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CLASSICS

Alexander L'Estrange  
**ON EAGLES' WINGS**

† | TENEBRAE

NIGEL SHORT



# ON EAGLES' WINGS

## SACRED CHORAL WORKS BY ALEXANDER L'ESTRANGE

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 1  | <b>Magnificat (New College Service)</b>   | [6.53] |
| 2  | <b>Nunc Dimittis (New College Service)</b><br>Soloists: Nicholas Madden <i>tenor</i>  | [3.49] |
| 3  | <b>Lighten our Darkness (Prayers for Peace)</b>   | [1.39] |
| 4  | <b>Let All the World in Every Corner Sing</b>   | [5.53] |
| 5  | <b>The Lord's Prayer (Prayers for Peace)</b>  | [1.46] |
| 6  | <b>Tune Me, O Lord</b><br>Soloists: Grace Davidson <i>soprano</i> , Emilia Morton <i>soprano</i><br>Nancy Cole <i>alto</i> , Jeremy Budd <i>tenor</i>             | [6.42] |
| 7  | <b>On Eagles' Wings</b><br>Soloists: Joanna Forbes L'Estrange <i>soprano</i> , Katie Trethewey <i>soprano</i>   | [4.50] |
| 8  | <b>Oculi Omnium</b>   | [2.51] |
| 9  | <b>My Song is Love Unknown</b><br>Soloists: Katie Trethewey <i>soprano</i> , Martha McLorinan <i>alto</i><br>Ben Alden <i>tenor</i> , Stephen Kennedy <i>bass</i> | [8.48] |
| 10 | <b>God Be in My Head (Prayers for Peace)</b>  | [1.59] |
| 11 | <b>Panis Angelicus</b><br>Soloist: Amy Wood <i>soprano</i>  | [5.20] |
| 12 | <b>Lute-book Lullaby</b><br>Soloist: Grace Davidson   | [4.39] |
| 13 | <b>Epiphany Carol</b><br>Soloist: Joanna Forbes L'Estrange  | [5.03] |
| 14 | <b>Hodie!</b>   | [3.18] |

- |    |                                  |        |
|----|----------------------------------|--------|
| 15 | <b>Let the People Praise You</b> | [4.46] |
| 16 | <b>An Irish Blessing</b>         | [3.56] |

Total timings: [72.03]

TENEBRAE  
NIGEL SHORT DIRECTOR  
JAMES SHERLOCK ORGAN / PIANO

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*"... One gorgeous piece after another, in pristine, dew-fresh performances by the ever-wonderful choir Tenebrae. Alexander L'Estrange is a many-sided composer of prodigious gifts, and this is an album I will return to again and again; I recommend it warmly to all lovers of choral music."*

**John Rutter**

*"It's unusual and deeply gratifying to find a voice like Alexander L'Estrange's. Both approachable and therefore potentially highly popular and, at the same time, beautifully crafted and full of integrity.*

*It's the music of someone steeped in a great tradition since childhood and of someone who is determined to bring new life and creative vigour to what he so loves and understands.*

*Variety is the spice of life and Alexander has spiced up our lives!"*

**Simon Halsey**

## COMPOSER'S NOTE

I was lucky enough to start my musical career as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford, where, under the direction of Dr Edward Higginbottom, my love for English choral music was fostered. At the same time I discovered a passion for improvising jazz on the piano and infamously once got into a fair amount of trouble for humming an added 9<sup>th</sup> in the final chord of *A Spotless Rose* by Herbert Howells. Whilst not being particularly proud of this boyhood moment I have used this very same chord in my *New College Service*, commissioned by Dr Higginbottom some thirty years on, and this time I think I got away with it!

*On Eagles' Wings* is the culmination of over thirty years' immersion in two of my greatest musical loves – cathedral music and jazz. The jazz element within the context of this church repertoire is more about harmony and voicings than it is about rhythm, although in the title track, the syncopated groove is all-important.

