TOCCATA CLASSICS

# Hans GÁL

## MUSIC FOR VOICES, VOLUME THREE

OF A SUMMER DAY, OP. 77
FOUR PART-SONGS, OP. 61
NACHTMUSIK, OP. 44
TWO SONGS, OP. 63
TWO SONGS, OP. 8

Carolyn Sampson, soprano
Pixels Ensemble
Borealis Choir
Bridget Budge and Stephen Muir, directors

FIRST RECORDINGS

# HANS GÁL: MUSIC FOR VOICES, VOLUME THREE

by Stephen Muir

In spite of little early musical education beyond 'some wretched class singing',[1] success as a composer came relatively early to Hans Gál. Although his parents were not formally trained in music, the family was nevertheless culturally inclined, and Gál accumulated musical impressions from the age of seven, starting (at first somewhat reluctantly) with piano lessons, visits to the opera with his father and sisters and, most significantly, his first experience (when he was fourteen) of an orchestral concert, featuring Wagner's *Meistersinger* Overture and Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony. Under the supervision of his piano teacher (and director of the New Vienna Conservatoire) Richard Robert (1861–1924), Gál obtained his music-teaching certificate in 1909, by which time he had already composed around 100 songs, piano versions of four operas in sketch form and innumerable piano pieces – all later destroyed as works of his apprenticeship.

In that same year, 1909, Robert obtained for Gál an appointment as teacher of harmony and piano at the New Vienna Conservatoire. It was also through Robert that he found his ideal mentor and 'spiritual father' in Eusebius Mandyczewski (1857–1929), a close friend of Johannes Brahms. Gál worked intensively with Mandyczewski on musical form and counterpoint for two years (1909–11); the two would later collaborate on publication of the complete works of Brahms. At the same time Gál pursued the academic study of musicology at the Musikhistorisches Institut of the University of Vienna under the eminent music-historian Guido Adler (1855–1941), culminating in 1913 with the completion of a doctoral dissertation on Beethoven.

In the ensuing short period before being drafted into the army in 1915, Gál had completed an opera, a symphony – for which he won, out of 78 contestants, the

[1] Letter to Erich Kleiber's biographer John Russell, dated 14 September 1956, held in the Gál family archives.

newly created 'State Prize for Composition' – and other orchestral and chamber-music works. They were for the most part 'laid aside'. Some works, however, survived their composer's critical judgement, including several for voices. Among this number can be counted Gál's earliest surviving works:[2] sets of accompanied songs for, respectively, male and female voices, Opp. 11 and 12 (1910–11); a cantata for four female soloists, double female chorus, organ and two harps entitled *Von ewiger Freude* ('Of Eternal Joy'), Op. 1 (1912); and the Two Songs, Op. 8, for four-part male-voice choir *a cappella* (1914).

Gál's exceptional ability at writing for voices is already in evidence in these Op. 8 pieces. The first, 'Idylle' 16, sets the text 'Kleinstadt-Idyll' by the poet Max Bruns (1876–1945).[3] The undulating motion at the opening phrase perfectly captures the author's description of the whispering sound of a fountain as sleep descends over a town square. Towards the end of each verse, delicate syncopations in the middle two voices move in subtle counterpoint to rather furtive melodic octaves between the outer two voices, hinting at the call of the nightwatchman and the gradual emergence of the crescent moon and stars.

'Sterne im Wasser' ('Starlight on the Water') 17 by Carl Bulcke (1875–1963) begins in a similarly peaceful manner, notwithstanding Gál's striking syncopation in the Bass 1 voice in contradistinction to the rhythmically uniform motion of the other three parts. Somehow this texture creates not tense agitation but nocturnal serenity; the pulsing interplay of voices delightfully conjures the breeze disturbing the mast and sails of a ship, and playfully suggests the hypnotic 'splosh-clomp' undulations of oarsmen in the distance. In this song, however, the languid atmosphere is momentarily interrupted as the poet contemplates the notion that only death can truly bring a release from life's struggles. Gál uses gentle fanfare-like figures to generate urgency, rising to a brief climax ('the glassy mirror of your soul') before subsiding back to tranquillity.

[2] Throughout his life Gál assigned opus numbers to his works only upon publication; as a result, his opus numbers coincide with the order of composition only occasionally.

[3] Originally published in Bruns' collection *Lenz: Ein Buch von Kraft und Schönheit* ('Springtime: A Book of Strength and Beauty') Schuster & Loeffler, Berlin and Leipzig, 1899.

Gál chooses to reprise the first verse, allowing the short-lived portent of death to be subsumed back into the gentle syncopations of the opening, creating a self-contained miniature masterpiece of word- and mood-painting.

Gál's 'active service' in the First World War from 1915 does not appear to have been so active as to stem the flow of his compositions, and his salvation was the ability, developed in his youth through confined domestic circumstances, simply to shut out all external distractions and concentrate on his own work. As a result, a number of important works emerged even in these disrupted years, including *Vom Bäumlein, das andere Blätter hat gewollt* ('The Tree that Wanted Different Leaves'), Op. 2, a cantata for alto solo, six-part female chorus and small orchestra (1916), *Serbische Weisen* ('Serbian Tunes') for piano duet, Op. 3 (1916), String Quartet No. 1, Op. 16 (published in 1924), and, most significantly, the comic opera *Der Arzt der Sobeide* ('Sobeide's Doctor') – composed mostly in winter 1917–18, when Gál was supposed to be building a mountain railway in the Polish Carpathians – which was published in 1919 as Op. 4 and received a successful premiere in Breslau the same year.

The ensuing decade, the 1920s, was to be the most intensively creative period of Gál's life. Major works include the operas *Die heilige Ente* ('The Sacred Duck'), Op. 15 (1920–21), and *Das Lied der Nacht* ('The Song of the Night'), Op. 23 (1924–25), the First Symphony, Op. 30 (1927), Piano Trio, Op. 18 (1925), Wind Divertimento, Op. 22 (1925), Piano Sonata, Op. 28 (1927), organ Toccata, Op. 29 (1928), and his Second String Quartet, Op. 35 (1929). With the success of *Die heilige Ente*, premiered in 1923, Gál's music achieved widespread performance and recognition, particularly in the buoyant cultural market of Weimar Germany, which offered unparalleled opportunities for the young composer. The *Motette*, Op. 19,[4] stems from 1924, and for the ensuing five years, the publishers Simrock offered Gál a salary for first refusal of any of his compositions, a clear indication that his fortunes were rising rapidly.

