



crd

Everlasting Light

Choir of Bath Abbey
Huw Williams Director

Emma Pouncefort writes...



The bonds forged through music-making are strong; the bonds forged through music-making as a child are unbreakable. And when it comes to the singing in a group as a young musician, we

can early on reach right into our existence and that of others. As Sir John Rutter, a British composer whose works have spurred on the revival of choral music in the C20th and C21st, has put it, 'Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls.'

Choral music lies at the heart of the DNA of CRD. Our founding director, Graham Pouncefort, deeply loved choral music, championing, on a personal level, groups gathering in the local parish church and, in his professional capacity, those – cue the Choir of New College, Oxford, for example – whose names have become synonymous with choral excellence. He meanwhile advocated both well-loved repertoire, such as Stainer's *God So Loved the World*, which features on this album, and the works of the next generation. In the late

1980s, Oliver Johnston, then a treble at New College, arranged the *Lute Book Carol* for one of the Choir's many recordings with CRD. He is now taking the concert hall and opera stages by storm. Here, we have the first recorded works of former-senior-chorister-turned-organ-scholar, Gavin Phelps: an *a cappella* piece that shifts from a serene opening to a rousing invocation, and an organ improvisation, here presented as an instrumental work which was originally presented with quotes cajoling us to acknowledge the world's fragility (these can be read below). Cheering Gavin on are his fellow choristers, both his near contemporaries and the adults who provide the other voice parts. Together, they offer world premiere recordings from the next generation whilst sharing in joyful chorus works that bring *everlasting light* to the magnificence of Bath Abbey and, importantly, the lives of

singers when they move on.

It was choral music that enabled both of our entrance as children into classical music and that, for me, has continued to play a significant role in my adult life.

Now a neighbour of the Abbey, it is a pleasure and privilege to be releasing this album to mark the 150th year of the Boys' choir. It is a time to celebrate achievements to date despite the headwinds faced by classical music, including choral music, currently in the UK. It is also a time to build a sense of great anticipation of what the next 150 years might bring.

Bradford-on-Avon, UK, 2024

Emma Pouncefort *Director*
Tom Pouncefort *Director*

in Bath Abbey in December 2023, with Sir John Rutter conducting. Many other alumni have gone on to become professional singers, musicians and lay clerks, including Dr David Price, who is the current Organist and Master of the Choristers at Portsmouth Cathedral.

One of the highlights of this project has been welcoming our alumni to sing again in Bath Abbey as part of the recording. Seeing the joy of our former choristers at being back in the Abbey, some of whom left the choir over 50 years ago, demonstrates the lasting mark that their time as a chorister has made on their lives. We know how important these choirs are for training future musicians. However, I believe we often underestimate the impact that being part of a choir can have on the choristers who pursue other careers; the discipline, teamwork

and concentration skills that will support them throughout their lives, helping to build the leaders and team players of the future.

The Abbey has no choir school and draws its choristers from across the city and wider area, many of whom are from state schools. Our boys meet three times a week, rather than daily, and we are not in a position to offer any large scholarships. Whilst this makes it more challenging to achieve the standards of choirs that sing together daily, I hope you will agree that the standard of singing on this album is testimony to what our choir has achieved. It is my hope that maintaining a separate Boys' Choir – in addition to our wonderful Girls' Choir, founded in 1997 – will help to maintain the precious choral jewel we have inherited.

Bath Abbey Boys' Choir tours regularly, singing in Paris during 2024 as part of these 150th anniversary celebrations and broadcasts regularly. In recent years we have sung (and played football!) with many other cathedral choirs including Wells, Southwell, Salisbury and Portsmouth. Being part of a boys' choir is a special educational opportunity, and participating in a successful and high-achieving team offers the boys a vital bonding experience as well as lasting happy memories.

These past decades have sadly seen a rapid decline in boys' choirs and, indeed, in all forms of boys' singing. In an era where singing can be seen as counter-cultural for boys, I hope we are playing a small part, not only in preserving a vital part of our country's musical heritage, but, through our extensive outreach work, in supporting more

widespread singing by boys in the community. In celebrating the choir's 150th anniversary, and by investing in the music at Bath, I believe that the next 150 years have every chance of being just as successful as the last.

