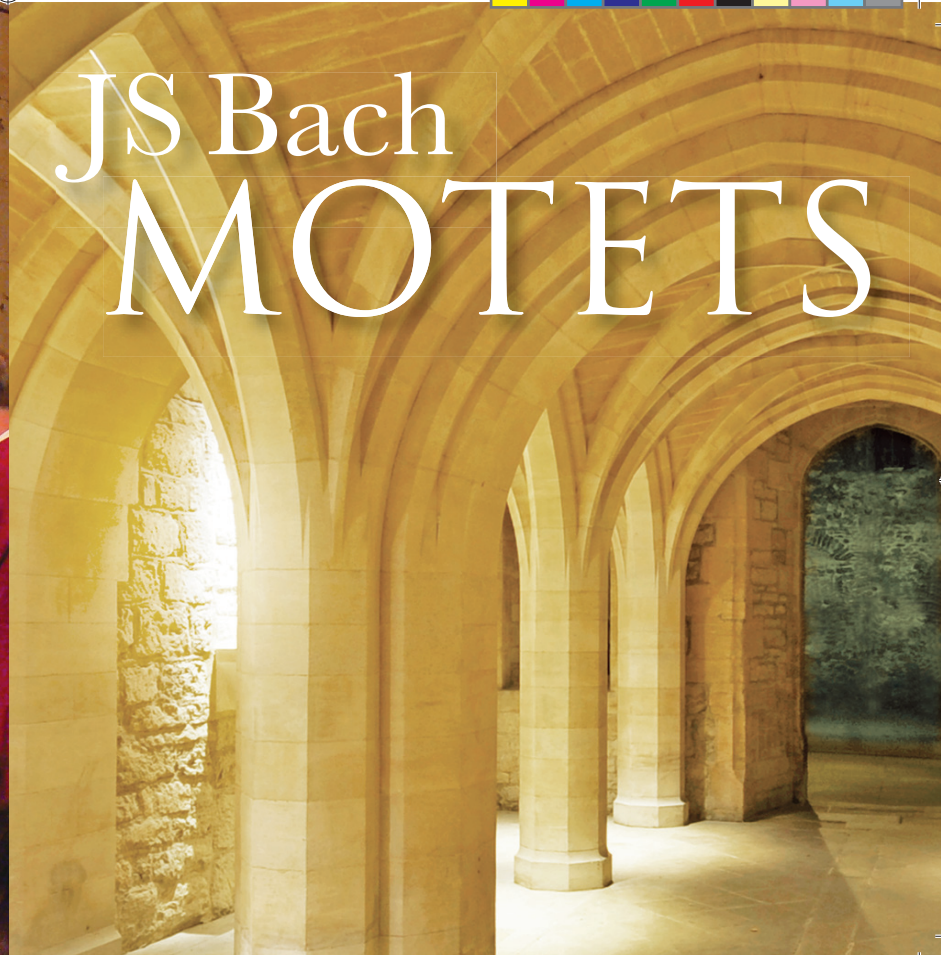




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JS Bach MOTETS

JESU, MEINE FREUDE (BWV 227)

- 1 Jesu, meine Freude..... 1:17
- 2 Es is nun nichts..... 3:12
- 3 Unter deinem Schirmen..... 1:12
- 4 Denn das Gesetz..... 1:05
- 5 Trotz dem alten Drachen ... 2:25
- 6 Ihr aber seid nicht
fleischlich..... 3:14
- 7 Weg mit allen Schätzen 1:14
- 8 So aber Christus..... 2:18
- 9 Gute Nacht 3:37
- 10 So nun der Geist..... 1:38
- 11 Weicht, ihr Trauergeister ... 1:23

LOBET DEN HERRN (BWV 230)

- 12 Lobet den Herrn,
alle Heiden..... 6:52

KOMM, JESU, KOMM (BWV 229)

- 13 Komm, Jesu, komm..... 7:42
- 14 Drum schliess ich 1:16

FÜRCHTE DICH NICHT (BWV 228)

