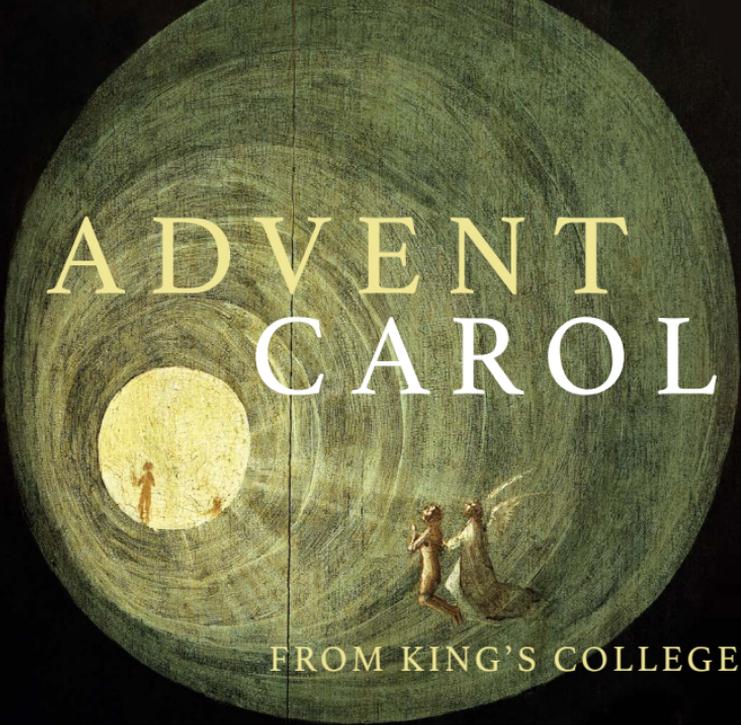


DELPHIAN

A circular painting depicting a tunnel with concentric, swirling lines. At the far end of the tunnel is a bright, glowing yellow circle. Two small figures are visible near this light. In the foreground, two larger figures are shown: one appears to be a woman in a long, flowing dress, and the other is a winged figure, possibly an angel, standing beside her. The overall color palette is dominated by shades of green and yellow.

ADVENT  
CAROLS

FROM KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

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THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE LONDON  
JOSEPH FORT

# ADVENT CAROLS

FROM KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE LONDON  
JOSEPH FORT

Michael Butterfield *organ*\*

*The Choir of King's College London gratefully acknowledges the support of The Williams Church Music Trust, and also of the staff of the Dean's Office at King's College London (Tim Ditchfield, Clare Dowding and Natalie Frangos). Thanks are also due to Fr David Houlding and Martin Kemp of All Hallows', Gospel Oak, for the use of their church and 1915 Hill organ.*

*Tracks 4, 8, 13 and 20 are premiere recordings.*

Recorded on 8-10 April 2019 in All Hallows', Gospel Oak  
Producer/Engineer: Paul Baxter  
24-bit digital editing: Matthew Swan  
24-bit digital mastering: Paul Baxter  
Design: Drew Padrutt  
Booklet editor: Henry Howard

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Cover image: Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450–1516), detail from *The Ascent of the Blessed*, oil on panel, c.1500–1504/Palazzo Ducale, Venice/Bridgeman Images  
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1	Advent Prose: Drop down, ye heavens, from above mode i		[4:46]
2	Canite tuba	Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594)	[5:10]
3	Antiphon: O Sapientia		[0:47]
4	Sancte et sapienter Madeleine Alabaster, Ruby Sweetland <i>soprano solos</i>	Philip Moore (b. 1943)	[4:10]
5	Antiphon: O Adonai		[0:50]
6	Ad te Domine levavi	Orlande de Lassus (1530/2–1594)	[4:05]
7	Antiphon: O Radix Jesse		[0:49]
8	O Radix Jesse*	Joel Rust (b. 1989)	[4:56]
9	Antiphon: O Clavis David		[1:00]
10	Tollite portas	William Byrd (1539/40–1623)	[1:45]
11	Lo! he comes with clouds descending* 'Helmsley'	melody noted by Thomas Olivers (1725–1799), arr. Joseph Fort	[4:14]
12	Antiphon: O Oriens		[0:44]
13	Advent Moon*	Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951)	[5:00]
14	Antiphon: O Rex Gentium		[0:46]
15	'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died* William Hester <i>tenor solo</i>	George Benjamin (b. 1960)	[7:09]
16	Antiphon: O Emmanuel		[0:45]
17	Laetentur caeli	William Byrd	[2:37]
18	O come, O come, Emmanuel* 'Veni Emmanuel'	melody, said to be French, adapted by Thomas Helmore (1811–90), arr. Joseph Fort	[4:51]
19	Antiphon: O Virgo virginum		[1:02]
20	Magnificat (Gloucester Service)* Madeleine Alabaster <i>soprano solo</i>	Kerensa Briggs (b. 1991)	[6:27]
21	O frondens virga	Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)	[2:56]
	Total playing time		[64:56]

