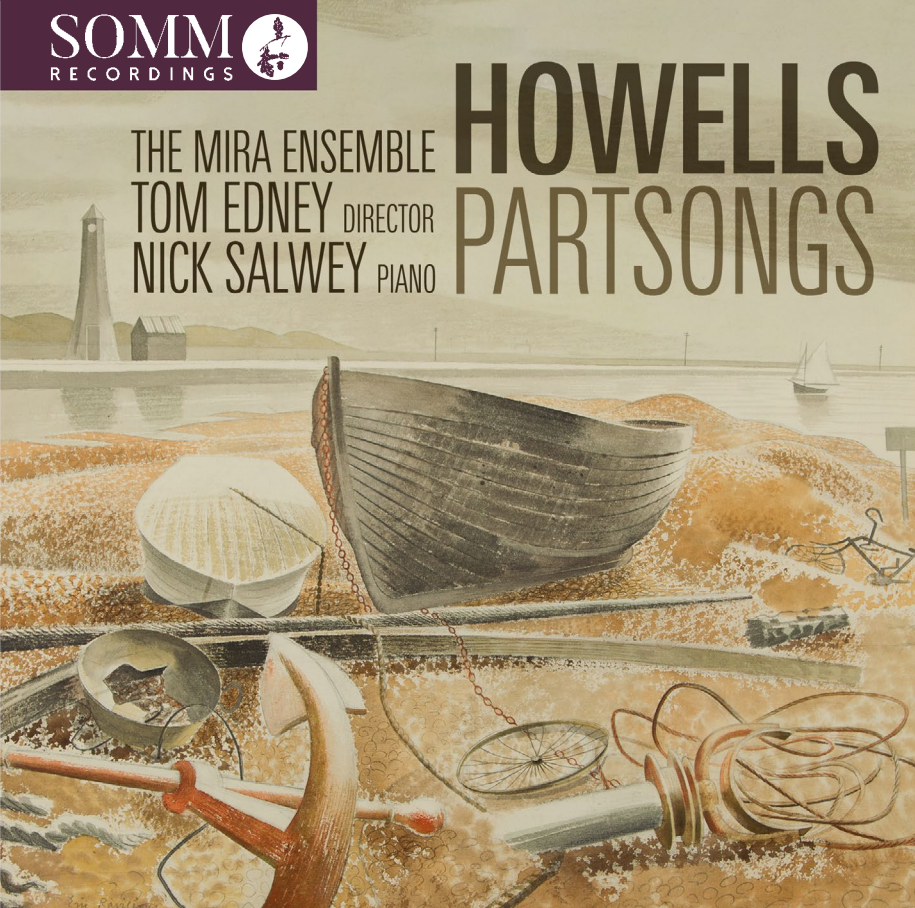


SOMM
RECORDINGS



THE MIRA ENSEMBLE
TOM EDNEY DIRECTOR
NICK SALWEY PIANO

HOWELLS PARTSONGS



Herbert Howells is best known for his vocal writing, ranging from large-scale choral-orchestral works such as *Hymnus Paradisi* to intimate solo songs, like *King David*. It is little surprise that his first publication was two partsongs for upper voices and piano, written and published before he won a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in 1912. As a child in Lydney, Gloucestershire, Howells sang at school and at the local Anglican church, absorbing a tradition of taut, characterful miniatures that is evident in many of the works on this disc.

Howells's compositional career embraced the miniature in two distinct ways. First, he mirrored the neoclassical movement in Europe (particularly France), which began in the 1920s with composers such as Stravinsky and Poulenc, through developments in his own concise, finely wrought style. Second, the poetic miniatures of Walter de la Mare, whom Howells set frequently, left a lasting impression. Both influences are crystallised in the partsongs for upper voices heard here.