- 15 Fürchte dich nicht 9:34

DER GEIST HILFT (BWV 226)

- 16 Der Geist hilft 4:25
- 17 Der aber die Herzen 2:21
- 18 Du heilige Brunst 1:29

SINGET DEM HERRN (BWV 225)

- 19 Singet dem Herrn 5:26
- 20 Wie sich ein Vater 4:28
- 21 Lobet den Herrn
in seinen Taten..... 4:24

Total duration 70:34

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THE MOTETS

The motets of JS Bach are small in number and confined in scope. Yet they have always held a special place in the choral repertory. Clearly for Bach they were significant commissions, all falling within the early years (1723-31) of his Leipzig period. The six motets presented here carry the BWV numbers 225 to 230. Another work, *O Jesu Christ, mein Lebens Licht* (BWV 118), previously classified among the cantatas, has more recently been associated with the motet genre. It is not included here because with its independent wind parts it falls outside the traditional scoring requirements of the German motet: voices and organ continuo.

THE GERMAN MOTET TRADITION

To understand the German motet tradition, we may return to the music of Heinrich Schütz (born one hundred years before Bach). The motets of Schütz, his most defining contribution to the choral repertory, divide into settings using voices and basso continuo and more elaborate settings employing instruments and richly varied vocal dispositions. In the first category we may place his *Cantiones sacrae* (1625); in the second the ambitious concerted (voices and instruments) motets of the *Psalmen Davids* (1619 and 1628). The first of these traditions links to Bach's motets, the second to his cantatas. The crucial distinction is that the motets do not require independent instrumental lines, nor contain movements for solo voice (recitatives and arias). They are essentially choral in format.

Understanding the place of the motet in Bach's output also means appreciating the tradition of motet performance in Leipzig churches, where at both morning and evening service a motet was sung. Collections of appropriate material were readily available, including the comprehensive anthology *Florilegium Portense*, published by Bodenschatz in 1618, and containing some 270 mostly eight-part settings of works by Italian, Flemish and German composers.

Within the more immediate circle of central German composers of the late 17th century we find examples of motet compositions which more closely resemble the output of Bach in this genre. Among them are compositions by the older Bachs (including an eight-part setting of *Lieber Herr Gott, wecke uns auf* by Johann Cristoph Bach, which may have been sung at Bach's funeral), Georg Böhm, Sebastian Knüpfer and Johann Schelle. These pieces are straightforward and undemand-



ing, whereas Bach's motets are decidedly more ambitious in scale, and in technical difficulty. They clearly belong to occasional rather than regular use, and indeed we are able to pin down at least three of them to particular events. *Der Geist hilft* was written for, and performed at, the funeral of the Rektor of the Thomasschule (October 1729). *Komm, Jesu, komm* and *Fürchte dich nicht* may likewise be associated with funeral/memorial events, the former using two strophes from a funeral hymn by Paul Thymich. Commentators have also been inclined to connect *Jesu, meine Freude* with a funeral or memorial event, but Christoph Wolff prefers to see this work, as perhaps also *Singet dem Herrn*, as a pedagogical motet, written for Bach's pupils at the Thomasschule. The 'instruction' in *Jesu, meine Freude* resides not only in its musical demands but also in its carefully crafted text (see below). If this is the case, then the paean of praise that is *Singet dem Herrn* is a truly advanced exercise in vocal agility and stamina. The connection with the older 'stile antico' tradition of Bodenschatz's compilation continues in the use of eight-part textures for four of the six motets recorded here, but the complexity of Bach's work in the genre is of a quite different order.

