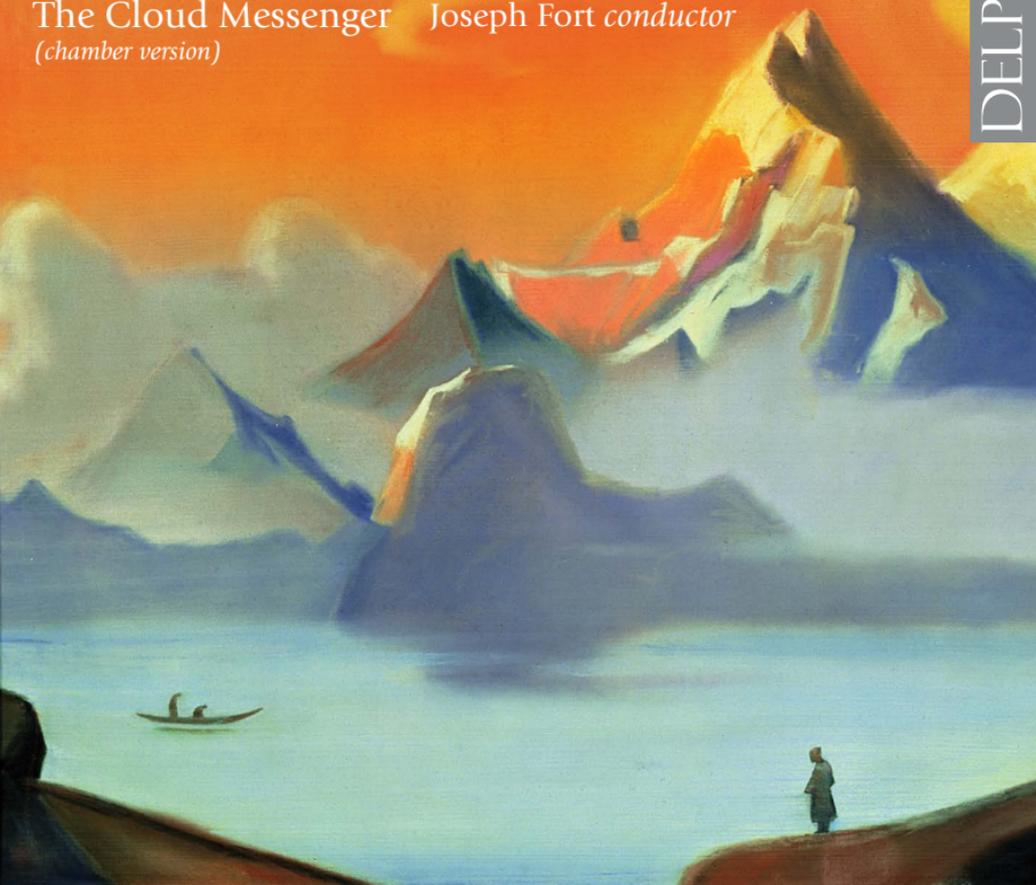


# HOLST

The Cloud Messenger  
*(chamber version)*

The Choir of King's College London  
The Strand Ensemble  
Joseph Fort *conductor*

DELPHIAN



GUSTAV HOLST (1874–1934)

**The Cloud Messenger, Op. 30** (*chamber version arr. Joseph Fort*)

**Five Partsongs, Op. 12**

The Choir of King's College London

The Strand Ensemble (tracks 1–18)

Caitlin Goreing *alto* (track 9)

Joseph Fort *conductor*

*Joseph Fort and The Choir of King's College London gratefully acknowledge the support of the individuals and institutions who made this project possible.*



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

*The performance and recording were funded through a Project Grant from Arts Council England and a Faculty Research Grant from King's College London.*

*The original manuscript of Holst's The Cloud Messenger was made available for research by the staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University.*

*The clergy and staff of All Hallows', Gospel Oak (in particular Fr David Houlding) graciously allowed use of their church for the recording.*

