

THE CHOIR OF  
KING'S COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE



A FESTIVAL OF NINE  
LESSONS & CAROLS

# THE CENTENARY SERVICE

Sir Stephen Cleobury





## SIR STEPHEN CLEOBURY CBE

Six months after the centenary service of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, Stephen Cleobury was appointed Knight Bachelor in the Queen's Birthday Honours. This richly-deserved recognition of his 'services to choral music' brought tremendous pleasure and delight to the Choir and College, and to the many more who have attended Chapel services and listened to broadcasts, webcasts and recordings since Stephen became Director of Music in 1982. Since that time, he has chosen and conducted the music for 37 years of choral worship: for Christmas and Easter, as well as for thousands of daily chapel services. The sound of the Choir under his direction has reached the ears and touched the hearts of countless millions of people. Hundreds of boys and young men have been Choristers or Choral Scholars and there have been no fewer than 23 Organ Scholars. His influence as a teacher and a role model to young musicians has been as extraordinary as the way in which he has extended the reach of the Chapel's music through recording, broadcasting and touring. As the College makes this recording of the Centenary Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols available, we once again salute Sir Stephen's extraordinary achievements and pay tribute to the qualities of musicianship, leadership, commitment and dedication that lie behind all that he has given, and all that we have so gratefully received.



A FESTIVAL OF NINE  
LESSONS & CAROLS  
**THE  
CENTENARY  
SERVICE**

The Revd Dr Stephen Cherry *Dean*  
The Revd Andrew Hammond *Chaplain*  
Ian Griffiths *Dean's Verger*  
Malwina Soltys *Deputy Dean's Verger*

The Choir of King's College, Cambridge  
Sir Stephen Cleobury *Conductor*

Henry Websdale & Dónal McCann *Organ Scholars*  
Guy Johnston *Cello Soloist*

*As Mayor of Cambridge and representing the City,  
Councillor Nigel Gawthorpe read the Sixth Lesson.  
We record with great sadness that Nigel died  
in January 2019.*



<b>CD</b>	<b>81:55</b>
Processional Hymn	
1 <b>Once in royal David's City</b>   <i>H. J. Gauntlett and A. H. Mann, desc. S. Cleobury</i>	4:21
2 <b>The Bidding Prayer, Lord's Prayer and Benediction</b>	3:17
Invitatory Carol	
3 <b>Up! good Christen folk</b>   <i>Piæ Cantiones, harm. G. R. Woodward</i>	1:20
4 <b>First Lesson</b>	2:44
Carols	
5 <b>Adam lay ybounden</b>   <i>Boris Ord</i>	1:11
6 <b>Jesus Christ the apple tree</b>   <i>Elizabeth Poston</i>	2:40
7 <b>Second Lesson</b>	1:03
Carols	
8 <b>In dulci jubilo</b>   <i>German traditional, arr. Robert Lucas de Pearsall</i>	3:05
9 <b>I saw three ships</b>   <i>English traditional, arr. Simon Preston</i>	2:15
10 <b>Third Lesson</b>	1:08
Carol	
11 <b>Nowell sing we</b>   <i>Mediæval, ed. Stephen Cleobury</i>	3:08
Congregational Hymn	
12 <b>Unto us is born a Son</b>   <i>Piæ Cantiones, arr. David Willcocks</i>	2:21
13 <b>Fourth Lesson</b>	1:59
Carols	
14 <b>A Spotless Rose</b>   <i>Herbert Howells</i>	2:45
15 <b>The Lamb</b>   <i>John Tavener</i>	3:07
16 <b>Fifth Lesson</b>	2:31



Carol		
17	<b>Joys Seven</b>   <i>Traditional, arr. Stephen Cleobury</i>	3:15
Anthem		
18	<b>Bogoróditse Dyevo</b>   <i>Arvo Pärt</i>	1:16
19	<b>Sixth Lesson</b>	1:01
Carol		
20	<b>What sweeter music</b>   <i>John Rutter</i>	4:09
Anthem		
21	<b>Stille Nacht</b>   <i>Franz Gruber, arr. Philip Ledger</i>	2:29
22	<b>Seventh Lesson</b>	1:40
Carol		
23	<b>In the bleak mid-winter</b>   <i>Harold Darke</i>	4:08
Congregational Hymn		
24	<b>While shepherds watched their flocks by night</b>   <i>After C. Tye, desc. Stephen Cleobury</i>	2:54
25	<b>Eighth Lesson</b>	2:45
Carols		
26	<b>O mercy divine</b>   <i>Judith Weir</i>	3:57
27	<b>Sir Christèmas</b>   <i>William Mathias</i>	1:44
28	<b>Ninth Lesson</b>	2:09
Congregational Hymn		
29	<b>O come, all ye faithful</b>   <i>Adeste fideles, desc. David Willcocks</i>	4:23
30	<b>Collect and Blessing</b>	1:06
Congregational Hymn		
31	<b>Hark! the herald angels sing</b>   <i>Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, desc. Stephen Cleobury</i>	3:25
Organ Voluntary		
32	<b>In dulci jubilo, BWV 729</b>   <i>Johann Sebastian Bach</i>	2:37







## COMMISSIONED CAROL

### **Judith Weir (KC 1973)** **Master of the Queen's Music**

The words of 'O Mercy Divine' come from a collection called 'Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord' by the Revd Charles Wesley (1707-1788). I have set to music nine of its fifteen brief, almost haiku-like verses, whose theme is the humble circumstance of Jesus' birth and the important example this sets for mankind. Beginning in the stable, the view widens to the sky, with singing angels in it, followed by the arrival of the wise men, whose grand appearance in the inn is not incongruous; because, as the poet says, 'The inn is a palace, for Jesus is there'. The carol includes a solo cello playing a generally fast-moving, bass-register accompaniment, intended as a musical 'flying carpet', on which the Choir can comfortably tread and later float above.





# KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL



## A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Christmas Eve 2018 at 3 pm



# THE ORDER OF SERVICE

## Processional hymn

¶ *The congregation will be invited to stand when the Choir is ready in the Ante-chapel, so that all may be silent when the hymn starts. All join in singing at the third verse.*

### *Solo*

Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a Mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed;  
Mary was that Mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

### *Choir*

He came down to earth from heaven  
who is God and Lord of all,  
and his shelter was a stable,  
and his cradle was a stall;  
with the poor and mean and lowly  
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the lowly maiden  
in whose gentle arms he lay;  
Christian children all must be  
mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern:  
day by day like us he grew;  
he was little, weak and helpless,  
tears and smiles like us he knew;  
and he feeleth for our sadness,  
and he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him  
through his own redeeming love,  
for that child, so dear and gentle,  
is our Lord in heaven above;  
and he leads his children on  
to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable  
with the oxen standing by  
we shall see him, but in heaven,  
set at God's right hand on high;  
when, like stars, his children, crowned,  
all in white shall wait around.

¶ *All remain standing.*



## THE BIDDING PRAYER

**Dean** Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmas Eve our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and let us make this Chapel, dedicated to Mary, his most blessed Mother, glad with our carols of praise:

But first let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in the dominions of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, within this University and City of Cambridge, and in the two royal and religious Foundations of King Henry VI here and at Eton:

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little

children; all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

Our Father;

**All** Our Father, which art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
in earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that 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.

**Dean** The Almighty God bless us with his grace:  
Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto  
the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of  
Angels bring us all.

**All** Amen.

¶ *The congregation sits.*



## INVITATORY CAROL

*Ding-dong-ding:  
Ding-a-dong-a-ding: Ding-dong, ding-dong:  
Ding-a-dong-ding.*

Up! good Christen folk, and listen  
how the merry church bells ring,  
and from steeple  
bid good people  
come adore the new-born King:

Tell the story how from glory  
God came down at Christmastide,  
bringing gladness,  
chasing sadness,  
show'ring blessings far and wide.

Born of mother, blest o'er other,  
Ex Maria Virgine, *[from the Virgin Mary]*  
in a stable  
( 'tis no fable),  
Christus natus hodie. *[Christ is born today]*

*Words and harmony:* G. R. Woodward  
*Melody:* Piæ Cantiones, 1582



# FIRST LESSON

## Read by a Chorister

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the

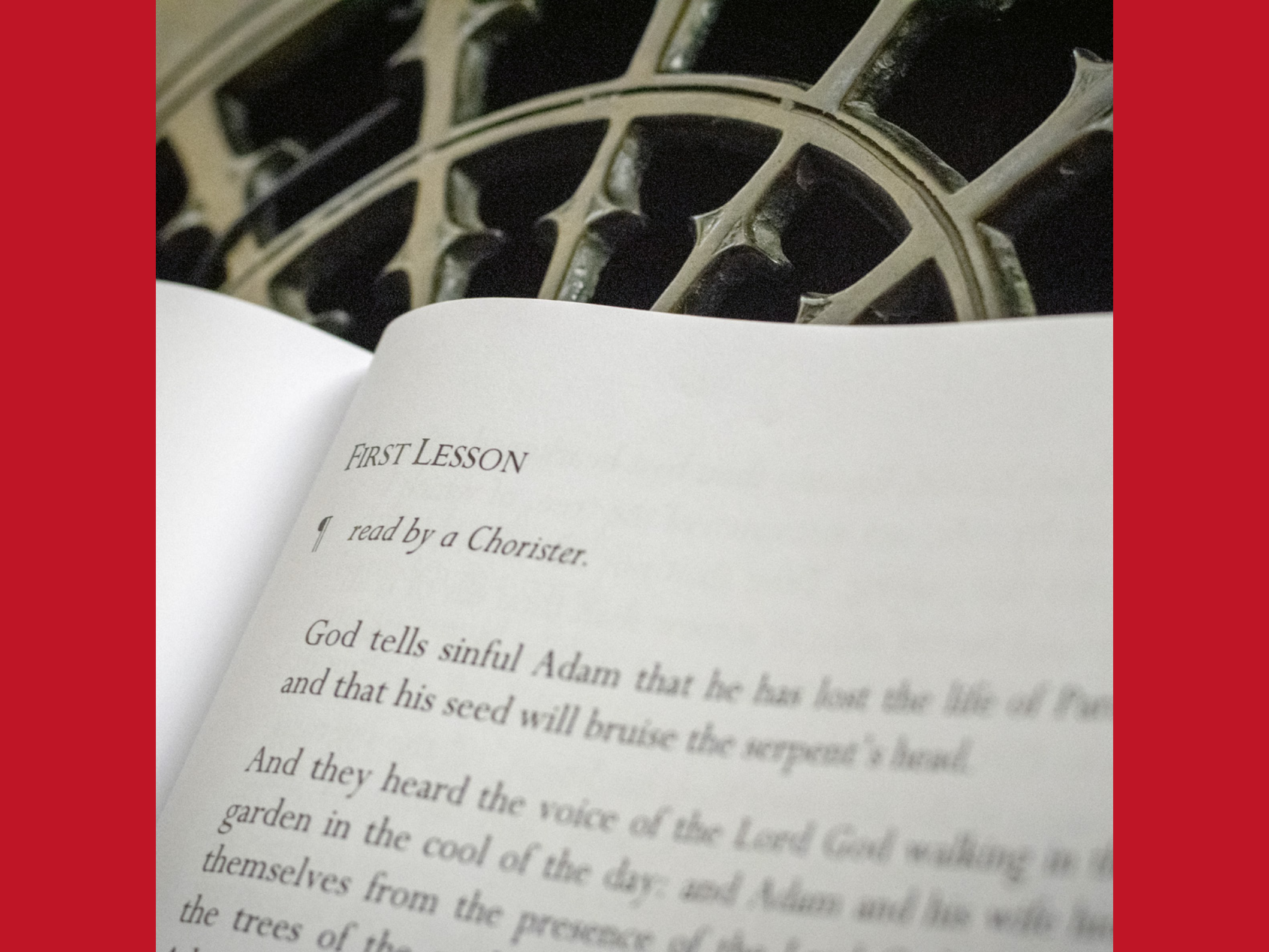
woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Thanks be to God.

