

Havergal BRIAN

COMPLETE CHORAL SONGS, VOLUME TWO

Joyful Company of Singers
Peter Broadbent
Finchley Children's Music Group
Grace Rossiter

HAVERGAL BRIAN Complete Choral Songs, Volume Two

1	<i>Daybreak</i> (Longfellow; SATB; 1910)	3:53
2	<i>Tell me, thou soul of her I love</i> (James Thomson; SATB; 1906)	3:50
3	<i>Stars of the Summer Night</i> (Longfellow; SSAATTBB; 1905)	5:17
4	<i>Rondel: In a Fairy Boat</i> (Weller; SSAA; 1906)	2:00
5	<i>Introit</i> (SATB, canon; 1924)	2:16
6	<i>Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame</i> (Pope; SSAA; canon; 1924)	1:56
7	<i>A Child's Prayer</i> (Betham-Edwards; SATB; 1914)	2:10
8	<i>If I had but two little wings</i> (Coleridge; SA; 1914)	1:15
9	<i>Little White Lily</i> (George MacDonald; SSA; 1914)	2:29
10	<i>Tell me, where is fancy bred</i> (Shakespeare; SSAA; c. 1919)	1:14
11	<i>It was a lover and his lass</i> (Shakespeare; SSAA; 1919)	1:29
12	<i>Fairies' Song</i> (Cumberland; SSAA; 1908)	2:13
13	<i>Absence</i> (Burns; SSAA; 1919)	1:06
14	<i>Pack clouds away</i> (Heywood; SSA; 1919)	1:46
15	<i>Pastoral: The Shepherd</i> (Blake; SSAA; 1914)	1:28
16	<i>Infant Joy</i> (Blake; SSAA; 1914)	1:28
17	<i>The Lamb</i> (Blake; SSA; 1914)	2:41
18	<i>Laughing Song</i> (Blake; SSA; 1914)	0:50
19	<i>The Fairy Palace</i> (Drayton; SSA; 1915)	1:27
20	<i>Spring, the sweet Spring</i> (Nashe; SA; 1919)	1:42
21	<i>The Lost Doll</i> (Kingsley; unison; 1914)	1:22
22	<i>The Dream</i> (Blake; SSA, 1914)	2:13
23	<i>The Echoing Green</i> (Blake; SSA; 1914)	3:04
24	<i>The Moon</i> (Cumberland; SA; 1914)	2:37
25	<i>The River</i> (Cumberland; SA; 1914)	1:51
26	<i>The Mountain and the Squirrel</i> (Emerson; unison; 1914)	1:12
27	<i>What does little birdie say?</i> (Tennyson; unison; 1914)	1:11

28	<i>Shall I then be spared?</i> (More; SATB; 1924)	1:29
29	<i>O Happiness, celestial fair</i> (More; SATB; 1924)	2:24
30	<i>Sweet Solitude</i> (More; SATB; 1924)	2:34
31	<i>The Phantom Wooer</i> (Lovell Beddoes; SATB; 1918)	2:41
32	<i>He was a rat</i> (Richards; SATB; 1914)	1:33
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Gavin Roberts, piano 11 14 17–20 22 23

Peter Broadbent, conductor 1–6 10–20 22 23 28–32

Finchley Children's Music Group 7–9 21 24–27

John Evanson, piano 7–9 21 24–27

Grace Rossiter, conductor 7–9 21 24–27

FIRST RECORDINGS

HAVERGAL BRIAN: COMPLETE CHORAL SONGS, VOLUME TWO

by John Pickard

Until recently, the gradually emerging recognition of the English composer Havergal Brian (1876–1972) has tended to focus on his symphonies. He wrote 32 numbered exemplars: the first, the gigantic *Gothic Symphony* (1919–27), is the largest symphony ever performed, whereas the last 21 symphonies come from an astonishing burst of creative activity between the ages of 80 and 92. Yet Brian came to the writing of symphonies relatively late, his early career being devoted to cantatas, orchestral tone-poems, solo songs and a large number of choral songs, or ‘partsongs’, as they are often called – an inaccurate term in Brian’s case, since several of the songs are not in ‘parts’ but are for unison voices. Brian wrote over 80 choral songs, possibly even more, since the scores of some twenty that he is known to have completed have vanished. That leaves 62 extant works for various choral combinations, some unaccompanied, some with piano; some for mixed voices, some for upper voices or unison voices. Most of the latter examples were primarily written for children’s voices, and some also double as solo songs.

By far the larger part of the choral songs come from two main phases of activity, the first around 1905–6, when Brian was starting to establish himself as one of the most promising British composers of the younger generation, the second from a longer period spanning the years either side of the First World War. It is significant that most of the songs from this later period were written for women’s or children’s voices, reflecting the departure for military service of male choristers throughout the land. Many of the songs in the present volume come from these years. A third, less concentrated phase can be identified around the 1920s and 1930s, with about a dozen choral songs dotted around this period. By this time, Brian’s musical language had undergone a drastic shift towards more dissonant harmony and a preoccupation with polyphony, often highly chromatic.