*The staff of the Dean's Office of King's College London (Tim Ditchfield, Clare Dowding and Natalie Frangos) provided considerable administrative and logistical support.*

Recorded on 9-11 June 2019 at  
All Hallows', Gospel Oak  
Producer: Paul Baxter  
Engineer: Matthew Swan  
24-bit digital editing: Matthew Swan  
24-bit digital mastering: Paul Baxter  
Session photography:  
Will Campbell-Gibson

Cover image: Nicholas Roerich  
(1874–1947), *Tibet, 1936* (tempera on  
canvas), 71 x 101 cm / Tretyakov Gallery,  
Moscow / Bridgeman Images  
Design: Drew Padrutt  
Booklet editor: John Fallas  
Delphian Records Ltd – Edinburgh – UK  
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## The Cloud Messenger, Op. 30

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1	Prelude	[3:18]
2	O thou, who com'st from Heaven's king	[2:48]
3	In the city of the Great God	[1:04]
4	Bringer of rain	[2:02]
5	Rushing northward	[1:59]
6	See how all greet thee	[1:14]
7	Behold the villages	[1:45]
8	As the rain descends	[1:33]
9	Tarry not, O cloud, tarry not	[4:42]
10	Tarry not, O cloud	[2:09]
11	And hark!	[0:53]
12	Thou hast reached the snowy peaks	[3:53]
13	And see! The Great God himself	[0:55]
14	Chorus (Moderato maestoso) – Vivace	[1:51]
15	When the dancers are weary	[4:41]
16	Wait near her flower-covered window	[1:17]
17	The Message (I, the bringer of the rain)	[2:38]
18	'Beloved!'	[4:33]

## Five Partsongs, Op. 12

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19	Dream Tryst	[4:39]
20	Ye little birds	[2:18]
21	Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee	[1:02]
22	Now is the month of Maying	[1:37]
23	Come to me	[5:01]

Total playing time

[58:06]

## Notes on the music

'Including translation, it took me seven years,' wrote Holst to his cousin Mary Lediard – '7 happy years of course.' **The Cloud Messenger** was originally completed in 1910; two years later Holst revised this mighty choral ode – lasting for over forty minutes, scored for full choir, semi-chorus, alto soloist ('to be placed among the Chorus', the score specifies) and large orchestra – for its belated premiere on 4 March 1913. But for that disastrous first performance, his subsequent creative path might have been quite different. Rather than ceasing to take inspiration from ancient Indian literature and religion, turning instead to astrology and *The Planets* in the following year, Holst might have gone on to still more ambitious, modernist treatments of Indian subjects. Indeed, by this point his ten years or so of setting such texts as the Rig Veda hymns had already inspired him to stretch the boundaries of tonality and rhythm in a manner which anticipated the innovations of Stravinsky.

So how was it that just when Stravinsky was detonating the musical bombshell that was *The Rite of Spring*, Holst in the very same year was placing his hopes in this ultra-Romantic choral work that celebrates marital love? The answer appears to be that *The Cloud Messenger* was initially conceived – from the evidence of Holst's letter to his cousin – in 1903, when he was on belated honeymoon with his beloved Isobel in Germany, and had

triumphantly discovered his 'voice' thanks to Wagner (*pace* his daughter and biographer, Imogen, who spent most of her life under the impression that Holst's individuality had been stifled by Wagner's influence). This is clear from the exuberant tone poem he composed in that year: *Indra*, not only the first significant Indian-inspired work he managed to complete but also in many ways a trial run for *The Cloud Messenger*.

Both works address a similar theme: the replenishing and life-giving properties of rain. In *Indra*, after an exuberant introduction, Holst depicts a parched land through two motifs – one apparently wilting descending theme (later transformed into something warm and joyous with Indra's triumph), the other a yearning, rising theme which is of particular interest to us as Holst reuses it in the present work. Here, first played by flute after the bassoon's opening solo, it becomes explicitly associated with the husband's longing for his absent wife. With reference to *Indra*, we might take it to signify the languishing husband, separated from the very one who nourishes him and gives him purpose.