## Notes on the music

Two universities, the medieval foundations of Oxford and Cambridge, were dominant in England for centuries until London broke the mould in the 1820s. The capital's industrial and commercial expansion helped build a secular alternative to the Anglican exclusivity of Oxbridge in the form of the future University College London, while its culture wars contributed to the creation of King's College London. King's, with the backing of George IV and the Duke of Wellington, emerged as the ruling establishment's response to what one critic, referring to University College, described as 'that goddess institution in Gower Street'. King's College's campus occupied a fine neoclassical building on the Strand and, despite determined conservative opposition, opened its doors to Anglicans and 'non-conformists of all sorts'. Whatever their denomination, all King's students were expected to attend Chapel services and did so at first in a rather plain space above the college's Great Hall.

King's Chapel was transformed in the early 1860s by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the great Gothic revivalist and the hand behind the Albert Memorial and the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras Station. His ornate design followed the lines of an early Christian basilica. It included a rich mix of mosaics, stained glass and wall paintings, and contained room for a 'Father' Henry Willis organ, reconstructed in the 1930s by its maker's grandson and most recently renovated by Mander Organs. The restoration

of the building's fabric, completed in 2001, was complemented by serious investment in The Choir of King's College London, a process eased by its then director of music, David Trendell, whose tireless leadership raised the choir's standards and established its reputation as one of the best on the collegiate circuit. He also secured generous choral scholarships from the King's College purse. Trendell's sudden, all too early death in October 2014 came just weeks before one of the most important occasions in the King's calendar, the annual candlelit Advent Carols, where demand for tickets, even with three iterations of the service, always exceeds the supply of Chapel seats.

Since taking up his position as its Director and College Organist in September 2015, Joseph Fort has given fresh momentum to the choir. He has introduced new works to its repertoire and broadened its Advent service to include compositions from the distant past and by today's emerging talents. The present recording evokes Advent's solemnity and sense of anticipation. Many of the pieces set words from the Book of Isaiah or their echoes in the New Testament Gospels. 'I wanted to tie the O Antiphons and Magnificat, which have been an essential part of the King's service for decades, to compositions based on prophetic texts from the Bible,' he notes. 'There's a strong flavour of Isaiah in many of these pieces and a feeling that something extraordinary is about to happen.'

Fort's choice of contemporary choral works embraces a host of King's College connections: Kerensa Briggs, for instance, gained her master's degree in composition from King's, while Philip Moore's *Sancte et sapienter*, a setting for double choir of the King's College Prayer, was commissioned to mark the institution's 175th anniversary. *Sancte et sapienter*, 'With holiness and wisdom', embodies the motto of King's. Moore's composition, fluid in metre, grows from a solo soprano line, repeated in choral form on ascending steps of the scale. The gradual rise in tension culminates with a mighty plea for the seeds of learning, virtue and religion to take root for the good of all. Moore's 'Sancte et sapienter' melody, restored to its initial pitch, runs as a refrain through the work's final bars until it makes way for overlapping Amens from two solo voices.

Conceived as a 'solemn and traditional' ritual, the full King's Advent Carols service combines music and readings. This recording omits the spoken word but preserves its essential blend of plainsong, polyphony and seasonal hymns, the whole built around the **O Antiphons**. These antiphons, also known as the Great Antiphons of Advent, constitute a group of seven ancient texts associated with the singing of the Vespers Magnificat (the song of Christ's mother, Mary) during Advent. Each begins with the invocation 'O', continues with a short prayer that alludes to Christ, and closes by petitioning the Saviour to come

to us, to teach us, to lighten our darkness. Their titles evoke attributes associated with Christ: *O Wisdom*, *O Adonai* (Lord), *O Root of Jesse*, *O Key of David*, *O Day-spring*, *O King of the Nations*, *O Emmanuel* (God with us). Emmanuel, Dayspring, the Root of Jesse and the Key of David draw on the messianic prophecies of Isaiah, while Adonai concerns the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses as recalled in St John's Gospel.

Advent is, or at least was, a season of penitence and fasting, of watching and waiting for the Lord. It remains a time for reflection in winter's darkest days on the light to come, a time to recall Christ's incarnation, to contemplate death and the final Day of Judgement. Above all, it is the season to prepare for the Second Coming. The O Antiphons, part of the Roman liturgy since the late eighth century, give voice to Advent's radical message of salvation. They precede and follow the Magnificat on each of the seven days before Christmas Eve; taken in reverse order, their initial letters form the acrostic ERO CRAS, the Latin translation of Christ's promise to his followers: 'I will be [with you] tomorrow'.