The songs from 1905–6 were undoubtedly written with the major English choral festivals in mind. During the thirty years before the First World War these competitive events, mainly concentrated in the north of England, attracted thousands of amateur singers each year. The Lancashire seaside town of Morecambe hosted the most important of the festivals, its exceptionally high musical standards encouraging many leading composers of the day to write new works for the various classes of choral competition that the festival promoted.

Elgar was among the composers who wrote extremely challenging and elaborate works for these festivals, and their example certainly rubbed off on Brian, as can be heard in the first song in this album, *Daybreak* [1]. Composed in 1910, this tonally adventurous work, one of two settings of the once vastly popular American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82), is among the most overtly virtuosic of all Brian's choral songs, its restless modulations culminating in a striking depiction of the clangour of church bells, before gradually receding to a quiet close. Although Brian's almost 97 years passed almost entirely without leaving Britain's shores, he is known to have made one trip abroad, to Italy in 1910. Why he visited or with whom is not known, but the score of *Daybreak* carries an intriguing dedication: 'Alla Signora Emilia Cimino in ricordo di giorni felici sul Lago Maggiore', implying that the visit may not have been entirely business-related.

The 1906 setting of words by the eighteenth-century Scots poet James Thomson (1700–48) *Tell me, thou soul of her I love* [2], with its mellifluous opening verse, beginning in E flat major (a favourite key of Brian's for many of these early songs), and gorgeous descending sequential dissonances, initially appears to inhabit more conventional musical territory than its predecessor – but a recurring feature of Brian's choral songs is the tendency of an innocuous opening to act as a foil to more complex material later on. In this case, the central span of the song leads into bleaker regions with austere textures and searching chromaticism, before returning to the home key for the final lines.

Stars of the Summer Night [3] is Brian's other Longfellow setting, composed for the 1905 Blackpool Music Festival, and using a text that Elgar had already set in 1892 in his

Spanish Serenade. This nocturne – which, following Elgar’s example, Brian described as a ‘serenade’ – is perhaps his most orchestrally conceived choral song, the division of the choir into eight parts offering possibilities for enhanced textural richness and colour. The music largely avoids counterpoint, and the harmonic outline is simple, yet striking, continuously shifting between two unrelated chords: G major and F sharp major, the latter sometimes pivoting to the related chord of D major which acts as a simple dominant back to G major. The strategy is highly effective and beguilingly hypnotic.

Only one year separates *Stars of the summer night* from **Rondel: In a Fairy Boat** (1906) [4], and yet the harmonic world of the latter seems considerably removed and more astringent. The song sets a poem by the theatre critic and sometime editor of *The Stage* magazine, Bernard Weller (1870–1940), anthologised in *Songs and Poems of Fairyland*, published in 1890 and edited by Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942). Written for unaccompanied upper voices in four parts, the song sets up a rocking motion at the start, overlaid with close canonic writing and frequent harmonic shifts, suggesting that the fairy vessel is none too seaworthy. A lively central section, though not strictly canonic, is certainly imitative in its textures, pointing the way towards some of Brian’s more experimental songs from the early 1920s, when he was composing his vast *Gothic* Symphony. It has sometimes been suggested that the choral songs and three ambitious fugal piano works dating from this later period¹ were written as contrapuntal ‘studies’ for the choral complexities of the *Gothic*, though it is also possible that they were composed as a respite from the toil of composing the symphony. Be that as it may, these shorter works share with their giant companion a preoccupation with imitative polyphony and, in the case of the choral songs, with the demanding compositional technique of writing canons. Five of these songs ([5] [6] [28] [29] [30]) explore various facets of canonic writing.

Introit (1924) [5] is perhaps the most ‘academic’ of the canons. A strict (indeed, rather stiff) four-part example, scored for mixed voices, with the second and fourth entries a perfect fourth below the first and third, the music comes close to referencing the style of Palestrina, while also pointing towards the first part of the choral *Te Deum*

¹ A double fugue in E flat and two preludes and fugues, one in C minor and the other in D minor/major, all from 1924.

setting that makes up Part Two of the *Gothic*. Setting just one word – ‘Amen’ (thereby making it Brian’s only non-English unaccompanied choral work) – this work really does feel like a compositional exercise. ***Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame*** [6] is a different matter altogether. Composed in 1924 and setting, for upper voices only, the first two of the three verses of *The Dying Christian to his Soul* by Alexander Pope (1688–1744), it is the most uncompromising of the choral canons: a four-voice double canon, with two independent lines in the sopranos strictly imitated a fourth lower in the altos. Initially, it proceeds euphoniously enough in a simple F major, until towards the end of the first verse, at the words ‘Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife’, matters take a decisive turn. The apparently innocent introduction of a series of chromatic pitches in the second sopranos sets off a chain of events that lead the music into a dense thicket of thorny dissonance from which the music only just recovers when Brian breaks the canon at the very end to emerge into the sunlit uplands of the home key.