Holst's mother had died when he was aged seven, and his father was by all accounts stern and unloving. Of her own mother, Holst's wife, Imogen wrote: 'It was not only her beauty that gave him such joy, though his college friends had been amazed at his

good fortune. It was her kindness, and her warm-hearted generosity, and her genius for bringing grace and ease and comfort into his life.' It seems no coincidence that several of Holst's works in this decade – particularly those conceived in 1903, the year of their honeymoon – celebrate love, and most specifically (and with a striking irony, given Wagner's evident influence on his music) marital love.

*The Cloud Messenger* was Holst's response to one of the most admired love poems in Indian literature – *Meghadūta*, by the fifth-century Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa. By the composer's own account, he had first encountered this epic poem as translated in R.W. Frazer's *Silent Gods and Sun-Steeped Lands*, published in 1896 (the same year, it appears, that Holst first met Isobel). It was, indeed, that volume which inspired Holst to explore Sanskrit literature in the first place. Whether Holst began studying Sanskrit in the 1890s as Imogen claims, or rather later after he had given up his demanding career as a professional orchestral trombonist (in late 1903), there is no doubt that by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century he had some working knowledge of that ancient language. Certainly he knew enough to undertake his own translations, aided by reference to previous translations by such scholars as Frazer and Ralph T.H. Griffith, and had acquired an extensive library of

Indian literature, including several books in Devanagari and Sanskrit script in which one may see Holst's own annotations.

The work sets Holst's own version – part translation, part paraphrase – of Kālidāsa's epic lyric poem. This concerns a *yaksha*, a semi-divine subject of King Kubera (god of wealth), who has been exiled to central India for neglecting his duties; the opening bassoon solo theme is associated with the idea of banishment. Pining for his wife (note the yearning flute theme), the *yaksha* petitions a passing cloud – which he hails as 'scion of a noble race, who wearest wondrous forms at will' – to deliver to her a consoling message of his love. Holst's work follows the poem in describing the cloud's journey and the landscapes, cities and sights it encounters en route to the sacred city in the Himalayas where the *yaksha*'s wife languishes. In a striking passage, an alto soloist sings of 'a poor thin wandering stream' – effectively anticipating the absent wife to whom the cloud is to deliver the message. (Joseph Fort hears a strong echo of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in the alto's warning to the cloud not 'to forget thy high purpose' – an echo specifically of Brangäne's warnings to Isolde in Act II of that opera. Might Holst have intended this interpolation, not found in the original poem, to signify the husband's faithfulness to his spouse?) The cloud approaches the foot of the Himalayas and the sacred city, the music

## Notes on the music

reaching its climax as the temple dancers greet the cloud's arrival.

It was after this impressive climax that disaster struck at the first performance. Holst later told his friend W.G. Whittaker, who became a staunch champion of the work, that, through some major oversight, no semi-chorus – required to sing the cloud's message – had been prepared in time for the performance; an attempt to fix the problem by having the chorus sight-read the semi-chorus's part resulted in the performance disintegrating over its final eight minutes.

Whittaker subsequently conducted several performances of *The Cloud Messenger*, though using a much-reduced ensemble for his 'orchestra', which consisted of piano, string quintet, timpani and percussion. Joseph Fort's new arrangement is rather fuller, involving woodwind, brass, celesta and harp; indeed, very little of Holst's original orchestration is lost as much of its scoring is already chamber-like. Still, a surprising and welcome gain from Fort's version is to hear how close much of the language of *The Cloud Messenger* is to Holst's much-admired chamber opera *Sāvitrī*.

It seems to be no accident that of all his Indian works it was *Sāvitrī* and *The Cloud Messenger* – above even all his choral Rig Veda hymn settings – that Holst rated most

highly as fulfilling his desire to 'discover the (or a) musical idiom of the English language'. That they did so was surely symptomatic of a deeper concern, and they surely owe at least part of their inspiration to the happiness that Holst had discovered in his wife, Isobel.