This disc could not have been made without the immense generosity of my mother and stepfather, Alison and Michael Smedley, to whom I am extremely grateful for everything. I am also

indebted to the various choral directors, educational establishments and cathedral choirs who have commissioned these works over the past fifteen years. Tenebrae's world-class performances on this album, under the expert guidance of Nigel Short, just blow me away.

Alexander L'Estrange, April 2016

### 1 - 2 **New College Service**

Commissioned by Dr Edward Higginbottom for the choir of New College, Oxford, to mark his retirement as Organist and Choir Master, May 2014.

I owe so much to my five years as a chorister (1981-6) in the choir of New College, Oxford, under the direction of Dr Edward Higginbottom, that I was delighted with this commission, to mark the great man's retirement from the post. The melodic material is derived from Dr Higginbottom's dates as organist; 1976 in the key of E major becomes E F# D# C#, followed by E B (Edward's initials E.H.) followed by F# D# E A for 2014.

### 3 **Lighten our Darkness**

Composed for the christening of my son Toby William Forbes L'Estrange, 28 January 2007.

I used to love hearing this prayer at Evensong every night when I was a chorister in Oxford. Indeed, it must have been heard and enjoyed by countless generations at Evensong ever since the days of Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer in 1549. What a privilege for me to be able to set it to music, and to sing it at our first son's christening.

### 4 **Let All the World in Every Corner Sing**

Commissioned by Iain Donald for Hampton School on the occasion of their 450th anniversary celebration service in St Paul's Cathedral, 2007.

I love George Herbert's poems, particularly those also known as hymns or choral settings (e.g. Howells' *King of Glory*, *King of Peace*) and have always wanted to set *Let all the world* (originally entitled *Antiphon*). The premiere in St Paul's Cathedral featured the brass and horns of the Hampton School big band, plus a percussion section to boot but it works equally well with organ accompaniment.

### 5 **The Lord's Prayer**

Composed for the christening of my son Harry Watson Forbes L'Estrange, 30 November 2008.

This short, mainly homophonic setting has a little piquancy and spice in its harmonic language, perhaps influenced by another favourite composer of mine when I was a chorister – Kenneth Leighton.

### 6 **Tune Me, O Lord**

Commissioned by John Bowley for Repton School to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the school chapel, June 2009.

The inspiration for this piece came in the form of opposing triads being “tuned into one harmony”. In the beginning the D & A triads in the upper voices over the G triad in the lower voices create dissonances which are finally resolved in A major. This A major section, based on the Latin *Musica Dei donum* words with a new melody, becomes the central part of an A-B-A form.

### 7 On Eagles' Wings

Commissioned by Alex Mason for the St Davids Cathedral Festival in 2008 and first performed on 28 May 2008. Dedicated to Andrew Speedy.

My inspiration for this, the title track of the album, lay in the many references in the Bible to eagles: strength being renewed like the eagle's, parents hovering under their young as they learn to fly, and the idea of "soaring like eagles". The anthem first introduces fragments of the main theme, sometimes in quasi-recitative style, perhaps evoking an eaglet's early attempts to fly. When the melody eventually appears in its entirety it is both powerful and uplifting; with a range of an octave and a half, it reaches a climax with the words "I will soar on eagles' wings". The counter-melody beginning "He has lifted me up" and the overall harmonic structure derive from a jazz/big band composition from my student days; indeed, there were two versions of the world premiere at St Davids Cathedral in 2008 – one with choir and organ and another with double bass and jazz piano, played by myself and renowned jazz musician Joe Stilgoe.

### 8 Oculi Omnium

Commissioned by Leslie East for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in 2009 and first performed as a grace for their annual luncheon.

I am grateful to Leslie East, who for many years ran the ABRSM office choir and would often commission a composer to write a grace for their annual knees-up at the Park Lane Hilton. "Oculi Omnium" was the grace that was said at dinner every day at Merton College Oxford, where I was an undergraduate.

### 9 My Song is Love Unknown

Commissioned by Nigel Short for Tenebrae in 2002 and dedicated to Francis Garcia and Becky Hookway for their wedding, 27 December 2007. First performed in its *a cappella* version at St Luke's, Chelsea, London, on 12 September 2002. With thanks to the John Ireland Trust for their permission to make reference to the composer's *Love unknown* melody.