Around the outbreak of the First World War, Brian turned to writing songs for children – a potentially lucrative market at the time, though there is no way of knowing how well these songs sold (they were all published by Augener), or whether they were widely taken up. ***A Child’s Prayer*** (1914) [7] sets a sentimental poem by the late nineteenth-century novelist Matilda Betham-Edwards (1836–1919). The song is written in the purest D major for two-part children’s choir with piano accompaniment. The five verses are set strophically – the same simple music for each verse, with the two vocal parts mainly a third apart – but maintaining interest by varying the piano parts in the odd numbered verses and letting the choir sing unaccompanied in the even numbered ones. In bright contrast, ***If I had but two little wings*** (1914) [8], to words by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), is more elaborate and busy. Scored, once again, for two-part children’s choir with the lower part often following the upper one but maintaining its independence, and with a buoyant piano accompaniment, this lively number is among the most endearing of Brian’s songs for children. ***Little White Lily*** (1914) [9], setting a poem by George MacDonald (1824–1905), nineteenth-century author, Congregational minister and close friend of Lewis Carroll, is one of the more texturally developed of these songs. The choir is divided into three parts, with a good deal of lively imitation

between the groups. The choral parts are identical in each of the five verses, but, as with *A Child's Prayer*, are alternately sung accompanied and *a cappella*.

Although Brian's texts range widely in authorship, William Shakespeare (1564–1618) was among the select few writers to whom he constantly returned in both his choral and solo songs. A dozen choral settings of Shakespeare are extant, dating from all periods of Brian's output in this genre, with at least two further settings now lost. With the exception of *Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day* (which opens Volume One of this collection²), Brian avoided the complexities of the sonnets, preferring instead to use verses and songs from the dramas. ***Tell me, where is fancy bred*** [10] sets a verse from Act 3, scene ii, of *The Merchant of Venice*. The date of Brian's unaccompanied choral setting for four-part upper voices is not known, and the score remained unpublished. He is believed to have composed a version as early as 1904, but the work to hand is far too harmonically astringent to date from that period. It is a particularly interesting song, quirky and unpredictable in its gear-changes, and, like *Daybreak*, culminating in a remarkable imitation of the sound of chiming bells. A lively setting of verses from *As You Like It*, Act 5, scene iii, ***It was a lover and his lass*** [11], dates from 1919 and is again scored for upper voices, but this time with a rather garrulous piano accompaniment – the piano parts of some of these songs are extremely tricky to play, placing them beyond the capabilities of many choral accompanists.

Fairies' Song (1908) [12] sets a poem by Philip Bourke Marston (1850–1887), reworked by Charles Frederick Kenyon (1879–1926), a friend of Brian's whose professional name as author, poet and journalist was Gerald Cumberland. His libretto *The Vision of Cleopatra* formed the basis of a 1907 cantata by Brian, who then went on to make seven further settings of Cumberland's poetry, three of them as choral songs. This four-part unaccompanied setting for upper voices is notable for its almost Mendelssohnian delicacy, flying past at a dynamic that almost never rises above *pianissimo*, whereas the wistful chromaticism of the tiny ***Absence*** (1919) [13] represents Brian's only setting of Robert Burns (1759–96). Again it is scored for unaccompanied upper voices only.

² Toccata Classics TOCC 0395.

With words by Thomas Heywood (early 1570s–1641), the late-Elizabethan/Jacobean playwright-actor, *Pack clouds away* (1919) [14] is notable for being completely through-composed. The music does not follow the two-verse structure of the poem but is instead in a continuous state of development. Furthermore, the first half of the song is notably polyphonic, the lines of the first verse excitedly tumbling over one another in three-part counterpoint for female voices, while the piano provides lively support in this cheerful morning song. Only at the very end does one hear a recapitulation of some of the opening material.

Volume One of this collection of Brian's choral songs featured seven of the fourteen settings he made of the poetry of William Blake (1757–1827). All the Blake choral settings use verses from the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789–94), all are written for upper voices and most are designed to suit both adult and children's voices. The following four songs on this album are Blake settings. All date from 1914 and are performed on this recording by adult singers. *Pastoral: The Shepherd* [15] and *Infant Joy* [16] are both unaccompanied songs for upper voices split into three parts, with identical music for both verses in each song. Blake seems to have brought out the most tender side of Brian's complex musical personality. These settings are simple, direct and utterly sincere, and yet not without the occasional gentle harmonic surprise – in this case, the tendency in both songs for the tonality to pivot between the tonic and keys a third away.

The following two songs, again for three-part upper voices, but this time including piano, are more texturally developed, with flowing accompaniments underscoring the suave vocal lines of *The Lamb* [17] and the more playful and mischievous writing of the tiny *Laughing Song* [18], the latter a mere 50 seconds long, having the distinction of being Brian's shortest complete work. Both songs bear dedications to Brian's children. *The Lamb* is 'Inscribed to Miss Pauline Olga Brian,' his first daughter by his second marriage. *Laughing Song* is 'Inscribed to Master Leoline Brian James' – the son that Brian had from an affair around this time with Wilhelmina Mary Ayrston, whose poetry, written under the pseudonym Temple Keble, Brian set in five of his solo songs.

The next two songs set Elizabethan writers, Michael Drayton (1563–1631) and Thomas Nashe (1567–c. 1601). *The Fairy Palace* (1915) [19] and *Spring, the sweet Spring* (1919) [20] are again accompanied songs for upper voices. *The Fairy Palace*, dedicated to Michael, Brian's second son by his second marriage (and his fifth child), is a glittering depiction of Drayton's fantastical and ghoulish text; *Spring, the sweet Spring*, sung here by children's voices, splits the choir into only two parts for a delightfully fluent setting of words that Britten would also use, some 30 years after Brian, in his *Spring Symphony* (1949).