*Genesis 3.8-15, 17-19*





## FIRST LESSON

*¶ read by a Chorister.*

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise  
and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the  
garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid  
themselves from the presence of the Lord God among  
the trees of the garden.



## CAROL

Adam lay ybounden,  
bounden in a bond;  
four thousand winter  
thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple,  
an apple that he took,  
as clerkes finden  
written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,  
the apple taken been,  
ne had never our lady  
a been heavené queen.

Blessed be the time  
that apple taken was,  
Therefore we moun singen  
Deo gratias.

*[thanks be to God]*

*Words:* Anon, 15<sup>th</sup> century  
*Music:* Boris Ord

## CAROL

The tree of life my soul hath seen,  
laden with fruit and always green:  
the trees of Nature fruitless be  
compared with Christ, the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:  
by faith I know, but ne'er can tell  
the glory which I now can see  
in Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,  
and pleasure dearly I have bought;  
I missed of all, but now I see,  
'tis found in Christ, the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,  
here I will sit and rest awhile:  
under the shadow I will be  
of Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
it keeps my dying faith alive;  
which makes my soul in haste to be  
with Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

*Words:* anon., Collection of Joshua Smith,  
New Hampshire. *Music:* Elizabeth Poston



## SECOND LESSON

### Read by a Choral Scholar

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Thanks be to God.

*Genesis 22.15-18*

## CAROL

In dulci jubilo *[in sweet jubilation]*  
let us our homage shew;  
our heart's joy reclineth  
in præsepio, *[in the manger]*  
and like a bright star shineth  
Matris in gremio. *[on his mother's lap]*  
Alpha es et O. *[you are Alpha and Omega]*

O Jesu parvule! *[O infant Jesus]*  
I yearn for thee alway!  
Comfort my heart's blindness,  
O Puer optime! *[O child most excellent]*  
With all thy loving-kindness,  
O princeps gloriæ! *[O prince of glory]*  
Trahe me post te! *[draw me after you]*

O Patris caritas, *[O love of the Father]*  
O Nati lenitas! *[O gentleness of the Son]*  
Deeply were we stained  
per nostra crimina; *[for our sins]*  
but thou hast for us gained  
cælorum gaudia. *[the joys of heaven]*  
O that we were there!



Ubi sunt gaudia, where, *[where are those joys?]*  
if that they be not there?  
There are angels singing  
nova cantica, *[new songs]*  
there the bells are ringing  
in Regis curia: *[in the court of the King]*  
O that we were there!

*Old German, transl. & arr.: Robert L. de Pearsall*

## CAROL

I saw three ships come sailing in,  
*on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,*  
I saw three ships come sailing in,  
*on Christmas Day in the morning.*

And what was in those ships all three?...

Our Saviour Christ and his lady,...

Pray, whither sailed those ships all three?...

O, they sailed into Bethlehem,...

And all the bells on earth shall ring,...

And all the angels in heav'n shall sing,...

And all the souls on earth shall sing,...

Then let us all rejoice amain!  
*on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,*  
Then let us all rejoice amain!  
*on Christmas Day in the morning.*

*English trad., arr.: Simon Preston*



## THIRD LESSON

**Read by a representative of Eton College**

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

The people that walked in darkness have seen  
a great light: they that dwell in the land of the  
shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.  
For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince  
of Peace. Of the increase of his government and  
peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of  
David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to  
establish it with judgment and with justice from  
henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of  
hosts will perform this.

Thanks be to God.

*Isaiah 9.2, 6-7*

## CAROL

*Nowell sing we now all and some,  
for Rex Pacificus is come. [the King of Peace]*

In Bethl'em in that fair city,  
a child was born of a maiden free,  
that shall a lord and princë be,  
a solis ortus cardine. [from the farthest east]

Children were slain full great plenty,  
Jesu, for the love of thee;  
wherefore their soulës saved be,  
hostis Herodis impie. [O profane enemy Herod]

As the sunnë shineth through the glass,  
so Jesu in his mother was;  
thee to servë now grant us grace,  
O lux beata Trinitas. [O Trinity of blessed light]

Now God is comën to worshipën us;  
now of Mary is born Jesus;  
make we merry amongës us;  
exultet celum laudibus. [let heaven rejoice with praises]

*Mediæval, ed.: Stephen Cleobury*



## CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

**As the organ introduction begins, all stand to sing**

Unto us is born a Son,  
King of quires supernal:  
see on earth his life begun,  
of lords the Lord eternal.

Christ, from heav'n descending low,  
comes on earth a stranger;  
ox and ass their owner know,  
becradled in the manger.

This did Herod sore affray,  
and grievously bewilder,  
so he gave the word to slay,  
and slew the little childer.

*Choir*

Of his love and mercy mild  
this the Christmas story;  
and O that Mary's gentle child  
might lead us up to glory.

O and A, and A and O,  
cum cantibus in choro, *[with songs in the choir]*  
let our merry organ go,  
benedicamus Domino. *[let us bless the Lord]*

¶ *All sit.*

## FOURTH LESSON

**Read by a Fellow**

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

*Isaiah 11.1-4a, 6-9*



## CAROL

A Spotless Rose is blowing,  
sprung from a tender root,  
of ancient seers' foreshowing,  
of Jesse promised fruit;  
its fairest bud unfolds to light  
amid the cold, cold winter,  
and in the dark midnight.

The Rose which I am singing,  
whereof Isaiah said,  
is from its sweet root springing  
in Mary, purest Maid;  
for through our God's great love and might  
the Blessed Babe she bare us  
in a cold, cold winter's night.