With these creative successes already under his belt, and fourteen years after he composed the earliest works in this album (Op. 8), Gál's 1928 article 'Vocal Chamber

[4] Recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0509.

Music' summed up his thoughts regarding the ever-increasing gap between composer and audience in contemporary music:

> What our musical life needs is […] a revival of the joy in music-making, a fresh impetus for domestic music. But most advantageously placed for this is what has long slumbered: a-cappella singing. [… –] *vocal music-making as chamber or domestic music*. […] It is only in the course of the last decade, with the decline of the massed orchestra and the move to chamber forms and thin, transparent treatment of instrumental resources, that the interest in pure vocal music has again awoken. The chamber choir and madrigal group are starting their activities, a new a-cappella literature is beginning. This more than any other form of music is dependent on a chamber-music effect. Its most precious effective means, the reciprocal support and interpenetration of words and music, demand, in order to succeed, an intimate space and a small, almost soloistic, number of singers to each part. […] The secular music of the 16th century, the madrigal, which was almost exclusively chamber music, makes the richest and most felicitous use of these possibilities for effect. [...] Here is a treasure to be unearthed for practical music-making that can be compared in significance with what the musical life of the last century gained by the rediscovery of the life's work of Johann Sebastian Bach. But above all there is a task in this area for the creative musicians of our own time [...]: *a new vocal music* is to be created, music which, born of the spirit of our time and making use of the newly acquired expressive possibilities, leads back to the long-buried sources of genuine vocalism, a *chamber* music in the true sense of the word, which offers the joy and stimulus not only of listening but also of singing.[5]

Although Gál does not mention himself or his music in this article, it is very much a manifesto of his beliefs and practice, and clearly expresses his sense of the potential for the creative renewal of contemporary music through reconnection to a vital and forgotten source. Gál had been a co-founder of the Vienna Bach Society in 1912, and in 1925 had founded a Madrigal Choir, at the time the only mixed *a cappella* choir in Vienna. In 1929, on the strength of his international successes, Gál left Vienna to

[5] Hans Gál, *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, Vol. X, Nos. 9–10 (1928), pp. 355–56.

take up a prestigious appointment as Director of the Music Conservatoire in Mainz, and again added a madrigal choir (indeed, he was nicknamed 'Hans Madrigál') and a women's voice choir to the existing college ensembles. The next four years were a happy and active period of his life, and in February 1933 his contract in Mainz was renewed for a further three years.

Fate, however, in the form of Adolf Hitler, was very rapidly to take a different turn. Only one month later – from the end of March 1933 – Gál, being of Jewish descent, was summarily dismissed from office, and his music banned from performance or publication in Nazi Germany. Over the next weeks and months all means of livelihood were successively closed to 'non-Aryans', and Gál was no exception. The family initially took refuge in a village in the Black Forest, where they had contacts. That is where, in the immediate aftermath of the cataclysmic change that had torn into their lives, *Nachtmusik* ('Night Music'), Op. 44 (1933) [1], was composed. Gál was not given to direct self-expression, nor was he himself religious, but in Grimmelshausen's poem about the song of the nightingale – characterised here by the flute in dialogue with the soprano solo – he found a powerful symbol of comfort in the voice that transcends the darkness of the night. *Nachtmusik* affirms the power of the voice to rise above the darkness in praise of the Creator, and thereby affirms His own power to create in the face of those who would silence Him.

From the outset of *Nachtmusik*, the almost unceasing ostinato figure in the piano sets up a tension that is in turns beguiling, ravishing, unsettling, even disturbing, and fully resolves in hopeful rest only at the very end ('most nearly can thy singing praise to God on high be bringing'). The soprano solo line frequently departs the realm of language into ecstatic vocalisation, often entwined with virtuosic flute lines suggesting that when even Grimmelshausen's sublime poetry becomes inadequate, music alone transcends earthly meaning and reaches towards a higher and more powerful dimension.

With *Nachtmusik* all but complete, and when it had become clear in September 1933 that there was no future for himself or his family in Germany, Gál returned to Vienna, in preference to the possibility of emigrating to America. In Vienna he composed the cantata *De Profundis*, Op. 50 (1936), a large-scale vocal symphony in five movements,

for solo singers, choir, orchestra and organ, later dedicated 'to the memory of this time, its misery and its victims', with texts (dealing with the 30 Years' War) reflecting with apocalyptic vividness Gál's sense of impending doom. Nevertheless, this work, written with no immediate prospect of performance, testifies to his unshakeable belief in the validity and viability of the musical tradition in which it is so firmly anchored, and with its composition he liberated himself as a creative artist from the trauma of 1933.

But the Nazi regime was already casting its shadow across the border, and the political situation in Austria became increasingly unstable. Gál was unable to obtain any official post. He had to survive on private teaching, occasional conducting (including his former madrigal choir) and whatever other paid work he could find; in March 1938, as the German *Anschluss* of Austria began, the Gál family took the painful decision to emigrate to England, with the intention of continuing to America in due course.

Circumstances dictated otherwise. The Gáls were still in London when the Second World War broke out in September 1939; Gál's wife, Hanna, immediately lost her job as a speech therapist, and the family eventually moved to Edinburgh, where the possibility had arisen of accommodation with a retired professor of English for whom Hanna would act as housekeeper. Gál felt comfortable in this thoroughly cultivated environment, where there was good conversation, chamber music and singing. He continued to compose, formed yet another madrigal choir, founded a refugee orchestra and gave concerts. But this relatively comfortable existence was again to be shattered in May 1940, when Gál was interned along with around 27,000 other 'enemy aliens', an experience documented in the only diary that the composer ever kept, entitled *Music behind Barbed-Wire: A Diary of Summer 1940*.[6] Fortunately, in late September of that year Gál was able to return to Edinburgh, a free man.

With the end of the war the situation for the family began to improve markedly. Gál was appointed to a permanent teaching post in the music faculty in Edinburgh, providing financial security and a focus for his activities. He remained active at the University well beyond retirement age, residing in Edinburgh until the end of his long

[6] *Musik hinter Stacheldraht*, ed. Eva Fox-Gál, Peter Lang, 2003; *Music behind Barbed Wire*, transl. Anthony Fox and Eva Fox-Gál, Toccata Press, London, 2014.

life, becoming a well-known personality in the musical life of the city as composer, performer, scholar and teacher. He also became involved in discussions about the possibility of founding a festival in Edinburgh. Initially sceptical, after the establishment of the Edinburgh International Festival in 1947 Gál became closely involved with and supportive of the event for many years. In turn, he began to regain some of the recognition he had enjoyed before the war, being awarded the Austrian State Prize in 1958, honorary doctorates from the universities of Edinburgh (1948) and Mainz (1977), the Order of the British Empire (1964) and the Grand Order of the Austrian Republic 'Literis et Artibus' (1981).

