

Ave Maria
Music for upper voices

The St Catharine's Girls' Choir, Cambridge
Edward Wickham

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The St Catharine's Girls' Choir, Cambridge
Edward Wickham *conductor*

About The St Catharine's Girls' Choir & Edward Wickham:

'[...] artless dexterity [...] unified by a thread of tenderness and warmth'
The Telegraph

Diana Burrell (b. 1948)
Magnificat & Nunc dimittis

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| 1. Magnificat | [3:38] |
| 2. Nunc dimittis | [3:25] |

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)
3. **Ave Maria**

[2:36]

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)
Missa Cornelia, Op. 81

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| 4. Kyrie | [2:31] |
| 5. Gloria | [3:37] |
| 6. Sanctus & Benedictus | [3:07] |
| 7. Agnus Dei | [3:00] |

Judith Bingham (b. 1952)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| 8. God be in my head | [1:48] |
|-----------------------------|--------|

9. **Les Saintes Maries de la Mer**

[3:58]

John Tavener (1944-2013)
Missa Brevis

- | | |
|---------------|--------|
| 10. Kyrie | [2:55] |
| 11. Gloria | [5:30] |
| 12. Sanctus | [2:32] |
| 13. Agnus Dei | [2:46] |

Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 14. Ave Maria | [3:20] |
|----------------------|--------|

Stevie Wishart
Three Carols

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 15. Te Deum laudamus | [3:18] |
| 16. Let's be merry as bird on berry | [5:09] |
| 17. Lullaby for Freya | [4:26] |

Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)

Evening Canticles – St Paul's Service

- | | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 18. Magnificat | [5:21] |
| 19. Nunc dimittis | [3:08] |

Total playing time [66:15]



Photography: Ihsan Aslam

Ave Maria: Music for upper voices

The repertoire gathered on this recording has been chosen with no particular theme in mind; it constitutes some of the more ear-catching contemporary music that the St Catharine's Girls' Choir has programmed during the long and pleasurable process, starting back in 2008, of building up repertoire suitable for an ambitious choir singing within the Anglican tradition. The anthology reflects the choir's commitment to new music, and celebrates the expanding repertoire of sophisticated polyphony for upper voices; a repertoire which, with the continuing formation of girls' choirs alongside the traditional boys' ensembles, promises to become ever more rich and diverse.

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis

Diana Burrell's evening canticles are amongst the most bracing and original settings for upper voices in the contemporary repertoire. They were commissioned by the Norwich Cathedral Ex-Choristers Guild to celebrate the 900th anniversary of Norwich Cathedral, and were first performed in April 1996. The angular lines of the 'Magnificat' and unflinching dissonance of the 'Nunc dimittis' are some way from the reassuring sound-world of some mainstream Anglican

settings. But, once recalibrated, the ear is drawn in by the insistent, dance-like rhythms of the 'Magnificat', accompanied by a succession of revolving figures which resemble the Marian spinning wheel of Stanford's famous Magnificat in G, reconceived for a non-Euclidian universe. Similarly the 'Nunc dimittis' takes on a granite-like austerity: not pretty, perhaps, but beautiful nonetheless.

Ave Maria

Rebecca Clarke was both a distinguished viola player and notable composer: her chamber music and songs remain in the mainstream repertoire, though her choral music has been unjustly neglected since her death. The *Ave Maria* dates from 1937 and was the first of her choral works to be published.

Missa Cornelia

Leighton's Op. 81 – one of seven mass settings that he composed – came as the result of a commission from the choir of St Leonard's-Mayfield School in East Sussex, and was premiered in June 1980. The title pays tribute to the founder of the school, Mother Cornelia Connolly who had previously founded the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1846. It is a setting in English of the Roman Catholic vernacular of the Mass.

In many respects the *Missa Cornelia* stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Benjamin

Britten's more celebrated *Missa Brevis* for upper voices. It demonstrates a similar facility with three interweaving polyphonic lines, the same ability to create dramatic textual contrast, and the same motivic economy. Yet those familiar with Leighton's other choral works – notably his two sets of evening canticles for full choir – will recognise traits which are distinctively those of Leighton: the modal fluidity of the 'Kyrie', for instance, or the fidgety rhythms of the 'Gloria'. There is in this mass above all else a sense of inner coherence, a narrative almost, which comes to an appropriate culmination in the 'Agnus Dei', where the mounting arpeggios of the 'Kyrie' are turned on their head. The final resolution of multiple suspensions in very English, very Anglican and very Leighton.

God be in my head (second setting)

Judith Bingham writes:
'I was in St Louis in 2003 for the first performance of my first setting of *God be in my head*, which had been commissioned for an episcopal church there by Philip Barnes. After the premiere I was explaining that it had been extremely hard to set words that I, as a singer, had automatically associated with the Walford Davies setting. The next morning I woke up with this new setting in my mind and had to get up and write it down! It has a simple canonic and

imitative form, with rising and falling phrases, and the emotion is achieved by harmonic changes. The music turns towards the minor at the end for 'God be at mine end', but then becomes more hopeful and rises at the words 'and at my departing.' I like to think that I unconsciously evoked a rather American sound.'