An eighth antiphon, *O Virgo virginum*, in honour of the Virgin Mary, was added to the sequence by the medieval English Church. It survived together with its seven older companions to find a place in Anglican worship; the pre-Reformation legacy is also preserved in the calendar of the 1662 *Book of Common*

Notes on the music

*Prayer*, where 16 December is marked as 'O Sapientia', the first of the eight days that precede the Vigil of Christmas. The eight O Antiphon chants from the medieval Sarum Antiphonal were published in 1856 for the Ecclesiological Society and included in *The English Hymnal* in 1906.

*Veni, veni Emanuel*, a metrical version of five of the O Antiphons, found a new audience in the 1850s after it was translated into English by the Anglican priest and hymnwriter John Mason Neale. Thomas Helmore, editor of the *Hymnal Noted* of 1851, married Neale's English words to a melody that seems to have originated in late medieval France. The second edition of the *Hymnal Noted* included a revised version of Neale's text, which in his own and subsequent retractions (such as *The English Hymnal's O come, O come, Emmanuel*, sung here) soon became a staple of Advent worship for English-speaking congregations. Joseph Fort's descant and sonorous organ harmonies in the penultimate verse reinforce the hymn's darkness-dispelling message.

**The Advent Prose (Drop down, ye heavens, from above)**, another *English Hymnal* staple, carries the melody of *Rorate caeli*, the Gregorian plainchant sung at Mass and Vespers during Advent. Its words, from the Book of Isaiah, express the yearning of the Old Testament's patriarchs and prophets for the Messiah. The power of prophetic imagery also propels the words and seems

to galvanise the music of **Lo, he comes with clouds descending**, Charles Wesley's great Advent hymn.

New York-based, London-born composer and sound artist Joel Rust took the text of **O Radix Jesse** from the Ritson Manuscript, one of the most important late fifteenth-century sources of English carols. Its beguiling mix of Latin and Middle English words opens with a version of the O Antiphon, here shortened to become a humble prayer for deliverance, followed by a more elaborate play on Christ as the root of all good things, life-giving and eternally powerful. Joseph Fort commissioned Rust's work while serving as Director of Music at Grace Church, Newton, Massachusetts. The piece opens with an alto chant, its repetition shadowed by a ghostly unison canon in the organ. Rust punctuates the music's edgy quality with islands of organum-like chordal passages, signifiers of unshakeable faith.

Recent studies of the Counter-Reformation have stripped away the myth of Palestrina as the saviour of Catholic music to leave a richer story. His genius was to translate the rather vague ideas on the reform of church music that came out of the Council of Trent into new works of great originality. Palestrina's sacred compositions supplied aural aids to devotion, intense in spiritual energy and alive to the great legacy of musical worship and ritual. **Canite tuba**, to words from the

Old Testament books of Joel and Isaiah, was published in Palestrina's second book of motets in 1572. Its clean-lined counterpoint heralds the day of salvation, at times with an urgency that suggests it is imminent. The work's second part, *Rorate caeli* offers a textbook model of the Palestrina style, simple in its musical invention, crystal clear in its projection of the words of the introit for the fourth Sunday in Advent.

Palestrina's contemporary Orlando de Lassus, originally from the Franco-Flemish province of Hainaut, learnt his craft in Italy before joining the court of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria in Munich. **Ad te Domine levavi**, published in Antwerp in 1556, draws its text from the first four verses of Psalm 25. Its austere yet always busy counterpoint recalls an earlier style of Flemish polyphony, perhaps conceived in tribute to the composer's homeland.

While the intolerance of Roman Catholics that marked the early years of Elizabeth I's reign softened over time, the law stood against so-called recusants, including those who refused to attend weekly Anglican services. William Byrd's **Tollite portas** probably began life as a piece for clandestine Catholic services but reached a larger audience with its publication in 1610 in the second edition of Byrd's *Gradualia*. The composer moves here from his initial fervent treatment of lines from Psalm 24 to consider the salvation that awaits the innocent of hands the pure of heart.

Although Byrd belonged to a group of activist Catholics, including the earls of Oxford and Northampton and the influential Petre family, he was largely protected from persecution by royal favour. **Laetentur caeli**, a setting for five voices of the processional respond for Advent Sunday, appears to have been revised from an earlier manuscript version for inclusion in Byrd's second *Cantiones sacrae* collection of 1589. The motet's lively opening contrasts with the other-worldly nature of its second part, cast chiefly for soprano, alto and tenor voices. Byrd restores the full choral texture while retaining the meditative mood with a subtle repeat of the first part's closing section.

George Benjamin, Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College London since 2001, was himself a student when he composed **'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died**. The piece, written in 1980 for the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, evokes the entrancing intensity of the best folk ballads, its mood set by solo tenor confiding the words of Isaiah's vision and intensified by the choir and organ's play of tonal textures and colours. While Benjamin's early studies with Messiaen left their influence on his composition's organ part, the piece draws equally from the English carol tradition in its melodic style and dramatic contrasts. *'Twas in the year* perhaps owes its greatest debt to the legacy of Christian mysticism, open to ecstatic visions of six-winged seraphim surrounding God in majesty.