But after his fifteen years of prohibition and exile, it was clear that times had changed, and with them musical tastes – at least, among the leaders of musical fashion, if not necessarily the public. Undeterred, Gál continued to compose, without consideration of further external recognition, and by the late 1950s he had completed a good number of new compositions, many of them featuring voices. The cantata *Lebenskreise* ('Life Cycles'), Op. 70 (1955), for four soloists and chorus (SATB), youth choir and orchestra, forms a positive counterweight to *De Profundis*, and from a similarly affirmative vein came *Jugendlieder* ('Songs of Youth'), Op. 75 (1959),[7] *A Clarion Call*, Op. 76 (1959), and the three chronologically latest works in this album, *Of a Summer Day*, Op. 77 (1951), Four Part-Songs, Op. 61 (1954), and the Two Songs for Male Choir, Op. 63 (1954).

Designated by Gál 'A lyrical suite for female voices and string orchestra', *Of a Summer Day* is one of ten works he composed for women's voices. First performed in 1953 by the St Andrew House singers with the Edinburgh Chamber Orchestra and soloist Roberta McEwan, it was actually commissioned and later performed by the conductor Robert Goodale and his women's chorus at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, one of a trio of works that Gál composed for what was one of the leading women's colleges in America. (The other two works were *A Clarion Call*, Op. 76 (1959), and *Songs of Youth*, Op. 75 (1959).[8])

[7] Recorded on Volume Two of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0644.

[8] Likewise recorded on Volume Two.

*Of a Summer Day* is by far Gál's most extensive choral work in English, and the only one with orchestra. Gál selected his own cycle of nine, predominantly nineteenth-century, poems varied in content and mood, ranging from Matthew Arnold's sombre 'Elegy' to F. W. Harvey's light-hearted 'Ducks'. Several other well-known poems were also included, such as Robert Herrick's 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may' and Walter de la Mare's 'Silver'.

The instrumental Prelude 6 establishes a mood of summer tranquillity only occasionally disturbed, foreshadowing many of the themes in the ensuing nine vocal movements. Many of the movements are a call to seize the day, describing the fleeting nature of life and humankind's limited time in which to enjoy it. The first, 'To-day' 7, by Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) is one such text, crafted in an understated form reflected in Gál's disarmingly simple setting. The second, 'Morning' 8, by contrast, marks the first appearance of the soprano soloist with commanding statements of 'Sister, awake!', declaimed over an accompaniment of shimmering string trills. Joyous counterpoint soon breaks out, the voices excitedly throwing the text 'and the bright morning doth arise out of her bed' between them. A brief moment of tranquillity soon gives way to restatements of the 'Awake! Make haste!' motif, now with hints of octatonicism urging the sisterly throng to hurry 'into the park a-maying'. The shimmering string trills once more lead to the conclusion and a brief moment of respite before the even more frenetic third song, 'Make much of Time' 9, which sets a text originally entitled 'To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time' (1648) by the English Cavalier poet Robert Herrick (1591–1674). The jaunty, somewhat angular accompaniment and sudden *pizzicato* outbursts give urgency to the elegantly poised vocal melody, reinforcing the notion that 'Old Time is still a-flying'. Gál alternates the largely cheerful music with one of his signature melodic progressions for lines cautioning that 'this same flower that smiles today, tomorrow will be dying', again lending the setting a hint of uneasiness amid the excitement.

By contrast, IV, 'Song of June' 10, features a languorously rippling accompaniment reflecting the 'drowsy tune' sung initially by unison voices. Some of Gál's favourite images (murmuring fountains, flickering leaves, the crescent moon) are brought to the

fore through the lens of the lyrical poem 'In Fountain Court' by British poet and critic Arthur Symons (1865–1945) from the collection *Silhouettes* (1892). Symons intertwines themes of longing, beauty and nostalgia, reflected by Gál through chromatic inflections and broad, sweeping melodic lines. Of special note is the conclusion 'come through the lingering afternoon, soon, love, come soon', which Gál captures with achingly beautiful jazz-like canonic vocal entries, resolving to an expectant major chord anticipating the arrival of love. As the soprano soloist explains in the fifth song, 'Elegy' 11, that long-hoped-for love sometimes never comes. Here, the intense pain of the text ('Too late', from *Faded Leaves* by Matthew Arnold, 1822–88) is laid bare in Gál's sparsely undulating accompaniment, which unfolds with slowly jarring harmonies and false relations between voice and muted instruments. The double bass remains *tacet* throughout 'Elegy': there is no emotional anchoring, and ultimately the soloist is left alone, unaccompanied on the final words 'too late'. A lesser composer might here have illustrated misery with deep, murky dissonant harmonies; Gál, however, reaches towards heaven in the final bars, only to find utter despair in the high solo harmonic of the cello and the desolate, whispered closing minor triad.

From the very outset of VI, 'Scherzo' 12, a starker contrast could hardly be imagined. Gál demonstrates the sheer breadth of his expressive genius, brazenly transforming the opening breathless jauntiness of 'Make much of time' into a delightfully playful accompaniment to the rather ungainly 'Ducks' so affectionately depicted by Frederick Harvey (1888–1957), published in his collection *Ducks and Other Verses*.[9] As a former wartime captive, Gál may well have felt some affinity with Harvey, who wrote the poem whilst imprisoned in the Holzminden prisoner-of-war camp: returning from a period of solitary confinement, he found the wall above his bed decorated with fresh chalk drawings of ducks in a pool of water. Gál was certainly inspired by Harvey's 'beautiful comical things', capturing with humour the birds' waddling gait in his musical setting, matching Harvey's varied descriptions at every turn, and allowing a special moment for the ducks' mischievous 'Quack!' Gál's inspired choice of an *a cappella* texture to

[9] Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1919.

reflect 'when God had finished the stars and whirl of coloured sun' nevertheless retains the underlying humour of the text, an understated wit sustained to the last in the exaggeratedly poised setting of 'And he's probably laughing still at the sound that came out of its bill!'