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When Gustav and Isobel married on 22 June 1901, Gustav's most lucrative work was as a trombonist with the Scottish Orchestra. He was therefore away from London during the autumn and winter months to perform in Glasgow and Edinburgh; outside that season Holst made ends meet by performing at seaside resorts and theatre pit bands, far less rewarding work in every sense which yet again often took him away from the marital home. Indeed, his itinerant existence left so little time for composition – much of that being absorbed by his ongoing three-act opera *Sita* – that by the end of 1901 Holst was unable to list a single work completed that year. Holst now attempted to spend more time at home and to improve his income from composing by writing music with a more immediate prospect of being published.

He already had a modest track record of published choruses and partsongs, including his beautiful Stanford-inspired *Ave Maria* for women's voices, published in 1900. In 1902 Holst began composing several more such works aimed, both in terms of technique and

taste, at the amateur choir market. The five partsongs he later bracketed as his Op. 12 (though they were never published as a set in his lifetime) are therefore written in a relatively conservative harmonic style, yet sensitively set some very fine and in some cases far from orthodox poetry.

Francis Thompson, one of the most extraordinary figures in Victorian poetry, once secured a hold on the British imagination with his evocative poem on cricket 'At Lords' and the extraordinary 'Hound of Heaven'. Born in Preston, he initially trained for the priesthood, then attempted medicine before ending up homeless in the streets of London where he composed poetry and became addicted to opium. **Dream Tryst**, written in pencil on a street-stained piece of paper, was submitted to the periodical *Merrie England*; not only was it accepted for publication, but the publishers, Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, took Thompson into their home and championed his work.

For all its apparent sensuality, 'Dream Tryst' was Thompson's memory of his first experience of love, aged eleven, for a school friend of his sister. Holst's setting, composed in 1902 and dedicated 'To Mrs Ralph Vaughan Williams', captures its rapt, intimate atmosphere by setting the words syllabically, with no ornamentation and very minimal counterpoint, to be sung softly by the choir in its warmest mid-range. This style of

word-setting anticipates the moment in *The Cloud Messenger* when the cloud delivers its intimate message of love.

The lyric **Ye little birds** – taken from *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, a Jacobean play attributed, though not conclusively, to Thomas Heywood – attracted several nineteenth-century composers. As befits its subject matter and period, Holst sets the words in quasi-madrigalian style: a manner he would have learned from Stanford while at the Royal College of Music.

Composed in 1903, **Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee** was never published in Holst's lifetime. His daughter Imogen edited the piece shortly before her death in 1984; having discovered that Gustav had apparently only completed setting the first stanza of Robert Herrick's 'The Night-Piece, to Julia', she finished the second with a wit perhaps more typical of her father's later work.

Today the words to **Now is the month of Maying** are most readily associated with Thomas Morley's ballett, first published in 1595. Holst originally composed his setting in 1899, the same year as his *Ave Maria*, and like that work written for four-part women's voices. Four years later, he reworked this partsong for the usual soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, giving more contrapuntal interest to the lower parts in the process. That version

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was published by Novello in 1903, with the dedication 'To Miss May Cameron'. Mary Cameron was a first cousin of Holst's on his mother's side ('May' being a diminutive for 'Mary'); though quite near in age – she was born in 1875 – there is no evidence that she and Gustav were particularly close. She was married in August 1903, in the picturesque village of Little Dewchurch, near Hereford, and the dedication was presumably a wedding gift.

Christina Rossetti had died only nine years before Holst wrote **Come to me**, his exquisite setting of her poem 'Echo' (first published in 1862). Like 'Dream Tryst', the poem concerns a past but still vital love, all the more poignant here since the recalled beloved is dead.



By the time of composition in 1903 (just a year or so before Holst composed his much-loved carol to Rossetti's poem 'In the Bleak Midwinter'), Holst was a great admirer of Elgar's music: one can hear echoes in this part-song of the older composer's *Serenade for Strings* – specifically the slow movement, which shares the same key. This is also, of all the part-songs in this set, the most harmonically expressive.