## Notes on the music

Expectation and hope are central to **Advent Moon**, Cecilia McDowall's plaintive setting of words written for the piece by Angier Brock. The work grows out of silence to deliver a flowing choral plea for salvation. McDowall matches the musical symbolism summoned by bell-like harmonies to the textual imagery of Christ as the inextinguishable source of light. *Advent Moon* was written for the Choirs of Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, Virginia and first performed by them on Advent Sunday 2013.

Kerensa Briggs was raised to the sounds of sacred music. She sang with the youth choir of Gloucester Cathedral, where her father David Briggs was Organist and Master of the Choristers, before joining the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge and holding a choral scholarship at King's College London. Briggs's **Magnificat**, part of her *Gloucester Service*, was

commissioned by Gloucester Choral Society and first performed by them in February 2017. Hers is not a Hollywood Magnificat, all guns blazing from the outset; rather, it unfolds like the coming of day, growing from a simple melodic mantra to express the overwhelming scale of God's power and unconditional love. Finally, Mary again advances as an agent of salvation in Hildegard's *O frondens virga*. The antiphon, from the twelfth-century Dendermonde Codex, sings of the virgin mother's nobility and pleads for her intercession, to free us from 'from our wicked habits'.

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*After studying historical musicology at King's College London, Andrew Stewart began his career as freelance writer 30 years ago and has held his passion for sacred choral music ever since.*

## Texts and translations

### 1 Drop down, ye heavens, from above

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: thy holy cities are a wilderness, Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation: our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee. Drop down ...

We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing, and we all do fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away: thou hast hid thy face from us: and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. Drop down ...

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know me and believe me: I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour: and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. Drop down ...

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, my salvation shall not tarry: I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions: fear not, for I will save thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer. Drop down ...

Advent Prose *Rorate caeli*, attr. Aurelius Prudentius (348–c.413), based on texts from Isaiah; translation from *The English Hymnal*, 1906

### 2 Canite tuba

Canite tuba in Sion, quia prope est dies Domini: ecce venit ad salvandum nos. Erunt prava in directa, et aspera in vias planas: veni Domine, et noli tardare. Alleluia.

Rorate caeli desuper et nubes pluant iustum: aperiat terra et germinet Salvatorem. Ostende nobis Domine misericordiam tuam et salutare tuum da nobis: veni Domine et noli tardare. Alleluia.

Antiphon and introit for the fourth Sunday in Advent; texts from Joel 2: 1, Isaiah 40: 4 and 45: 8 and Psalm 84: 7 (85: 8 Vulgate)

*Sound the trumpet in Sion, for the day of the Lord is near: see, he is coming to save us. What is crooked shall be straightened, and rough ground turned into smooth paths: come, Lord, and do not delay. Alleluia.*

*Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness: let the earth open and bear the Saviour. Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation: come, Lord, and do not tarry. Alleluia.*

Texts and translations

3 **O Sapientia**

O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the Most High, and reachest from one end to another, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Magnificat Antiphon for 16/17 December; translation attr. to Alexander Beresford Hope (1820–1887), given with revisions in John Mason Neale and Thomas Helmore, eds, *Hymnal Noted*, ii, 1855–6; revised again for *The English Hymnal*, 1906

4 **Sancte et sapienter**

Almighty God, the fountain of wisdom and the giver of every good and perfect gift, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: send down thy blessing upon this place; prosper, we pray thee, the searches of those who here would find holiness and wisdom. May the seeds of learning, virtue and religion here sown, bring forth fruit abundantly to thy glory and in the service of all our fellow creatures, from generation to generation. Amen.

Sancte et sapienter.  
[*With holiness and wisdom.*]

Prayer for and motto of King's College London (adapted)

5 **O Adonai**

O Adonai, and Leader of the house of Israel, who appearedst in the bush to Moses in a

flame of fire, and gavest him the Law in Sinai: Come and deliver us with an outstretched arm.

Magnificat Antiphon for 17/18 December

6 **Ad te Domine levavi**

Ad te Domine levavi animam meam, Deus meus in te confido: non erubescam, delicta iuventutis meae, et ignorantias meas, ne memineris.

Vias tuas Domine demonstra mihi, et semitas tuas edoce me. Dirige me in veritate tua, et doce me, quia tu es Deus salvator meus.

Psalm 25 (24 Vulgate): 1–2, 7a, 4b–5a

*I have raised up my soul to you, O Lord; my God, in you I trust: I will not be ashamed; do not bear in mind the sins of my youth and my errors.*

*Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. Instruct me in your truth, and teach me, for you are my saviour God.*

7 **O Radix Jesse**

O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people, at whom kings shall shut their mouths, to whom the Gentiles shall seek: Come and deliver us, and tarry not.

Magnificat Antiphon for 18/19 December

8 **O Radix Jesse**

O radix Jesse supplices  
Te nos invocamus;  
Veni ut nos libereres  
Quem iam expectamus.