VII and VIII, 'Hurricane' and 'Sunset', both come from Book IV of *Shorter Poems* (1890) by Robert Seymour Bridges (1844–1930), who was the British Poet Laureate for the last seventeen years of his life. 'Hurricane' 13 is a *tour de force* of virtuosic *tempesta* string-writing, replete with agitatedly chromatic, angular melody lines and a subtle metric instability that aptly depicts the urgent account by the soloist and choir of a storm, itself a reflection of the protagonist's sad 'proud spirit', rendered 'a wreck of fairer field to mourn'. By contrast, 'Sunset' 14 – for soprano soloist alone – is a deeply felt and tender expression of acceptance, with a barely perceptible interplay of compound and simple metre ('the tyrannous wind, its strength fordone') finding resolution with the optimistically warm cadence signifying that 'The day is done'. Now 'wrapped in sleep', 'Sunset' melts into 'Silver', the final movement of the cantata 15. The summery tranquillity of the 'Prelude' returns, now suffused with the blissful contentment of Gál's sumptuous interpretation of the poetry of Walter de la Mare (1873–1956). Lofty harmonics from the first violin lend the setting a transparency that complements the rich harmonic backdrop.

In his new adoptive home, Gál became fascinated by the flowering of the English Madrigal School (c. 1580–1630), an interest first suggested in his 1928 'manifesto' article in *Musikblätter des Anbruch*. Among his earliest English-language compositions after the formation of his madrigal choir in Edinburgh (1939) were the *Four Madrigals to Elizabethan Poems*, Op. 51 (1939),[10] soon followed by *Two Madrigals to Poems by Thomas Lodge* (1939–40).[11] It is no surprise, then, that he once again drew upon the period and style for inspiration in his Four Part-Songs, Op. 61, for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella* (1954).

[10] Recorded on Volume One, TOCC 0509.

[11] Recorded on Volume Two, TOCC 0644.

*Hans Gál and the Vienna Madrigal Society, 1929*

No. 1, 'Love Will Find out the Way' [2], takes extracts from an anonymous seventeenth-century poem published as 'The Great Adventurer' in *Palgrave's Golden Treasury* (1906). Gál's characterful setting exemplifies precisely the concepts set out in the 1928 article.

From the opening lines, 'Love Will Find out the Way' demonstrates the successful fusion of the sixteenth-century chamber-like textures he cited with the chromaticism of Gál's own time. In another example, the apparently incongruous descending quavers in the tenor line of the cadential figure heard at the end of each verse would scarcely

by tolerated in Elizabethan times, given the surprisingly modern effect they impart (this cadential formula would much later become a hallmark of John Rutter's style). No. 2, 'An Epitaph' (a setting of verses 2 and 4 of 'Epitaph, Intended for Himself', by the poet and anti-slavery abolitionist James Beattie, 1735–1803) 3, is quintessentially madrigalian in nature and affect, but modern (for Gál) in harmony and expressive range. Again, it is the cadences (the final one in particular) that most clearly add Gál's unmistakable stamp, along with a contrapuntal fluency honed over a lifetime spent championing the virtues of choral music.

Contrapuntal assuredness is again seen in the central section ('then save me') of No. 3 'To Sleep' (a sonnet from 1819 by John Keats, 1795–1821) 4. Here, the anxious imitative entries reinforce the ironic conclusion of the sonnet: far from being the blissful state of repose promised by the soft lilt of the opening phrases, 'soothest Sleep' is in fact our best, even our *only* hope of escaping the tormented memories – the 'curious conscience that still lords its strength for darkness' – of the human condition.

A lighter, more triumphant conclusion is provided in No. 4, 'Phyllida and Corydon' (to a text by Nicholas Breton, 1542–1604) 5. The opening imitative entries express the pure joy of the month of May in typical Elizabethan manner, and the setting continues with stylistically appropriate depictions of the rather coquettish interaction between the title characters, as observed in secret by the narrator. Gál sustains the momentum to the last, closing with a glorious sequence of imitative entries that build to a magnificent and ecstatic conclusion: 'And Phyllida, with garlands gay, Was made the Lady of the May'.

The remaining work featured on this third volume of Gál's music for voices consists of the Two Songs, Op. 63, for Male Choir, (also from 1954), and recollects a different aspect of the musical lineage within which Gál felt himself to be firmly established. Possessed of a sharp and witty sense of humour, he was not averse to echoing the songs of ordinary people in his output, and drinking songs were no exception. At the same time, he was a keen admirer of the German Baroque poets, and Op. 8 enthusiastically embodies these two fascinations.

No. 1, 'Bey dem Weine' ('Wine Song') 18, to a text by Christian Brehme (1613–67), is entirely strophic in form, something of a rarity in Gál's output: he generally preferred

a through-composed structure that allows for more flexibility. The structure is entirely suitable for the text, however, and results in a jovial clog-dance-like incantation in praise of Bacchic delights. Like many venerable drinking songs, this one ends with a more-or-less untranslatable exclamation 'Juch hoscha holl!', a resounding 'hurrah' to round off the evening's revelry (or, perhaps, to mark its recommencement).

No. 2, 'Runda' 19 (probably an archaic form of the word 'Runde', meaning a 'round' of drinks), to words by Gottfried Finckelthaus (1614–48), raucously celebrates a drinking session by extolling the virtues of sharing a cup and pursuing romantic ambitions, with another idiomatic refrain, 'Rundadinellula!'. Gál makes much play of the percussive text, delighting especially in the line 'Singt, springt, klingt, trinkt, herzt, scherzt und schreit' ('Sing, leap, clink, drink, love, jest and shout'). His setting is notable for the number of emotional states that are reflected through the music. For the line 'So guard the code, brave lads, stand true', the music shifts to the minor, recalling a kind of mock or indignant seriousness that one might encounter in inebriated company. Similarly, 'And if you've done as I have sung' is given a stretto-like treatment in close canon, suggesting the clumsy imitations and mimicry that often characterise such gatherings. Finally, the song ends with an ecstatic cry of 'Rundadinellula!', the B flat in the bass part momentarily clashing with the G major chord resounding above it to raucous effect.

The wide variety of styles, texts, poetic registers and musical languages on display throughout this recording attest to a composer steeped in a longstanding tradition and yet capable of amalgamating the essence of that tradition with 'the newly-acquired expressive possibilities' afforded by his modern situation. Kenneth Leighton summed up his late colleague in a moving obituary, affectionately observing that in Gál's music 'the main features are intense lyricism (which in more recent works owes not a little to the English tradition) and a mixture of strength, tenderness and quiet humour. Everything sings. His music says "yes" to life'.[12] A more fitting tribute from one distinguished composer to another would be difficult to imagine.