Some of Brian's choral songs are for unison voices, and all of those are performable as solo songs, if preferred. *The Lost Doll* [21] (1914) sets a poem by Charles Kingsley (1819–75) with artless simplicity and is heard here as Brian surely intended it, for unison children's voices and piano. *The Dream* [22], another Blake setting from 1914, is more complex and ambiguous in character, the chromatic inflections in the piano part darkening the atmosphere in this setting for adult upper voices in three parts. A central unaccompanied 'chorale' is especially effective.

For almost four decades, the composer Granville Bantock (1868–1946) was Brian's closest friend and confidant. The relationship was surely asymmetric: Bantock, urbane, prosperous, well-travelled, positioned at the very centre of British musical life as composer, conductor and academic, eventually knighted for his efforts; Brian, the unpredictable, awkward outsider, self-taught, often short of money, undervalued for most of his life. Yet there is no doubt that Bantock's loyal support and generosity meant the world to Brian during the darkest period of his life, and it was surely more than mere courtesy that drove him to dedicate several partsongs to the Bantock family (though, curiously, none to Bantock himself). *The Echoing Green* [23] and *The Moon* [24] are respectively dedicated to Bantock's sons Hamilton and Raymond. Scored for three-part upper voices and piano, *The Echoing Green* is the last of the 1914 Blake settings. It is relaxed in character, the music essentially identical for each of the three verses but with a varied piano part for each verse to prevent the song from becoming too formulaic. The texts of *The Moon* [24] and *The River* [25] return to the poetry of Gerald Cumberland in settings for two-part children's choir with piano, again from 1914. *The Moon* is especially

interesting, its spare, almost minimalist piano accompaniment casting an eerie glow over the work. Brian is unusually specific about the manner of vocal delivery, requiring the outer verses to be sung ‘quietly and almost whispering’, but asking that in the middle verse ‘the voices must gradually become more natural’. At the end, the voices sing in unison with closed lips – a unique instance among Brian’s choral songs. *The River* is set as a dialogue, with the soprano voices taking the part of the river as it responds to the alto interlocutors. At the end, the two parts come together and are carried away on the current of the restless (and fiendishly difficult) piano accompaniment.

The Mountain and the Squirrel (1914) [26] is one of the quirkiest of Brian’s choral songs, setting a whimsical poem, ‘Fable’, by the American Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882). The great mountain looks down on the squirrel who spiritedly defends its own modest station in life: ‘talents differ [...] / If I cannot carry forests on my back, / Neither can you crack a nut’. The character of this unison song is chiefly conveyed in the piano part, with portentous bass octaves representing the looming mountain, contrasted with scuttling and trilling for the undaunted squirrel. With words by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), *What does little birdie say?* (1914) [27], the final unison song in this collection, also draws on nature to illuminate the human condition. Here, the newly hatched bird and the new-born child must each bide their time until they are strong enough to fly the nest. Brian’s charming setting of the two verses encapsulates all that is brightest and best in these tiny songs.

The next three songs comprise the remaining choral canons that Brian composed in 1924 to poems by the English religious, writer, poet and philanthropist Hannah More (1745–1833). All are written for unaccompanied mixed chorus. *Shall I then be spared?* [28] is the simplest of the canons, an entirely diatonic D major with alternate entries at the tonic and the fourth below, in the manner of the earlier *Introit* [5] but more persuasive and fluid in its polyphonic movement. The canons seem to have been partly intended as experiments in deploying different degrees of dissonance. As can be heard in *Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame* [6], in canonic writing the introduction of a chromatic note inevitably has ‘knock-on’ effects for successive entries, especially where the entries, as here, are not all at the same pitch.

Slightly more animated than its predecessor, *O Happiness, celestial fair* [29] begins with a span in pure C major. Brian then bends the rules of strict canon by repeatedly flattening the note B in the alto and bass parts (which are imitating a perfect fourth below the tonic) while retaining naturals in instances of the corresponding note (E) in the other parts, and judiciously avoiding the note B natural altogether (which would produce an F sharp when imitated a perfect fourth lower). This intervention tilts the music toward the Dorian mode for a while, before Brian carefully introduces more chromatic notes and lets them spread into all parts. The concluding stretch guides the music safely back to the opening C major. It is altogether an impressive display of handling the harmonic consequences of incorporating chromaticism into imitative textures.

Sweet Solitude [30] differs from the other canons by starting in the basses and moving up through the parts, with tenors and sopranos imitating at the perfect fourth above. Chromatic notes are used very sparingly and always as part of a descending line. This song seems to be primarily intended as a study in rhythmic control and in gradually opening up broader paragraphs of flowing polyphony as it proceeds.