Bath, UK, 2024

Texts and programme notes

Magnificat in D

George Dyson (1883–1964)

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His name.
And his mercy is on them that fear Him, throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich He hath sent empty away.
He remembering His mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and His seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Luke 1 vv. 46–55

George Dyson studied at the Royal College of Music where he later became a teacher and finally Director in 1937. He won a scholarship to study composition in Italy and Germany for four years and later worked at schools with posts at Marlborough, Rugby, Wellington and Winchester Colleges. This joyful and uplifting setting of the *Magnificat* has enthused singers and listeners alike for many generations. Written in 1907 when Dyson was staying in Germany, it has become one of the most popular settings in the Anglican repertoire.

A Hymn of St Columba

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

Regis regum rectissimi
prope est dies domini,
diese irae et vindictae,
tenbrarum et nebulae,
Regis regum rectissimi.

Diesque mirabilium
tonitruorum fortium,
dies quoque angustiae,
maeroris ac tristitiae.
Regis regum rectissimi.

In quo cessabit mulierum
amor et desiderium,
nominumque contentio
mundi hujus et cupido,
Regis regum rectissimi.

King of kings and of lords most high,
comes his day of judgement nigh:
day of wrath and vengeance stark,
day of shadows and cloudy dark.
King of kings and of lords most high.

Thunder shall rend that day apart,
wonder amaze each fearful heart.
Anguish and pain and deep distress
shall mark that day of bitterness.

King of kings and of lords most high.

That day the pangs of lust will cease,
Man's questing heart shall be at peace;
then shall the great no more contend
and worldly fame be at an end.
King of kings and of lords most high.

Britten was commissioned to write this anthem in 1962 to celebrate the 1400th anniversary of Columba's missionary journey from Ireland to Scotland where he founded an Abbey on the Scottish island of Iona. The text is attributed to St Columba. One of the most notable features of the anthem is the opening line 'King of kings and of lords most high' which is repeated several times. Britten sets it with a unison, rising scale full of intensity which recalls the starkness of the 'dies irae' text in the Requiem Mass. The music is dark and brooding and captures the 'day of judgement' with an insistent ostinato in the bass of the organ part. The third stanza of the text is much stiller depicting being 'at peace' with 'worldly fame... at an end'.

View Me, Lord

Richard. H. Lloyd (1933–2021)

View me, Lord, a work of thine:
Shall I then lie drown'd in night?
Might thy grace in me but shine,
I should seem made all of light.

Cleanse me, Lord, that I may kneel
at thine altar, pure and white;
they that once thy mercies feel,
gaze no more on earth's delight.

Worldly joys, like shadows, fade
when the heav'nly light appears;
but the cov'nants thou hast made,
endless, know nor days, nor years.

In thy word, Lord, is my trust,
to thy mercies fast I fly;
though I am but clay and dust,
yet thy grace can lift me high.

Thomas Campion (1567–1620)

Richard Lloyd began his musical studies as a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral and later went to Rugby School. He was organ scholar at Jesus College, Cambridge where his teachers included Patrick Hadley and Peter le Huray. He was appointed Assistant Organist at Salisbury and later became Organist and Master of the Choristers at Hereford Cathedral (1966–1974) then later at Durham Cathedral (1974–1988). Lloyd has written many choral works including several settings of the canticles for English cathedrals. Lloyd's elegant and charming setting of words by Thomas Campion (1567–1620) has a captivating simplicity and warmth. It was written in 1963 and has become one of his most popular anthems. *Gramophone* music magazine has described Lloyd's compositions as 'some of the most rewarding church music of our time'.

Hear My Words, Ye People

Sir Charles H. H. Parry (1848–1914)

Joined by Girls' Choir and Choir Alumni

Hear my words, ye people, give ear unto me,
give ear all ye that have knowledge.
Let us choose to us judgement,

let us know among ourselves what is good.
Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any,
He is mighty in strength and in wisdom.
Behold, He is great, and we know Him not,
neither can the number of His years be searched out.