I have admired John Ireland's hymn *Love unknown* ever since I sang it as a boy, but it was in response to a beautiful interpretation by the jazz saxophonist Ben Castle (son of the late Sir Roy) that I chose this text. Fragments and phrases from Ireland's melody are developed, re-harmonised and passed around the different voices. Further melodic material then arises from that jazz-influenced re-harmonisation, particularly the bass-line at the very start

of the piece. Ideally the quartet of soloists, who "comment" on the text in a Latin translation/commentary by my friend Francis Garcia, should be placed at a distance from the main choir, as Tenebrae have done for this recording, as if to create a kind of ethereal Greek Chorus.

### 10 God Be in My Head

Commissioned by Tom and Katie Bullard for their wedding day, 7 April 2006.

The simple melodic formula here rises by a scale-degree every line, leading to a darker, richer final statement and a Howells-inspired cadence with a double suspension in the upper voices.

### 11 Panis Angelicus

Commissioned by Spode Music Week to mark their 60th anniversary in 2013.

The melody and harmony of this upper-voices anthem have a warm, rich quality which owes something of a debt to an earlier song of mine, *Pack of three*. This formed part of a one-woman musical I wrote with Michelle Magorian, *Hello life!* and the song also features on my jazz album *New Things to Say*, sung by my wife Joanna Forbes L'Estrange.

### 12 Lute-book Lullaby

Commissioned by Nigel Short for Tenebrae in 2001 and recorded in its *a cappella* version on the CD *Mother and Child* (SIGCD501, released June 2003). Dedicated to my nephew Thomas Michael William L'Estrange.

This piece will always be close to my heart as it was my first published anthem. The melody is derived from the octatonic scale (alternating semitones and tones), which serves to evoke a bitter-sweet sense of foreboding. The contrast of this with a warmer, diatonic "Lulla, lullaby" refrain helps to highlight the poignancy of a mother singing a lullaby to a baby whose future would involve suffering.

### 13 Epiphany Carol

Specially composed for the St Paul's Cathedral Carol Competition in 2013 and first performed in the chapel of King's College Cambridge in 2015.

When it was suggested to me that I enter a piece for the St Paul's Cathedral Carol Competition my wife, Joanna, composed this lovely poem and its simple strophic structure and topical message inspired me to write the music. The piece is SATB non-divisi, making it ideal for Christmas and Epiphany services and concerts.

#### 14 **Hodie!**

Commissioned by Andrew Cleary for Portsmouth Grammar School and first performed 11 December 2010.

Speaking to a number of cathedral and school choir directors, I found that there was a perceived paucity of Christmas repertoire that was jolly, fast and uplifting. This jazzy 5/8 number has already been performed and recorded by a number of choirs, including the BBC Singers, who commissioned a special version with brass and percussion (available on request from Faber Music).

#### 15 **Let the People Praise You**

Commissioned by James Lowry for Felsted School on the occasion of their 450th anniversary celebration service in St Paul's Cathedral, 20 March 2014.

These words were suggested to me by Felsted School, and I decided to write a gently unfolding melody that grows to a large central organ climax and then a big octatonic finish which would resound long and loud around St Paul's Cathedral. The piece received its second performance in front of Queen Elizabeth II when she visited Felsted School later that same year.

#### 16 **An Irish Blessing**

Commissioned by Tessa Forbes for Rydes Hill School, Guildford, on the occasion of the school's Diamond Jubilee in 2005.

The gentle, lilting melody for these much-loved words was composed by my wife, Joanna. My setting of it begins in unison and builds to a fuller choral texture, while an optional flute part can add a folk-like quality. The piece works as well for weddings and leaving celebrations as it does in concert or for church services.

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## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### 1 **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.

### 2 **Nunc Dimittis**

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant  
depart in peace according to thy word.  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles  
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

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.

