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VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Five Mystical Songs
and other British Choral Anthems

DARKE • ELGAR • HADLEY • HOLST
HOWELLS • STANFORD • WESLEY

Roderick Williams, Baritone

Martin Ford, Organ

Vasari Singers

Jeremy Backhouse

The Vasari Singers logo is located in the bottom left corner, featuring a stylized circular icon to the left of the text "vasari" in a bold, lowercase font, with "singers" in a smaller, lowercase font below it.

FIVE MYSTICAL SONGS

and other British choral anthems

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|---|--|
| <p>Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)</p> <p>1 O clap your hands (1920) 3:29
(version for choir and organ)
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: verses from Psalm 47, vv. 1–2, 5–8)</p> <p>Sir Edward ELGAR (1857–1934) /
John CAMERON (b. 1944)</p> <p>2 Lux æterna (1899/1996) 3:31
(Choral setting of <i>Nimrod</i> from the <i>‘Enigma’ Variations</i>)
(Text: from the Requiem Mass)</p> <p>Gustav HOLST (1874–1934)</p> <p>3 Two Psalms – Psalm 148
‘Lord, who hast made us for thine own’ (1912) 5:33
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: Psalm 148,
paraphrased by Francis Ralph Gray, dates unknown)</p> <p>Harold DARKE (1888–1976)</p> <p>4 O gladsome light, Op. 38, No. 2 (1929) 3:51
(Text: Anonymous, 3rd century or earlier, English
translation from the Greek by Robert Seymour Bridges,
1844–1930, <i>The Yattendon Hymnal</i>, pub. 1899)</p> <p>Herbert HOWELLS (1892–1983)</p> <p>5 Four Anthems – No. 3. Like as the hart (1941) 6:28
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: Psalm 42, vv. 1–3)</p> <p>Sir Edward ELGAR</p> <p>6 Give unto the Lord, Op. 74 ‘Psalm 29’ (1914) 9:23
(version for choir and organ)
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: Psalm 29)</p> | <p>Samuel Sebastian WESLEY (1810–1876)</p> <p>7 Wash me thoroughly (c. 1840) 4:51
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: Psalm 51, vv. 2–3)</p> <p>Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS</p> <p>8 O taste and see (1952) 1:36
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: Psalm 34, v. 8)</p> <p>Samuel Sebastian WESLEY</p> <p>9 Blessed be the God and Father (1833–34) 8:01
(Text: Bible – New Testament: 1 Peter,
vv. 3–5, 15–17, 22–25)</p> <p>Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852–1924)</p> <p>10 Bible Songs, Op. 113 – No. 6. A Song of Wisdom
(pub. 1909) (version for sopranos and organ) 5:25
(Text: Bible – Ecclesiasticus 24)</p> <p>Patrick HADLEY (1899–1973)</p> <p>11 My beloved spake (1936) 3:34
(version for choir and organ)
(Text: Bible – Old Testament: The Song of Solomon 2,
vv. 10–13)</p> <p>Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Five Mystical Songs (1911)
(Text: George Herbert, 1593–1633)</p> <p>12 No. 1. Easter 5:21</p> <p>13 No. 2. I got me flowers 3:01</p> <p>14 No. 3. Love bade me welcome 6:08</p> <p>15 No. 4. The Call 1:58</p> <p>16 No. 5. Antiphon 3:23</p> |
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Organ accompaniment created from the score by Martin Ford **12–16**

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for the choir and the arts in general following the Covid pandemic.**

Five Mystical Songs and other British choral anthems

The 150th anniversary of the birth of Ralph Vaughan Williams is an opportunity to celebrate the music of this wonderful composer and reflect on the motivation and sources of inspiration of some of his sacred choral works, alongside gems of 19th- and early-20th-century English church music.

The England into which Ralph Vaughan Williams was born was considered by Europeans as ‘*das Land ohne Musik*’ (‘the country without music’). This variously attributed phrase is the title of an essay by Oscar Schmitz, published in 1904, in which he wrote: ‘the English are the only cultured nation without their own music ... a lack which everyone acknowledges’. The sentiment was often repeated, and believed even by the British themselves. Yet one can quite definitely discern a musical character that is properly British: in vocal music, obviously, but even in instrumental writing, its inspiration comes essentially from the English language and, specifically, the kind of ‘memorable speech’ (as W.H. Auden defined it) found in the *King James Bible*.