In freakish contrast to the rarefied intellectual discipline of the preceding songs, *The Phantom Wooer* (1918) [31] sets a creepy text by the death-obsessed Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–49) (the son of the physician Thomas Beddoes (1760–1808), who is credited with first discovering the non-clinical properties of laughing gas) concerning a ghost who falls in love with a beautiful woman. In Brian's setting for unaccompanied mixed voices, chromaticism runs amok, the lines and harmonies twisting into strange shapes as the morbidly erotic tale unfolds. It ranks among his most inventive and atmospheric choral songs.

He was a rat (1914) [32], for unaccompanied mixed voices, sets a verse long attributed to that prolific author 'Anon.', but which eventually turned out to be by Laura Elizabeth Howe Richards (1850–1943), an American writer of biographies and poems, with a special line in nonsense verse for children. The song is Brian's only choral setting of a genuinely comic text, which is a matter for regret, since many of his early orchestral works, and above all the opera *The Tigers* (1917–29), reveal a fine comedic sensibility. Indeed, Brian's *A Fantastic Symphony* (1907–8) yielded a further example of rodent-

based humour, its four movements all based on the nursery rhyme *Three Blind Mice*, before the work was cut up and the middle movements discarded, leaving only the first and last movements (the head and the tail) as the orchestral works *Fantastic Variations on an Old Rhyme* (1907) and *Festal Dance* (1908).

John Pickard is a composer, with six symphonies and six string quartets to his credit, as well as many other works for orchestra, voices and chamber ensemble. Over thirty of his orchestral, choral and instrumental works have been recorded by BIS Records. In 2021 his BIS album The Gardener of Aleppo, played by the Nash Ensemble, won the prestigious Gramophone Contemporary Award. Toccata Classics has issued three albums devoted to his music, including one with the String Quartets Nos. 1 and 5. John Pickard is currently Professor of Composition at the University of Bristol, UK, where he has worked since 1993. Between 2004 and 2016 he was General Editor of the Elgar Complete Edition. He is also an authority on the music of Havergal Brian, writing widely on the composer and editing many of his scores for performance.

Peter Broadbent is one of Britain's leading choral conductors, whose experience ranges from brass bands to large-scale choral works, opera and musicals. In addition to his work with Joyful Company of Singers since its creation in 1988, he has conducted the London Mozart Players, the chamber orchestra Divertimenti, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Southern Sinfonia, the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Apollo Voices and the BBC Singers, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. Engagements outside the UK include concerts with the Debrecen Philharmonic Orchestra and Kodály Chorus in Hungary, a broadcast with the National Chamber Choir in Dublin and a European tour with the World Youth Choir in 2006. He gives workshops and master-classes throughout Europe, and as the first Director of Training for the Association of British Choral Directors, he helped to instigate and develop choral-conducting courses.



In 2007 he was presented with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award by the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture for his services to Anglo-Hungarian relations and in 2017 was presented with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit. He was awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Year's Honours for his service to music.

One of the leading amateur chamber choirs in the UK, **Joyful Company of Singers** is known for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the sixteenth century to the present day, including many first performances.

Formed in 1988 by Peter Broadbent, JCS first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's 'Choir of the Year' competition in 1990. Since then, it has maintained its profile in the musical world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions, leading to many invitations to perform. Concert appearances include most of the leading UK festivals, and the choir has performed in numerous concert tours in Europe, broadcasting in many countries as well as on the BBC and Classic FM.

JCS has recorded over 25 albums for a number of labels and with various conductors, including Rachmaninov's *All-Night Vigil* on Nimbus, 'beautifully characterized and shaped by Peter Broadbent' (*International Record Review*). The JCS recording of the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* under Richard Hickox was listed in April 2024 by *Gramophone* magazine as one of the top twenty recordings of the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

JCS also instituted a Youth Fund to encourage the development of young conductors, singers and composers, in recent years including its first-ever Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon.

Born in London, **Grace Rossiter** is a choral conductor, composer and arranger. A champion of youth music, she has been Artistic Director of the Finchley Children's Music Group since 2001. She has prepared the choir for conductors who include Marin Alsop, Martyn Brabbins, Sir Colin Davis, Kurt Masur and Mark Wigglesworth.

Her work with FCMG includes large-scale events such as singing with Madonna at Wembley for Live Earth, and staged productions with the National Theatre, Shakespeare's Globe, English National Opera and the Rambert Dance Company. FCMG has an ongoing commitment to the commissioning of new works for children's voices, and she has conducted numerous world premieres with the group. Recent projects have included the world premiere of Christian Mason's *The Singing Tree* with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and

Neue Vocalisten Stuttgart; the world premiere of *The Innocents* by Patrick Hawes with Voces8; and recordings of settings by Iain Farrington with the Aurora Orchestra.

She gave the premiere of Kerry Andrew's *No Place Like*, conducting the 'Ten Pieces' Children's Choir at the BBC Proms. She is Deputy Chorus Director of the BBC Symphony Chorus and Musical Director of Finchley Choral Society. She has worked closely with Voices of the River's Edge, born out of the BBC Proms Youth Choir Academy, with whom she conducted the premiere of Kristina Arakelyan's *Whin Lands* at the BBC Proms at The Glasshouse. She often guest-conducts the BBC Singers, for whom she has also composed and arranged music.