[*O Root of Jesse, humbly we call on you: come to set us free, you whom now we await.*]

O of Jesse thow holy rote,  
That to thi pepill arte syker merke,  
We calle to the; be thow oure bote,  
In the that we gronde all owre werke.

Thy laude ys exalted by lordes and kynges;  
No man to prayse the may suffice;  
Off the spryngith vertu and all gode thynges;  
Come and delyuere vs fro owre malice.

Off the may no malice growe,  
That thou thyselue arte pure godenesse;  
In the be rotedde what we showe,  
And graunte ows blisse after owre decesse.

English, 15th century, from the Ritson Manuscript (BL Add. MS 5665)

rote, rotedde *root, rooted*; syker merke *certain sign*; bote *salvation*; malice *badness*

9 **O Clavis David**

O Key of David, and Sceptre of the house of Israel; that openest, and no man shutteth, and shuttest, and no man openeth: Come and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house, and him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.

Magnificat Antiphon for 19/20 December

10 **Tollite portas**

Tollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit Rex Glorae. Quis ascendet in montem Domini, aut quis stabit in loco sancto eius? Innocens manibus et mundo corde. Alleluia.

Gradual for votive masses of the Virgin during Advent; text from Psalm 24 (23 Vulgate): 7; 3–4

*Lift up your gates, princes, and be raised up, you everlasting gates, and the King of Glory will enter. Who will go up onto the Lord's hill, or who will stand in his holy place? He whose hands are innocent and whose heart is clean. Alleluia.*

Texts and translations

11 **Lo! he comes with clouds descending**

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,  
Once for favoured sinners slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluya!  
God appears, on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him  
Robed in dreadful majesty;  
Those who set at naught and sold him,  
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing  
Shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion  
Still his dazzling body bears,  
Cause of endless exultation  
To his ransomed worshippers:  
With what rapture  
Gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,  
High on thine eternal throne;  
Saviour, take the power and glory,  
Claim the kingdom for thine own:  
O come quickly!  
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!

Charles Wesley (1707–1788), with later alterations

12 **O Oriens**

O Day-spring, Brightest of Light  
Everlasting, and Sun of Righteousness:  
Come and enlighten him that sitteth in the  
darkness and the shadow of death.

Magnificat Antiphon for 20/21 December

13 **Advent Moon**

Let the coming of the One  
who arranges Orion and the Pleiades  
begin in darkness.  
Let the night be cold, with drifts of snow.  
Let there be one lily blooming,  
and whispered messages, and kneeling.  
The fierce earth spins in expectation  
beneath the long night's moon, Advent moon.  
Like the restless fox crossing frosted meadows,  
the silvered owl in [focused,] silent flight,  
each of us is hungry.  
From rooms of untold longing,  
we sing our seasoned carols,  
watch and wait.  
Let the coming of the One  
who kindles fires of hope,  
whose faithfulness runs far beyond our sight,  
be like the coming of a child.  
Let there be milk, forgiveness, quiet arms.  
Come quickly, Love, our dearest deep  
and sweetest dawning.  
Come, fill us with your light.

Angier Brock (b. 1947)

*Advent Moon* by Cecilia McDowall, words by Angier  
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14 **O Rex Gentium**

O King of the Nations, and their desire;  
the Corner-stone, who makest both one:  
Come and save mankind, whom thou  
formedst of clay.

Magnificat Antiphon for 21/22 December

15 **'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died**

'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died,  
A vision by Isaiah was espied:  
A lofty throne – the Lord was set thereon;  
And with his glory all the temple shone.

Bright seraphim were standing round about;  
Six wings had ev'ry of that quire devout;  
With twain he, awesome, veil'd his face, and so  
With twain he, dreadful, veil'd his feet below,

With twain did he now hither, thither fly.  
And thus aloud did one to other cry:  
'Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth,  
Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth,

'Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth,  
Full of his glory are earth and heav'n, both.'  
And at their cry the lintels moved apace,  
And clouds of incense fill'd the holy place.

Translation by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848–1934)  
of the hymn *Jesaia, dem Propheten, das geschah* by  
Martin Luther (1483–1546), after Isaiah 6: 1–4

16 **O Emmanuel**

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the  
Desire of all nations, and their Salvation:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Magnificat Antiphon for 22/23 December

17 **Laetentur caeli**

Laetentur caeli, et exsultet terra. Jubilate  
montes laudem, quia Dominus noster veniet,  
et pauperum suorum miserebitur. Orietur  
in diebus tuis iustitia et abundantia pacis, et  
pauperum suorum miserebitur.

Processional respond on Advent Sunday in the Use of  
Sarum; text from Isaiah 49: 13 and Psalm 72 (71 Vulgate): 7

*Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth  
exult. Shout in praise, you mountains, for our  
Lord shall come, and shall have pity on his  
poor ones. In your day righteousness will  
arise, and an abundance of peace, and he  
shall have pity on his poor ones.*

18 **O come, O come, Emmanuel**

O come, O come, Emmanuel!  
Redeem thy captive Israel,  
That into exile drear is gone  
Far from the face of God's dear Son.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Texts and translations

O come, thou Wisdom from on high  
Who madest all in earth and sky,  
Creating man from dust and clay:  
To us reveal salvation's way.