[12] 'Dr. Hans Gál', *The Independent*, 9 October 1987; the text can be viewed in full at https://kennethwoods.net/blog1/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/GalScan1.bmp1.jpg.

## Texts and Translations

### 1 Nachtmusik, Op. 44, for soprano solo, male voices, flute, cello and piano

*H. J. Chr. v. Grimmelshausen (1621–76)*

Komm', Trost der Nacht, o Nachtigall,
Lass' deine Stimm' mit Freudenschall
Auf's Lieblichste erklingen;
Komm', komm' und lob' den Schöpfer dein,
Weil andre Vögel schlafen sein,
Und nicht mehr mögen singen!

*Come nightingale, night's comfort thou,*
*with joyful sound thy voice let now*
*in loveliness be ringing.*
*to thy creator, come, give praise,*
*since other birds in sleep do laze,*
*and can no more be singing!*

Lass' dein Stimmlein
Laut erschallen,
Dann vor allen
Kannst du loben
Gott im Himmel hoch dort oben.

*Let thy voice*
*sound loud and clearly,*
*then most nearly*
*can thy singing*
*praise to God on high be bringing.*

Obschon ist hin der Sonnenschein
Und wir im Finstern müssen sein,
So können wir doch singen
Von Gottes Güt' und seiner Macht,
Weil uns kann hindern keine Nacht,
Sein Lob zu vollbringen.

*Although the sun has gone away*
*and now in darkness we must stay,*
*yet still we can be singing*
*of God's great goodness and his might,*
*for night cannot deny our right*
*our praises to be bringing.*

Drum dein Stimmlein
Lass' erschallen,
Dann vor allen
Kannst du loben
Gott im Himmel hoch dort oben.

*Let therefore*
*thy voice sound clearly,*
*then most nearly*
*can thy singing*
*praise to God on high be bringing.*

Echo, der wilde Widerhall
Will sein bei diesem Freudenschall
Und lässet sich auch hören,
Verweist uns alle Müdigkeit,
Der wir ergeben allezeit,
Lehrt uns, den Schlaf betören.

Die Sterne, so am Himmel steh'n
Sich lassen zum Lob Gottes seh'n
Und Ehre ihm beweisen;
Die Eul' auch, die nicht singen kann,
Zeigt doch mit ihrem Heulen an,
Dass sie Gott auch tu preisen.

Nur her, mein liebstes Vögelein,
Wir wollen nicht die Fäulste sein
Und schlafend liegen bleiben,
Vielmehr bis dass die Morgenröt'

Erfreuet diese Wälder öd,
In Gottes Lob vertreiben.
Lass' dein Stimmlein Laut erschallen
Dann vor allen
Kannst du loben
Gott im Himmel hoch dort oben.

*Echo, who gives us back each noise,*
*and wants to share this sound of joys,*
*our company is keeping,*
*and all the tiredness takes away*
*that overcomes us every day,*
*and charms away our sleeping.*

*The stars which in the heavens glow*
*in praise of God themselves do show*
*while honour to him paying.*
*The owl, which has no song, it, too,*
*can still with its to-wit, to-woo*
*be praise to God displaying.*

*So come my dearest bird to me,*
*for we must not so lazy be*
*and still be ever sleeping!*
*But rather must, until the dawn*

*brings joy unto this woodland lawn,*
*our watch in praise be keeping.*
*Let thy voice sound loud and clearly,*
*then most nearly*
*can thy singing*
*praise to God on high be bringing.*

*—Anthony Fox*

**Four Part Songs, Op. 61**

2 No. 1, Love Will Find out the way
*Anon. (seventeenth century)*

Over the mountains and over the waves,
Under the fountains and under the graves;
Under floods that are deepest which Neptune obey,
Over rocks that are steepest, Love will find out the way.

When there is no place for the glow-worm to lie,
When there is no space for receipt of a fly;
When the midge dare not venture, lest herself fast she lay,
If Love comes, he will enter, and will find out the way.

Some think to lose him by having him confined;
And some do suppose him, poor heart, to be blind;
But if ne'er so close you wall him, do the best that ye may,
Blind Love, if so ye call him, he will find out his way.

3 No. 2, An Epitaph
*James Beattie (1735–1803)*
Like thee I once have stemm'd the sea of life,
Like thee have languish'd after empty joys.
Like thee have labour'd in the stormy strife,
Been grieved for trifles and amused with toys.
Forget my frailties; thou art also frail;
Forgive my lapses; for thyself may'st fall:
Nor read unmoved my artless tender tale –
I was a friend, O man, to thee, to all.

4 No. 3, To Sleep
*John Keats (1795–1821)*

O soft embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting with careful fingers and benign
Our gloom pleased eyes, embower'd from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! If so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength for darkness burrowing like a mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

5 No. 4, Phillida and Corydon
*Nicholas Breton (1542–1604)*

In the merry month of May,
In a morn by break of day,
Forth I walk'd by the wood-side,
When as May was in her pride:
There I spièd all alone,
Phillida and Corydon.
Much ado there was, God wot!

He would love, and she would not.
She said, 'Never man was true',
He said, 'None was false to you'.
He said, He had loved her long,
She said, 'Love should have no wrong'.
Corydon would kiss her then,
She said, 'Maids must kiss no men'.
Till they did for good and all;
Then she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness truth,
Never loved a truer youth.
Thus with many a pretty oath,
Yea and nay, and faith and troth,
Such as silly shepherds use
When they will not love abuse,
Love, which had been long deluded,
Was with kisses sweet concluded;
And Phillida, with garlands gay,
Was made the Lady of the May.

## *Of a Summer Day,* Op. 77: A lyrical suite for three-part women's choir with soprano solo and strings

6 Prelude
*Instrumental*

7 I To-day
*Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)*

So here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.
Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did:
So soon it forever
From all eyes is hid.
Out of Eternity
This new Day is born;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.
Here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

8 II Morning
*Anonymous, 1604, possibly by Thomas Bateson (1570–1630)*

Sister awake! Close not your eyes,
The day her light discloses,
And the bright morning doth arise,
Out of her bed of roses.
See the clear sun, the world's bright eye,
In at our window peeping;
Lo! how he blusheth to espy
Us idle wenches, sleeping!
Therefore awake! Make haste, I say,
And let us, without staying,
All in our gowns of green so gay
Into the park a-maying!