Words: Book of Common Prayer, 1662

### 3 **Lighten our Darkness**

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;  
And by thy great mercy defend us  
from all perils and dangers of this night;  
For the love of thy only Son, our Saviour,  
Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words: Thomas Cranmer, 3rd Collect for Evensong

4 **Let All the World in Every Corner Sing**

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!

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!

Words: George Herbert, The Temple, 1633

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5 **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven:  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done  
On Earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

Words: The Lord's Prayer

6 **Tune Me, O Lord**

Tune me, O Lord, into one harmony,  
One harmony with Thee,  
One full responsive vibrant chord.  
Unto thy praise, all love and melody, O Lord,  
Tune me, O Lord.

Musica Dei donum optimi  
Trahit homines, trahit deos.  
Musica truces mollit animos  
Tristesque mentes erigit,  
Musica vel ipsas arbores  
Et horridas movet feras  
Musica Dei donum optimi  
Trahit homines, trahit deos.

Words: Tune me, O Lord by Christina Rossetti incorporating  
16th-century anon. Musica Dei Donum

*Music, the gift of the supreme God,  
draws men, draws gods;  
Music makes savage souls gentle  
and uplifts sad minds.  
Music moves the very trees  
and wild beasts.  
Music, the gift of the supreme God,  
draws men, draws gods;*

## 7 On Eagles' Wings

Like an eagle that hovers o'er its young,  
That spreads its wings to catch them,  
And bears them on its outstretched span.

The angel of his presence saved me,  
In his love and mercy he redeemed me.  
He lifted me up and bore me all the days of old.

I will soar on wings like eagles' wings,  
I will run and not grow weary,  
I will walk and not be faint  
I will soar on eagles' wings.

He has lifted me up out of the mirey clay,  
He has put a new song in my mouth,  
A hymn of praise to our God.

I will soar on wings like eagles' wings,  
I will run and not grow weary,  
I will walk and not be faint  
I will soar on eagles' wings.

Words: Deuteronomy, Isaiah & Psalm 40, compiled by  
Andrew Speedy

## 8 Oculi Omnium

Oculi omnium in te respiciunt, Domine.  
Tu das escam illis tempore opportuno.  
Aperis manum tuam,  
Et imples omne animal benedictione tua.  
Benedicas nobis, Deus, omnibus donis  
Quae de tua beneficentia accepturi simus.  
Per Jesum Christum dominum nostrum. Amen.

*The eyes of the world look up to thee, O Lord.  
Thou givest them food in due season.  
Thou openest thy hand and fillest  
every creature with thy blessing.  
Thou blessest us, O God, with all the gifts  
which by thy good works we are about to receive.  
Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

Words: Anon. including Psalm 144: 15

## 9 My Song is Love Unknown

My song is love unknown,  
*Gratiam cano latentem,*  
My Saviour's love to me;  
*Mei gratiam Salvatoris,*  
Love to the loveless shown,  
*Gratiam patentem ingratis*  
That they might lovely be.  
*qua in gratos vertantur.*

O who am I,  
*At ego quisnam?*  
That for my sake  
*Gratia cui Carnem*  
My Lord should take  
*Dominus meus infirmam*  
Frail flesh and die?  
*Indutus moriatur?*

He came from His blest throne  
Salvation to bestow;  
But men made strange, and none  
The longed-for Christ would know:  
But O! my Friend, My Friend indeed,  
Who at my need His life did spend.

Sometimes they strew His way,  
And His sweet praises sing;  
Resounding all the day  
Hosannas to their King:

Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,  
And for His death they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?  
What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run,  
He gave the blind their sight,  
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these  
Themselves displease, and 'gainst Him rise.