Founded in 1958 to give the first amateur performance of Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, **Finchley Children's Music Group** is a highly versatile group of choirs for young people aged 4 to 18. FCMG frequently performs in the major concert-halls in London and abroad, alongside leading professional ensembles, among them the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, BBC Singers and Voces8, with repertoire ranging from the Britten *War Requiem* and Mahler Symphony No. 8 to Louis Andriessen's *La Commedia* and Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*.

Championing contemporary music for children's voices, FCMG has commissioned works from such composers as Judith Bingham, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and James Weeks, as well as premiering works by Luciano Berio, Bob Chilcott, Michael Finnissy and Alec Roth. FCMG often records for radio, film and TV, the music including *Laudes Animantium* by Kenneth Leighton with Londinium, Prokofiev's *Winter Bonfire* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, works by Ian Farrington with the Aurora Orchestra and Judith Weir's *Storm* with the BBC Singers and members of BBC SO for 'BBC Ten Pieces', and it has provided children's choruses for English National Opera under the baton of Martyn Brabbins, for the National Theatre and for Madonna at Wembley.

www.fcmg.org.uk

Texts

1 *Daybreak*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82)
Birds of Passage (1858)

A wind came up out of the sea,
And said, 'O mists, make room, for me.'

It hailed the ships, and cried, 'Sail on,
Ye mariners, sail on, the night is gone.'

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, 'Awake, it is the day.'

It said unto the forest, 'Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!'

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, 'O bird, awake and sing.'

And o'er the farms, 'O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near.'

It whispered to the fields of corn,
'Bow down, and hail the coming morn.'

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
'Awake, awake, O bell! proclaim the hour.'

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, 'Not yet! in quiet lie.'

2 *Tell me, thou soul of her I love*

James Thomson (1700–48)
The Poems and Plays of James Thomson (1841)

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! tell me, whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead.

Or dost thou free at pleasure roam,
And sometimes share, thy lover's woe,
Where void of thee his cheerless home
Can now, alas, no comfort know.

Oh, if thou hoverest round my walk,
While under every well-known tree,
I to thy fancy'd shadow talk,
And ev'ry tear is full of thee,

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh, visit thou my soothing dream.

Tell me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! tell me, whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead.

3 *Stars of the Summer Night*

Longfellow

The Spanish Student (1842)

Stars of the summer night!
Far in yon azure deeps,
Hide, hide your golden light!
She sleeps, my lady sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!
Far down yon western steeps,
Sink, sink in silver light!
She sleeps, my lady sleeps!

Wind of the summer night!
Where yonder woodbine creeps,
Fold, fold thy pinions light!
She sleeps, my lady sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!
Tell her, her lover keeps watch!
While in slumbers light,
She sleeps, my lady sleeps!

4 *Rondel: In a Fairy Boat*

Bernard Weller (1870–1943)

Songs and Poems of Fairyland (1890)

In a fairy boat on a fairy sea,
All amber and gold, I used to float
When never a wind rose stormily:

And sweet and sad like a white dove's note,
Strange voices wakened my soul to glee
And soft scents strayed from the violet's throat.

In a fairy boat I shall no more be
For gloom has fallen on creek and moat
And my tired soul's too heavy to flee
In a fairy boat.

5 *Introit*

Amen

6 *Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame*

Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

'The Dying Christian to his Soul' (1712)

Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, longing, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper; angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

7 *A Child's Prayer*

M. Bethan-Edwards (1836–1919)

Good Words (1873)

God, make my life a little light,
Within the world to glow,
A tiny flame that burneth bright
Wherever I may go.

God, make my life a little flow'r
That giveth joy to all;
Content to bloom in native bow'r,
Although the place be small.

God, make my life a little song,
That comforteth the sad;
That helpeth others to be strong
And makes the singer glad

God, make my life a little staff
Whereon the weak may rest,
That so what health and strength I have
May serve my neighbour best.

God, make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise
Of faith, that never waxeth dim
In all His wondrous ways.

8 *If I had but two little wings*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)

The Annual Anthology, Vol. 2 (1800)

If I had but two little wings,
And were a little feath'ry bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I'm always with you in my sleep;
The world is all one's own;
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids.
So I love to wake at break of day,
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

9 *Little White Lily*

George MacDonald (1824–1905)

Within and Without: A Dramatic Poem (1855)

Little White Lily
Sat by a stone
Drooping and waiting
Till the sun shone
Little White Lily
Sunshine has fed;

Little White Lily
Is lifting her head.

Little White Lily
Said: 'It is good
Little White Lily's
Clothing and food'.
Little White Lily
Dressed like a bride!
Shining with whiteness,
And crownèd beside.

Little White Lily
Drooping with pain
Waiting and waiting
For the wet rain.
Little White Lily
Holdeth her cup
Rain is fast falling
And filling it up.

Little White Lily
Said, 'Good again
Where I am thirsty,
To have nice rain;
Now I am stronger
Now I am cool;
Heat cannot burn me,
My veins are so full'.

Little White Lily
Smells very sweet;
On her head sunshine,
Rain at her feet.

'Thanks to the sunshine!
Thanks to the rain!
Little White Lily
Is happy again.'

[10] *Tell me, where is Fancy bred?*
William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
The Merchant of Venice, Act 3, scene ii

Tell me, where is Fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and Fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring Fancy's knell
I'll begin it: Ding, dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell.