At 16, Howells became an articled pupil of Herbert Brewer, then organist of Gloucester Cathedral. The role was akin to the training of an organ scholar today, with additional instruction in music theory, harmony and counterpoint, organ playing, and accompanying services. Crucially, it gave Howells access to a far broader choral repertoire and brought him into contact with fellow pupil Ivor Gurney. Gurney and Howells shared a love of literature and long walks through the Gloucestershire countryside, where they fostered a deep artistic bond. During the same period, Howells was excelling as a pianist, memorising a wealth of 19th-century repertoire, including works by Rachmaninoff, Brahms and Chopin. His pianistic flair is evident in the earliest pieces on this disc: *The Shepherd*, *A Croon* (both 1916), *An Old Man's Lullaby* (1917) and, particularly, *The Tinker's Song* (1917).

The Shepherd (a setting of William Blake) and *A Croon* come from a set of partsongs for women's voices. In Blake's pastoral image of a watchful shepherd, Howells introduces an undulating dotted triplet rhythm that pervades the whole piece, at moments recalling works such as "Love Bade me Welcome" from Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* (1906–11). *The Tinker's Song* captures the character of the text from the outset: march rhythms propel the accompaniment before the tinker's entrance, asking "Have you any work?". Howells later orchestrated the piece for timpani and strings, but even with just the piano, it is easy to imagine the timpani rolls and pizzicato strings. In these early partsongs, Howells already demonstrates a remarkable ability to establish atmosphere within a few bars of the introduction and maintain interest without overstaying his welcome.

In the 1920s, Howells wrote numerous upper-voices partsongs, but with a decisive stylistic shift. Some songs retain a more straightforward quality – particularly the unison songs, which were most likely intended for children – while others reflect Howells's more experimental endeavours as a composer. The two unison songs on this disc, *The Wonderful Derby Ram* (1921) and *Spanish Lullaby* (1923), are simple yet strikingly effective. It is not hard to imagine Howells's own childhood experiences of singing songs and hymns informing these pieces, whether in the emphatic text of *The Wonderful Derby Ram*, with its depiction of a ram being sold at market, or in the equally compelling *Spanish Lullaby*. *A Golden Lullaby* (1920) was another setting of a poem by Thomas Dekker, which Howells first set in *An Old Man's Lullaby*. The 1917 setting was originally conceived as a solo song, with a second part added later, whereas the 1920 *Golden Lullaby* was conceived for two voice parts. Although only a few years separate them, the different approaches are striking, something we also observe in his many settings of the Evening Canticles.

My master hath a garden (1923) reflects the influence of fellow composer and friend Gustav Holst. Shifting metres, subtle polyrhythms and parallel fourths with modal inflections evoke Holst's distinctive sound world. When the two voices divide into four parts, the harmonic palette recalls the textures and harmony of Claude Debussy, whose *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *La Damselle élue* Howells greatly admired. The result is hypnotic: a musical evocation of paradise that anticipates later masterpieces such as *Hymnus Paradisi* and *Stabat Mater* (1965). *Sing Ivy* (1924) starts similarly by evoking some of Holst's folk song arrangements with modal inflections and parallel harmonies. However, the piece changes character halfway through, when the accompaniment shifts from flowing quavers to a sound reminiscent of Tudor keyboard music and an approach to modal harmony that is distinctly Tallis or Byrd.

The final work from the 1920s on this disc, *Tune thy music* (1927), is a Howells piece many singers and admirers of his music will recognise. Earlier in 1927 he had completed *Lambert's Clavichord*, a collection of short dances for this early keyboard instrument (he had been gifted a clavichord the year before). Howells's interest in dance forms grew from his fascination with English Tudor music, first encountered through Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* (1910). Setting a text by Thomas Campion, *Tune thy music* adopts a sarabande form, with its characteristic stress on the second beat. The form held great significance for Howells and can be heard in many of his later liturgical and concert works. Cast in the key of E flat, with polyphonic accompaniment supporting a largely conjunct melody, *Tune thy music* can feel like a precursor to the style that would come to define Howells in his later years, most clearly in the *Collegium Regale Te Deum* (1945).

The 1930s saw him combine professional work with family life. His daughter Ursula was born in 1922, followed by Michael in 1926. Michael's premature death in 1935 remains the defining event of Howells's life, and much of Howells's output after 1935 draws on this event and the subsequent grief that never left him. However, even during his lifetime, Michael's presence in his father's music is evident: he wrote a C sharp in the *Hymnus Paradisi* manuscript that is still marked in the vocal score, and Howells's most famous hymn tune (later named after him), so the story goes, was composed over the breakfast table in response to a request for a hymn tune. Howells also made both his children study piano with him – whether they liked it or not, music was part of family life.