The Lord's seat is in heaven.
Clouds and darkness are round about Him,
Righteousness and judgement are the habitation of His seat.
He decketh himself with light as with a garment,
and spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain.
He layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters,
and maketh the clouds His chariots,
and walketh upon the wings of the wind.
He bowed the heavens, and came down,
and it was dark, dark under His feet.
He rode on the Cherubim, and did fly,
and came flying upon the wings of the wind.

The Lord's seat is in heaven,
His kingdom ruleth over all.
Behold, the eye of the Lord is on them that fear Him,
and upon them that put their trust in His mercy.
To deliver their soul from death,
and to feed them in a time of dearth,
Our soul hath tarried for the Lord,
for He is our help and our shield.

He delivered the poor in His affliction,
the fatherless and Him that hath none to help Him.
He shall bind up the brokenhearted,
and proclaim liberty to the captives,

and comfort those that mourn.
He shall give them beauty for ashes;
the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
and as the garden causeth things that are sown to spring forth.
So the Lord God will cause righteousness and peace
to spring forth before all nations.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness,
For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth,
so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.
Look how wide also the east is from the west,
so far hath He set our sins from us.

O praise ye the Lord, praise Him in the height;
Rejoice in His word ye Angels of Light!
Ye Heavens adore Him by whom ye were made,
And worship before Him in brightness arrayed.

O praise ye the Lord, praise Him upon earth,
in tuneful accord, ye sons of new birth,
praise Him who hath brought you His grace from above,
praise Him who hath taught you to sing of His love.

O praise ye the Lord! Thanksgiving and song
to Him be outpoured all ages along;
for love in creation, for heaven restored,
for grace of salvation, O praise ye the Lord.
Amen.

*Anon.
Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*

Parry studied at Eton and later became a key figure in the revival of British music. He was Principal of the Royal College of Music and taught many of the leading composers in this country. His influence as composer, historian and teacher has been of great significance. This large scale anthem was written for a Diocesan choir festival at Salisbury Cathedral in 1894. It contrasts large and small forces throughout with the trebles solo 'He delivereth the poor' and the dramatic bass solo 'clouds and darkness', with fuller sections such as the opening 'Hear my words, ye people' and the final section 'O praise ye the Lord'. This final section, set to words by Henry Baker, is a paraphrase of Psalm 150 and has become a well-known hymn which appears in most hymnbooks. There are also small semi-chorus sections making this an engaging and colourful setting which helps create a sense of celebration and joy on special occasions. On this recording, in the final section, the boys and lay clerk alumni joined the Abbey choir to record this work as part of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the modern choir of boys and men (now renamed 'Lay Clerks') in 1875.

It is a Thing Most Wonderful

John Ireland (1879 – 1962)

Boys only

It is a thing most wonderful,
almost too wonderful to be,
that God's own Son should come from heaven,
and die to save a child like me.

And yet I know that it is true:
he chose a poor and humble lot,
and wept, and toiled, and mourned, and died,
for love of those who loved him not.

I sometimes think about the Cross,
and shut my eyes, and try to see
the cruel nails and crown of thorns,
and Jesus crucified for me.

But even could I see him die,
I should but see a little part
of that great love, which, like a fire,
is always burning in his heart.

And yet I want to love thee, Lord;
O light the flame within my heart,
and I will love thee more and more,
until I see thee as thou art.

William W. How (1823–1897)

John Ireland was born in Cheshire and studied at the Royal College of Music with Walter Parratt and Charles Villiers Stanford. He later became Organist of St Luke's Church, Chelsea. As a composer, John Ireland is most widely recognised for his song and piano works, though several of his choral works are popular pieces in the Anglican repertoire. The Passiontide text by Bishop Walsham How is a contemplation of Christ dying on the cross. Scored for organ or piano with two treble voices, Ireland wrote the work in 1944 for a RSCM summer school at Durham Cathedral. The music is lyrical with rich harmonies, including the passage 'I sometimes think about the cross' where the music changes key to E minor, a dramatic shift from the tonic, E \flat major.