9 III Make Much of Time
*Robert Herrick (1591–1674)*

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.
That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.
Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

10 IV Song of June
*Arthur Symons (1865–1945)*

The fountain murmuring of sleep,
A drowsy tune;
The flickering green of leaves that keep
The light of June.
Peace, through a slumbering afternoon,
The peace of June,
A waiting ghost, in the blue sky,
The white curvèd moon;
June, hushed and breathless, waits, and I
Wait too, with June.
Come, through the lingering afternoon,
Soon, love, come soon!

11 V Elegy
*Matthew Arnold (1822–88)*

Each on his own strict line we move,
And some find death ere they find love;
So far apart their lives are thrown
From the twin soul which halves their own.
And sometimes, by still harder fate
The lovers meet, but meet too late.

12 VI Scherzo (Ducks)
*F. W. Harvey (1888–1957)*

From troubles of the world
I turn to ducks,
Beautiful comical things
Sleeping or curled,
Their heads beneath white wings
By water cool,
Or finding curious things
To eat in various mucks
Beneath the pool,
Tails uppermost, or waddling
Sailor-like on the shores
Of ponds, or paddling
– Left! Right! – with fanlike feet
Which are for steady oars
When they (white galleys) float
Each bird a boat
Rippling at will the sweet

Wide waterway…
Yes, ducks are soothy things
And lovely on the lake
When the sunlight draws
Thereon their pictures dim
In colours cool.
And when beneath the pool
They dabble, and when they swim
And make their rippling rings,
O ducks are beautiful things!
But ducks are comical things:–
As comical as you. Quack!
They waddle round, they do.
They eat all sorts of things,
And then they quack.
By barn and stable and stack
They wander at their will,
But if you go too near
They look at you through black
Small topaz-tinted eyes
And wish you ill.
Triangular and clear
They leave their curious track
In mud at the water's edge,
And there amid the sedge
And slime they gobble and peer
Saying 'Quack! quack!'
When God had finished the stars and whirl of coloured suns
He turned His mind from big things to fashion little ones;
Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and then
He made the comical ones in case the minds of men
Should stiffen and become
Dull, humourless and glum.
And so forgetful of their Maker be
As to take themselves – *quite seriously*.
And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit
Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it.
And He's probably laughing still
At the sound that came out of its bill!

13 VII Hurricane
*Robert Bridges (1844–1930)*

The summer trees are tempest-torn,
The hills are wrapped in a mantle wide
Of folding rain by the mad wind borne
Across the countryside.
His scourge of fury is lashing down
The delicate-rankèd golden corn,
That never shall rear its crown
And curtsey to the morn.
So my proud spirit in me is sad,
A *wreck* of fairer fields to mourn,
The ruin of golden hopes she had,
My delicate-rankèd corn.

14 VIII Sunset
*Robert Bridges*

The storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
Is fallen back in the west
To couch with the sinking sun.
The last clouds fare
With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
In melting drifts of the sky.
The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light
Sleep falls on forest and field.
See! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

15 IX Silver
*Walter de la Mare (1873–1956)*

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and [*omitted:* a] silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

**Two Songs, Op. 8, for four-part male-voice choir *a cappella***

16 No. 1, Idylle
*Max Bruns (1876–1945)*

Der Marktplatz ruht, der Brunnen in der Mitte
rauscht in der Sommernacht… wie reifes Korn;
von weitem hallen würdeschwere Schritte,
und melancholisch ruft das Wächterhorn.

*The marketplace rests, the fountain in the square*
*Whispers in the summer night… like ripened corn;*
*Echoing footsteps stir the heavy air,*
*And melancholy sounds the nightwatchman's horn.*

Der Nachtwind weht mit den Kastanienfächern
in tiefen Schlaf die Häuser, längst verwohnt –
und zwischen wunderlichen Giebeldächern
ein Stückchen Himmel… und der Sichelmond.

*The night wind wafts with chestnut plumes Into*
*deep slumber the houses, long forlorn –*
*And midst wonderous gabled roofs that loom, A*
*hint of sky… and the crescent moon is borne.*

*—Stephen Muir*

17 No. 2, Sterne im Wasser
*Carl Bulcke (1875–1936)*

Weiss im Mondlicht träumt der Hafen
Ruderschlag in weiter Ferne
Meine müden Segel schlafen
Und im Wasser steh'n die Sterne
Selig blinkend

*White in moonlight dreams the harbour,*
*Oarsmen's lapping sounds afar,*
*Wearily my sails slumber,*
*And in the water stand the stars,*
*Blissfully gleaming.*

Langsam regen sich die Maste
Stumm zum Meere zieh'n die Wellen
Was ich liebte, was ich haßte
Wandert nur mit auf dem hellen
Blanken Wasser

*Gently stir the masts above,*
*Waves move soundless out to sea;*
*All I hate, and all I love,*
*Floats adrift on filigree limpid water.*

Erst der Tod löst alle Qualen
Erst der bricht alle Riegel
Deines Glückes Sterne strahlen
Spät zur Nacht erst auf dem Spiegel
Deiner Seele

*Only death dissolves all sorrow,*
*Only death breaks every chain.*
*Joy's faint stars, unseen till morrow,*
*Flicker on the glassy mirror*
*Of your soul, through night's domain.*

*—Stephen Muir*

**Two Songs, Op. 63, for four-part male-voice choir *a cappella***

18 No. 1, Bey dem Weine

*Christian Brehme (1613–67)*

Nur weg die Kannen und die Krüg'
in dem man sieht gantz keine Flieg'
anstatt bring her von jenem Ort
geschwungne Gläser richtig sortt!
Jung, wasch es rein und schenk mir ein

*Cast off the jugs and pitchers too*
*Where not a single fly breaks through!*
*Instead, bring here from that fine stash*
*Curved glasses lined in gleaming glass!*
*Young lad, now wash it, pour me wine*

Sieh Bruder, wie gefällt dir das?
du merkst ja, was der Wein für was.
Ich setz, ich gieß, ich schluck, ich trink:
also deim Nachbar wieder wink,
und trink es aus
bis nichts läuft 'raus!