It is therefore unsurprising that many of Howells's partsongs for upper voices were aimed at children. *Bunches of grapes* (1933), a setting of one of de la Mare's miniatures, is dedicated to his two children and one other person, presumably another child. The text depicts three children, each asking for different things, reflected in a particularly characterful piano accompaniment. The same light-hearted atmosphere infuses the multi-movement *Sea Urchins* (1935), which sets texts by Gladys Balcomb depicting a seaside holiday across ten movements. Introduced by a piano overture that could itself be one of Howells's piano miniatures, it echoes the style of his other works from this period, such as the short ballet *Penguinski* (1933). The miniature and dance forms are central to Howells's set of songs. No one movement lasts more than around two minutes, yet they all vividly capture aspects of the narrator's holiday: the first trip to the beach, their landlady sharing out food, or Granny on the beach doing her knitting, to name but a few.

By contrast, *Sweet Content* (1931) and *To music bent* (1933) are more poetic meditations than stories. In settings of Robert Greene and Campion, the style of *Tune thy music* returns. All three pieces are cast in E flat major, featuring long, sustained vocal lines and an accompaniment that both supports and enriches the melody. As in *Tune thy music*, we again see the experiments in vocal writing that would become the cornerstone of Howells's church music, whether in the treatment of split sopranos, as in the *Gloucester Service Magnificat* (1946), or in the anthems *Behold, O God, our Defender* (1952) and *The House of Mind* (1954).

Christmas often proved fertile ground for composition; many works were written during the Christmas breaks from teaching at the Royal College of Music. *Piping down the valleys wild*, composed on 28 December 1938, followed a momentous year for Howells, during which he completed the *Concerto for String Orchestra* and the vocal score of *Hymnus Paradisi*; the former had also received its premiere in a broadcast conducted by Sir Adrian Boult with the BBC Symphony Orchestra on 16 December. With two much larger works that, through music, show a bereaved parent beginning to come to terms with their grief, *Piping down the valleys wild* can also be read, in one way, as bittersweet. It is not difficult to see why this text – William Blake's depiction of a divine child appearing on a cloud, asking the piper to continue to play his song and weeping with joy – might have taken on new meaning for Howells at this point in his life.

After the Second World War, as Howells devoted himself increasingly to church music composition, fewer upper-voices partsongs appeared. *The Key of the Kingdom* (1948), another de la Mare text, adapted from an old rhyme, draws the focus in from the entire Kingdom down to a basket of flowers on a bed and back again. Urgency and playfulness are achieved through the antiphonal writing for two voices.

Pink Almond (1957) was among Howells's final contributions to the medium, with a text by Katharine Tynan. While many of his early partsongs show glimmers of the church music to come, here there is an obvious reference to the musical material of the *Collegium Regale Nunc Dimittis* in the middle section, and, like so many of Howells's *Nunc Dimittis* settings, it is cast in sarabande form. *A Christmas Carol* (1957) sets a text by George Wither and was composed on Christmas Day. Again, it features harmonic and melodic elements that, by this point, are quintessentially Howellsian, alongside the composer's sensitivity to text and polyphonic accompaniment. It is hard not to imagine a merry bunch of singers performing the piece on a crisp Christmas Day after a plentiful feast, just as the poem depicts – one such as Howells had likely just enjoyed when he sat down to compose the song.

Tom Edney © 2026

Founded in 2025, **The Mira Ensemble** was established to champion the extensive body of music for upper voices that is little known, performed, or recorded, with a focus on music written for women's voices rather than children. The group prides itself on delivering high-quality performances and recordings to promote this often-neglected repertoire. Comprising professional singers across the UK, the ensemble also aims to provide opportunities for younger singers.