Les Saintes Maries de la mer

Judith Bingham writes:
I was asked, in 2014, to write a piece for three cathedral girls' choirs, for a concert at the City of London Festival. The three cathedrals were Guildford, St Albans and Southwark. I was struggling to find a text that would suit, and asked my friend, the poet Elizabeth Cook, if she had written anything suitable and she produced this poem, about the legend of the two Marys who, having witnessed the Crucifixion, were cast adrift in a small boat with their African maidservant Sara, and ended up in the Camargue. In a synchronic way, it tallied with the first news of migrants travelling across the Mediterranean to Europe. Sara became the patron saint of the gypsies, and it was gypsy music that informed the guitar like harmonies of the music.

Missa Brevis

Unifying themes and transformations of a more obvious kind are in evidence in

John Tavener's *Missa Brevis*, composed for the choir of Westminster Cathedral, dedicated to the memory of Pope John Paul II and first performed in June 2005. The opening tune of the 'Kyrie' is a palindrome, which in the succeeding 'Kyrie' is turned upside down. The tune also appears at the end of the 'Gloria' and 'Agnus Dei': the musical analogue of a timeless, recursive theology. Tavener wrote the work soon after his large-scale piece based on the ninety-nine Names of Allah, *The Beautiful Names*, and had the same piercing timbre in mind when writing the stratospheric lines on display here. Succinct and intense in its expression, the music reaches its spiritual climax with the virtuosic leaps of the 'Sanctus'.

Ave Maria

Cecilia McDowall writes:
The *Ave Maria*, for upper voices, is one of a triptych of Marian motets, the others being *Ave Regina* and *Regina Caeli* for mixed voices. Written in memory of the commissioners' parents it is the most intimate in expression of the three, opening in spare plainchant fashion. Pairs of motifs build upwards, rising in close harmony quavers, which are then followed by a cascade of suspensions. The work was commissioned for the Canterbury Chamber Choir by Janet and Douglas Mackay in memory of their parents. The first performance was given on 4 April

2004 at St Mary of Charity, Faversham, Kent, by the Canterbury Chamber Choir conducted by George Vass.

Three Carols

Stevie Wishart composed her three lyrics – 'Te Deum laudamus', 'Let's be merry as birds on berry' and 'Lullaby for Freya' – for St Catharine's Girls' Choir, who first performed them in 2014. Reflecting the composer's own expertise as a performer of medieval music, the three settings display a neo-medieval sensibility, in which harmonies of increasing richness are created through rounds and, in the case of 'Te Deum Laudamus', by the layering of apparently independent melodic lines.

St Paul's Service

The St Paul's Service by Joanna Marsh was commissioned by Lucy Winkett for the all-female vocal ensemble Aurora Nova. The first performance was given during evensong at St Paul's Cathedral on 1 August 2010, sung by Aurora Nova, directed by Patrick Craig.

Joanna Marsh writes:
From the moment I spent considerable time with Gibbons Second Service among other sixteenth century works back in the '90s, I have had a vision of a kind of music that echoed these motivic and harmonic idioms but stretched them into a new shape. The

St Paul's Evening Service gave me the opportunity to explore these ideas. As I composed it I realised it was very much a piece I wanted to write for years and I can see now that the catalyst for writing it was an extraordinary nostalgia coming from the disjunct between my highly secular life in Dubai and my former life steeped in church music. I wrote it in my very hot office overlooking the desert with an A4 photo of the inside of St Paul's cathedral stuck next to me on the wall.

Additional notes by Edward Wickham
All programme notes © the authors
as indicated

Diana Burrell (b. 1948)

Magnificat & Nunc dimittis

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 hand-maiden:
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 showed 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.

Luke 1: 46-55

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.

Luke 2: 29-32

Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)

3. Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum:
benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus
fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, regina caeli, dulcis et pia, O mater Dei:
ora pro nobis peccatoribus, ut cum electis te videamus.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the
fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

*Holy Mary, queen of heaven, sweet and pious,
O mother of God:
pray for us sinners, so that we may see thee
with the saints.*

Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

Missa Cornelia, Op. 81

4. Kyrie

Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

5. Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to His people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord, Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father;
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

6. Sanctus & Benedictus

Holy, Holy, Holy,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

7. Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

Judith Bingham (b. 1952)

8. 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.

Sarum Primer 1558

9. Les Saintes Maries de la Mer

Words by Elizabeth Cook (b. 1952)

John Tavener (1944-2013)

Missa Brevis

10. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.*

11. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, rex celestis,
Deus pater omnipotens.
Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei patris.
Amen.

*Glory be to God on high,
and in earth peace towards men of goodwill.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee,
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory,
O Lord God, heavenly king, God the father almighty,
O Lord, the only-begotten son Jesus Christ;*

*O Lord God, lamb of God, son of the father,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord,
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the father.
Amen.*

12. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

13. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

*Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.*

Cecilia McDowall (b. 1951)

14. Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum:
benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus
fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee:
blessed art thou among women, and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

*Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

Stevie Wishart

Three Carols

15. Te Deum Laudamus
Of Mary, a maide without lessing,
this day was borne a worthy king:
therfore with joy now let us syng,
'Te Deum laudamus.'