They rise and needs will have  
My dear Lord made away;  
A murderer they save,  
The Prince of life they slay,  
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes,  
*Mala amplectitur.*  
That He His foes from thence might free.  
*Quo inde absolvantur inimici.*

Here might I stay and sing,  
*Hic velim canes constare,*  
No story so divine;  
*Numquam tanta res divina,*  
Never was love, dear King!  
*Nec, care Rex, amor umquam,*  
Never was grief like Thine.  
*Nec dolor tantus fuit.*  
This is my Friend,  
*Ecce amicus,*  
in Whose sweet praise

*cuius laudes Dulce fundens*

I all my days  
*atque amice*  
could gladly spend.  
*totam degerem.*

Words: Samuel Crossman, 1664, adap. Latin translation by Francis Garcia, 2002

### 11 Panis Angelicus

Panis angelicus  
fit panis hominum;  
Dat panis caelicus  
figuris terminum:  
O res mirabilis!  
Manducat Dominum  
Pauper, servus et humilis.

Te trina Deitas  
unaque poscimus:  
Sic nos tu visita,  
sicut te colimus;  
Per tuas semitas  
duc nos quo tendimus,  
Ad lucem quam inhabitas.  
Amen.

Words: from Sacris solemniis by Saint Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi

### 10 God Be in My Head

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

Words: Sarum Primer, 1558

*May the Bread of Angels  
Become bread for mankind;  
The Bread of Heaven puts  
All foreshadowings to an end;  
Oh, thing miraculous!  
This body of God will nourish  
the poor, the servile, and the humble.*

*Thee God, Three  
And One, we beseech;  
Do us Thou visit,  
As Thee we worship.  
By Thy ways  
lead us where we are heading,  
to the light Thou inhabitest.  
Amen.*

### 12 Lute-book Lullaby

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,  
When she to Bethlem Judah came,  
And was delivered of a Son,  
That blessed Jesus hath to name.  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

Sweet Babe, sang she,  
My Son, and eke a Saviour born,  
Who hast vouchsafed from on high  
To visit us that were forlorn;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby.

Sweet babe, sang she,  
And rocked Him sweetly on her knee.

Words: William Ballet's Lute Book in Library of Trin. Coll.,  
Dublin about A.D. 1600

### 13 Epiphany Carol

Is it gold that you bring?  
Is that your present for the King?  
Is that your special offering?  
But far more precious than the gold,  
So often have we heard it told,  
Is our beloved bluegreen world.  
Oh bring me a present for the future.

Is it frankincense you bring?  
Is that your present for the King?  
Is that your special offering?  
However fair the frankincense,  
Its perfume warming to our sense,  
Our planet's need remains immense.  
Oh bring me a present for the future.

Is it myrrh that you bring?  
Is that your present for the King?  
Is that your special offering?  
If only could those drops of myrrh,  
A sense of longing in us stir,  
To make Earth's blessings as they were.  
Oh bring me a present for the future,  
A present for *our* future.

Words: 'A present for the future' by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange

14 **Hodie!**

Hodie Christus natus est, Alleluia,  
Salvator apparuit, Alleluia,  
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,  
Laetantur archangeli, Alleluia,  
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia!

Words: Traditional

15 **Let the People Praise You**

May God be gracious to us  
And bless us and make his face to shine upon us,  
That your way may be known upon Earth,  
Your saving power among all nations.

Let the people praise you, O God.  
Let all the people, O let all the people,  
O God let all the people praise you.

Words: Psalm 67: 1-3

*Today Christ was born, Alleluia,  
A saviour has appeared, Alleluia,  
Today the angels sing on earth,  
The archangels rejoice, Alleluia,  
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:  
Glory be to God on high, Alleluia!*

16 **An Irish Blessing**

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rain fall soft upon your fields,  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Words: Traditional Gaelic blessing

ALEXANDER L'ESTRANGE

*"If you had to create from scratch the perfect 21st-century musician, Alexander L'Estrange would be your template." Howard Goodall CBE*

Alexander L'Estrange (b.1974) is a British choral composer and arranger whose consummate musicianship and stylistic versatility have led to regular commissions from choirs and a *cappella* groups across the globe. His flagship work, *Zimbe! Come sing the songs of Africa!*, an ingenious 40-minute fusion of African song and jazz, received 150 performances worldwide within its first five years, something of a record for a new choral work, establishing him as one of Britain's most popular living choral

composers. L'Estrange is a passionate advocate for the importance of singing in schools and the wider community and, to this end, has composed a series of large-scale choral pieces with jazz quintet, all of which are published by Faber Music.