The group's ethos is also grounded in connecting performance with leading musicological research, particularly in highlighting the work of composers not often represented in standard choral repertoire. Their first recording project, presented here, focuses on the upper-voices repertoire by English composer Herbert Howells, and features a disc of (almost) entirely premiere recordings that shine a light on a rarely discussed part of this well-known choral composer's output. The group looks forward to building on this and advocating for a broader repertoire of upper-voices pieces, as well as the future commissioning of new upper-voices pieces, both a cappella and accompanied.

The ensemble is directed by **Tom Edney**, a Newcastle-born conductor, composer, academic, editor, and orchestrator. Currently completing a PhD at the Royal College of Music, Tom is supervised by Prof. Robert Adlington, Dr Jonathan Clinch, and Prof. David Wright, researching British choral-orchestral works of the 1960s. Other academic research includes the music of Avril and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, which has led him to edit and typeset the entire catalogue of Avril. Outside of academia, Tom works as a freelance conductor and is artistic director of the Odiham Music Festival. He has a passion for engaging programming and showcasing underrepresented works in both his academic and performance work. As a conductor, he has worked with children and adults, amateurs and professionals, and this is reflected in his diverse portfolio career.



Nick Salwey graduated with a First from Oxford University, where he later gained his doctorate (*The Piano in London Concert Life: 1750–1800*). Nick taught at Oxford, Eton College, and Winchester College, where he was Head of Piano from 2005 to 2025 and continues to teach and work as accompanist. He is also piano accompanist at St Swithun's School, and runs the lunchtime concert series in Winchester Cathedral, which provides performance opportunities for young musicians. As accompanist he has performed live on BBC Radio 3, on ITV (playing Schubert lieder at the age of twelve), Channel 4 and Classic FM.

He has reviewed for *The Independent*, *New York Observer* and *Classical Piano*, and has published articles in academic books and journals in the UK and Austria.

1 The Wonderful Derby Ram

Old Rhyme

As I was going to Derby,
All on a market day,
I met the finest ram, sir,
That ever was fed upon hay.

This ram was fat behind, sir,
This ram was fat before,
This ram was ten yards round, sir,
Indeed he was no more.

The horns that grew on his head, sir,
They were so wondrous high;
As I've been plainly told sir,
They reach up to the sky.

The tail that grew from his back, sir,
Was six yards and an ell,
And it was sent to Derby
To ring the market bell.

2 Sweet Content

Robert Greene (c.1560–1592)

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep,
 such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The man that 'grees with country music best;
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare;
Obscured life sets down a type of bliss:
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

3 Piping down the valleys wild

William Blake (1757–1827)

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:
"Pipe a song about a lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again."
So I piped: he wept to hear.
"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer."
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.
"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,
And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

④ **A Croon**

Old Cradle Song

Hush-a-ba, burdie, croon, croon
Hush-a-ba, burdie, croon;
The sheep are gane tae the siller wid,
An the coos are gane tae the broom, broom.

An it's braw milkin the kye, kye,
It's braw milkin the kye;
The birds are singin, the bells are ringin,
An the wild deer come gallopin by.

Hush-a-ba burdie, croon, croon,
Hush-a-ba burdie, croon,
The gaits are gane tae the mountain hie,
An they'll no be hame till noon.

⑤ **My master hath a garden**

Anon.

My master hath a garden,
Fullfilled with divers flowers,
Where thou may'st gather Posies gay,
All times and hours.
Here nought is heard
But Paradise bird,
Harp, dulcimer, and lute,
With cymbal and timbrel,
And gentle sounding flute.

O, Jesus, Lord, my heal and weal,
My bliss complete,
Make Thou my heart Thy garden plot,
True, fair and neat,
That I may hear this music clear,
Harp, dulcimer, and lute,
With cymbal and timbrel,
And the gentle sounding flute.

⑥ **The Key of the Kingdom**

Walter de la Mare (1873–1956)

This is the Key of the Kingdom
In that kingdom there is a city;
In that city there is a town;
In that town there is a street
In that street there is a lane.
In that lane there is a yard;
In that yard there is a house;
In that house there is a room;
In that room there is a bed
And on that bed a basket,
A basket of sweet flowers.
Flowers in a basket
Basket on the bed;
Bed in the Chamber;
Chamber in the house;
House in the weedy yard
Yard in the winding lane;
Lane in the broad street;

Street in the high town;
Town in the city;
City in the kingdom
Of the Kingdom this is the Key.