Spirit divine

Gavin Phelps (b.2009)

Tenor solo: Alastair Comery

Spirit Divine, attend our prayers,
and make this house thy home.
Come as the light, to us reveal
our emptiness and woe,
And lead us in those paths of life,
where all the righteous go.

Come as the fire and purge our hearts,
like sacrificial flame.
Let our whole soul an offering be,
to our Redeemer's name.

Come as the dove, and spread your wings,
the wings of peaceful love.
And let the church on earth become,
blest as the church above.

Spirit divine, attend our prayers.
Make a lost world your home.
Descend with all thy gracious power,
O come, great Spirit come!

Andrew Reed (1787-1862)

Gavin Phelps writes: 'I decided upon this text after looking through my hymn-book. I liked the many different ways the spirit is presented and how I could reflect this in the music. For the first verse, a kind of refrain, I used a plainsong style with a single monophonic tenor line in the Lydian mode. The second verse

starts with the motif from the plainchant and harmonises it to represent 'light'. The dissonances on the words 'emptiness and woe' resolve as they are led towards 'righteousness'. The third verse paints a different picture of 'fire' and 'sacrifice'. I decided to invert the motif from the plainchant and put it in the minor mode with basses singing powerful open fifths, characteristic of medieval writing but with a modern twist. In the fourth verse, higher voices represent a 'dove' and a large pitch range shows a wide gap between earth and heaven. For the final verse, the opening chant is repeated as a refrain, but, this time, a full choir calls for the spirit in a grand finale.'

A New Song

James MacMillan (b.1959)

O sing unto the Lord a new song,
sing unto the Lord all the whole earth.
Sing unto the Lord and praise His Name,
be telling of His salvation from day to day.
For He cometh to judge the earth,
and with righteousness to judge the world
and the people with His truth.

Psalms 96 vv. 1, 2, 13

James MacMillan's evocative and atmospheric setting was written in 1998 and first performed in St Bride's Episcopal Church, Glasgow. The opening begins with a haunting, single treble voice and there follows imitative yet lyrical phrases where the organ is playing an atmospheric accompanying background on a gentle string sound. The opening phrase returns twice again, first sung by the tenors, then in canon between the tenors and the trebles. The work ends with a glorious climax on full organ representing the coming of the Lord in glory to 'judge the earth'.

The Crucifixion: God So Loved the World

John Stainer (1840–1901)

God So Loved the World that he gave His only begotten Son,
that whoso believeth in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world;
But that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3 vv. 16–17

God So Loved the World comes from Stainer's oratorio *The Crucifixion*, which was written in 1887. The text is drawn from a famous passage in the Gospel according to St John. Most of the oratorio is accompanied by the organ, but this movement is *a cappella* and has a special poignancy and elegance when performed as part of this larger work. Stainer's setting has a melodic simplicity and charm which has fuelled its popularity, often being performed during Lent or on Good Friday. Stainer was a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral and became Organist and Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College, Oxford before moving to St Paul's Cathedral as Organist in 1872. At St Paul's he oversaw a series of modernisations including expanding the size of the choir, the establishment of a purpose-built choir school and a brand new Father Willis organ.

Let the People Praise Thee

William Mathias (1934–1992)

Let the people praise Thee, O God:
yea, let all the people praise Thee.
O let the nations rejoice and be glad:
for Thou shalt judge the folk righteously,
and govern the nations upon earth.
Let the people praise Thee, O God:

yea, let all the people praise Thee.
Then shall the earth bring forth her increase:
and God, even our own God, shall give us His blessing.
God shall bless us:
and all the ends of the world shall fear Him.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us:
and shew us the light of His countenance,
and be merciful unto us.
That Thy way may be known upon earth,
they saving health among all nations.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.

Welsh-born composer William Mathias was invited to write this work for the wedding of the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer at St Paul's Cathedral in July 1981 where it was first performed by St Paul's Cathedral Choir. The composer sets the text of Psalm 67, which is one of the appointed texts for weddings in the Book of Common Prayer. The psalm begins with the gentle verse 'God be merciful unto us', but Mathias chooses to begin with verse 3 (which is also repeated as verse 5) to open the music and thus the character of the psalm feels much more uplifting and festal, thus befitting the historic occasion when it was first performed. The anthem begins with an organ fanfare and is in three sections. The opening choral phrase is characterised by syncopations and dance-like rhythms. The second section, 'God be merciful unto us', is more tranquil and features longer, more lyrical phrases. The second section ends with an organ interlude which leads to the third section. Here, he recapitulates the opening music, this time featuring a descant in the treble part. During the final chord for the choir, the organ repeats the opening fanfare and the work ends in a blaze of glory.