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*Daniel Jaffé, an author and music critic with a particular interest in Russian and 20th-century English music, is currently researching the life and work of Gustav Holst.*

## Note on the arrangement

Two convictions lie behind this chamber arrangement of Gustav Holst's *The Cloud Messenger*. The first is simply that the piece deserves to be better known. It holds an important position in Holst's oeuvre historically as the immediate predecessor to *The Planets*; it tells a beautiful story; and it is richly composed – powerfully moving and finely crafted. But with its vast orchestral scoring (needing about eighty players), the original is beyond the budget of most choirs, and consequently is rarely performed. I hope that this new arrangement will create an economically viable option for choirs to sing the piece.

The second conviction is that the work's original scoring is quite amenable to a chamber arrangement for single instruments. The subject matter – an exiled *yaksha* sending a message of love to his distant wife – also lends itself readily to this more intimate means of delivery. The resulting version, I believe, has its own intrinsic coherence, while still closely resembling the original.

I re-scored the piece for a fifteen-player chamber ensemble, essentially comprising one of each instrument (see the player list for specific details). The original harmonic and melodic 'skeleton' of the work is entirely intact: I did not add or remove any notes. Instrumental colouring is a vital characteristic of Holst's original, with certain melodies, *leitmotifs* and even depictions of nature

associated with particular instruments; I have almost always retained these, such that when a particular instrument is prominent in the original the same instrument has that role in the arrangement. A few parts (harp and percussion, for example) have been condensed so that an individual now covers what was previously distributed across multiple players.

In other words, the arrangement might be best described as simply a *leaner* version of the original, in which the orchestral 'filling' has been scooped out, so that a chamber choir can now perform it and still balance with the orchestra. This new clothing does, to my ears, put a slightly new spin on the work; in particular, it lends the more tender expressions a greater intimacy and clarity. But fifteen players and a decent chamber choir can still pack a quite a punch, and I think that the climactic passages still deliver powerfully.

The adaptation here was made entirely from the autograph manuscript of the work, held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University (ref: Osborn Music MS 500), and I am very grateful to the staff of that library for making this available to me.

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Texts

### The Cloud Messenger

2 O thou, who com'st from Heaven's king, scion of a noble race, who wearest wondrous forms at will, O glorious cloud, I welcome thee.

Where'er thou goest, lonely wives, who pine in solitude with close-bound hair, will arise and gaze along the road. Thou bringest home their absent husbands, who will loosen their tresses and fill their hearts with joy.

Save one!

3 In the city of the Great God my wife sits alone, counting the days that creep wearily on. In his anger the Great One has banished me.

For a year I must wander, bereft of her who is my second self.

4 Bringer of rain to the thirsty land, bringer of joy unto those in sorrow, thou goest to the city that lies amid the eternal snows of the Himalaya, the city whose groves are bathed in the glory of the Great God. Thou dost ride the wind proudly, thou art surrounded by wild birds who sing thy praises. With thee cometh thy dazzling bride, the lightning, joyously playing at thy side.

O cloud, O harbinger of joy, bear a message to my love. Tell her of the longing that burns my soul.

5 Tarry not, O cloud, tarry not! Rushing northward through the sky thou seemest a mountain peak, torn from its roots and hurled onward by the wind. At the sound of thy thunder the hills rejoice. In gratitude they reach out toward thee. Veil their heads in thy embrace. Pour down thy rain in huge torrents upon them. Quench the fierce forest fires that assail them.

At the sound of thy thunder the birds rejoice. They rise up hailing thee and fly with thee toward the Himalaya.

At the sound of thy thunder the lonely worker rejoices. He leaves his toil in the field and seeks home.

6 See how all greet thee. Yet stay not, let not each hill beguile thee with the scent of the flowers thou hast revived.

Tarry not, O cloud, tarry not! Leave the highlands, sweep down on to the plains.

7 Behold the villages, the hedges white with flowers, the trees in the sacred groves whose branches hang down heavy with nesting birds.