7 **Sing Ivy**

Old Rhyme

My father left me three acres of land,
Sing ivy, sing ivy;
My father left me three acres of land.
Sing holly, go whistle, and sing Ivy!

I ploughed it with a ram's horn,
Sing Ivy, sing Ivy;
And sowed it all over with one peppercorn,
Sing holly, go whistle and sing Ivy!

I harrowed it with a bramble bush,
Sing ivy, sing ivy;
And reaped it with my little pen-knife,
Sing holly, go whistle and sing Ivy!

8 **To music bent**

Thomas Campion (1567–1620)

To music bent is my retired mind,
And fain would I some song of pleasure sing:
But in vain joy no comfort now I find;
From heavenly thoughts all true delight
doth spring.
Thy power, O God, Thy mercies, to record,
Will sweeten every note and every word.

All earthly pomp or beauty to express,
Is but to carve in snow, on waves to write.
Celestial things, though men conceive them less,
Yet fullest are they in themselves of light:
Such beams they yield as know no means to die,
Such heat they cast as lifts the spirit high.

9 **A Golden Lullaby**

Thomas Dekker (c.1572–1632)

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and care must keep you;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

10 **Bunches of grapes**

Walter de la Mare

"Bunches of grapes," says Timothy;
"Pomegranates pink," says Elaine;
"A junket of cream and a cranberry tart
For me," says Jane.

"Love-in-a-mist," says Timothy;
"Primroses pale," says Elaine;
"A nosegay of pinks and mignonette
For me," says Jane.

"Chariots of gold," says Timothy;
"Silvery wings," says Elaine;
"A bumpety ride in a wagon of hay
For me," says Jane.

11 Pink Almond

Katharine Tynan (1859–1931)

So delicate, so airy,
The almond on the tree,
Pink stars that some good fairy
Has made for you and me.

A little cloud of roses,
All in a world of grey,
The almond flower uncloses
Upon the wild March day.

A mist of roses blowing
The way of fog and sleet,
A dust of roses showing
For grey dust in the street.

Pink snow upon the branches,
Pink snowflakes falling down
In rosy avalanches,
Upon the dreary town.

A rain, a shower of roses,
All in a roseless day,
The almond tree uncloses
Her roses on the grey.

12 A Christmas Carol

George Wither (1588–1667)

So now is come our joyful'st feast,
Let every man be jolly.

Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.

Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labor;
Our lasses have provided them
A bag-pipe and a tabor.

Young men and maids and girls and boys
Give life to one another's joys,
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays
To make our mirth the fuller.
And, whilst thus inspir'd we sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills and everything,
Bear witness we are merry.

13 The Shepherd

William Blake

How sweet is the Shepherds sweet lot,
From the morn to the evening he strays:
He shall follow his sheep all the day
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lambs innocent call,
And he hears the ewes tender reply,
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

14 Spanish Lullaby

Old Spanish lullaby

The baby child of Mary,
Now cradle He has none.
His father is a Carpenter,
And he shall make him one.

The Lady good St Anna,
The Lord St Joachim,
They rock the baby's cradle
That sleep may come to him.

Then sleep thou too, my baby,
My little hear so dear,
The Virgin is beside thee,
The Son of God is near.

SEA URCHINS

Gladys Balcomb

15 Overture

16 Happy Street

This must be the way to the sea,
I'm sure it must be the way to the sea.
The shops are gay with toys that float.
Come, buy a swan and a painted boat.
Inflated ball of scarlet and green.
A paper sunshade of gold and blue.
A pail of seaside greetings, too.

This must be the way to the sea,
I'm sure it must be the way to the sea.
The scent of seaweed wafts from the rock,
The children dance, the grownups scurry,
Gone is sorrow, gone is worry.
London streets are far away
Now that we're on holiday.