As a chorister at New College, Oxford, under the direction of Dr Edward Higginbottom, L'Estrange recorded and performed many solos and went on to read Music at Merton College, singing countertenor in the choir of Magdalen College under the direction of former member of The King's Singers, Bill (Grayston) Ives and graduating with a First Class Honours degree. His sacred repertoire, whilst steeped in the English cathedral choral tradition, has



subtle allusions to the harmonies and sonorities of jazz, a combination which characterises L'Estrange's voice as a composer. The publication of his stunning Christmas anthem *Lute-book Lullaby*, commissioned by Tenebrae, resulted in a plethora of commissions from festivals, schools and cathedral choirs, much of which is recorded on this disc.

L'Estrange's output as a songwriter includes three stunning settings of poems by Shelley, Tennyson and Byron, entitled *Love's Philosophy*, currently on the ABRSM Singing Syllabus. He writes arrangements for the world's leading *a cappella* groups including The Swingle Singers, Voces8 and The King's Singers, for whom he wrote and produced the highly-acclaimed album *Great American*

## TENEBRAE

### Soprano

Grace Davidson  
 Joanna Forbes L'Estrange  
 Katy Hill  
 Emilia Morton  
 Katie Trethewey  
 Amy Wood

### Alto

Nancy Cole  
 Hannah Cooke  
 Amy Lyddon  
 Martha McLorinan

### Tenor

Ben Alden  
 Ruari Bowen  
 Jeremy Budd  
 Hugo Hymas  
 Nicholas Madden

### Bass

Geoff Clapham  
 Nicholas Garrett  
 Stephen Kennedy  
 Andrew Mahon  
 Richard Savage  
 Greg Skidmore

*Songbook*. As Consultant Editor of Faber Music's popular Choral Basics series, L'Estrange has also written hundreds of arrangements of songs from across the musical spectrum.

Aside from writing, Alexander L'Estrange is a highly accomplished jazz double bass player and pianist, choral workshop leader, adjudicator, presenter of children's concerts and jazz examiner/trainer for the ABRSM. He presents his music with an infectious mixture of energy, humour and expertise that has become synonymous with his name. He is married to the soprano and jazz vocalist Joanna Forbes L'Estrange with whom he has two very musical sons, Toby and Harry.

For sheet music, digital downloads and CDs, visit [alexanderlestrangeshop.com](http://alexanderlestrangeshop.com)



© Chris O'Donovan

Described as “phenomenal” (The Times) and “devastatingly beautiful” (Gramophone Magazine), award-winning choir Tenebrae, under the direction of Nigel Short, is one of the world's finest vocal ensembles renowned for its passion and precision.

As the first-ever ensemble to be multi-nominated in the same category for the BBC Music Magazine Awards (2012), Tenebrae's recording of Victoria's *Requiem Mass, 1605* secured the accolade for Best Choral Performance.

The choir's recording of Fauré's *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra was nominated for the Gramophone Awards (2013), having been described as “the very best Fauré Requiem on disc”, so too was *Mother and Child* (2003) for Choral Disc of the Year featuring sacred music by living British composers. Tenebrae's ever-increasing discography has brought about collaborations with Signum, Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live and Warner Classics, with the choir's recording of

Russian Orthodox music being launched on its own label, Bene Arte, receiving glowing reviews and reaching number 1 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart.

Tenebrae is dedicated to championing contemporary composers, having worked with Judith Bingham, Ola Gjeilo, Alexander L'Estrange, Alexander Levine, Paul Mealor, Joby Talbot, Hilary Tann, Sir John Tavener and Will Todd. The choir is renowned for its highly acclaimed interpretations of choral music with repertoire ranging from the hauntingly passionate works of the Renaissance through to contemporary choral masterpieces. Tenebrae's recent release of Brahms and Bruckner motets, in benefit of Macmillan Cancer Support, was nominated for a BBC Music Magazine award.