Village wives gaze on thee with tender pleading eyes that know not how to woo thee wantonly. Here you may rejoice in the fragrance of the earth newly ploughed.

8 As the rain descends, green shoots appear. On marshy banks the plantains arise. Sprinkle the buds of the jasmine that grow near the forest rivers. Spread thy cool shade over the burning cheeks of the maidens who gather flowers. The birds fly up in thousands, circling round, drinking thy raindrops, filling the sky with thy praises. The sound is wafted by the south wind filled with the fragrance of the opening lotus.

9 Tarry not, O cloud, tarry not.

Behold her lying there, yearning for thee who hath been absent so long: a poor thin wandering stream, like the braided tresses of one early widowed. On her banks the trees shed their withered leaves in silent sympathy. Let not her pleading glances be in vain.

Pour down thy rain on her, fill her heart with gladness. Yet beware, lest the sight of her beauty tempt thee to forget thy high purpose, to forsake thy journey and, drinking in her loveliness, sink down in deepest oblivion.

10 Tarry not, O cloud. Bow thy head.

Thou art come to the foot of the Himalaya, from whose peaks, white with everlasting snow, springs the Holy Mother Ganga. Tarry not, O cloud, ascend the mighty pass. With thee come those that are freed from sin, journeying to their last home in the sacred city on Mount Kailasa.

11 (*Ah* –)

And hark! Afar off thou canst hear the singing maidens, chanting the praises of their Lord. The sound is mingled with the music of the wind-blown reeds growing at the riverside. Ascend ever higher! Tarry not, O cloud! Lo!

12 Thou hast reached the snowy peaks of Kailasa.

Behold the sacred city, round which flows Ganga like a maiden's robe clinging to her form. There the vast temple spires reach up to kiss thee, glittering with jewels that shine like thy rainbow. There the gentle breeze that bears thee onward is heavy with incense and the fragrance of the lotus. There in the temple are the dancers, fair as thy bride the lightning, their tresses bound in jasmine, their dark eyes flashing with joy as they greet thee.

There at even the minstrels assemble to sing the praises of their Lord.

13 And see! The Great God himself, whose tread shakes the mountains! He descends, and begins his solemn dance. O cloud, great is thy honour! Join thy deep voice to those of the singers. Let thy thunder, rolling o'er hill-tops, echoing through caves, beat out the measure for the dancing of Him who holds the Three Worlds in His grasp.

14 (*Ah* –)

Yet tarry not, O cloud, tarry not!

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15 When the dancers are weary, and the minstrels sink down to slumber, when the temple drum rolls out its deep voice for the last time, steal o'er the roofs of the palaces, covered with gems and swaying lotus leaves. From afar thou wilt see an arched gate, in front a pond with swans, eagerly awaiting the coming of the rain. Sink gently down, let thy lightning gleam faintly as 'twere the glittering of fireflies: for there is my love's home, joyless as a lotus bereft of the sun. Therein is my second self, pining as a storm-swept flower.

Wearied by sorrow, she seeks relief in slumber. As she smiles, let thy voice be silent, lest in her dream my arm should be unwound from her neck.

16 Wait near her flower-covered window until her eyes, half opened, rest on thee. Let thy cool breeze, scented with the moist earth and the jasmine blossom, play gently on her cheek. Then, with the soft voice of thy thunder, breathe these words in her ear:

17 *I, the bringer of the rain, who with deep-sounding thunder call the traveller to return to his home, to hasten and unbind his wife's braided hair; I, the cloud, bring thee tidings*

*of him who is ever thine. Men say that love perishes through separation, but loneliness increases his love.*

*At night time in his dreams he comes to thee and knoweth joy again. But in the day his form is wasted like thine, his face tear-stained like thine, sighs deep as thine fall from his lips. The days crawl on wearily for him as for thee. He who once whispered words of love in thine ear, now sends thee a message from his heart's grief.*