The *King James Bible* (1611) is the wellspring of English poetry. The power of these texts – as RVW put it, ‘words which have engraved themselves indelibly on our consciousness’ – cannot be overestimated. Hundreds of expressions have become part of everyday speech and, even more importantly, the rhythms of its language entered the bloodstream of English speakers. When there was a move in the mid-20th century to publish a new version of the Bible, correcting mistranslations and modernising the language (a move which led ultimately to the publication of the *New English Bible*), Vaughan Williams wrote a deeply felt letter to Gilbert Murray expressing his dismay:

‘I expect you have seen with concern, as I have, the proposal to make a new translation of the Bible. ... Promoters of this new scheme do not seem to realise that a thought and its expression are indivisible: if you take away the beauty of the expression the beauty of the thought will disappear also ...’

(Letter dated 19 April 1949)

Samuel Sebastian (‘S.S.’) Wesley (1810–1876) was born the same year as Chopin and Schumann; he was the great-nephew of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement. A skilled organist, he held posts at Hereford, Exeter, Winchester and Gloucester cathedrals, as well as Leeds Parish Church. Choral music was in a sorry state in cathedrals and churches at this time and it was in part thanks to Wesley’s efforts that it gradually improved.

The anthem *Blessed be the God and Father* (text from 1 Peter) was written for an Easter Day service at Hereford at which ‘only Trebles and a single Bass voice’ were present. Wesley turned the situation to advantage, with an important solo soprano line and a recitative-like unison intervention for the men. The structure is varied, even dramatic; the marvellous melody to the words ‘Love one another with a pure heart fervently’ has irregular phrase lengths, and builds to a glorious choral ending. *Wash me thoroughly* is a setting of two verses of Psalm 51, published in 1853, and another perfect example of his imaginative and sincere style. More unified in structure than *Blessed be*, the anthem features relatively dense part-writing, the steadily paced harmony laced with expressive appoggiaturas and chromaticism. Motivic construction is tight, even scholarly. The ending is surprising: the choir concludes with a series of quiet, slow chords.

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was a pillar of the musical establishment and had a profound influence on the development of music in Britain in his time. Born in Dublin, he studied at Cambridge University and in Europe, and became professor both at the newly founded Royal College of Music and at Cambridge. He was conductor of the London Bach Choir until 1902 and was one of Vaughan Williams’ teachers. *A Song of Wisdom* is the last of *Six Bible Songs, Op. 113* (1909). Setting a text from Ecclesiasticus, it is for sopranos alone with organ accompaniment. The deceptively simple vocal line is a perfect demonstration of how sensitivity to word-rhythm could result in a uniquely British form of expression.

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934) stands a little outside the British mainstream, as a Catholic and a composer influenced predominantly by continental models. Edward Dent wrote that ‘For English ears, Elgar’s music is too emotional and not quite free from vulgarity.’ *Give unto the Lord, Op. 74* was written for the 1914 Festival of the Sons of Clergy at St Paul’s Cathedral. The writing is powerful and dramatic, as well as harmonically adventurous. *Lux æterna* is not originally for choir – it is an arrangement made by John Cameron (in 1996) of the *Nimrod* movement from the ‘*Enigma*’ *Variations*, whose arching lines and yearning harmonies nonetheless make for a very impressive unaccompanied choral piece.

Gustav Holst (1874–1934) was a close friend of Vaughan Williams – the two composers shared an interest in folk music, and often consulted each other about work in progress. His setting of Psalm 148, *Lord, who hast made us for thine own*, uses an old German melody (‘*Lasst uns erfreuen*’) known also as the hymn *All creatures of our God and King*.

Harold Darke (1888–1976) was organist of St Michael’s, Cornhill in London for 50 years. He is best known for his Christmas carol *In the bleak midwinter*, but he wrote much else. *O gladsome light, Op. 38, No. 2* sets a text translated by Robert Bridges from a traditional Greek Orthodox hymn.

The long lines of text set by Herbert Howells (1892–1983) in *Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks* (Psalm 42, 1941) give rise to finely spun and expressive melody, modally inspired, featuring prominent minor thirds. Howells integrates choir and organ in a beautiful musical tapestry.

In *My beloved spake* (1936), Patrick Hadley (1899–1973) sets a magnificent text from *The Song of Solomon*. Hadley was a pupil of Vaughan Williams and taught at the RCM and at Cambridge. Using a harmonic language in which gentle dissonances enliven the B flat major tonal centre, his setting is lyrical and has considerable rhythmic vigour.

Born into a well-to-do and cultured family, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) knew even at school that he wanted to be a composer. Dissatisfaction with the narrowness of the musical training at the Royal College of Music and at Cambridge led him to seek out alternative European models, studying with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris. He himself disparaged his compositional technique as ‘amateurish’, but this is unfair – he was a seeker after truth, concerned to express his vision in the most honest way possible. It is well known that the young Vaughan Williams was an atheist who, according to his second wife, Ursula, drifted into ‘cheerful agnosticism’, but the reality was more complicated. Throughout his life, he wrote works whose inspiration was spiritual – if not necessarily religious – and one can often hear in his music an existential searching for enlightenment. Folk song and the English language both played a significant part in this quest.