*[the second verse is repeated]*

*Words:* 14<sup>th</sup> century anon., transl. C. Winkworth  
*Music:* Herbert Howells

## CAROL

Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,  
By the stream and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight,  
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb.  
He is meek, and he is mild,  
He became a little child;  
I, a child, and thou a lamb,  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

*Words:* William Blake  
*Music:* John Tavener



## FIFTH LESSON

### **Read by the Master over the Choristers**

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son

of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

*Luke 1.26-35, 38*



## CAROL

The first good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of one;  
to see the blessed Jesus Christ  
when he was first her son:  
    When he was first her son, good man,  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of two;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
to make the lame to go:  
    To make the lame to go, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of three;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
to make the blind to see:  
    To make the blind to see, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of four;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
to read the Bible o'er:  
    To read the Bible o'er, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of five;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
to bring the dead alive:  
    To bring the dead alive, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of six;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
upon the crucifix:  
    Upon the crucifix, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

The next good joy that Mary had,  
it was the joy of seven;  
to see her own son, Jesus Christ,  
to wear the crown of heaven:  
    To wear the crown of heaven, good man:  
    and blessed may he be,  
    both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all eternity.

Joys Seven  
*Trad., arr.: Stephen Cleobury*



## ANTHEM

Bogoróditse Dyevo, raduisya,  
Blagodatnaya Marie, Gospod s toboyu.  
Blagoslovena Ty v zhenakh  
i blagosloven plot chreva tvoyego;  
yako spasa rodila yesi dush nashikh.

*[Sung twice]*

*Rejoice, O virgin Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.*

*Words: The Orthodox Liturgy  
Music: Arvo Pärt*

*Commissioned for the 1990 Festival of Nine Lessons  
and Carols.*

## SIXTH LESSON

**Read by a representative of the City of Cambridge**

St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

*Luke 2.1-7*



## CAROL

What sweeter music can we bring  
Than a carol, for to sing  
The birth of this our heavenly King?  
Awake the voice! Awake the string!  
Dark and dull night, fly hence away,  
And give the honour to this day  
That sees December turned to May.

Why does the chilling winter's morn  
Smile, like a field beset with corn?  
Or smell like a meadow newly shorn  
Thus on the sudden? Come and see  
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:

'Tis he is born, whose quickening birth  
Gives life and lustre, public mirth,  
To heaven and the under-earth.

We see him come, and know him ours,  
Who, with his sunshine and his showers,  
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The darling of the world is come,  
And fit it is, we find a room  
To welcome him, to welcome him.

The nobler part of all the house here, is the heart,  
Which we will give him: and bequeath  
This holly, and this ivy wreath.  
To do him honour, who's our King,  
And Lord of all this revelling.

*Words:* Robert Herrick

*Music:* John Rutter

*Commissioned for the 1987 Festival of Nine Lessons  
and Carols.*



## ANTHEM

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar,  
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar.  
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh'.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht.  
Hirten erst kundgemacht  
Durch der Engel Halleluja,  
Tönt es laut von fern und nah:  
Christ der Retter ist da.

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!  
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht  
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,  
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund',  
Christ in deiner Geburt.

*Silent night, holy night,  
all is dark, just one light:  
Mary and Joseph are watching the child;  
boy so tender, so graceful and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, holy night,  
shepherds first saw the sight  
and the angels' Alleluia  
brings the tidings near and far:  
Christ the Saviour is born.*

*Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, love's pure light  
shines from you, the divinest of kings  
as the hour of salvation it brings,  
Jesus, Lord, with thy birth.*

*Text: J. Mohr, transl. Godela Weiss-Sussex  
Music: Franz Gruber, arr. Philip Ledger*



## SEVENTH LESSON

### Read by the Director of Music

The shepherds go to the manger.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Thanks be to God.

*Luke 2.8-16*

## CAROL

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter,  
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him,  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heav'n and earth shall flee away  
When he comes to reign:  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty  
Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom Cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for him, whom angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.



What can I give him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give him –  
Give my heart.

*Words:* Christina Rossetti  
*Music:* Harold Darke

## CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

**As the organ introduction begins, all stand to sing**

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
an angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

'Fear not,' said he (for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind);  
'glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and all mankind.

'To you, in David's town, this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands  
and in a manger laid.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:



'All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to men  
begin and never cease.'

¶ *All sit.*

## EIGHTH LESSON

### **Read by the Vice-Provost**

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.



When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Thanks be to God.

*Matthew 2.1-12*

## CAROL

O mercy divine,  
how couldst thou incline,  
my God, to become such an infant as mine?

What a wonder of grace,  
the Ancient of Days  
is found in the likeness of Adam's frail race!

He comes from on high,  
who fashioned the sky,  
and meekly vouchsafes in a manger to lie.

The angels, she knew,  
had worshipped him too,  
and still they confess adoration his due.

Their newly born king,  
transported they sing,  
and heaven and earth with the triumph doth ring.

The wise men adore,  
and bring him their store,  
the rich are permitted to follow the poor.



To the inn they repair,  
to see the young heir;  
the inn is a palace, for Jesus is there.

Who now would be great,  
and not rather wait  
on Jesus their Lord in his humble estate?

Like him would I be,  
my master I see  
in a stable; a stable shall satisfy me.

*Words:* Revd Charles Wesley

*Music:* Judith Weir

*This carol was commissioned for today's service with  
the support of parents of a former Chorister. The cello  
soloist is Guy Johnston, another former Chorister.*

## CAROL

*Nowell.*

Who is there that singeth so, Nowell?

I am here, Sir Christèmas.

Welcome, my Lord Sir Christèmas!

Welcome to all, both more and less, come near. *Nowell.*

Dieu vous garde, beaux sieurs,

*[God protect you, good sirs]*

tidings I you bring:

a maid hath borne a child full young,

which causeth you to sing: *Nowell.*

Christ is now born of a pure maid;

in an ox stall he is laid,

wherefore sing we at abrayde: *Nowell.*

Buvez bien, buvez bien par toute la compagnie.

*[drink well, throughout the gathering]*

Make good cheer and be right merry,

and sing with us now joyfully: *Nowell.*

*Nowell!*

*Words:* anon., c.1500

*Music:* William Mathias

¶ *All stand.*



## NINTH LESSON

### Read by the Provost

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

Thanks be to God.

*John 1.1-14*

## CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

**Sung by all, standing. In verses 1 and 2 the first two lines of the refrain are sung by upper voices only.**

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the King of Angels.

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God,  
Begotten, not created.

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
'Glory to God  
In the highest.'