18 *'Beloved! In the forest creeper I see the tender grace of thy form, in the startled look of the doe the glance of thine eye, in the ripple of the waters lies the loving play of thy brow. I fain would paint my remembrance of thee on a stone. But the tears fall fast and blind me: only in my dreams can I behold thee. Yet who hath perpetual joy or sorrow? Our lot doth go now up, now down, like the rim of a wheel. No yearning can shorten the days of my exile that still remain.*

*'Let this my message bring thee comfort, as the Messenger bringeth comfort to the parched earth.'*

Gustav Holst (1874–1934),  
after Kālidāsa (fl. c.400AD), *Meghadūta*

## Five Partsongs

19 Dream Tryst

The breaths of kissing night and day  
Were mingled in the eastern Heaven:  
Throbbing with unheard melody  
Shook Lyra all its star-cloud seven:  
When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy,  
And dawn's gray eyes were troubled gray;  
And souls went palely up to the sky,  
And mine to Lucidè.

There was no change in her sweet eyes  
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine;  
There was no change in her deep heart  
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.  
Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,  
Wherein did ever come and go  
The sparkle of the fountain-drops  
From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams  
Are fed with so divine an air  
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,  
And they who walk there are most fair.  
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,  
Who with the Past meet girt about:  
Where our last kiss still warms the air,  
Nor can her eyes go out.

Francis Thompson (1859–1907)

20 Ye little birds

Ye little birds that sit and sing  
Amidst the shady valleys,  
And see how Phillis sweetly walks  
Within her garden alleys;  
Go pretty birds about her bower,  
Sing pretty birds she may not lower.  
(Ah me, methinks I see her frown.)  
Ye pretty wantons warble.

Go tell her through your chirping bills,  
As you by me are bidden,  
To her is only known my love,  
Which from the world is hidden:  
Go pretty birds and tell her so.  
See that your notes strain not too low.  
(For still methinks I see her frown.)  
Ye pretty wantons warble.

Go tune your voices' harmony,  
And sing I am her lover;  
Strain loud and sweet, that ev'ry note  
With sweet content may move her.  
And she that hath the sweetest voice,  
Tell her I will not change my choice.  
(Yet still methinks I see her frown.)  
Ye pretty wantons warble.

O fly, make haste, see, see, she falls  
Into a pleasant slumber;  
Sing round about her rosy bed,  
That waking she may wonder.  
Say to her 'tis her lover true  
That sendeth love to you, to you;  
And when you hear her kind reply,  
Return with pleasant warblings.

attrib. Thomas Heywood (c.1570s–1641)

## Texts

- 21 Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,  
The shooting stars attend thee;  
And the elves also,  
Whose little eyes glow  
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-the-Wisp mis-light thee,  
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;  
But on, on thy way,  
Not making a stay,  
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674)

- 22 Now is the month of Maying

Now is the month of Maying,  
When merry lads are playing, *Fa la la*.  
Each with his bonny lass  
A-dancing on the grass, *Fa la la*.

The Spring, clad all in gladness,  
Doth laugh at Winter's sadness, *Fa la la*.  
And to the bagpipes' sound  
The nymphs tread out the ground, *Fa la la*.

Fie then! why sit we musing,  
Youth's sweet delight refusing? *Fa la la*.  
Say, dainty nymphs, and speak,  
Shall we play barley-break? *Fa la la*.

anon., 16th c.

- 23 Come to me

Come to me in the silence of the night;  
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes  
as bright  
As sunlight on a stream;  
Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of vanished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet,  
too bittersweet,  
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,  
Where souls brimful of love abide and meet;  
Where thirsting, longing eyes  
Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may give  
My very life again though cold in death:  
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:  
Speak low, lean low,  
As long ago, my love, how long ago!

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

## Biographies

**The Choir of King's College London** is one of the leading university choirs in England. Founded by William Henry Monk in the middle of the nineteenth century, it consists today of some thirty 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, in a performance which *The Times* described 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 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 – praised as 'an intimate, highly charged performance' (Stephen Pritchard, *The Observer*) – and *Kenneth Leighton / Frank Martin: Masses for Double Choir*. Future releases include a collaboration with guitarist Sean Shibe on a new commission from composer Liam Paterson.