O clap your hands dates from 1920. After the First World War, RVW’s style darkened, but this is not at all apparent in this luminous, cheerful piece, starting with a four-note trumpet fanfare and using one of the composer’s harmonic signatures, parallel triads, in a simple ternary structure. The exquisite miniature *O taste and see* was written in 1952: it is a setting of Psalm 34. Flowing from a simple pentatonic melody heard in the sopranos at the start, the texture becomes contrapuntal before ending calmly and homophonically.

Various threads come together in the *Five Mystical Songs* of 1911, written for the Three Choirs Festival. As much a song cycle as a choral work, it sets texts by the 17th-century metaphysical priest-poet, George Herbert. (Around 40 of his texts were selected by the Wesleys for the Methodist hymnal.) Four movements are for baritone solo, three of them with choir (*No. 1. Easter, No. 2. I got me flowers* and *No. 3. Love bade me welcome*), one solo (*No. 4. The Call*). The fifth movement, *Antiphon*, ‘Let all the world in every corner sing’, is for choir alone. This last movement is glorious, full of light and confidence, but the composer arrives at this via passages of introspection. ‘Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part / With all thy art’ (*No. 1. Easter*) could well be a description of his striving for musical authenticity. His setting of the dialogue between the ‘Soul’ and ‘Love’ (*No. 3. Love bade me welcome*) is masterly, intensely personal, alive to every subtlety of language and meaning. The choir comments wordlessly with the plainsong melody *O sacrum convivium*: ‘Our souls are filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given to us.’ It is a typically imaginative, even daring, juxtaposition on RVW’s part, and on this anniversary of his birth, long may it resonate!

David Bray

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

1 O clap your hands

Verses from Psalm 47

O clap your hands, all ye people;
shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For the Lord most high is terrible;
He is a great King over all the earth.
God is gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God; sing praises.
Sing praises to our King; sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth;
Sing ye praises everyone that hath understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen,
God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness.
Sing praises unto our King. Sing praises.

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

2 Lux æterna (a choral setting by John Cameron
of *Nimrod* from the *'Enigma' Variations*)
Text from the Requiem Mass

Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in æternum, quia pius es.
Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis, quia pius es.

*May eternal light shine on them, Lord,
with your saints for ever, for you are good.
Give them eternal rest, Lord,
and may light perpetual shine upon them, for you are good.*

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

3 Lord, who hast made us for thine own

Psalm 148, paraphrased by Francis Ralph Gray

Lord, who hast made us for thine own,
Hear as we sing before Thy throne. Alleluia.

Accept Thy children's rev'rent praise
For all Thy wondrous works and ways. Alleluia.
Waves, rolling in on ev'ry shore,
Pause at His footfall and adore. Alleluia.

Ye torrents rushing from the hills,
Bless Him whose hand your fountains fills. Alleluia.

Earth, ever through the pow'r divine,
Seedtime and harvest shall be thine. Alleluia.

Sweet flow'rs that perfume all the air,
Thank Him that He hath made you fair. Alleluia.

Burn lamps of night, with constant flame,
Shine to the honour of His name. Alleluia.

Thou sun, whom all the lands obey,
Renew his praise from day to day. Alleluia.

Harold Darke (1888–1976)

4 O gladsome light, Op. 38, No. 2

3rd century or earlier, tr. Y. H. [Yattendon Hymnal]

O gladsome light, O grace
Of God the Father's face,
The eternal splendour wearing;
Celestial, holy, blest,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ,
Joyful in thine appearing.

Now, ere day fadeth quite,
We see the evening light,
Our wonted hymn outpouring;
Father of might unknown,
Thee, his incarnate Son,
And Holy Spirit adoring.

To thee of right belongs
All praise of holy songs,
O Son of God, Lifegiver;
Thee, therefore, O Most High,
The world doth glorify,
And shall exalt for ever.

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

5 Like as the hart

(No. 3 of *Four Anthems for Chorus and Organ*)

Psalm 42, vv. 1–3

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks:
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God:
when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?
My tears have been my meat day and night:
while they daily say unto me, Where is now thy God?

Sir Edward Elgar

6 Give unto the Lord, Op. 74

Psalm 29

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
give unto the Lord glory and strength,
give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
the God of glory thundereth;
it is the Lord that ruleth the sea.
The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;
the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.
yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire,
the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness
and strippeth the forests bare.