O come, O come, Adonai,  
Who in thy glorious majesty  
From Sinai's mountain clothed with awe,  
Gavest thy folk the ancient law.

O come, thou Root of Jesse! draw  
The quarry from the lion's claw;  
From those dread caverns of the grave,  
From nether hell, thy people save.

O Come, thou Lord of David's Key!  
The royal door fling wide and free;  
Safeguard for us the heavenward road,  
And bar the way to death's abode.

O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright!  
Pour on our souls thy healing light;  
Dispel the long night's lingering gloom,  
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.

O come, Desire of nations! show  
Thy kingly reign on earth below;  
Thou Corner-stone, uniting all,  
Restore the ruin of our fall.

*Veni, veni Emanuel* first published in *Psalterium  
Cantionum Catholicarum* (Cologne, 1710)  
trans. Thomas Alexander Lacey (1853–1931) for *The  
English Hymnal* (1906), with later alterations

19 **O Virgo virginum**

O Virgin of virgins, how shall this be?  
For neither before thee was any like  
thee, nor shall there be after. Daughters  
of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me?  
The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.

Marian antiphon for Advent, used in the English and some  
Continental traditions as a Magnificat Antiphon for  
23 December; translation from Neale and  
Helmore, ii, 1855–6

20 **Magnificat**

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.

21 **O frondens virga**

O frondens virga,  
in tua nobilitate stans  
sicut aurora procedit:  
nunc gaude et laetare  
et nos debiles dignare  
a mala consuetudine liberare  
atque manum tuam porrigere  
ad erigendum nos.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)

*O branch bursting into leaf,  
standing in your nobility,  
who comes forth like the dawn:  
rejoice now and be glad  
and condescend to free us  
weak ones from our wicked habits  
and stretch out your hand to us  
to set us aright.*

## Biographies



photo © David Arnda

**Joseph Fort** is the College Organist & Director of the Chapel Choir, and Lecturer in Music at King's College London. Previously, he completed his PhD at Harvard University, and is active as a conductor and musicologist. Joseph

is responsible for chapel music at King's, conducting the choir in the weekly Eucharist and Evensong services during term. He has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4, and on US radio. His conducting debut with Britten Sinfonia in 2017 was met with acclaim from *The Times*, and his recording of the Brahms *Requiem* (London Version) released the same year on Delphian Records was praised as 'an intimate, highly charged performance' (Stephen Pritchard, *The Observer*) and 'utterly uplifting' (Norman Lebrecht, *La Scena Musicale*). Another Delphian release, of the *Double Masses* of Leighton and Martin, was described in *Gramophone* as 'a performance of astonishing intensity and musicality ... Joseph Fort is clearly in his element with this music and drives his singers onward with an almost hypnotic zeal'.

Festival conducting appearances across the world include the Festival de México, the White Nights Festival of St Petersburg, the Montreal Organ Festival, the London Handel Festival, the St Albans International Organ

Festival and the conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the Royal Canadian College of Organists. In demand as a chorus master, he has assisted John Eliot Gardiner and Roger Norrington, and enjoys a long and warm association with the Cambridge University Symphony Chorus. During his time in America, Joseph conducted choirs in the Boston area, and served for several years as the Resident Conductor of the Harvard–Radcliffe Collegium Musicum.

Joseph's research focuses on eighteenth-century music and dance, and he is currently completing a monograph on Haydn and minuets. He has published in the journal *Eighteenth-Century Music*, and has chapters in books with Cambridge University Press and Leipzig University Press. He has given papers at numerous conferences, and recently featured on a panel for the Mozart Society of America entitled 'The Future of Mozart Studies'. In November 2017 he returned to Harvard as Artist in Residence with the Harvard Choruses. A dedicated teacher, Joseph lectures on a variety of topics at King's, and regularly gives talks for music societies and festivals. In 2018 his teaching was recognised with the Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. Prior to Harvard, he studied at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he was the organ scholar, and at the Royal Academy of Music, who in 2017 elected him to their Associateship.

**The Choir of King's College London** is one of the leading university choirs in England, and has existed since its founding by William Henry Monk in the middle of the nineteenth century. The choir today consists of twenty-eight choral scholars reading a variety of subjects. The choir's principal role at King's is to provide music for chapel worship, with weekly Eucharist and Evensong offered during term, as well as various other services. Services from the chapel are regularly broadcast on BBC Radio. The choir also frequently sings for worship outside the university, including at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral.