This must be the way to the sea,
The children run all bronzed with sun
Down the hill, in golden heat,
With eager, tripping rubber-clad feet.
The clatter of each wooden spade
Is sweetest music ever made.

17 Many Rainbows

Rainbows shine in many things:
Pretty ones in ladies' rings,
Little ones in old men's glasses,
In crystal bowls when sunlight passes.
On wings of dragonflies as well,
And in the lining of a shell.
There are rainbows traced in travelling snails
And rainbows left on oily trails
But still most beautiful to me
Is a rainbow arched across the sea.

18 The Sea-Side Landlady

Our landlady's plump and kind as can be
And gives us good things fresh caught
from the sea.
Our landlady has such a fine tabby cat
Who begs for our titbits upon a red mat,
A parrot as well in a cage by itself
And a ship carved from coconuts upon a shelf.

Our landlady's husband who has some fine boats
Knows all about every craft that floats,
Our landlady's boy is away at sea,
And went when a lad not much older than me;
Some day when I'm bigger I'll too go to sea
And sail with that boy not much older than me.

19 Granny sits beside the sea

Granny sits beside the sea,
Some knitting in her hand,
And why she doesn't want to bathe
I cannot understand.

Our shoes are standing two by two,
Our clothes lie in a row;
She sits and guards them all day long,
She'd rather have it so.

Granny sits beside the sea,
Her eyes are blue and kind,
Reminding me of gentle pools
The tide has left behind.

Granny sits beside the sea,
Her knitting nearly done,
She's putting all her things away
For now it's set of sun.

SEA URCHINS *cont'd*

20 The Barrel-Organ

All the London children danced,
One or two grownups advanced,
And on the pavement by the sea
Remembered home, forgot their tea,
Folks outside the charmed circle
Began to whistle, then to sing
A waltz, a shanty, hymn or carol,
It mattered not to the wheezing barrel.

The organ from its vulgar throat
Set all its friendly tunes afloat,
The lilting simple songs it sang
Along the esplanade still rang.
Long after, on that summer's day
The cockney, with his music gay,
And bag of pennies, slipped away,
And all day long a jangling sound,
Lingered with the happy thong.

21 A Seaside Lullaby

Sleep little brother, beneath the sky.
Someday you'll swim when as old as I
But now in a cradle of soft yellow sand
You'll be so much safer with Mother at hand.
The pretty pink shells that you gathered today
Sink quite forgotten in seaweed and spray;
Your little warm hands lie curved on your breast
In Mother's cool shadow your sweet eyes
find rest.

22 The Lair on the Cliff

I cannot swim or dive,
And so I must contrive
To do a thing my brothers wouldn't dare.
In exactly half a jiff
I scramble up the cliff,
And am spying through the railing of my lair.

Spread before me is a view
Like a map of gold and blue,
With small canals and rivers dug in sand,
And whene'er a steamer passes,
With uncle's powerful glasses
I can almost touch the funnel with my hand.

Like rainbow-hued confetti.
Scatter'd o'er the bay and jetty
Are people all with numbers to their door.
They have names like Bill and Jane,
And most of them are plain
From here they look like specks and nothing more.

On the sands beneath my lair
Is my uncle in a chair,
And both my brothers swimming strong
and free.

A drowsy tune comes drifting all around
With distant laughter from the sea,
The minstrels in the bay seem very far away
Just a lazy seagull
Spies my lair and me.

23 **Lindy's Ballet Shoes**

A fairy borrowed Lindy's shoes
Upon an autumn night
The loveliest time of all to choose
For the harvest moon shone bright.
She drew some moonbeams off the sea
And sewed them on for strings,
And ever since our Lindy has danced as tho'
on wings.

24 **The Musical Train**

Oh, how I clang and strain,
For I am a mighty train
With Vulcan in my entrails stoking fire into
my brain,
As I clatter o'er my rails
Thro' blizzard, sun or rain
I sing a cheerful song with this refrain;
Adagio, Adantino, Ad libitum,
Crescendo, Fortissimo, Forzando, doh, doh.
The strong will often seek
To protect and help the weak,
So I carry little children to the sea
And they are very fond of me
As I flash between the trees
With my sulphuretted sneeze
I take into the distance this refrain.
Legato, portamento and mezzo,
Diminuendo, pianissimo, morendo, doh doh.

