



PASSIONTIDE

Music for Solace and Reflection

Pergolesi

J.S. Bach

Lotti

Vaughan Williams

S.S. Wesley

Byrd

Ireland

Gibbons

Hurford

Emily Gray

Manchester Cathedral Choir

Christopher Stokes

Lent and Passiontide Music

The forty days of Lent, which represent the time that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, have been used by Christians down the ages as a time for reflection, a period in which to repent for sins committed. Lent is also a time to consider God's plan of salvation for all humans through the events of Good Friday and Easter Day, which end the period of fasting.

Like Christmas, Lent and Passiontide have provided composers from every generation with a wealth of material to set to music, either drawn from the Bible or associated, directly or indirectly, with the themes of penitence and the suffering of Christ on the cross.

In 1844 Felix Mendelssohn composed *Hear my prayer*, based on the first seven verses of Psalm LV. The psalmist, in fear of the enemy and the troubles around him, pleads with God to hear his prayers and save him. His desire is to have the wings of a dove by which to escape. The anthem opens with a slow plea from the solo soprano, after which the choir joins the soloist as the music becomes more agitated to reflect 'the enemy shouteth', 'the wicked oppress me', interspersed with the pleading 'O God hear my cry'. The gentle soprano solo 'O for the wings of a dove' follows and is developed with the choir to bring the anthem to its peaceful conclusion.

The twentieth-century English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams set to music the words of verse 8 of Psalm XXXIV, *O taste and see*, for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The music is direct, allowing the message of this short text to speak clearly. It is often sung at Communion and therefore has a special relevance to Maundy Thursday, with reference to the bread and wine, Christ's body and blood and the Lord's open arms stretched out to welcome those who turn to him.

The *Litany to the Holy Spirit* by the distinguished English organist Peter Hurford, for many years master of music at St Albans Abbey, is a simple prayer, set for unison voice and keyboard accompaniment, asking for comfort and help from the Holy Spirit when temptations and fears threaten to overwhelm.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley composed *Wash me*

thoroughly using words from Psalm LI. The opening treble solo requesting forgiveness is repeated by the full choir before the separate voice parts enter one by one with the words 'For I acknowledge my faults', as if to emphasize the importance of this action before being eligible to receive forgiveness.

The *Stabat mater* is a Latin devotional poem, ascribed to Jacopone da Todi, who died in 1306. It tells of the vigil of Mary by the cross. The early eighteenth-century Italian composer Pergolesi is one of many composers who have set this to music and his version was originally scored for two solo voices and strings, quickly winning wide favour. The four movements selected for this recording show first the mourning and anguish felt by Mary in *Stabat mater dolorosa* (There stood the mournful mother), followed by *Inflammatu et accensus* (May I, inflamed and burning), *Quando corpus morietur* (When the body shall die) and the final *Amen*, bringing the hope that on the Day of Judgement, Mary may intercede for mankind.

William Byrd was one of the greatest and most prolific of the Tudor composers. *Civitas sancti tui* (The City of thy saint) is the second part of his anthem *Ne irascaris, Domine* (Be not angry, O Lord) and in its English version is 'Bow thine ear, O Lord'. It is a penitential anthem based on Psalms LXXXVI (v. 1), LXXXV (v. 4) and Isaiah 64 (v. 10). As a result of sin, Zion and Jerusalem have become desolate and destroyed and the people are asking God to have mercy and forgive them for their sins. Byrd's music conveys the sentiment of the text very effectively and reveals his mature style of composition.

O sacred head sore wounded is one of the best known of Johann Sebastian Bach's chorales. The words originate from a Latin poem attributed to St Bernard and were translated into German by Paul Gerhardt in 1656 and subsequently into English. It summarises the suffering of Christ for our salvation and our great indebtedness to him. The melody by the late sixteenth-century German composer Hans Leo Hassler is heard in Bach's fine harmonization.

The aria *Bist du bei mir* (Be thou with me) is one of

a group of songs to be found in a music-book copied for the second wife of Johann Sebastian Bach, Anna Magdalena. Once thought to be by Bach himself, it has more recently been attributed to Bach's admired contemporary, Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel. Its words, while not directly connected with Lent or Passiontide, show that through the death and resurrection of Christ comes salvation and eternal life, and for those who claim this, death no longer holds its fear. The music, in its serenity, reflects the peace of mind that this knowledge brings.

O vos omnes (All ye who pass by) was written around 1932 by the great Catalan cellist Pablo Casals for tenors and basses, but then rearranged for mixed choir in 1965. The words are from Lamentations 1 (v. 12) and Casals' setting captures the sorrow Jesus must have felt looking down from the cross, and the frustration which breaks out with the words 'behold me and see and consider...'.