In addition, the choir gives many concert performances. Recent festival appearances in England include the Barnes Music Festival, London Handel Festival, Oundle International Festival, St Albans International Organ Festival, Spitalfields Festival, and the Christmas and Holy Week festivals at St John's Smith Square. In 2017 the choir joined forces with Britten Sinfonia to give the UK premiere of Samuel Barber's *The Lovers* (chamber version) at Kings Place, the performance described in *The Times* as 'sung beautifully, the voices judiciously blended'. The choir tours widely, with recent destinations including Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Nigeria and the USA. In 2017 it served as choir in residence for the northeast convention of the American

Guild of Organists and Royal Canadian College of Organists in Montreal.

The choir has made many recordings, and enjoys an ongoing relationship with Delphian Records. Recent recordings include the *German Requiem* of Johannes Brahms in its 1872 English-language setting (DCD34195), and the Masses for Double Choir by Kenneth Leighton and Frank Martin (DCD34211). Future releases with Delphian include Gustav Holst's *The Cloud Messenger*, in a new chamber version by Joseph Fort.

Following some twenty years under the leadership of David Trendell, the choir has been directed since 2015 by Joseph Fort.

The Choir of King's College London

**Soprano**

Madeleine Alabaster *Harrow Choral Scholar*  
Sabrina Curwen *Glanfield Choral Scholar*  
Georgia Entwisle *Harrow Choral Scholar*  
cantor tracks 3, 7, 12, 16  
Lucy Green  
Claudia Lau  
Arabella Lewis  
Sofia Robinson  
Ruby Sweetland  
Ciara Williams

**Alto**

Adam Bull  
Miriam Briggs *Eileen Lineham Choral Scholar*  
Megan Holch *Helen Hudson Choral Scholar*  
Hafren Park  
Jessica Smith  
Jacob Werrin

**Tenor**

Connor Collerton  
Richard Franklin  
William Hester *David Trendell Memorial*  
*Choral Scholar* cantor track 1  
Ben Mark Turner

**Bass**

Marcus Cox  
Samir Hutchings  
Sebastian Johnson cantor tracks 5, 9, 14, 19  
Thomas Keogh  
Thomas Noon *Ouseley Trust Choral Scholar*  
Paul Spies *Gough Choral Scholar*

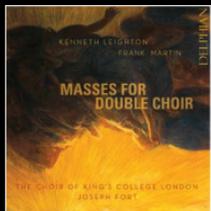
**Organ Scholar**

Michael Butterfield *E. H. Warrell Memorial*  
*Organ Scholar*



photo © Harry Hitchens

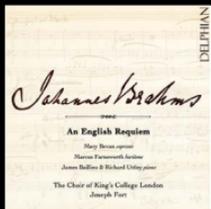
Also available on Delphian



**Kenneth Leighton/Frank Martin: Masses for Double Choir**  
The Choir of King's College London/Joseph Fort  
DCD34211

In the 1920s Frank Martin, a Swiss Calvinist by upbringing, created a radiant Latin setting of the Mass for double choir, only to return it to the bottom drawer, considering it to be 'a matter between God and myself'. It was finally released for performance forty years later, around the same time that the Edinburgh-based composer Kenneth Leighton made his own double-choir setting – a work with moments of striking stillness, delightful to choral singers and yet rarely recorded. Contrasts and comparisons abound at every point in this fascinating pairing of Masses from the supposedly godless twentieth century, and are brought out to the full by The Choir of King's College London's impassioned performances. A short organ postlude by the teenage Jehan Alain, written on retreat in a monastery in 1930, follows like a voluntary concluding the liturgy.

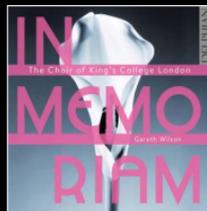
'a performance of astonishing intensity and musicality'  
— Gramophone, May 2019



**Brahms: An English Requiem**  
Mary Bevan, Marcus Farnsworth, The Choir of King's College London /  
Joseph Fort; James Baillieu & Richard Uttley (piano four hands)  
DCD34195

Since its London premiere in 1871, Brahms's *German Requiem* has enjoyed immense popularity in the UK, in both its orchestral and chamber versions. But the setting we know today is not the one that nineteenth-century British audiences knew and loved. The work was rarely performed here in German; rather, it was almost always sung in English translation, with the writer G.A. Macfarren proposing in a widely read text that it should be called *An English Requiem*. In its sixth Delphian recording, The Choir of King's College London revives the nineteenth-century English setting in which Brahms's masterpiece established itself as a favourite among its earliest British audiences.

'utterly uplifting' — Norman Lebrecht, *La Scena Musicale*, November 2017



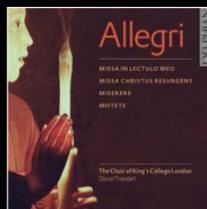
**In Memoriam**  
The Choir of King's College London / Gareth Wilson  
DCD34146

The choir which David Trendell directed for twenty-two years pays tribute in a collection of specially chosen pieces by David's colleagues, friends and former students, interspersed with the Renaissance polyphony which was Trendell's area of scholarly expertise. His deep love for the Song of Songs has inspired many of the inclusions, and its nature imagery threads through the disc, adding a suggestion of renewal and rebirth to the memorial tone of works written in the difficult months after his untimely death. The composers' affection for David and gratitude for his life and musical achievements is matched by the intelligence and deep musicality of the choir which he raised to an international reputation, and which here takes on a sophisticated and challenging programme in his memory.