[11] *It was a lover and his lass*
Shakespeare
As You Like It, Act 5, scene iii

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green cornfield did pass
In the Spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding,
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
Those pretty country folks would lie,
This carol they began that hour,
How that a life is but a flower.

And therefore take the present time,
For love is crownèd with the prime,
In Spring-time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding-a-ding,
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

[12] *Fairies' Song*

Gerald Cumberland (1879–1926)
(1906)

Softly, softly, under earth so cool,
By the margin of a pool,
Lillies stir with faint surprise,
Quickened by the Spring's warm sighs,

Gently grow they, one by one,
Kissed to life by the hot sun.
Whilst their flowers shake in the air,
I hear music everywhere:

Tiny little cups of sound,
Grown by roots within the ground.
Music sweet comes from all flowers
Trembling softly in the bowers,

But the chimes that lilies make,
Sweetest are for thy dear sake.

[13] *Absence*

Robert Burns (1759–96)
(mid-1780s–90s)

When I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie;
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie?

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were sad and weary.
It was na so, ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

[14] *Pack Clouds Away!*

Thomas Heywood (early 1570s–1641)
'Matin's Song', *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608)

Pack clouds away and welcome day
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air, blow soft; mount, larks, aloft
To give my Love good-morrow!
Wings from the wind to please her mind
Notes from the lark I'll borrow:
Bird, prune thy wing, nightingale, sing,
To give my Love good-morrow
To give my Love good-morrow!
Notes from them both, I'll borrow!

Wake from the nest, Robin redbreast,
Sing birds in ev'ry furrow;
And from each bill, Let music shrill

Give my fair Love good morrow
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, among your-selves
Sing my fair love good-morrow
To give my Love fair morrow
Sing birds in every furrow.

15 Pastoral: The Shepherd

William Blake (1757–1827)
Songs of Innocence and of Experience
Shewing the Two Contrary States
of the Human Soul (1794)

How sweet is the Shepherd's 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 lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

16 Infant Joy

Blake
Songs of Innocence and of Experience

I have no name
I am but two days old.
What shall I call thee?
I happy am

Joy is my name,
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy but two days old,
Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile.
I sing the while
Sweet joy befall thee.

17 The Lamb

Blake
Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bade thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice
Making all the world rejoice
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee.
Little Lamb I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,

We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

18 *Laughing Song*

Blake

Songs of Innocence and of Experience

When the green woods laugh with the voice
of joy
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,

When the meadows laugh with lively green
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing ‘Ha ha he!’

When the painted birds laugh in the shade
Where our table with cherries and nuts is
spread,
Come live, and be merry, and join with me
To sing the sweet chorus of ‘Ha ha he!’

19 *The Fairy Palace*

Michael Drayton (1563–1631)

Nymphidia, The Court of Fairy (1627)

This palace standeth in the air,
By necromancy placed there

That it no tempests needs to fear
Which way soe'er it blow it
And somewhere southward toward the noon,
Whence lies a way up to the moon;
And thence the Fairy can as soon
Pass to the earth below it.

The walls of spiders' legs are made,
Well mortised and finely laid;
He was the master of his trade
It curiously that builded;
The windows of the eyes of cats,
And for the roof, instead of slats
Is covered with the skins of bats
With moonshine that are gilded.

20 *Spring, the sweet spring*

Thomas Nashe (1567–1601)

*A pleasant comedie, called Summers last will
and testament* (1600)

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant
king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in
a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, tu-wit-ta-woo!

The Palm and May make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, tu-wit-ta-woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, tu wit-ta-woo!
Spring! the sweet Spring.

[21] *The Lost Doll*

Charles Kingsley (1819–75)
The Water Babies (1862)

I once had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world;
Her cheeks were so red and white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears,
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day;
Folks say she is terribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arms trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled;
Yet for old sakes she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

[22] *The Dream*

Blake
Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel guarded bed,
That an Emmet³ lost its way
Where on grass me thought I lay.

Troubled, wilder'd, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel worn
Over many a tangle spray,
All heart-broke, I heard her say:

'Oh my children, do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see;
Now return and weep for me?'

Pitying I dropp'd a tear;
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied: What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round.
Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wand'rer, hie thee home!'

³ 'Emmet' is an archaic or dialectal term for an ant, derived from the Old English æmette. It is still used in Cornwall as a colloquial, often derogatory, word for tourists.

23 *The Echoing Green*

Blake

Songs of Innocence and of Experience

The sun does arise
And make happy the skies.
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring
The sky-lark and thrush
The birds of the bush
Sing louder around
To the bells cheerful sound.
while our sports shall be seen
On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk
They laugh at our play
And soon they all say
'Such, such were the joys
When we all girls & boys
In our youth-time were seen
On the echoing green.'

Till the little ones weary
No more can be merry
The sun does descend
And our sports have an end
Round the laps of their mothers,
Many sisters and brothers
Like birds in their nest

Are ready for rest
And sport no more seen
On the echoing green.