JESU, MEINE FREUDE

Jesu, meine Freude is the most carefully constructed of Bach motets, comprising varied chorale settings of Johann Franck's chorale text, interleaved with selected verses from Paul's letter to the Romans. At the heart of the motet – in the very centre of the sequence of the movements – stands the choral fugue 'Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich sondern geistlich' (You are not of the flesh but of the spirit). Bach's intention was clearly theological: to bring the basic tenets of Christian faith into close relation with the affirmations of belief and virtue in Franck's chorale text. Either side of this centre fan out a symmetrical sequence of movements, fascinating not only in their intention to balance the work around a doctrinal hub, but also to provide an encyclopedia of choral writing: trios, freely worked choruses, and chorale variations. Unlike the other motets, this setting does not employ the standard double-choir format, but works a variety textures from three to five voices.

LOBET DEN HERRN

Lobet den Herrn is perhaps the most succinct of the motets, in length and texture (requiring a single four-voice choir). Its fanfare-like initial subject gives way to a dance-like second set of fugal entries at the text 'und preiset ihn alle Völker' (and praise him all ye people), only to reveal that the two subjects may indeed be superimposed. The second section of the motet ('Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit') deploys a similar technique, counterpointing the initial

durezza e *ligature* style of the superius with more lively motives. With a twinkle in his eye, Bach sets the word 'Ewigkeit' (eternity) to a single note held by the altus through two whole bars – by which time the tenor has sung 21 notes. A sprung, three-time 'Alleluia' concludes the motet, not unlike the final bars of *Singet*, but more compact in its stretto entries.

KOMM, JESU, KOMM

The double-choir format of *Komm, Jesu, komm* naturally gives rise to a good deal of call-and-answer between the two groups (especially in the 6/8 section 'Du bist der rechte Weg'). It also permits some intricate polyphonic workings across the texture as a whole, notably in the 'der saure Weg' entries. Bach's response to his text has more than simple Figurenlehre behind it: the opposite word setting – listen out for 'müde' (tired), 'sehne' (long for) and 'saure' (bitter) – strikes an admirable balance between the didactic and the expressive. Even the very first utterance 'Komm', in its isolated imperative voice, immediately articulates meaning and sound in a single gesture.

FÜRCHTE DICH NICHT

The most striking aspect of this motet is Bach's generous treatment of the chorale text 'Herr, mein Hirt' (O Lord, my shepherd). We hear two complete verses of the chorale in chorale prelude style, a three-part contrapuntal dialogue supporting successive (but separated) statements of chorale phrases. Then, almost as if Bach has run out of time, he concludes the motet in less than four bars of reprised figures from the opening section. Perhaps this is a rare miscalculation on Bach's part, the last four bars as striking in their economy as the preceding 73 (of the chorale setting) are lavish.

DER GEIST HILFT

The sunny demeanour of this motet is a reminder that for the German Protestant mind death held no dominion over the soul. There is a lively exchange of material between the two choirs in the opening section, then a progressive reduction in independent voices during 'sondern der Geist', down to five by the cadence before the final section 'Der aber die Herzen forschet', these bars effectively combining the choirs in a four-part stretto fugue. The final chorale, 'Du heilige Brunst', sets forth the core Christian values, a process encountered also in the final chorales of both *Jesu, meine Freude* and *Komm, Jesu, komm*.



SINGET DEM HERRN

Singet dem Herrn is the most virtuosic of the motets recorded here. If Christoph Wolff is right in his suggestion that it represents a sort of vocal training exercise for Bach's scholars, it is well adapted to stretching vocal dexterity. The virtuosity lies also in the compositional practice, where an opening set of ideas (including the initial text) is further combined with an independent fugue (in the first choir) to the text 'Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich' (The children of Sion rejoice). After the bustle of the opening movement, the 'slow' movement pulls the two choirs apart, the one presenting, phrase by phrase, the chorale 'Wie sich ein Väter erbarmet über seine jungen Kinderlein' (As a father cares for his young children), the other interjecting a simple commentary (headed 'aria') in a freer, more intimate style. The idea of answering choirs is retained for the third and concluding movement, 'Lobet den Herrn' (Praise the Lord), coalescing into four voices for the peroration 'Alles was Odem hat, lobet den Herrn' (All that hath breath, praise the Lord): a resolution of the many voices into a single four-voiced texture lauding the Creator. In all, the instrumentalising of vocal lines and the three-movement form bring this motet close to the concerto genre.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