'The choir sings with assured intonation and a controlled vibrancy ... For quality of performance and diversity of repertoire, this is an outstanding disc'  
— Choir & Organ, March/April 2016, \*\*\*\*\*



GRAMOPHONE  
Editor's choice

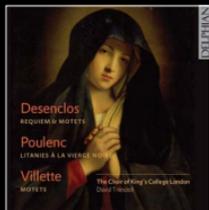


**Allegri: Miserere; Masses & Motets**  
The Choir of King's College London / David Trendell  
DCD34103

Gregorio Allegri deserves better than for his reputation to rest on just one piece. Alongside his iconic *Miserere*, which never fails to cast its spell on listeners, the Choir of King's College London presents premiere recordings of two of his five surviving masses, richly wrought with consummate skill in Palestrina's *prima prattica*, and of their originating motets. These radiant performances shed new light on a much-loved composer.

'David Trendell's fine choir glows with warmth and commitment'  
— The Observer, May 2012

Also available on Delphian



**Desenclos/Poulenc/Villette: Requiem; Motets; Litanies à la Vierge noire**  
The Choir of King's College London / David Trendell  
DCD34136

Winner of the coveted Prix de Rome, Alfred Desenclos remains an almost unknown figure in twentieth-century music. His contribution to the distinguished French tradition of Requiem Mass settings dates from 1963; incorporating influences from Gregorian chant as well as rich harmonies based on added-note chords, this piece with its passionate outpourings is a revelation. It forms the centrestone of David Trendell's programme, which also features music by Villette – who shared Desenclos' interest in jazz – and Poulenc, whose return to Catholicism in 1936 initiated a line of pieces, beginning with the *Litanies à la Vierge noire de Rocamadour*, that represent some of the most significant religious choral music of the twentieth century. Trendell's choir is on ravishing form, and the organ at his alma mater, Exeter College, Oxford, fits this music like a velvet glove.

'spaciously dignified and meditative ... [The choir] has a formidable musical unity under David Trendell' — SundayTimes, March 2014



**Rodion Shchedrin: The Sealed Angel**  
Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge; The Choir of King's College London  
Geoffrey Webber & David Trendell *conductors*, Clare Wills *oboe*  
DCD34067

Two of Britain's finest collegiate choirs join forces and cross a continent to take on the sublime expressiveness of Rodion Shchedrin's 'Russian liturgy', an astonishing statement of faith composed in the early days of perestroika. Shchedrin's choral tableaux juxtapose tenderness with bracing sonic impact, and are shadowed throughout by the plangent voice of a solo oboe representing the soul of the Russian people.

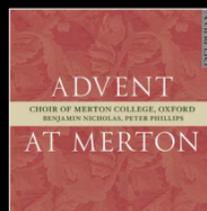
'Caught here in fine sound, this is a splendid disc of a multifaceted, many-layered modern masterpiece' — Gramophone, June 2009, EDITOR'S CHOICE



**Deutsche Motette**  
Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge; The Choir of King's College London  
Geoffrey Webber & David Trendell *conductors*  
DCD34124

Delphian's superchoir reunites after its highly successful recording of *The Sealed Angel*, this time for a unique programme of German music from Schubert to Richard Strauss. Strauss's sumptuous *Deutsche Motette* is the last word in late Romantic choral opulence, its teeming polyphony brought to thrilling life by this virtuoso cast of over sixty singers. The rest of the programme explores the vivid colours and shadowy half-lights of a distinctly German music that reached its culmination in Strauss's extravagant masterpiece. The singing throughout combines a musical intensity and imagination with an understanding of period style, two qualities that are hallmarks of both choirs' work.

'Credit to conductor David Trendell for eliciting that sustained intensity of expression from his combined college choirs, whose youthful timbre imparts a freshness which ... suits the imprecatory nature of Rückert's poem perfectly' — BBC Music Magazine, August 2013



**Advent at Merton**  
Choir of Merton College, Oxford / Benjamin Nicholas & Peter Phillips  
DCD34122

The beginning of Advent is celebrated with a particular solemnity at Merton. For its second recording, the choir explores the musical riches that adorn this most special time in the church's year, centring on a newly commissioned sequence of Magnificat antiphons from seven leading composers including Howard Skempton, Ēriks Ešņvalds and Sir John Tavener. The mingled hopes, fears and expectations of the season are beautifully articulated by this fervent body of young singers.

'an immensely accomplished and responsive mixed-voice choir ... Delphian's recorded sound is beautiful' — International Record Review, December 2012