Tenebrae has appeared at some of the world's most prestigious festivals including the BBC Proms, City of London Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Three Choirs Festival and Montreux Choral Festival (Switzerland). Alongside concert performances, the choir presents its new inspirational workshop method, 'The Tenebrae Effect', designed to challenge and advance every participant by instilling skills essential to a Tenebrae performance.

'Passion and Precision' is Tenebrae's motto, and through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, audiences around the world experience the power and intimacy of the human voice.

## NIGEL SHORT

Award-winning conductor Nigel Short has built up an enviable reputation for his concert and recording work with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world.

A singer of great acclaim, Nigel was a member of the world-renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers from 1994–2000. Upon leaving the group, he formed Tenebrae, a virtuosic choir that embraced his dedication to passion and precision. Under his direction, Tenebrae has enjoyed collaborations with orchestras and instrumentalists of various musical genres and now enjoys a reputation as one of the world's finest choral ensembles.

To date, Nigel has conducted the Aurora Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, English Chamber Orchestra, English Concert, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic



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Orchestra and the Scottish Ensemble. He has directed the London Symphony Orchestra with Tenebrae in a live recording of Fauré's *Requiem*, which was nominated for the Gramophone Awards (2013). Since then, he has conducted the orchestra alongside Tenebrae for a sold-out performance in St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival. Other orchestral recordings include Mozart's *Requiem* and *Ave Verum Corpus* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and two discs of music by Will Todd with the English Chamber Orchestra.

Nigel has vast recording experience having conducted recordings for many of the world's major record labels including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, Signum and Warner Classics. As a Gramophone award-winning producer, Nigel works with many of the UK's leading professional choirs and vocal ensembles including Alamire, Ex Cathedra, Gallicantus and The King's Singers.

## JAMES SHERLOCK

James Sherlock performs widely as an organist, pianist and conductor. He was organ scholar at Trinity College Cambridge, and continued his keyboard and conducting studies at the Guildhall School of Music with Ronan O'Hora, Joan Havill and Pamela Lidiard.

He works regularly with major orchestras and choirs in the UK, appearing on several award-winning records with Tenebrae, alongside solo appearances with the London Philharmonic and English Chamber Orchestras. As a chamber musician he works with Dame Felicity Lott, Angelika Kirchschrager and Benjamin Appl, appearing at major chamber festivals including the Schubertiade Hohenems, Wigmore and Carnegie Halls.

Increasingly active as a conductor, James is a member of the International Artists Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras. He is a winner of the Royal Overseas League Piano Competition and the ROSL award for accompanists, Das Lied International Song Competition, the BBC Performing Arts Trust, Award for Young Concert



Artists and Gold Medallist at the Marcello Galanti International Organ Competition. He is a Fellow of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, a Samling Artist and Director of Music at Hampstead Parish Church.

Alexander would like to thank his mother and step father, **Alison** and **Michael Smedley**, for making this recording possible by their kind generosity; his wife and muse **Joanna Forbes L'Estrange** for seeing the album through from conception to completion, not to mention singing beautifully on it; his publishers at **Faber Music** for providing the sheet music for the recording sessions; **Nigel Short** and **Tenebrae** for their outstanding musicianship and for commissioning *Lute-book Lullaby* all those years ago, setting him on his way as a composer.

Recorded in St Jude's Church, Hampstead, London, UK from 15-17 April 2015.

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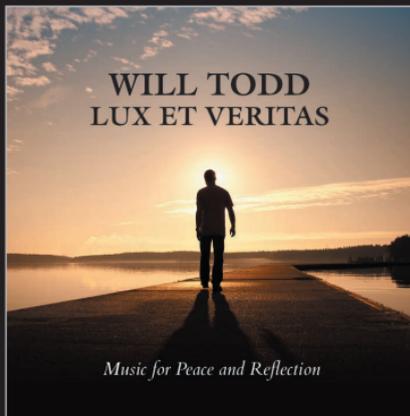
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