One of the motets, *Der Geist hilft*, survives with instrumental parts doubling the vocal lines (strings for choir I, woodwinds for choir II). This has given rise to speculation about the colla-voce doubling in the motet repertory as a whole. Whilst this is not impossible, it is neither obligatory, nor in certain instances desirable. (The desirability of such a project would be influenced by the number of voices engaged in the performance, and local circumstances: if only one voice to a part, then instrumental doubling would be welcome support; if however a ripieno choir is used, this sort of support is not needed.) The New College performances on this CD adopt in most cases what we might call a choral approach. More accurately, ripienists are employed alongside a solo ensemble. In an eight-part motet the basic vocal distribution is 44222233 (SSAATTBB). Though a choir such as New College uses twice as many trebles as the eight represented here, it should be remembered that half our voices belong to very young and inexperienced singers whose function it is in the stalls (and in recording situations) to be learning skills and voicing them only very lightly. This number of voices is a historically legitimate resource for motet performance, just as is a reduction to single voices.

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JESU, MEINE FREUDE

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Jesu, meine Freude,
meines Herzens Weide,
Jesu, meine Zier,
ach wie lang, ach lange
ist dem Herzen bange
und verlangt nach dir!
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,
außer dir soll mir auf Erden,
nichts sonst Liebers werden. | Jesus, my joy,
my heart's pasture,
Jesus, my treasure,
ah how long, how long
must my heart be anxious
as it longs for you!
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
none other on earth
could be more dear to me. |
| 2 Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an
denen, die in Christo Jesu sind, die
nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln,
sondern nach dem Geist. | There is now no condemnation of them
who are in Christ, and who walk not
according to the flesh but according to
the spirit. |
| 3 Unter deinem Schirmen
bin ich vor den Stürmen
aller Feinde frei.
Laß den Satan wittern,
laß den Feind erbittern,
mir steht Jesus bei.
Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,
ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:
Jesus will mich decken. | Under your protection
I am free from the raging
of all foes.
Let Satan storm,
let my enemy grow bitter,
Jesus stands by me.
Though now there is thunder and lightning,
even though sin and hell shriek,
Jesus will shelter me. |
| 4 Denn das Gesetz des Geistes, der da
lebendig machet in Christo Jesu, hat
mich frei gemacht von dem Gesetz der
Sünde und des Todes. | For the law of the Spirit, which gives life in
Christ Jesus, has made me free from the
law of sin and death. |



- 5 **Trotz dem alten Drachen,
trotz des Todesdrachen,
trotz der Furcht darzu!
Tobe, Welt, und springe,
ich steh hier und singe
in gar sicherer Ruh.
Gottes Macht hält mich in acht;
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,
ob sie noch so brummen.**
- 6 **Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich, sondern
geistlich, so anders Gottes Geist in euch
wohnet. Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,
der ist nicht sein.**
- 7 **Weg mit allen Schätzen!
Du bist mein Ergötzen,
Jesu, meine Lust !
Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,
ich mag euch nicht hören,
bleibt mir unbewusst!
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod
soll mich, ob ich viel muss leiden,
nicht von Jesu scheiden..**
- 8 **So aber Christus in euch ist, so ist der
Leib zwar tot um der Sünde willen;
der Geist aber ist das Leben um der
Gerechtigkeit willen.**
- 9 **Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
das die Welt erlesen,
mir gefällt du nicht.
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
bleibet weit dahinten,**

Despite the ancient dragon,
despite the jaws of death,
despite the fear they bring!
Tremble, O World, and leap,
I stand here and sing
in complete calm.
God's power keeps me safe;
earth and hell's abyss must fall silent,
however much they roar.

You however are not of the flesh, but of
the spirit, and so God's Spirit dwells in
you. But whoever does not possess Christ's
Spirit is not His.