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit

Arr William L. Dawson (1899–1990)

Baritone solo: Mike Entwistle

Ev'ry time I feel the spirit,
moving in my heart, I will pray.
Yes, ev'ry time I feel the spirit,
moving in my heart, I will pray.

Upon the mountain my Lord spoke,
out of His mouth came fire and smoke;
looked all aroun me, it looked so fine,
till I asked my Lord if all was mine.

Jordan river is chilly an' cold,
it chills the body, but not the soul.
There ain't but one train upon this track,
it runs to heaven an' right back.

The origins of many African American Gospel songs are uncertain, though most were almost certainly sung during the Atlantic Slave Trade period. Many are filled with allegory with the 'train' and 'river' often having double meaning – sometime crossing the Jordan river was a reference to crossing from the south of the USA to the north where slavery was illegal. Some of these songs are sad and comforting, but this one is uplifting and full of rhythmic vigour. This arrangement by William Dawson (1899–1990), himself of African American heritage, was written in 1946 and features a baritone soloist. Dawson was born in Anniston, Alabama and studied at the Tuskegee Institute, the Horner Institute of Fine Arts, the American Conservatoire and at the Chicago Musical College.

Turn Back, O Man

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Turn back, O Man, forswear thy foolish ways.
Old now is Earth, and none may count her days,
Yet thou, her child, whose head is crowned with flame,
Still wilt not hear thine inner God proclaim,
'Turn back, O Man, forswear thy foolish ways.'

Earth might be fair and all men glad and wise.
Age after age their tragic empires rise,
Built while they dream, and in that dreaming weep:
Would man but wake from out his haunted sleep,
Earth might be fair and all men glad and wise.

Earth shall be fair, and all her people one:
Nor till that hour shall God's whole will be done.
Now, even now, once more from earth to sky,
Peals forth in joy man's old undaunted cry:
'Earth shall be fair and all her folk be one!'

Clifford Bax (1886–1962)

Gustav Holst was born in Cheltenham and was a close friend of Vaughan Williams. Like his musical peer, he was interested in preserving and supporting folk songs and older church melodies. The main melody in this atmospheric anthem is the Old 124th, which was first published in the Genevan Psalter of 1551. A particularly memorable feature of this anthem is the slow staccato ostinato bass accompaniment. Holst sets each verse differently: the opening verse is a haunting unison setting; the second, begins gently for tenors and basses before growing as the melody is treated contrapuntally; there is a climax at the end of the second verse with some quickening in the pulse and key changes

before the triumphant final verse which is accompanied by fanfare bursts on the organ. The poignant text was written by Clifford in the wake of World War 1.

Strengthen Ye the Weak Hands

William H. Harris (1883–1973)

Tenor solo: Alastair Comery

The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth;
and He that is wise will not abhor them.
And He hath giv'n men skill, that He might be honour'd in His
marvelous works.

My son, in thy sickness leave off from sin, and order Thy hands aright, and
cleanse Thy heart from all wickedness.
Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.
Say to them that are of a fearful heart,
Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come;
He will come and save you.
Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd,
and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopp'd.
Then shall the lame man leap as an hart,
and the tongue of the dumb shall sing:
for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them:
and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing:
the glory of Lebanon shall be giv'n unto it, the excellency of Carmel and
Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeem'd us,

Save us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.