In His temple doth every one speak of His glory.

The Lord sitteth above the water-flood;
and the Lord remaineth a King for ever.
The Lord shall give strength unto His people;
the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810–1876)

7 Wash me thoroughly

Psalm 51, vv. 2–3

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness,
and forgive me all my sin.
For I acknowledge my faults and my sin is ever before me.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

8 O taste and see

Psalm 34, v. 8

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is:
Blest is the man that trusteth in him.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley

9 Blessed be the God and Father

1 Peter 1, vv. 3–5, 15–17, 22–25

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which according to his abundant mercy
hath begotten us again unto a lively hope
by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled,
that fadeth not away,
reserved in heaven for you,
Who are kept by the power of God
through faith unto salvation
ready to be revealed at the last time.

But as he which hath called you is holy,
so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.
Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

Love one another with a pure heart fervently.
See that ye love one another.
Love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Being born again,
not of corruptible seed,
but of incorruptible,
by the word of God.

For all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man
as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth,
and the flower thereof falleth away.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.
Amen.

Sir Charles Villers Stanford (1852–1924)
10 **A Song of Wisdom, Op. 113, No. 6**
(from *Bible Songs*)
Ecclesiasticus 24

I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and covered the earth as a mist.
I dwelt in high places,
and my throne is in a pillar of cloud.
Alone I compassed the circuit of heaven
and walked the depth of the abyss.
In the waves of the sea and in all the earth,
and in every people and nation I got a possession;
With all these I sought rest.
And I took root in a people that was glorified,
in the portion of the Lord's own inheritance.
I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus,
and as a cypress on the mountains of Hermon.
I was exalted like a palm-tree on the sea shore,
and as a fair olive tree in the plain.
And my branches are branches of glory and grace,
and my flowers are the fruit of glory and riches.
Come unto me, ye that are desirous of me,
and be ye filled with my fruits.
And I came out as a stream from a river
I said, I will water my garden
and will water abundantly my garden bed.

And lo, my stream became a river,
and my river became a sea.
For my thoughts are filled from the sea,
and my counsels from the great deep.
I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
And my throne is in a pillar of cloud.

Patrick Hadley (1899–1973)

11 **My beloved spake**

The Song of Solomon 2, vv. 10–13

My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of the singing of birds is come,
and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs,
and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Five Mystical Songs

Poems by George Herbert, 1593–1633

12 **No. 1. Easter**

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
Without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With him may'st rise;
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more, Just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art.
The cross taught all wood to resound his name
Who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long:
Or since all music is but three parts vied,
And multiplied;
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

13 No. 2. I got me flowers

I got me flowers to strew thy way;
I got me boughs off many a tree:
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sun arising in the East,
Though he give light, and the East perfume;
If they should offer to contest
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
Though many suns to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we miss:
There is but one, and that one ever.

14 No. 3. Love bade me welcome

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
If I lack'd anything.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

15 No. 4. The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, My Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

16 No. 5. Antiphon

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

The church with Psalms must shout.
No door can keep them out:
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

Roderick Williams



Photo: Benjaming Ealovega

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation and enjoys relationships with all the major UK and European opera houses. He has sung world premieres of operas by, among others, David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michel van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel as well as roles by Mozart, Britten and Strauss. Williams has performed concert repertoire with many of the leading orchestras and ensembles internationally including the Berlin and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, London Symphony Orchestra and all of the BBC Orchestras. In demand as a recitalist, he has performed at major venues worldwide and festival appearances have included the BBC Proms (Last Night 2014), Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh and Melbourne. In 2016 he won the RPS Singer Award and the prize for Best Choral Composition at the British Composer Awards.

Martin Ford



Martin Ford is the acting sub-organist of St Paul's Cathedral, and the organist and director of music of The Guards' Chapel. His wide-ranging freelance career encompasses a variety of work as an organist, piano accompanist, choral director and teacher. Ford read music at Oxford University before continuing his studies at the Royal College of Music. He has held organ scholarships at Southwark Cathedral and Magdalen College, Oxford; the position of assistant organist at St Martin-in-the-Fields and Westminster Abbey, and acting sub-organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. He has given solo recitals in venues such as the Church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, and has accompanied numerous broadcasts on BBC radio and television. As an accompanist, Ford regularly appears with soloists as well as larger ensembles, including the Vasari Singers and Trinity Boys Choir. His discography includes a number of releases with the Vasari Singers on the Naxos label, and two albums with the Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford for Harmonia Mundi.