Away with all treasures!
You are my delight,
Jesus, my desire!
Away with all vain honours,
I do not want to hear of you,
remain unknown to me!
Suffering, distress, the cross, shame and death,
however much I have to suffer
will never separate me from Jesus.

If Christ is in you, then the body
is dead because of sin,
but the spirit is still living
because of righteousness.

Good night, O existence,
which the world has chosen;
you please me not.
Good night, you sins,
stay far behind me,

**kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,
gute Nacht gegeben.**

- 10 **So nun der Geist des, der Jesum von
den Toten auferwecket hat, in euch
wohnet, so wird auch derselbige, der
Christum von den Toten auferwecket
hat, eure sterblichen Leiber lebendig
machen um des willen, dass sein Geist
in euch wohnt.**
- 11 **Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,
denn mein Freudenmeister,
Jesus, tritt herein.
Denen, die Gott lieben,
muss auch ihr Betrüben
lauter Freude sein.
Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,
dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,
Jesu, meine Freude.**

come no more into the light!
Good night, pride and pomp.
Dissolute life,
I bid you goodnight.

If now the Spirit which raised Jesus from
the dead, dwells in you, so the very same
Spirit that has raised Jesus from the dead,
gives life to your mortal bodies,
so that His Spirit may dwell in you.

Vanish, spirits of gloom,
for my master of joy,
Jesus, enters in.
For those who love God,
even their grief
must become great joy.
Though here enduring scorn and derision,
you remain, even in my suffering,
Jesus, my joy.

LOBET DEN HERRN

- 12 **Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,
und preiset ihn, alle Völker!
Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit
waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.
Alleluja!**

Praise the Lord, all you gentiles
and celebrate him, all you peoples!
For his grace and truth
reign over us for ever.
Alleluia!



KOMM, JESU, KOMM

- 13 **Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde,
die Kraft verschwindt je mehr und mehr,
ich sehne mich nach deinem Frieden;
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!
Komm, ich will mich dir ergeben;
du bist der rechte Weg, die Wahrheit
und das Leben.** Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary,
my strength fails me more and more,
I long for your peace;
the bitter way is too difficult for me!
Come, I will give myself to you;
you are the right way, the truth and the life.
- 14 **Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände
und sage, Welt, zu guter Nacht!
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende,
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,
weil Jesus ist und bleibt
der wahre Weg zum Leben.** Thus I put myself in your hands
and bid goodnight to the world!
If my life's course hastens onto the end,
my soul is then well-prepared.
It will rise up to be with its creator
for Jesus is and remains
the true way to life.

FÜRCHTE DICH NICHT

- 15 **Fürchte dich nicht, ich bin bei dir;
weiche nicht, denn ich bin dein Gott;
ich stärke dich, ich helfe dir auch,
ich erhalte dich durch die rechte Hand
meiner Gerechtigkeit.** Be not afraid, I am with you;
stumble not, for I am your God;
I strengthen you, I help you,
I uphold you with the right hand of my
righteousness.
- Fürchte dich nicht, denn ich
habe dich erlöst;
ich habe dich bei deinem Namen
gerufen, du bist mein.** Be not afraid, for I have
redeemed you;
I have called you by your name,
you are mine.

**Herr, mein Hirt, Brunn aller Freuden!
Du bist mein, ich bin dein,
niemand kann uns scheiden.
Ich bin dein, weil du dein Leben
und dein Blut, mir zu gut,
in den Tod gegeben.
Du bist mein, weil ich dich fasse
und dich nicht, o mein Licht,
aus dem Herzen lasse!
Laß mich, laß mich hingelangen,
da du mich und ich dich
lieblich werd umfassen.**

Lord, my Shepherd, source of all joys!
You are mine, I am yours,
no one can separate us.
I am yours, since your life
and your blood, for my benefit,
have been given in death.
You are mine, since I clasp you
and, O my light, never
shall I let you leave my heart!
Let me, let me come
where you and I
shall be embraced in love.