*See, brother, how does this appeal?*
*You notice what the wine can heal.*
*I place, I pour, I gulp, I sip:*
*Thus, to your neighbour, give a tip,*
*Till all is gone!*

Die Flasche, Krug und auch die Kann'
hinfort ich will verweisen lahm:
Mir kömmt zu Sinn, ein Trunk fromm
eines Mannes kann
aus diesem kleinen Glas auch kommen.
Ein solch Gläschen soll man loben,
es bringt uns edlen Trank nach oben!
*Juch hoscha holl!*

*The jug, the crock, the can – begone!*
*I cast them from this table on!*
*One thought now comes to mind, you see:*
*A noble draught may also be*
*Drawn from this humble glass with grace.*
*So praise this little drinking face –*
*It lifts fine wine to highest place!*
*Juch hoscha holl!*

*—Stephen Muir*

19 No. 2, Runda
*Gottfried Finckelthaus (1614–48)*

Ihr Brüder, singt und stimmt mit ein
Ein jeder schreie was er kann:
Gut ist der Wirt, gut ist das Bier:
Ein Schelm ist, der nicht schreit mit mir:
*Rundadinellula!*

Das Glas soll nimmer stille stehn:
Auf G'sundheit soll es umhergehn:
Wer nicht die Liebste herzt und küsst:
Unwürdig seiner Liebsten ist:
*Rundadinellula!*

Drumb nehmt ihr Brüder acht der Schanz:
Kein feiges Herze kriegt den Krantz:
Singt, springt, klingt, trinkt, herzt, scherzt und schreit:
Es ist versoffen alles Leid:
*Rundadinellula!*

Und hast du's so wie ich getan:
So fang die Rund' von neuem an!
*Rundadinellula!*

*Ye brothers, sing and join the cheer*
*Let each one shout without a fear:*
*Good is our host, good is the beer:*
*A rogue he who won't shout clear:*
*Rundadinellula!*

*The glass should never still remain:*
*For health, let's pass it round again:*
*If loved one you don't love and kiss:*
*Unworthy are you of her bliss:*
*Rundadinellula!*

*So guard the code, brave lads, stand true:*
*No coward wins the victor's due!*
*Sing, leap, and clink, drink, love, and jest,*
*All sorrow's drunk and laid to rest!*
*Rundadinellula!*

*And if you've done as I have sung:*
*Then start the round with heart and lung!*
*Rundadinellula!*

*—Stephen Muir*

Equally at home on the concert and opera stages, **Carolyn Sampson** has enjoyed notable successes in the UK as well as throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Over the last 25 years of her career, she has sung with countless world-class musicians, with her recordings serving as testament to both her versatility as an artist and the scope of her repertoire. In 2024 she was awarded an OBE in the King's New Year Honours, was elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and was the winner of the Gramophone Artist of the Year Award.

Having begun her career in the early-music world, she has forged long-standing relationships with many renowned groups, among them the Bach Collegium Japan, the Academy of Ancient Music, The Sixteen and the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century. She has also been a frequent guest with the Concertgebouworkest, Gürzenich Orchester Köln, the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest and the BBC Scottish and BBC Philharmonic as well as the Boston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony and Philadelphia Orchestra, to name but a few. Recent additions to her repertoire have included Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* and Dutilleux's *Correspondances,* which pieces she has performed in the UK, the Netherlands and Croatia. She is proud to be part of the Minnesota Orchestra Mahler series, recording both the Fourth and Eighth Symphonies with Osmo Vänskä for the BIS label. She has had the pleasure of working with other inspiring conductors, among them Harry Bicket, Ivor Bolton, Riccardo Chailly, Jonathan Cohen, Ludovic Morlot, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Trevor Pinnock and Donald Runnicles. She is a frequent guest at such international festivals as Aldeburgh, the BBC Proms, the Dresdner Musikfestspiele and Schleswig Holstein.

On the operatic stage her roles have included the title role in Handel's *Semele* and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* for English National Opera, various roles in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera (released on DVD), and Anne Truelove in *The Rake's Progress* and Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Sir David McVicar's productions for Scottish Opera. In the 2021–22 season she sang Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at the Palau de la Musica in

Barcelona. She has also appeared at Opéra de Paris, Opéra de Lille, Opéra de Montpellier and Opéra National du Rhin, and sang the title role in Lully's *Psyché* for the Boston Early Music Festival, which was released on CD and subsequently nominated for a Grammy in 2008.

A consummate recitalist, Carolyn Sampson appears often at the Wigmore Hall and has given recitals at the Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder, Saintes and Aldeburgh Festivals as well as in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Barcelona, Freiburg, Oper Frankfurt, Pierre Boulez Saal Berlin, Vienna Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall and on tour in Japan.

She has had a celebrated song-partnership with the pianist Joseph Middleton for over a decade. Their debut recording, *Fleurs*, was released in 2015 on BIS and was nominated in the solo vocal category of the Gramophone Awards, as is their most recent album *But I Like to Sing.*

Alongside her longstanding relationship with BIS, she has released award-winning discs for Decca, Harmonia Mundi and Hyperion, her accolades including the 'Choc de l'Année Classica!', an ECHO Award and a Diapason d'Or. Gramophone Awards include 'A French Baroque Diva' (the Recital award 2015), Mozart's Mass in C minor and *Exsultate Jubilate* (Choral 2017) and Bach *St Matthew Passion* (Choral 2020).

**Bridget Budge** was born in Devon and, after falling in love with music at school, went on to read music at Trinity College, Cambridge, where she was a Choral Exhibitioner under the late Richard Marlow. She then specialised in solo singing, subsequently studying at both the Guildhall School of Music, London, and latterly the Royal College of Music, where she was the recipient of several prizes. After early forays into opera (Cambridge Handel Opera Group, Scottish Opera), she decided to concentrate, as a contralto, on concert repertoire, performing as a soloist in oratorio and recital programmes throughout the UK and Germany. She has recorded with the Geoffrey Mitchell Choir in London and has also performed worldwide as a member of the West Deutscher Rundfunkchor and Berliner Rundfunkchor under such conductors as Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, Semyon Bychkov, Neeme Järvi, James Levine and Karlheinz Stockhausen, among others.

Latterly, in addition to occasional solo appearances in recital and with the Black Dyke Brass Band, she has been much in demand as a vocal coach (Huddersfield Choral Society, Mirfield Community of the Resurrection), concert facilitator (Square Chapel for the Arts, Halifax, Brighouse Festival), Music Director (Pennine Spring Festival, Halifax Chamber Choir), and since moving to Yorkshire has gone on to establish several choirs, including Orion and Borealis.

Born in Zambia in 1972, **Stephen Muir** gained B.Mus. and Ph.D. degrees from Birmingham University, specialising in singing and percussion at the Birmingham Conservatoire, and studying conducting under George Hurst at the Canford Conducting Academy (now Sherborne).

As Associate Professor of Music at the University of Leeds (1998–2023), he focused in his research on choral repertoire and performance, nineteenth-century Russian music and Jewish liturgical music in the diaspora, particularly southern Africa. From 2014 to 2018 he was Principal Investigator for the £1.8m AHRC-funded international research project 'Performing the Jewish Archive' (ptja.leeds.ac.uk), resulting in choral and orchestral performances in Sydney, Cape Town and Prague, and, closer to home, in the Wigmore Hall and at the Holocaust Memorial Day Annual Commemoration of the UK Parliament.