The Venetian Antonio Lotti's *Crucifixus*, part of a Mass setting, is taken from the Creed. A comparatively short piece, it is, nevertheless, full of great intensity from its opening gradual build up of the voice parts, with some dissonance as if to emphasize Christ's agony, through to the reiteration of his suffering under Pilate and then his death. Rather than ending in the minor key in which the piece is written, the last chord moves to the relative major, as if to stress the positive outcome of Christ's suffering.

The English composer and organist Richard Dering (or Deering), a Catholic convert, lived and worked in Italy and Brussels for some years, returning to London in 1625 in the service of Queen Henrietta Maria. His early Anglican music was followed by compositions in an Italianate style, under the influence of Monteverdi and his contemporaries. *O bone Jesu* (O good Jesus), published in Antwerp in 1617, is a prayer of supplication asking for Jesus to show mercy on the sinner.

Orlando Gibbons, organist of Westminster Abbey and of the Chapel Royal until his death in 1625, was recognised as one of the best composers of his day. He set to music, the words *Drop, drop, slow tears*, and a short three-verse poem by Phineas Fletcher. Though

short, the work shows Gibbons mastery in his interpretation of the text. The theme of the poem reaffirms that the confession of sins should be made with real sincerity and that Jesus prefers to see tears of repentance rather than sin in our eyes. It is also a reminder that Jesus wept over Jerusalem and the sins of the world on Palm Sunday.

Ex ore innocentium (From the mouth of the innocent), composed by John Ireland in June 1944 sets Bishop William Walsham How's poem *It is a thing most wonderful*. Whilst a dynamic spiritual force from the middle of the nineteenth century, Bishop How enjoyed the simple things in life and his enthusiasm for working with children led him to write this children's poem about God's act of great love for mankind. John Ireland's sensitivity to words enabled his setting to reinforce the simplicity of the text. The opening two verses start in the major key with the understanding that God sent his Son 'to die to save a child like me', as well as for 'those who loved him not'. A change to the minor key reflects on Christ's death on the cross before the music returns to the major key, describing the inextinguishable love of God and the response that this may bring from the individual.

Psalms XXXIX provided the text for the early eighteenth century English composer Maurice Greene's anthem *Lord, let me know mine end*. The psalmist recognises the brevity and uncertainty of life, the sinfulness of man and the need to live a life pleasing to God, as this is his only hope. This beautiful and sincere anthem contains expressive and effective contrapuntal vocal parts over an organ accompaniment, a rarity in its day. The duet for treble voices in the middle of the piece finds the two voices interlacing and changing position as they consider the futility of man's desires.

When I survey the wondrous cross by Isaac Watts, to the tune *Rockingham*, is one of the most popular of Passiontide hymns. It challenges us to meditate on the cross and to understand the immense love that was shown by Christ in his suffering and death.

Manchester Cathedral Choir and Christopher Stokes

Manchester Cathedral Choir comprises a treble line of 16 boys and girls and 9 lay-clerks. The children all attend Chetham's School of Music for their education from ages 8–13. The Choir has an extensive repertoire of music from plainsong to the present day.

In addition to its principal function of singing the *Opus Dei*, the Choir is a frequent contributor to BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and television and has recorded five CDs over the last four years.

It is directed by the Organist and Master of the Choristers, Christopher Stokes who was appointed to Manchester Cathedral in 1996, having previously held posts in two of London's leading churches: as Organist and Master of Music at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square and Director of Music at St. Margaret's, Westminster Abbey. He is well known as a choral conductor and as a solo organist, having performed extensively both in the UK and abroad. He is also known for his work as an orchestral musician, have performed with most of the country's leading orchestras.

Whilst in London, Christopher taught the organ at Trinity College of Music. He was invited to become Head of Organ Studies at Chetham's School of Music in 1994.

He is a Council Member of the Royal College of Organists and serves on its Executive Committee. He was also the Artistic Director of the Royal College of Organists' *Performer of the Year 2000* competition.

Jeffrey Makinson

Christopher Stokes is assisted by Cathedral Sub-Organist Jeffrey Makinson, who pursues a busy career as a solo performer. He is also a tutor in organ studies at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Claire Buckley

Claire Buckley is currently a student at the Chethams School of Music and will be taking up a choral scholarship at Cambridge.



Emily Gray

Emily Gray, born on 8th July 1986, began singing at the age of ten when her grandmother, during a family gathering, noticed an exceptional quality in her voice. Since November 1997 she has been studying with the soprano Celia Darby in Nidd, near Harrogate. Since 1998 she has entered and won many solo singing classes at local festivals and was the runner-up in the *Young Voice of the Year* competition in Birmingham in 1999. She was a finalist in the BBC Radio 2 *Young Chorister of the Year* competition in both 1998 and 1999 and won the prestigious title of BBC Radio 2 *Choir Girl of the Year* in October 2000. She was *Choir Girl of the Year* from 15th October 2000 to 14th October 2001. Following the competition she rushed back to Harrogate where she was the soprano soloist in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in the international Sing Messiah for Hospices charity fund-raiser. Following much acclaim she was invited onto Yorkshire Television