Ecclesiasticus 38. vv.4, 6, 9, 10,

Isaiah 35. vv. 106 and the Book of Common Prayer

William Harris was a chorister at Holy Trinity, Tulse Hill before becoming Assistant Organist at St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire at the age of 14. He worked at the Birmingham Conservatoire whilst also being Assistant Organist at Lichfield Cathedral. In 1919 he moved to Oxford and took up posts at New College and Christ Church before taking up his final post as Organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor. He was a favoured royal organist and took up the role of piano teacher to the young Princesses Margaret and Elizabeth. *Strengthen Ye the Weak Hands* was written in 1949 and draws its text from *Ecclesiasticus* and *Isaiah*, including one of the most memorable phrases – 'Be strong, fear not' – which has a nobility and intensity reminiscent of Elgar. The opening tenor solo is thoughtful and moving, and the final passage – 'O saviour of the world' – is dark and brooding, a contrast to the close of the piece which is marked by a gentle 'we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord'.

A Grateful Heart

Mary Plumstead (1905–1980)

Boys only

Thou that hast given so much to me
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.
Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare days:
But such a heart, whose pulse may be Thy praise.
Thou that hast given so much to me
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.

George Herbert (1593–1632)

Mary Plumstead lived and worked in Devon and Cornwall. This beautiful anthem captures the simplicity of the believer asking for ‘one thing more, a grateful heart’. Written in the key of D \flat major, there is a warmth and charm in a seemingly simple setting of Herbert’s poem which is now widely sung within the Anglican tradition.

Justorum animae

Matthew Martin (b.1976)

Lay clerks only

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt;
et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae,
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori:
illi autem sunt in pace.

(The souls of the just are in the hand of God;
and the torment of death shall not touch them.
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die:
but they are in peace.)

Matthew Martin is an organist, conductor and composer. He has written music for many prestigious choirs including the Tallis Scholars, St Paul’s Cathedral Choir, Westminster Abbey Choir, the Gabrieli Consort and The Sixteen. He has worked as Assistant Master of the Music at Westminster Cathedral and Organist at Brompton and the Oxford Oratory as well as being Director of Music at Keble College, Oxford. Since 2020 he has been Precentor and Director of Music at Gonville and Caius College, where he directs the renowned College Chapel Choir. *Justorum animae* is written for altos, tenors and basses, the typical Lay Clerk combination in cathedral choirs. A setting of the text for All Saints, it was written during his tenure at Westminster Cathedral in London.

A Pale Blue Dot (An Organ Improvisation)

Gavin Phelps (b.2009)

‘There is a way that nature speaks, that land speaks. Most of the time we are simply not patient enough, quiet enough, to pay attention to the story.’
(Linda Hogan)

‘It’s surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on Earth.’
(David Attenborough)

‘The whole system is under tremendous strain. Although the increasing pace of change is essential for developing new solutions, it is also pushing society to its limits’
(Franz Josef Radermacher)

‘I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots’
(Albert Einstein)

‘The earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth’
(Marlee Martin)

‘Preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, it’s the only home we’ve ever known.’
(Carl Sagan)

Gavin Phelps writes: ‘This improvisation was inspired by NASA’s historic photo of Earth from afar, aptly named *Pale Blue Dot*, and was first performed as part of the Abbey’s atmospheric *Music of the Spheres* concert complementing Luke Jerram’s *Gaia* installation in 2023. Quotes that I selected from various scientists and inspirational thinkers were read live as I improvised based on my graphic

score. A single note is held throughout the performance to represent our earth as a distant blue dot. The first section depicts a forest soundscape with mutation stops mimicking birdsong. A gradual crescendo leads into the next section: a jagged, mechanical representation of industry and the modern world. The final section allows us to retreat away from the noise and chaos of everyday life and reflect on earth's place in the universe.'

Te Deum in B flat

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

*Quartet: Joseph Brunton, Keiron Nash, Alex Edwards and Mike Entwisle
Joined by Choir alumni.*

We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting.
To Thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the Pow'rs therein.
To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heav'n and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee;
The Father of an infinite Majesty,
Thine honourable, true and only Son;
also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man,
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,

Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the Glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants,
whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.
Make them to be number'd with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them, and lift them up for ever.
Day by day, we magnify Thee;
and we worship Thy Name, ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in Thee.
O Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

Dublin-born composer, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford is known for his elegant and rich Anglican choral music. This setting of the *Te Deum* was first performed during Matins in May 1879 when Stanford was organist at Trinity College, Cambridge. He later added the opening fanfare and orchestrated it for the occasion of the Coronation of King Edward VII in 1902 at Westminster Abbey. The text is an ancient C4th hymn, and is similar to the Creed as a way of expressing cornerstones of the Christian faith. It is one of the two canticles sung at Matins, but, more importantly, it is a text that has been sung at festivals and other celebrations (including most coronations) and large scale royal occasions across the centuries, often towards the ends of services. The opening melody is based on ancient Gregorian chant melodies.