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him,*

*O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*



Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
Jesu, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in flesh appearing.  
*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

## THE COLLECT AND BLESSING

**Dean** The Lord be with you.

**All** And with thy spirit.

**Dean** Let us pray.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only son, Jesus Christ: grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

**All** Amen.

**Dean** Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with peace and goodwill, and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

**All** Amen.



## CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

**Sung by all, standing**

Hark! the herald angels sing:  
'Glory to the new-born King!  
peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!'   
Joyful, all ye nations rise!  
Join the triumph of the skies!  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'   
*Hark! the herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born King!*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord:  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell;  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!   
*Hark! the herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born King!*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings;  
mild he lays his glory by,  
born that man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth.   
*Hark! the herald angels sing:  
Glory to the new-born King!*

¶ *All remain standing in their places during the organ voluntary.*

In dulci jubilo, BWV 729  
*Music:* Johann Sebastian Bach

¶ *When the processions have left, members of the congregation may make their way from the building.*



## CHRISTMAS COMMISSIONS AT KING'S

1983	<i>In Wintertime</i>	Lennox Berkeley	2004	<i>God Would be Born in Thee</i>	Judith Bingham
1984	<i>Fix on one star</i>	Peter Maxwell Davies	2005	<i>Away in a Manger</i>	John Tavener
1985	<i>Illuminare, Jerusalem</i>	Judith Weir	2006	<i>Misere' Nobis</i>	Mark-Anthony Turnage
1986	<i>Nowell (Holly Dark)</i>	Richard Rodney Bennett	2007	<i>Advent Responsories / High Word of God</i>	Philip Ledger, David Willcocks
1987	<i>What sweeter music</i>	John Rutter	2007	<i>Now comes the Dawn</i>	Brett Dean
1988	<i>The Birthday of thy King</i>	Peter Sculthorpe	2008	<i>Mary</i>	Dominic Muldowney
1989	<i>St Steven was a clerk</i>	Alexander Goehr	2009	<i>The Christ Child</i>	Gabriel Jackson
1990	<i>Bogoróditse Dyevo</i>	Arvo Pärt	2010	<i>Christmas Carol</i>	Einojuhani Rautavaara
1991	<i>The text is of a gathering</i>	John Casken	2011	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	Tansy Davies
1992	<i>Sweet Jesu, King of blisse</i>	Nicholas Maw	2012	<i>Ring Out, Wild Bells</i>	Carl Vine
1993	<i>When Christ was born (Christo paremus cantica)</i>	Diana Burrell	2013	<i>Hear the Voice of the Bard</i>	Thea Musgrave
1994	<i>The Angels</i>	Jonathan Harvey	2014	<i>De Virgine Maria</i>	Carl Rütti
1995	<i>Seinté Mari moder milde</i>	James MacMillan	2015	<i>The Flight</i>	Richard Causton
1996	<i>Pilgrim Jesus</i>	Stephen Paulus	2016	<i>This Endernight</i>	Michael Berkeley
1997	<i>Fayrfax Carol</i>	Thomas Adès	2017	<i>Elisha's Carol / Carol Eliseus</i>	Huw Watkins
1998	<i>Winter Solstice Carol</i>	Giles Swayne	2018	<i>O Mercy Divine</i>	Judith Weir
1999	<i>Dormi, Jesu</i>	John Rutter			
1999	<i>On Christmas Day to my heart</i>	Richard Rodney Bennett			
2000	<i>The Three Kings</i>	Jonathan Dove			
2000	<i>The Shepherd's Carol</i>	Bob Chilcott			
2001	<i>Spring in Winter</i>	John Woolrich			
2002	<i>The angel Gabriel descended</i>	Robin Holloway			
2003	<i>The Gleam</i>	Harrison Birtwistle			







## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

**The Revd Dr Stephen Cherry – Dean of King's College  
(2014-); Chaplain of King's College (1989-1994)**

As we prepared to celebrate the centenary of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols in King's College Chapel in December 2018, I found my thoughts drifting back to the very first such service in 1918.

War had recently ended and people were still living with its consequences. There were not yet any war memorials around the country, nor was there a Cenotaph in Whitehall. War was not being remembered so much as still experienced. The First Eastern General Hospital in Cambridge, on the site now occupied by the University Library, was still busy dealing with the wounded, and institutions like King's College were counting the cost and perhaps coming to a deeper appreciation of the actual scale of loss than would have been possible while battles were still raging.

Eric Milner-White, Chaplain of King's before the war, padre in the trenches during it, and now Dean,





would have been grieving the loss of many old friends. He may also have been brooding on the two huge pastoral frustrations he suffered while offering Christian ministry to the troops. First, the prohibition on praying for the dead, and second, the assumption that the Book of Common Prayer provided an adequate liturgy for every conceivable occasion. An aesthete and pastor rather than a theologian or bishop-in-waiting, Milner-White took the opportunity of the comparative freedom of King's to deal with these frustrations. He introduced on All Souls Day (November 2nd) a requiem mass for the fallen, and, on Christmas Eve, 'A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols'. The format had been pioneered by the Bishop of Truro since 1880 and was exported from there to many other places. Indeed in 1884 A. R. Mowbray & Co. published an order of service for twopence. It was entitled 'Nine Lessons with Carols' and subtitled 'Festal Service for Christmas Eve'. It was published again in 1911; clearly it was popular long before it was at King's.

So Milner-White wasn't exactly going out on a limb when he sought to introduce it. But it is well known that A. H. Mann, who since 1876 had been Organist (the title for the Director of Music in those days), was against the idea. After all, a suitably festive Evensong had always been sung on Christmas Eve. Traditionally, the introit at this Evensong was *Once in royal David's city*, with the first verse sung by the boys alone, and the men adding the harmony in the second. Nevertheless, the Dean prevailed and also added a few words of his own – the Bidding Prayer – to set the scene for the reading of lessons and the singing of the carols that would come between them.

