St Helens, Merseyside, Philip began his musical career as Organ Scholar at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and was subsequently appointed as Sub-Organist and Director of the Cathedral Girls' Choir. Philip graduated with a combined honours degree in theology and religious studies, with music, from Liverpool Hope University, and afterwards with a master's degree in Sacred Music. During his tenure at Buckfast Abbey, Philip has overseen the expansion of the music department to include the new Ruffatti organ, the formation of a new choir of choristers, a thriving concert and organ recital series, in addition to the establishment of the Abbey's own record label. In 2018, Philip directed the Abbey Choir at a number of high profile services and events to celebrate 1000 years since the monastery's foundation, including a live televised broadcast of Christmas Midnight Mass – the first such broadcast from a Roman Catholic abbey in the UK.

## MATTHEW SEARLES

Matthew Searles is Assistant Master of the Music at Buckfast Abbey. In this role, he shares in the accompaniment of the Abbey Choir and Monastic Community in the *Opus Dei*, and has oversight of the Abbey's new provision of Choristers. In 2018, at the conclusion of Buckfast's millennium celebrations, Matthew played for Midnight Mass, which was televised live on BBC One. Prior to this, Matthew spent two years as Sub-Organist of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral.

Matthew studied at Royal Holloway, University of London, where as organ scholar he graduated with first class honours and the Driver Prize for 'outstanding musical performance'. Matthew continued his studies, in both organ and harpsichord, at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Poitiers, France.





*Recorded at* BUCKFAST ABBEY, 31 January – 2 February 2020

*Recording Engineer* DAVID HINITT

*Recording Producer* DAVID DAVIES

*Assistant Producer* MATTHEW SEARLES

*Executive Producer* PHILIP ARKWRIGHT

*Booklet Proofreader* AARON KIELY

*Organ maintained by* GARY OWENS

*Front illustration: The North East of the Abbey Church photographed from the monastic garden on the bank of the River Dart*

Photography © Buckfast Abbey Media Studios (pages 4–5, 6, 21, 28, 31, 32–33, 50–51, 54, 57, 58, 60–61), Buckfast Abbey Archive (page 12) and Clive Barda (page 17).

© Ad Fontes 2020

© Ad Fontes 2020

All rights of the producer and of the owner of the recorded work reserved. Unauthorised copying, hiring, renting, public performance and broadcasting of this record are prohibited.

Manufactured in the EU

[www.adfontes.org.uk](http://www.adfontes.org.uk)



*The Choir of  
Buckfast Abbey during a  
recording session*

# PUER NATUS EST

*Christmas Day Mass from Buckfast Abbey*

The Choir of Buckfast Abbey

Philip Arkwright *director*

Matthew Searles *organ*

Malcolm | Duffy | Terry | Holst | Victoria | Baker

The Choir of Buckfast Abbey presents music for the Mass of Christmas Day. Weaving between the Gregorian chant propers are George Malcolm's evocative *Missa ad Præsepe* (Mass at the Crrib), and traditional carols and festive motets. The much-loved hymn *Adeste fideles* opens the Mass, progressing from the original plainsong melody through to a dramatic new arrangement of the penultimate verse, epitomising the joy of the Incarnation.



Total running time: 68' 05

[www.adfontes.org.uk](http://www.adfontes.org.uk)