The Choir of Bath Abbey

Since Bath Abbey's foundation as a Benedictine Monastery in the C8th, choral music has lain at the heart of its worship.

This recording has been made to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the introduction of the Boys and Lay Clerks (formally Men's choir) in 1875. At a time when boys' choirs are decreasing due to mixing the treble line with boys and girls, we are lucky that, despite there being no choir school at the Abbey, we can maintain our independent boys' choir. For part of this recording, we have invited our girls and lay clerk alumni to join us for two items as we celebrate the history and tradition that helped many singers to find their voice.

In addition to singing for a regular pattern of services at Bath Abbey, the Abbey Choirs broad-

cast regularly on national and international radio and television, featuring recently on Radio 4's *Morning Worship* and in a documentary for PBS Television in the US. The Choirs meanwhile tour regularly, completing a tour to Paris in 2024 and, in 2017, to the Netherlands to support the 60th anniversary celebrations of the twinning of Alkmaar and Bath.

Closer to home, the choirs have sung at many prestigious venues, including St George's Chapel Windsor, Hampton Court Chapel Royal, and St. Paul's and Portsmouth Cathedrals. They have also combined with the choirs of King's College, London, Jesus College, Cambridge, Merton College, Oxford, Norwich Cathedral and St Mary's Redcliffe, Bristol and the Gesualdo Six. Their performances for members of the British royal family and others include singing for the then Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

in December 2020, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The boys were recently invited to sing under Sir John Rutter's direction in his *Mass for the Children*. John Rutter wrote: 'Huw Williams and his music team's truly outstanding achievement is in bringing the ambition and standard of the music in Bath Abbey to the level of any leading cathedral in Britain... it serves as a shining example of what can be achieved without the benefit of a choir school.'

Former choristers have become professional musicians of distinction and have been awarded choral scholarships to Trinity and Clare Colleges, Cambridge and to King's College, London.

In May 2021, the choir moved into the new Abbey Song School, completed as part of the exciting and spectacular Footprint proj-

ect. The Choir now enjoys a purpose-built, magnificent space in which to rehearse and relax.

The choirs have made numerous acclaimed recordings that showcase Bath Abbey's wonderful acoustic and fine 4-manual Klais organ, which was completed in 1997. The Klais instrument has served the Abbey with distinction drawing many famous players including James O'Donnell (formerly of Westminster Abbey) to play in recent times.

Reviews of *Caritas*, an album featuring music of hope, love, charity and consolation, described the choir as being 'at the peak of its powers' (*Church Music Quarterly*) and able to 'sing magnificently' (*Choir and Organ*). *Cathedral Music Magazine* dubbed the Choir's Christmas release *Gaudete* 'a most pleasing collection to enrich one's Christmas festivities'.

Trebles

Joseph Brunton
Bryan Chan
Joe de la Tour
Alessandro Deering
Felix Dennis
Charlie Dodkin
Rafael Estella
Alfred Evans
Tom Gilmore
Harry Hampson-Gilbert
Jacob Hill
Cameron James
Pin Jia
Harry Jones
Tom Langton
Sebastian McHugh
Maurice Marten
Zachary Meunier
Gavin Phelps
Theo Pillow
Rupert Scheidecker
Teddy Sherwood

Girls

Ella Barker
Emmeline Branston
Isla Byrne

Florence Flinn
Rosie McDonald
Alice Osborne
Orla Reddin
Rosenna Sandbrook
Katie Shepperdson
Ruth Williams
Shannon Williams