The service was open to the public. Indeed, one of its purposes was to express 'the goodwill between

University and Town' and so the Mayor's Chaplain and a Free Church Minister were among the lesson readers. Another of King Henry VI's institutions was to be involved as well: the Provost of Eton, who at that time was M. R. James, writer of ghost-stories, was invited to read a lesson. James had been Provost of King's when war broke out, and Milner-White was Chaplain, and it was James who invited Milner-White to be Dean.

In 1918 eight carols were sung by the choir alone and there were six congregational hymns. The *Magnificat*, a nod in the direction of Evensong, was also sung, in a metrical form arranged by Charles Wood. It was never repeated at this service. In 2018 there were 15 carols, five congregational hymns and, of course, nine lessons.

Looking through the order of service for 1918 clarifies that the readings, often held to be sacrosanct and unchanging, have indeed changed over the years. Perhaps even more surprising is that the service did not begin with *Once in royal David's city*. That hymn was preceded by the sixteenth century carol *Up! good Christen folk*. The service did, however, end with *Hark! the herald angels sing*. The notes at the beginning of the service booklet indicate that members of the congregation 'should join heartily in the singing of the hymns and verses specially marked for that purpose'. Participation was positively encouraged.

If that was the form of the service, what was the atmosphere like? Unlike today there would have been no BBC trucks on the cobbles of King's Parade or microphones suspended from holes in the fan vault. The Dean would not have had a huge correspondence through the autumn from people saying how much they would like to come and could they please bring



their ageing grandparent who has been a stalwart of their parish church choir for half a century; nor would there have been the sorts of concerns about security that have worried the College in recent years. At the very first service people would have gathered in reasonable time, but not exceptionally early, and settled down just before the afternoon light began to fade. As well as members of College, dressed, like the Choir, in white surplices, I imagine many people in uniform, as well as those wearing bandages or on crutches, or perhaps having been wheeled across from the First Eastern General Hospital. Just about everyone present, whether 'town' or 'gown' would have been keenly aware of the loss of a friend, or a son, or a brother.

When the Dean read his new Bidding Prayer to the standing congregation, they would have been following the words in the service booklet and straining to hear his crisp consonants and clipped vowels in the Chapel's difficult acoustic. The words take them first to Bethlehem; then let them know that 'the tale of the loving purposes of God' is to be read from Holy Scripture; then invite all present to make, 'this Chapel, dedicated to His pure and lowly Mother, glad with our carols of praise'. But before gladness comes prayer: for the whole world, for peace, for love and unity in the Church, across the Empire, in the town and University and in this College and at Eton. The prayer then becomes more focused on those who are struggling: 'the poor, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed', 'the sick and them that mourn', 'the lonely and the unloved' and 'the aged and the little children'. That Milner-White was primarily a man of sympathy, a pastor, is evident here. Finally, the prayer moves on to the departed; an audacious

addition at the time. The wording of the prayer is clever and capacious. Of course, it refers to all 'those whom we love but see no longer', to quote a prayer that appeared in the 1928 Prayer Book, in which Milner-White had a big hand but which never became legal. But the allusions are more specific than that. 'Lastly let us remember before Him them who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.' It's the 'other shore' that is the giveaway. The thought is the same as Rupert Brooke's, a Fellow of King's until he died in the same war, who wrote of 'some corner of a foreign field'. The other shore is on the far side of the English Channel.

While reading Milner-White's words 100 years later, not only did scenes familiar from film footage of the trenches flash across my mind, but also the rows and rows of gravestones in the many war cemeteries in northern France and Belgium that I had visited the previous summer. In one such cemetery I found the grave of Group Captain Gerald Fitzgerald of the Durham Light Infantry. Fitzgerald was a good friend of Milner-White. They were at Harrow together and they shared rooms in the Gibbs' Building next to the Chapel at King's when they were undergraduates. Milner-White couldn't have imagined the white stones of the war cemeteries, but he would have recalled the noise and smell of battle and grieved the young friendship enjoyed and so cruelly cut short.

All that was a century ago. The world has changed much and the service has changed too, though rather less. The BBC has broadcast it every year (with one exception) since 1928; the windows were taken out of



the Chapel for the war but the service and broadcasts kept going. Boris Ord contributed *Adam lay ybounden*, and Harold Darke's *In the bleak mid-winter* became one of the most loved regular carols. The pattern of readings settled down. A version of the service was recorded for television in 1956 and is now a regular feature of the December schedule. Queues, largely of the young people of Cambridge, began to form many hours before the service began and (according to local mythology) everyone enjoyed the fellowship of waiting in the wintry weather as much as the service itself. David Willcocks came to direct the music, and then Philip Ledger. Both wrote new arrangements, made recordings of carols and adorned the great hymns with their own descants. Stephen Cleobury arrived in 1982 and introduced the regular practice of commissioning new carols, wrote many arrangements and added his own descants. Some people began queuing one, two or three days in advance; not to be sure of getting in so much as to add something to the experience of celebrating the birth of the Christ child in the depth of winter. Every year more and more radio stations have taken the service and broadcast it to living rooms, kitchens, hospital wards, garden sheds and prison cells around the world. The College has become used to receiving letters (and now emails and social media messages) of praise or criticism, delight or complaint, especially with regard to anything that might be perceived as a change or innovation. And of course, the service has been emulated, adapted, transplanted and generally used as a source of inspiration in cathedrals, churches and chapels of many denominations in almost every continent on the planet.

There is, therefore, a tremendous sense of responsibility at King's for the stewardship of this wonderful occasion. Those of us inside the Chapel for the service cannot help but be aware of the uncounted millions who are sharing it with us on many different shores. When I was Chaplain it was my duty to prepare the readers. Early on Christmas Eve morning I'd take them all to stand at the High Altar and look down the length of the building. I'd then draw their attention to the service sheets already in each place in the empty and silent Chapel. Each of those service booklets, I suggested, represents Wembley Stadium filled to capacity. I said this to try to get their nerves out of their system. It certainly sparked a reaction, and the image has stayed in my mind. And it is probably an underestimate of the people whom we think of as the unseen congregation, with whom we are one for those precious ninety minutes of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.



## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

### Sir Stephen Cleobury – Director of Music (1982-2019)

A few years ago, I realised that the date fixed for my retirement from the position of Organist and Director of Music at King's would enable me to choose and conduct the music on this significant occasion. This, for me, would crown the years in which it has been my privilege to fulfil this role.

Much of my time in the late summer and early autumn of the last thirty-seven years has been spent in thinking about repertoire for the 24th of December. Always this has involved trying to include music marking centenaries, significant birthdays, or, indeed, the deaths of composers. The choice was perhaps particularly challenging in my first year, 1982, when I had only a term in post prior to the service, but no less so in 2018, which required particularly careful thought. Eventually I decided that I would like to include a number of carols which had been chosen for the first service in 1918, albeit some of them in different musical settings. The next consideration was to represent all those who had directed the music across the years. This meant starting with A. H. Mann's harmonisation of *Once in royal David's city* (a version in which I have recently restored Mann's original intention whereby the music begins with a root position G major chord and only in the repeat of the

first two phrases is the high B in the bass, yielding a first inversion chord, employed). Boris Ord was clearly to be represented by the ever-popular *Adam lay ybounden*. In the cases of Sir David Willcocks and Sir Philip Ledger, one was spoilt for choice in terms of the volume of repertoire from which selection could be made, while Harold Darke, who looked after the choir during Boris Ord's wartime service was obviously to be heard through his beautiful *In the bleak mid-winter*. I also included some of my own arrangements.

I wanted also to represent some now well-known works which were introduced to the Festival at various stages, and I might mention Howells' *A Spotless Rose*, first heard in 1929, *Sir Christèmas* by William Mathias (1976), and *The Lamb* by John Tavener (1982).

The final strand in my thinking centred on commissioned works (commissioning a new carol each year having been my custom since 1983). Among the most popular have been John Rutter's *What sweeter music* and Arvo Pärt's *Bogoróditse Dyévo*. For 2018 itself, I returned to Judith Weir, alumna and honorary fellow of the College, who earlier had written the hugely effective *Illuminare, Jerusalem* to commission. This time she set the Wesley poem *O mercy divine* for choir and solo cello. It seemed particularly appropriate to ask former King's chorister, Guy Johnston, to play the cello part.

As I have said, it has been an enormous privilege to be connected with this great tradition for so long; I want to pay a special tribute to my two immediate predecessors, David and Philip (sadly I did not know the others), whose support and encouragement of my endeavours was greatly sustaining.







## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Bob Chilcott – composer; conductor;  
former King's College Chorister**

3pm Greenwich Mean Time, on Christmas Eve is quite a magical time of the year for so many people, from all walks of life and from a variety of different countries. It is the time when the 3 o'clock news is read on BBC Radio 4, before going over to the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge for the live broadcast of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. The solo treble voice, singing the first verse of the opening carol, *Once in royal David's city*, signals the beginning of the celebration of Christmas as it resounds through the ether into headphones, radios, computers and homes, all over the world. The solo voice is for many a marker, that for a moment unifies millions of people everywhere.

I was lucky enough to sing in this service seven times, four times as a boy chorister and three times as a tenor Choral Scholar. In fact, I was also the solo treble voice that sang the first verse of *Once in royal David's city*. I do remember quite clearly our Director of Music, Sir David Willcocks, humming me the starting note (rather indistinctly) just before three o'clock and then asking me to hum it back to him, which I also did rather indistinctly. There was not a lot of time to be nervous because there was a job to be done.

With the first two verses unaccompanied by the organ, the critical point is always the beginning of the third verse, when the organ joins. The hope was that the organ would come in at exactly the same pitch that the choir was singing. If it did, then it was job done, relief and smiles all round. I suspect David chose me because my pitch was quite reliable. And yet nowadays it amazes me to hear the boy soloists, year after year, singing this solo. They seem so calm, professional and secure. They are consummate young professional musicians.

Those of us who were choristers in the nineteen-sixties will remember singing this service before the Chapel was cleaned and restored inside. Years of candle smoke had darkened the windows and the stone of the building so the only light inside was a subdued, warm, yellow candlelight. It was difficult, on a late December afternoon, to see any detail on the ceiling, the walls or the windows. However, the sound of the Chapel full of people, the choir in full song and the organ at full tilt released an energy and warmth that created an atmosphere that was filled with light.

In those days one of the most exciting things was singing the new descants that David had written just a few years previously to the hymns, *O come, all ye faithful* and *Hark! the herald angels sing* as published in the classic choral volume *Carols for Choirs* that he edited with Reginald Jacques. Of course, these have now become a part of the King's folklore, but at this time they were still relatively new. David also wrote a wonderful descant to the last verse of *Once in royal David's city* during my time as a chorister, which perhaps has not had the exposure of the others, but at the same time is very





fine – and we loved singing it. It took a few years for David's successor, Sir Philip Ledger, to pen his own fine descants, and then Sir Stephen Cleobury, who followed suit later during his own tenure as Director of Music at King's.

During the Willcocks years, I remember the repertoire being fairly consistent. The carols began with Boris Ord's setting of *Adam lay ybounden*. We would also sing the wonderful R. L. de Pearsall arrangement of *In dulci jubilo* and Harold Darke's lovely setting of *In the bleak mid-winter*. I returned to King's as a choral scholar in 1973 for David's last Christmas Eve Service. By then his second *Carols for Choirs* volume, co-edited with John Rutter, had taken a hold. Many singers will remember David's arrangements of *Quelle est cette odeur agréable?* and *Silent Night* from this book being sung. And of course, John's own *The Cherry Tree Carol* became a favourite. When Sir Philip Ledger took over as Director of Music he replaced Boris Ord's *Adam lay ybounden* with G. R. Woodward's *Up! good Christen folk* as the choir's first offering. The music of William Mathias also featured regularly, with his classic setting *Sir Christèmas*.