Jeremy Backhouse



Photo: Ash Mills

Jeremy Backhouse is one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was senior chorister. Backhouse has been the sole conductor of the internationally renowned chamber choir Vasari Singers since its inception in 1980. The choir broadcasts frequently on BBC Radio and Classic FM, and has a discography of over 30 highly acclaimed albums on the EMI, Guild, Signum and Naxos labels. In 1995, Backhouse was appointed music director of the Vivace Chorus. Alongside the standard classical works, Backhouse has conducted the ensemble in a vast array of ambitious programmes over his 26 years with the choir, including sell-out performances of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand* and Verdi's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In January 2009, Backhouse took up the post of music director of the Salisbury Community Choir, and in November 2018 gave the world premiere performance of *Freedom! The Power of Song*, commissioned by them from Alexander L'Estrange. Backhouse has also worked with a number of the UK's other leading choirs, including the BBC Singers, the London Symphony Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus and the Brighton Festival Chorus.

www.jeremybackhouse.com

Vasari Singers



Vasari Singers was founded in 1980 and is regarded as one of the leading chamber choirs in Britain. Under the direction of its founder conductor Jeremy Backhouse, Vasari Singers performs a wide range of repertoire from Renaissance to contemporary. The choir regularly sings at major concert venues and other locations in London and elsewhere, including abroad, having enjoyed tours to Spain, Italy and the Baltic states in recent years. Cathedral residencies are an important part of the choir's year, and the ensemble is frequently heard on Classic FM and BBC Radio 3. The choir's extensive discography includes a large collection of premiere recordings, many of which are of works commissioned by Vasari Singers, as well as two collections of Christmas music. Many of the choir's recordings have received high acclaim, achieving chart successes and similar recommendations. During the moratorium on live choral singing in 2019 and 2020, Vasari turned its attention to online activities, successfully engaging with a worldwide audience through virtual performances and choral workshops. Notable among these was the online launch concert for the critically acclaimed *Heaven Full of Stars* (8.574179). www.vasarisingers.org

Soprano: Victoria Cross, Sarah Cumbers, Rachel Holmes, Elizabeth Isherwood, Kate Jurka, Elizabeth Limb, Rachel Limb, Fiona McWilliams, Rosalind Newis, Julia Smith, Jess Stansfield, Laura Stephenson, Susan Waton

Alto: Elizabeth Atkinson, Alison Benton, Alex Brougham, Yvonne Connell, Stephanie May, Sarah Mistry, Philippa Smethurst, Julia Ridout • **Tenor:** Daniel Burges, Roger Carpenter, Giles Gabriel, Andrew Isherwood, David Jackson, Paul Robertson, Rihards Saknītis, Jonathan Scott, Julian Washington • **Bass:** Imants Auziņš, Daniel Benton, Rory Benton, Matthew Bernstein, Jeremy Brown, James Cross, John Hunt, Keith Long, Paul Newis

Featuring Vaughan Williams' masterly and intensely personal *Five Mystical Songs*, this album reflects on the sources of inspiration of some of his sacred choral works, alongside gems of 19th- and early-20th-century English church music. Often setting the poetry of the King James Bible, the finely spun melodies and sensitivity to word-rhythm of composers from S.S. Wesley to Herbert Howells result in a uniquely British form of expression.

FIVE MYSTICAL SONGS

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|--|------|--|-------|
| 1 Ralph Vaughan Williams:
O clap your hands | 3:29 | 8 Vaughan Williams:
O taste and see | 1:36 |
| 2 Sir Edward Elgar / John Cameron:
Lux æterna | 3:31 | 9 S.S. Wesley:
Blessed be the God and Father | 8:01 |
| 3 Gustav Holst: Lord, who hast
made us for thine own | 5:33 | 10 Sir Charles Villiers Stanford:
A Song of Wisdom | 5:25 |
| 4 Harold Darke: O gladsome light | 3:51 | 11 Patrick Hadley:
My beloved spake | 3:34 |
| 5 Herbert Howells:
Like as the hart | 6:28 | 12–16 Vaughan Williams:
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| 6 Elgar: Give unto the Lord | 9:23 | | |
| 7 Samuel Sebastian Wesley:
Wash me throughly | 4:51 | | |

Roderick Williams, Baritone **12–15**

Julia Smith **5** **7**, **Elizabeth Limb** **8** **9**,

Rachel Limb, Kate Jurka **8**, **Soprano**

Martin Ford, Organ **1** **3** **5–16**

Vasari Singers **1–14** **16** • **Jeremy Backhouse**

A detailed track list and publishers' details can be found inside the booklet.

The sung texts are included in the booklet, and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/574416.htm

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