Altos

Rob Burnet
Sian Jones
Kieron Nash
Amy Seyers

Tenors

Alastair Comery
Roger Dawe
Alex Edwards
Chris Johnson

Basses

Mike Entwisle
Paul Maine
James Millichap
Asher Randall



Huw Williams
Director of Music

Huw Williams is Director of Music at Bath Abbey, where he directs its renowned choirs of boys, girls and lay clerks. A conductor and award-winning organist of international standing, Huw previously served as Director of Music at Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, St James' Palace, where his predecessors included Thomas Tallis, William Byrd and Henry Purcell. Whilst at the Chapel Royal he conducted the music for Prince George's Christening, the Queen's Christmas message in 2015, the annual Remembrance Sunday Service at the Cenotaph, and numerous other events in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family. He was principle organist at St Paul's Cathedral for ten years and made two solo organ recordings, one of which, *Organ Spectacular*, re-

ceived the Gramophone Editor's Choice award.

Alongside his conducting work, Huw enjoys an international career as an organ recitalist and accompanist. He was invited to give the opening concert on the new Mander Organ presented to the late Queen by the City of London, and played the first concert on the restored Henry Willis organ at the Hooglandsekerk in Leiden. A fluent Welsh speaker born in Swansea, Huw was also the subject of a documentary on S4C, and many of his compositions have been performed at St Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, Bath Abbey and further afield. He is one of the editors of the recently published *Revised English Hymnal*.

Dewi Rees
Assistant Organist

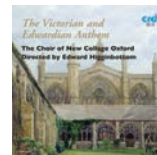


Dewi Rees is the Assistant Organist of Bath Abbey, where he assists the Director of Music in the running of the choirs and accompanies the Abbey Boys' and Girls' Choirs in services, concerts

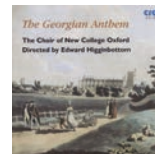
and other events. Dewi directs the Abbey Chamber Choir and the Melody Makers, and is also the Music Assistant at Kingswood School.

Dewi read Music at Jesus College, Cambridge where, as Organ Scholar and then Assistant Organist, he performed in services, concerts and recordings with the College's two choirs. He was subsequently organ scholar at St Albans Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. He appears as organist on *Praise my Soul: Favourite Hymns* from Jesus College, Cambridge and *Bruckner Motets* with St Albans Cathedral Choir.

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MusicWeb International



CRD 3510
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BBC Music Magazine



CRD 3534
Sung exquisitely.
Gramophone

*A Wonderful project, excellently performed. ******
Five Stars
Choir and Organ

For full details of these recordings and the complete CRD catalogue, visit www.crdrecords.com

1	George Dyson <i>Magnificat in D</i>	4:33
2	Benjamin Britten <i>Hymn of St Columba</i>	2:14
3	Richard Lloyd <i>View Me Lord</i>	2:39
4	Charles Hubert Hastings Parry <i>Hear My Words, Ye People</i>	15:43
5	John Ireland <i>It is a Thing most Wonderful</i>	3:36
6	Gavin Phelps <i>Spirit Divine</i>	3:01
7	James Macmillan <i>A New Song</i>	5:23
8	John Stainer <i>God so Loved the World</i> (from <i>The Crucifixion</i>)	3:49
9	William Mathias <i>Let the People Praise Thee</i>	5:32
10	Traditional <i>Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit</i> (Arr. for Choir by William. L Dawson)	2:09
11	Gustav Holst <i>Turn Back, O Man</i>	4:32
12	William Harris <i>Strengthen Ye the Weak Hands</i>	7:13
13	Mary Plumstead <i>A Grateful Heart</i>	1:35
14	Matthew Martin <i>Iustorum animae</i>	2:15
15	Gavin Phelps <i>A Pale Blue Dot</i> (An Organ Improvisation)	4:03
16	Charles Villiers Stanford <i>Te Deum in B Flat</i>	6:54
Total		01:17:16

Front image *Stained Glass Splinters of Everlasting Light*
 Recorded 30 January, 20–21 February 2024, Bath Abbey, UK
 Executive Producers Emma Pouncefort, Tom Pouncefort
 Producer Annabel Connellan
 Sound Engineer Ben Connellan

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