On Christmas Day that child borne was
Man to redeme for owr trespass;
Therfor syng we both more and lesse:
'Te Deum laudamus.'

16. Let's be merry as bird on berry
This time is born a child full good,
He that is bought upon the Rood;
He bound the devil that is so wode,
Till the dreadful Doomesday

Let's be merry as birds on berry
And all thy care let away.

When the child of mickle might
Would be born of Mary bright,
A token he sent to king and knight,
A star that shone night and day.

Let's be merry...

In token he was withouten peer,
And peerless he shall lasten ay.
The star shone as bright as fire,
Over all the world both far and near.

Let's be merry...

The twelfth day come kings three,
Out of the East, with heartes free,
To worship him they kneeled on knee
With gold and myrrh and frankincense.

Let's be merry...

17. Lullaby for Freya

Mo ghaol, mo ghràdh is m' eudail Thu!
'ionntas ùr is m' èibhneas Thu!
Mo mhacan àlainn, ceutach Thu!
Chan fhiù mi fhèin a bhith ad dhàil.

Ged as leanabh dìblidh thu
Cinnteach Rìgh nan Rìghrean Thu
S Tu'n t-òighre dligheach, firinneach
Air rìoghachd Dhe nan gràs

M' ulaidh, m' aighear, is mo luaidh thu,
Rùn, is gaol, is gràdh an t-sluaigh thu;
'S tus' an Tì a bheir dhoibh fuasgladh
Bho chuibhreach an namhaid uaibhrich.

My love whose eye has tender gaze!
My love whose heart is full of love!
Though you are a babe without fault,
You grow in victory.

Though a feeble baby are you
for sure the king of kings are you
You're the rightful, true heir
of the Kingdom of God of the Graces.

My treasure, my joy, my love, you are a passion,
A darling and an affection.
You are the One who will give to them resolution,
away from the chain of the proud enemy.

Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)

Evening Canticles – St Paul's Service

Text as tracks 1 & 2.

St Catharine's Girls' Choir, Cambridge

Rachel Barlow
Joanna Barrett
Annabel Butler
Olivia Cleobury
Grainne Dignam
Siân Ellis
Beatrice Greenhalgh
Eleanor Hunt
Jasmine Hunt
Maggie Hunt
Abbie Keegan
Amy Keegan
Alexandra Lee
Anna Morris
Anna Mullock
Sophie O'Sullivan
Rebecca Peacock
Agatha Pethers
Agnes Pethers
Francesca Stevenson
Sofia Swenson-Wright
Audrey Suryadarma
Isabella Wickham

Organists

Alex Coplan (Burrell)
William Fairbairn (Leighton, Tavener, Marsh)

Director

Edward Wickham

The St Catharine's Girls' Choir

The St Catharine's Girls' Choir – the only college-based girls' choir in the UK – was founded in 2008. The choir sings weekly in the College Chapel, as well as giving regular concerts and its repertoire extends from the early Middle Ages to the twenty-first century, with several works written specially for it. The choir is made up of twenty girls, aged between eight and fifteen, drawn from local schools; and for this recording is augmented by former choristers.

The choir has performed in some of the UK's leading venues including London's St John's, Smith Square, and St David's Hall, Cardiff. It has performed live on Radio 3's *The Choir* and toured to Poland and Hungary.

Edward Wickham

Edward Wickham is a Fellow and Director of Music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. He combines his duties in Cambridge with performing engagements throughout the world. He came to St Catharine's College in 2003, and in 2008 established the first college-based children's girls' choir.

With The Clerks, the vocal ensemble he formed in 1992, he has made a series of ground-breaking recordings, principally of Franco-Flemish Renaissance music. In

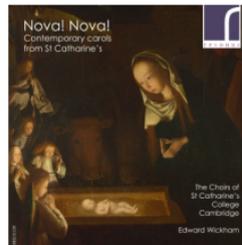
2001 the ensemble completed an award-winning survey of the music of Jean Ockeghem and more recent projects have included first-time recordings of polyphony by composers such as Josquin, Barbireau and Regis.

In recent years, Dr Wickham has been exploring, through collaborative and experimental projects, modes of performance which break out of the traditional Western classical tradition. With multi-media sound installations, partnerships with singers from the Middle East, and ground-breaking educational and outreach programmes, he is committed to pursuing an idiosyncratic agenda of artistic innovation and social participation.

His most recent projects, funded by Arts Awards from The Wellcome Trust, explore issues of cognition and intelligibility in musical lyrics and libretti.

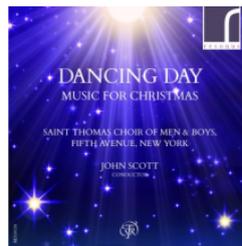


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info@resonusclassics.com
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