24 *The Moon*

Cumberland

Rosalys, and Other Poems (1919)

The moon's a lamp hung in the sky
She lingers till the night's passed by
The stars are sheep, their shepherd she;
She tends her flock most patiently,
At dawn a little child she is;
She hides her face from the sun's kiss.

A ghost all day she is I know
And her face is soft and white like snow
Sometimes the moon man comes at night
His face is dark, his hair is white
Behind a cloud I see him wink.
He's feeling jolly so I think.

One night I saw the old moon rise
From out the sea and climb the skies
Her angry face was red but when
She neared nigh heav'n 'twas calm again.
I love her best when in my bed
I see her hov'ring over head
For then a little lamb am I
Watched by the shepherd in the sky.

25 *The River*

Cumberland
(1914)

Where do you come from? Where do you go?
What is the song you sing so low?
'I come from the clouds;
I go to the sea;
And the song I sing is a song for thee.'

Why do you haste so quickly away?
Linger a moment, Stay, oh stay!
'My mother, the sea,
she waiteth for me,
And I run to her that I may be free.'

Let me come with you, take me away,
give me the seas where the dolphins play.
'The sea is a wilderness drear and old
And the wind is bleak,
and the stars are cold.'

Here I am lonely, You are my friend
Run not away to the world's far end.
'Today I am here and here shall I be
Though my arms stretch out to the farthest sea
I circle the earth I circle the skies

But I'm always here 'neath your sweet fresh eyes
Have never a fear we're friends for a day
We're friends for a year
We're friends for alway.'

26 *The Mountain and the Squirrel*

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82)
(1846)

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter
'Little prig,'
Bun replied,
'You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry;
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut!'

27 *What does little birdie say?*

Alfred Tennyson (1809–92)
'Cradle Song,' *The Princess* (1849)

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,

Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger,
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

[28] *Shall I then be spared?*

Hannah More (1745–1833)

Shall I then be spared, o monstrous pride?
shall I escape
When Solomon has died?
If all the worth of all the saints were vain,
Peace to my troubled soul nor dare complain.

Lord, I submit, Complete they gracious will
for if thou slay me
I will love thee still.
Oh be my will so swallow'd up in thine
That I may do they will in doing mine.

[29] *O Happiness, celestial fair*

More

The Search after Happiness: A Pastoral Drama
(1762)

O happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care;
Oh hear our fond request.
Vouchsafe reluctant Nymph to tell
On what sweet spot thou lov'st to dwell,
And make us truly blest.

O happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care.
Let us not sue in vain
O deign to hear our fond request
Come take possession of our breast,
And there for ever reign.

[30] *Sweet Solitude*

More

'*Sylvia's Song*,' *The Search after Happiness*

Sweet Solitude, thou placid queen,
Of modest air and brow serene!
'Tis thou inspirest the Sage's themes,
The Poet's visionary dreams;

In these blest shades, oh still maintain
Thy peaceful, unmolested reign!
Let no disorder'd thoughts intrude
On thy repose, sweet Solitude!

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And angels wings point the way to peace.

[31] *The Phantom Wooer*

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–49)
Poems (1851)

A Ghost, that loved a lady fair,
Ever in the starry air
Of midnight at her pillow stood;
And with a sweetness skies above
The luring words of human love
Her soul the phantom woo'd.
Sweet and sweet is the poisoned note,
The little snakes of silver throat,
In mossy skulls that nest and lie
Ever singing 'die, oh! die.'

Young soul, put off your flesh and come
With me into the quiet tomb,
Our bed is lovely, dark, and sweet.
The earth will swing us as she goes,
Beneath our coverlid of snows,
And the warm leaden sheet.
Dear and dear is their poisoned note

The little snakes of silver throat
In mossy skulls that nest and lie
Ever singing 'die, oh! die.'

[32] *He was a rat*

Laura Elizabeth Howe Richards (1850–1943)

He was a rat, and she was a rat,
And down in one hole they did dwell,
And both were as black as a witch's cat,
And they loved one another well.

He had a tail, and she had a tail,
Both long and curling and fine;
And each said, 'Yours is the finest tail
In the world, excepting mine!'

He smelt the cheese, and she smelt the cheese,
And they both pronounced it good;
And both remarked it would greatly add
To the charms of their daily food.

So he ventured out and she ventured out;
And I saw them go with pain;
But what befell them I never can tell,
For they never never came back again.

The Havergal Brian Society exists to promote public knowledge of the work of William Havergal Brian (1876–1972) and to support and sponsor its publication, performance and recording. The HBS, which enjoyed the distinguished patronage of Sir Adrian Boult until his death in 1983, was founded informally in 1974 by Martin Grossel and James Reid Baxter. With the clarification of its principal aims and objectives, a more formal structure was established in 1977, and charitable status was granted in 1978. Membership has continued to grow, and is now global.



Aims and Objectives

1. To act as an information source about the composer and his music, both for the general public and for musicians
2. To promote and sponsor recitals, concerts and recordings of Brian's music
3. To advise and assist prospective performers in their choice of works and in the acquisition of performing materials
4. To publish original material on Brian and his music
5. To gather as much information as possible on the whereabouts of Brian's missing scores, most importantly the full score of *Prometheus Unbound*

To join the Society, please write to membership@havergalbrian.org.

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