DER GEIST HILFT

- 16 **Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf,
denn wir wissen nicht,
was wir beten sollen,
wie sich's gebühret;
sondern der Geist selbst vertritt
uns aufs beste mit unaussprechlichem
Seufzen.** The Spirit helps us in our weakness,
for we do not know
for what we should pray,
or how we ought to plead;
but the Spirit itself pleads
for our good with inexpressible sighs.
- 17 **Der aber die Herzen forschet, der weiß,
was des Geistes Sinn sei;
denn er vertritt die Heiligen nach dem,
das Gott gefällt.** But he who searches our hearts knows
what the Spirit means
since he pleads for the saints
in the way that pleases God.
- 18 **Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost,
nun hilf uns, fröhlich und getrost
in deinem Dienst beständig bleiben,
die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben.** Holy love, sweet consolation,
help us now, joyful and confirmed
in your service remaining,
untroubled by sorrow.



**O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit
und stärk des Fleisches Blödigkeit,
dass wir hie ritterlich ringen,
durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.
Halleluja, halleluja.**

O Lord, through your power make us ready
and strengthen the feebleness of our flesh,
so that we may bravely struggle
through life and death to reach you!
Alleluia, alleluia.

SINGET DEM HERRN

- 19 Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
die Gemeinde der Heiligen sollen ihn loben.
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.
Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich über
ihrem Könige,
sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihen;
mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie
ihm spielen.**

Sing to the Lord a new song,
let the assembly of the saints praise Him.
Israel rejoices in the one that made Him.
Let the children of Zion be joyful in
their king,
let them praise His name in the dance
praising Him with drums and harps.

- 20 Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet
uber seine jungen Kinderlein,
so tut der Herr uns Armen,
so wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.
Er kennt das arm Gemächte,
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
ein Blum und fallend Laub.
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
so ist es nicht mehr da,
also der Mensch vergehet,
sein End, das ist ihm nah.**

As a father feels compassion
for his young children,
so does the Lord for us poor,
and so we feel pure childlike awe.
He knows how weak is our strength,
God knows that we are but dust,
like grass before the rake,
a flower or falling leaf.
The wind has only to blow over it
and it is no longer there,
and so man passes away,
his end is close at hand.

**Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.
Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
so wirst du's ferner machen.
Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.**

God, in future take us to yourself
for without you nothing is accomplished
in all our affairs.
Therefore be our shield and light,
and if our hope does not deceive us,
then in future you will do this.
Blessed are those who firmly
hold on to you and your grace.

- 21 Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit!
Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn.
Halleluja!**

Praise God in his works,
praise him in his great glory!
Let all that has breath praise the Lord.
Alleluia!



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ALTOS	Dominic Burnham, Dana Marsh, Alexander Pullinger, Stephen Taylor
TENORS	James Brown, Alexander Clissold-Jones, Guy Cutting, Benedict Linton, Daniel Turner
BASSES	Christopher Borrett, George Coltart, William Dawes, Thomas Edwards, Maxim Jones, Duncan Saunderson,
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New College Choir is one of the world's oldest, going back to the late 14th century. It is also one of most active and successful in modern times. Its role in forming musicians of high calibre and in promoting enlightened and engaged performance practice has been recognised by the recent nomination of Edward Higginbottom as Professor of Choral Music at Oxford University. The work of the Choir outside the chapel has been marked by numerous invitations to give concerts abroad, taking in most of Europe (from Latvia to Cyprus), Australia, the USA, Brazil and Japan. The many recordings made by the Choir (see www.newcollegechoir.com for a full list) cover an immense range of periods and styles: early polyphony, baroque masters, classical works, nineteenth-century sacred epertory, and a whole swathe of material from the last century. At the same time the Choir offers a level of competence in these diverse fields equalling the specialists, so that for instance its recording of Nicholas Ludford was selected for a Gramophone award in 2008. The Choir's work also encompasses CD anthologies (notably 'Agnus Dei' and 'Early One Morning') bringing choral music to new and worldwide markets.

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