and performed her winning song from the BBC competition on *Calendar News*. She has won a mayoral award for services to music in the local area as well as a grant to help her in the pursuit of a career in music. Emily Gray's title of BBC Radio 2 *Choir Girl of the Year 2000* has led to many live and recorded broadcasts for local and national radio, including the Radio 4 *Daily Service*, Radio 2 *Sunday Half Hour*, *Good Morning Sunday*, and television. She also made a CD with the BBC for Sunday programmes. She performed on the BBC 1 *Songs of Praise* when she was part of the BBC Music Live *Songs of Praise* in Leeds in May 2001, and also made a series of three *Songs of Praise* that were broadcast in July 2001. BBC *Look North* has followed her progress throughout 2001 and there have been both local and national BBC interviews.

PASSIONTIDE

Music for Solace and Reflection

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

- [1] Hear my prayer ^{acdf}
Text by W. Bartholomew

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

- [2] O taste and see ^{acdf}
Text: Psalm xxxiv, verse 8

Peter Hurford (b. 1930)

- [3] Litany to the Holy Spirit ^{ae}
Text by Robert Herrick

Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876)

- [4] Wash me thoroughly ^{acdf}

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736)

Stabat mater ^{abe}

- [5] i Stabat mater dolorosa
[6] xi In flammatus et accensus
[7] xii Quando corpus morietur
[8] xiii Amen

William Byrd (1543-1623)

- [9] Civitas sancti tui ^{cdf}

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

- [10] O sacred head sore wounded ^{acdf}
Tune from Passion according to St. Matthew
Text by Paul Gerhardt
Translated by Robert Bridges

- [11] Bist du bei mir ^{ae}

Pablo Casals (1876-1973)

- [12] O vos omnes ^{cd}

Antonio Lotti (c. 1667-1740)

- [13] Crucifixus ^{cdf}

Richard Dering (c. 1580-1630)

- [14] O bone Jesu ^{abe}

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

- [15] Drop, drop, slow tears ^{acdf}

John Ireland (1879-1962)

- [16] Ex ore innocentium ^{acf}
Text from a poem by Bishop W. W. How

Maurice Greene (1696-1755)

- [17] Lord, let me know mine end ^{abcdf}
Text: Psalm xxxix, verses 5-8, 13 & 15

Edward Miller (1735-1807)

after Samuel Webbe

- [18] When I survey the wondrous cross ^{acdf}
Tune: 'Rockingham'
Text by Isaac Watts

Emily Gray, soprano ^a

Claire Buckley, soprano ^b

Manchester Cathedral Choir ^c

Christopher Stokes, director ^d / organ ^e

Jeffrey Makinson, organ ^f

For full sung texts please refer to
www.naxos.com



Playing
Time
62:16

8.557025

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Music for Solace and Reflection

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|------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| MENDELSSOHN | | |
| 1 | Hear my prayer | 11:05 |
| VAUGHAN WILLIAMS | | |
| 2 | O taste and see | 1:26 |
| HURFORD | | |
| 3 | Litany to the Holy Spirit † | 3:33 |
| WESLEY | | |
| 4 | Wash me thoroughly | 4:04 |
| PERGOLESI | | |
| | Stabat mater * † | 10:17 |
| 5 | i Stabat mater dolorosa | 4:00 |
| 6 | xi Inflamatus et accensus | 2:20 |
| 7 | xii Quando corpus morietur | 2:44 |
| 8 | xiii Amen | 1:14 |
| BYRD | | |
| 9 | Civitas sancti tui | 3:54 |
| J.S. BACH | | |
| 10 | O sacred head sore wounded | 2:52 |
| 11 | Bist du bei mir † | 2:12 |
| CASALS | | |
| 12 | O vos omnes | 3:27 |



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|---------|----------------------------------|------|
| LOTTI | | |
| 13 | Crucifixus | 2:55 |
| DERING | | |
| 14 | O bone Jesu * † | 3:17 |
| GIBBONS | | |
| 15 | Drop, drop, slow tears | 1:21 |
| IRELAND | | |
| 16 | Ex ore innocentium | 3:14 |
| GREENE | | |
| 17 | Lord, let me know mine end * | 5:17 |
| MILLER | | |
| 18 | When I survey the wondrous cross | 3:22 |

Emily Gray, soprano
 Claire Buckley, soprano * • Jeffrey Makinson, organ
 Manchester Cathedral Choir • Christopher Stokes, director and organ †

Recorded at Manchester Cathedral, 28–30th January & 8th February, 2002

Recorded at 88.2 kHz, 24 bit

Producer/Post-producer: Arthur Ka Wai Jenkins • Engineer: Andrew Lang for K & A Productions Ltd.
 A detailed tracklist can be found in the booklet.