**Caitlin Goreing** read Mathematics and was a choral scholar with the Choir of King's College London from 2014 to 2017. During this time Caitlin was a frequent soloist with the choir. She now performs regularly as a soloist around London and the South East; recent performances include Szymanowski *Stabat Mater*, Handel *Messiah*, and Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*. Her operatic experience includes title roles in *Dido and Aeneas*, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* and *Carmen*, as well as *The Witch (Hänsel und Gretel)* and *The Old Lady (Candide)*.

Caitlin was a 2019 Waterperry Opera Festival Young Artist where she created the role of Isaac in a new staged production of Benjamin Britten's *Abraham and Isaac*. She now studies at the Royal College of Music with Amanda Roocroft.

## Biographies

**The Strand Ensemble** is an *ad hoc* group of instrumentalists, which performs with The Choir of King's College London for various projects. The performers on this recording include several principals from orchestras including Britten Sinfonia, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as well as several of the UK's leading specialist chamber musicians.

**Joseph Fort** is 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.

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, working with the choir in several seasons. During his time in America, Joseph conducted several 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

### Soprano

Madeleine Alabaster *Harrow Choral Scholar*  
Sabrina Curwen *Glanfield Choral Scholar*  
Georgia Entwisle *Harrow Choral Scholar*  
Lucy Green  
Arabella Lewis  
Sofia Robinson  
Ruby Sweetland  
Ciara Williams

### Alto

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

### Tenor

Connor Collerton  
Richard Franklin  
William Hester *Trendell Memorial Choral Scholar*  
Ben Mark Turner

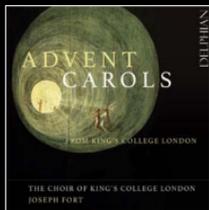
### Bass

Samir Hutchings  
Sebastian Johnson  
Thomas Keogh  
Thomas Noon *Ouseley Trust Choral Scholar*  
Paul Spies *Gough Choral Scholar*

## The Strand Ensemble

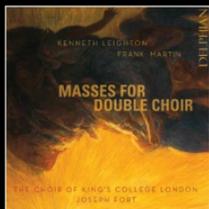
Benjamin Marquise Gilmore *violin 1*  
Michael Gurevich *violin 2*  
Rosalind Ventris *viola*  
Matthijs Broersma *cello*  
Siret Lust *double bass*  
Philippa Davies *flute/piccolo*  
Peter Facer *oboe/cor anglais*  
Christopher Richards *clarinet*  
Lorna West *bassoon*  
Anna Drysdale *horn*  
Simon Cox *trumpet*  
Stephen Turton *trombone*  
Anneke Hodnett *harp*  
Stephen Gutman *celesta*  
James Crook *percussion*

Also available on Delphian



**Advent Carols from King's College London**  
The Choir of King's College London / Joseph Fort  
DCD34226

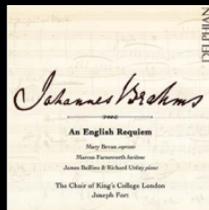
Every December, over a thousand people attend the Advent carol service in the Chapel of King's College London, which is repeated over three nights to meet demand. This album offers a snapshot of one such service, with its characteristic mix of plainchant, seasonal hymns and polyphony old and new. The Great 'O' Antiphons (sung according to medieval Sarum practice) provide the backbone, pointing inexorably towards the Christmas birth. A brace of premiere recordings centres on composers with personal connections to King's, and is complemented by current Professor of Composition George Benjamin's rarely heard setting of a prophetic text after Isaiah. It intensifies the mood of heightened expectation proper to this very special season, and reminds us that something truly extraordinary is about to happen.



**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.

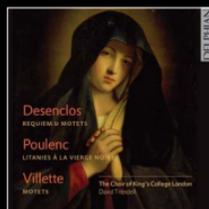
'Fort is clearly in his element [...] and drives his singers onward with an almost hypnotic zeal'  
— Gramophone, May 2019



**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



**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' — Sunday Times, March 2014