25 **The Open Air**

The House of God is clean and wide
Great winds sweep it from side to side
Rains and rivers,
Sea and fountains
Wash its hills. Its moors, and mountains.
The House of God is clean and wide,
With plenty of room for all inside.
Narrow and mean is the house of man
God's a mansion none can span.
Why are we bounded by roof and wall,
When the "out of doors" is free to all?
The House of God is clean and wide,
With plenty of room for all inside.
Come be a guest 'neath the starlit sky,
On a bed of grass to softly lie,
Nature, as our Host's Handmaiden,
Waits upon us, hands o'erladen.
The House of God is clean and wide
With plenty of room for all inside.

26 An Old Man's Lullaby

Thomas Dekker

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and care must keep you;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

27 The Tinker's Song

Have you any work for a tinker, mistress?
Old brass, old pots, or kettles?
I'll mend them all with a tink, merry tink,
And never hurt your metals;
First let me have but a touch of your ale,
'Twill steel me 'gainst cold weather,
Or tinkers' frees,
Or vintners' lees,
Or tobacco, chuse you whether.

But of your ale,
Your nappy ale,
I would I had a firkin,
For I am old,
And very cold,
And never wear a jerkin.

28 Tune thy music

Thomas Campion

Tune thy music to thy heart;
Sing thy joy with thanks, and so thy sorrow.
Though devotion needs not art,
Sometime of the poor the rich may borrow.
Strive not yet for curious ways;
Concord pleaseth more the less 'tis strained.
Zeal affects not outward praise,
Only strives to show a love unfeigned.
Love can wondrous things effect,
Sweetest sacrifice all wrath appeasing.
Love the Highest doth respect,
Love alone to Him is ever pleasing.

Thanks to

Dr Jonathan Clinch

The Herbert Howells Trust

The Herbert Howells Society

Peter Linnett and the Royal College of Music Library team

HERBERT HOWELLS (1892–1983)

PARTSONGS

SOMMCD 0725

FIRST RECORDINGS
(EXCEPT *)

THE MIRA ENSEMBLE TOM EDNEY DIRECTOR · NICK SALWEY PIANO

SOPRANOS SUMEI BAO-SMITH, HANNAH LITTLETON, MOLLY NOON, HANNAH KING

ALTOS ELLIE STAMP, LILY PLATTS, LAURA OLDFIELD, KATIE AMBROSE

1	The Wonderful Derby Ram	1:32		Sea Urchins	
2	Sweet Content*	2:04	16	Overture	2:08
3	Piping down the valleys wild	3:09	16	Happy Street	1:54
4	A Croon	2:32	17	Many Rainbows	1:45
5	My master hath a garden	2:26	18	The Sea-Side Landlady	1:14
6	The Key of the Kingdom	1:38	19	Granny sits beside the sea	1:40
7	Sing Ivy	2:03	20	The Barrel-Organ	1:31
8	To music bent	3:41	21	A Seaside Lullaby	1:55
9	A Golden Lullaby	3:41	22	The Lair on the Cliff	2:09
10	Bunches of grapes	1:18	23	Lindy's Ballet Shoes	1:15
11	Pink Almond	3:02	24	The Musical Train	1:19
12	A Christmas Carol	2:16	26	The Open Air	2:14
13	The Shepherd	2:53	26	An Old Man's Lullaby	2:26
14	Spanish Lullaby	1:46	27	The Tinker's Song	1:48
			28	Tune thy music	2:02
				Total duration:	59:36

Recording: St George's Headstone, Harrow, 14 & 15 July 2025

Executive & Recording Producer: Siva Oke

Recording Engineer: Adaq Khan

Front Cover: *Anchor and Boats, Rye* (1938) by Eric Ravilious (1903–1942)

Design: WLP London Ltd

Editorial: Ray Granlund

Visit somm-recordings.com for further information

© & © 2026 SOMM RECORDINGS · THAMES DITTON · SURREY · ENGLAND · Made in the UK