He has worked extensively in Britain as a singer, percussionist and conductor, including recordings and broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. With the Leeds Baroque Choir and Orchestra under the direction of Peter Holman, he has sung Bach's Evangelist roles on several occasions, and recently appeared alongside the trumpeter Crispian Steele-Perkins as timpanist for the debut of the new hand-crafted kettle drums of Leeds Baroque.

Now a freelance musician, he is a tenor lay clerk at Sheffield Cathedral, and frequently deputises at cathedrals around the country. He is co-director of the professional chamber choir Borealis, assistant director of the Clothworkers Consort of Leeds, conductor of the recently established Enigma Orchestra and musical director of Anston Ladies Choir.

**Borealis** is a professional chamber choir based in the north of England, drawing membership from among the finest singers in or from the north. Its mission is to give performances of the highest quality, building audiences across northern England while also touring further afield and abroad. Alongside the standard choral repertoire, it aims to present ambitious and exciting programmes and similarly innovative recordings, often bringing to light music and composers who have not received the recognition they deserve.

This, Borealis' fourth recording, embodies this mission, and is the third in a series comprising the complete 'Music for Voices' of Austrian-Jewish émigré composer Hans Gál (1890–1987). Gál has featured prominently in the choir's concert programmes.[1] Borealis delved further into the repertoire of composers displaced by the World War II in its second recording, *Robert Fürstenthal, Complete Choral Music,* Volume One (Toccata Classics TOCC 0648, released in August 2022); a further Fürstenthal album is in preparation.

Although Borealis was formally established as recently as 2016, most of its singers are or have been leading members of the most accomplished and long-standing ensembles of the region, including the Clothworkers Consort of Leeds, Orion Chamber Choir and Manchester Chamber Choir, among others. United as a single choir of 16–20 singers, and directed by Bridget Budge and Stephen Muir, these voices combine to produce a uniquely rich yet agile sound, a perfect blend of youthful vibrancy built upon a solid bedrock of experience.

*Soprano*
Louise Alp
Darryl Dumigan
Hannah Peace
Nicki Sapiro
Sarah Wickham
Alison West

*Alto*
Ruth Aldred
Katrina Attwood
Catherine Haworth
Ruth Taylor
Jane Toole
Rebecca Weaver

*Tenor*
Sam Hubbard
Christopher Hughes
Stephen Muir
Lucien Treacy
Niki Zohdi

*Bass*
Martin Barry
Stuart O'Hara
David Valsamidis
Robert Webb

[1] For more information on the conception and development of the *Music for Voices* project, *cf.* Stephen Muir's posting on the Toccata Blog, 'Songs of Love, Sorrow and Satire (and not forgetting the Baboon!): Recording Hans Gál's Music for Voices', at https://toccataclassics.com/recording-hans-gals-music-for-voices/.

**Pixels Ensemble** is a versatile chamber-music group with a shared passion for performing the finest repertoire, from the classical period to the present day. Its players are all established soloists, chamber musicians, recording artists, orchestral principals and explorers of contemporary music. Formed in 2016 by the pianist and director Ian Buckle, the group appears in a wide range of line-ups and combinations, lending itself to innovative programming and enabling huge variety within individual concerts. Recent engagements include appearances at Liverpool Philharmonic, the Holywell Music Room in Oxford and Conway Hall in London; and the group enjoys close associations with the University of Liverpool and Stapleford Granary, Cambridge. Pixels Ensemble is also committed to new music, with premieres of works by Lera Auerbach, Dani Howard, Martin Iddon, Timothy Jackson, Marco Momi and Karen Tanaka.

Fiona Fulton, flute
Thelma Handy, violin
David Greed, violin
Nicholas Bootiman, viola
Elinor Gow, cello
Hannah Turnbull, double bass
Ian Buckle, piano
*www.pixelsensemble.org*

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TOCC 0509


'a most welcome exploration of Hans Gál's a cappella choral music. [...] The liner notes are up to Toccata Classic's usual high standard and make valuable and learned reading. [...] Let us hope that Toccata Classics keeps these excellent surveys of Hans Gál coming. It is so good to discover an "Aladdin's Cave" of singable, enjoyable, approachable, and well-written choral music.'

—John France, MusicWeb International

TOCC 0644


'The recording is to the usual high standard of Toccata Classics. [...] Borealis, established in 2017 and based in the North of England, is a mixed choir of 16–20 singers, directed by Bridget Budge and Stephen Muir. Their sound is an interesting blend of strength and intimacy, power and reflection. Ian Buckle provides a magnificent service at the piano, with a commanding performance of several tricky accompaniments. The second volume of Hans Gál's vocal music impressed me as much as the first instalment. It is a great cross-section of works composed over a period of four decades. I certainly look forward to the third.'

—John France, MusicWeb International

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Balance engineers: Dave Rowell, Alexander van Ingen
Recording Producer, Editing and Mastering: Simon Fox-Gál

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Quotations from the Hans Gál website and other programme-notes written by Eva Fox-Gál or other members of the composer's family are reproduced here by kind permission. Thanks also to Bridget Budge and Charlotte Laidlaw for their invaluable contributions. *Stephen Muir*

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# HANS GÁL Music for Voices, Volume Three

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***Nachtmusik*, Op. 44, for soprano solo, male voices, flute, cello and piano** (1933) | **9:47** |
| | **Four Part-Songs, Op. 61, for mixed choir (SATB) *a cappella*** (1954) | **11:17** |
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| 14 | VIII Sunset – | 2:48 |
| 15 | IX Silver | 4:30 |
| | **Two Songs, Op. 8, for four-part male-voice choir *a cappella*** (1914) | **4:43** |
| 16 | No. 1 Idylle | 1:54 |
| 17 | No. 2 Sterne im Wasser | 2:49 |
| | **Two Songs, Op. 63, for four-part male-voice choir *a cappella*** (1954) | **5:15** |
| 18 | No. 1 Bey dem Weine | 2:44 |
| 19 | No. 2 Runda | 2:36 |
| | | TT **62:47** |

FIRST RECORDINGS

**Carolyn Sampson, soprano** 1 8 11 13 14
**Pixels Ensemble** 1 6–15
**Borealis Choir**
**Bridget Budge** 1–15 **and Stephen Muir** 16–19**, conductors**