Many admirers of the King's tradition would see one of the greatest achievements and legacies of the thirty-seven year tenure of Sir Stephen Cleobury as being the annual commissioning of a new carol from a leading composer of the day. Many of these are performed regularly all over the world, and the tradition has opened people's eyes and ears to the wonder of the new, as well as respecting and cherishing what has gone before. King's College Choir, through its position in the world as one of the leading choirs singing within the Christian tradition, has, through its nearly 100 years of Christmas Eve broadcasts, helped to innovate, inspire and bring a special kind of unity to millions of people throughout the world through the medium of the airwaves. This moment of magic, just after 3 o'clock, Greenwich Mean Time, is there for us all.



## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

**John Butt – conductor; scholar;  
former King's College Organ Scholar**

'If you make one mistake that lasts one second, and it's broadcast to 100 million people, do you realise that it's the same as one person hearing the same mistake for over three years?'

So said a choral scholar, famously keen on calculation, just as I was about to ascend the organ loft stairs 45 minutes before I made the first of my two attempts at accompanying the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, on Christmas Eve 1980. I don't recall whether this statement actually made me feel any worse than I would otherwise have felt but I had the clear sense that the number of listeners was actually unimaginable, so far off the scale of what I could conceive that I was not actually capable of getting nervous enough to reflect that totality. Surviving those experiences when I had just turned twenty is something I will always cherish, even if they seemed almost unreal at the time they were actually happening.

Of course, like for so many of us, 'King's' on Christmas Eve was part of my earliest Christmas memories, my father dutifully tuning the valve radio to the correct channel at 3pm, just as his own father had done when he acquired his first 'wireless' around 1930. My ingrained impression was of a solemn yet

joyous ceremony, broadcast across the entire world and stretching back into the mists of time. At around the age of ten I at last visited the chapel, which I already felt I knew from numerous LP covers and TV recordings. I was immediately hooked and, for reasons that I cannot quite recall, I immediately gained the ambition to learn the organ, specifically to win the organ scholarship at King's. This was the longest-lived and most intense ambition I have ever had – and one that fortunately proved to be fruitful.

On the other hand, I vividly remember my first time in the loft for a choir practice and experiencing, almost instantaneously, the meaning of the motto 'be careful what you wish for'. There is no doubt though that my experience at King's – much of it entirely different from what I had anticipated and certainly far harder – set me up with skills and experience that have been absolutely central to everything I have managed to achieve since.

But one area of competence that I developed some time after my undergraduate career at King's was the type of critical thinking that is vital for much academic research and teaching. This gave me the sense of perspective to recognise that the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is actually a relatively recent 'invented tradition' (its vague analogy to the repetitive structure of various Roman offices notwithstanding). And, as Timothy Day's excellent recent book, *I Saw Eternity the Other Night*, shows us, it's clear that the success of the Festival (and indeed much of its mystique) is critically dependent on the development of the recording industry and world-wide broadcasting. When it first defined my father's Christmas, he was actually hearing one of the very earliest broadcasts.

I was given tremendous support in my second year



by the wonderful Hugh Maclean, who was having a year's sabbatical in Cambridge. He was one of Boris Ord's later organ scholars and the very first to be recorded accompanying the actual services, together with the first LP version. Learning from his experiences and advice gave me a sense of historical depth and a link to an era that seemed very far in the past. Yet I am older now than he was in 1980 (and indeed, much older than the then Director, Philip Ledger) and, as only the sixteenth organ scholar to play for the carol services, I am astonished to realise that there have been more organ scholars after my time than before. Now I have the vertiginous experience of feeling that the first Festival of 1918 is much closer to our present day than it felt in 1980; what seemed to be a timeless tradition seems to shorten as I get older.

Another oddity about the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is the relatively unexplored belief that it has become universally part of Christmas around the world. Living in the United States for a number of years taught me that the service was certainly enjoyed in various church denominations that had an interest in some degree of liturgical organisation, together with many devotees of what might loosely be termed 'western art music'. But I certainly encountered many, even from Christian churches, who had absolutely no knowledge of the tradition. Now, living in Scotland, I find similar experiences just as striking: it is quite common to find ministers and members of the Church of Scotland who have virtually no knowledge of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Where it has been introduced it is not unusual to encounter variations of the service wherein the readings are interspersed not with carols but with theologically congruent (and often musically indifferent) hymns and psalms.

So much for two nations divided by a common island!

In all then, I have come to view Nine Lessons and Carols with a degree of proportion and cultural distance that I could not possibly have even conceived of when I was playing for the broadcasts. Yet, rather than belittling the thrills of my youth, and indeed those of millions of listeners across the world, this experience has taught me a great lesson about the human condition. We all seek historical and cultural grounding, often coupled with some sort of inherited belief system. The events and traditions that achieve the greatest resonance with the sensibilities that many of us share are often those that are the most valuable – the most authentic – in any particular era, however short or narrow the traditions concerned. Even if I overestimated the significance of what I was trying to achieve as Organ Scholar at King's, it was certainly worth living it for a while. It provided me with many of the necessary skills for a productive musical life, and I am still able to be enchanted by the sorts of experience that the Festival has so often set in motion.





## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

### **John Rutter – commissioned composer**

For me, it's Eric Milner-White's bidding prayer that does it every time. When we 'remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light', I invariably dissolve into silent tears, having already been weakened by the reminders of the poor, the helpless and all the others listed in that section of the prayer. I am ready to 'hear again the message of the angels'. It's a group experience: several hundred people gathered together (with millions more listening on radio), all with a common purpose. I know of no other religious event involving words and music – and a great and ancient building – that can compare with it.

It was on the radio in my teenage years that I first experienced the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, around 1960, just as the first exciting new carol arrangements by the recently appointed Director, David Willcocks, were transforming the whole event, together with his radiant hymn descants which seemed to light up the sky as the choirs of angels sang in exultation. Since then, I don't think I have ever missed King's on Christmas Eve, either on radio or, from time to time, in the chapel itself if I was accorded the special honour of a pair of tickets. Over the years, I have been able to experience the ways in which the

Festival has evolved, best described as an inspired blend of tradition retained and refreshing change introduced. No one, thank goodness, has attempted to improve upon the stately and poetic language of the 1611 King James Bible for the readings. The hymns remain largely the same. The format of the service and the constitution of the choir are as they were in 1960.

The changes have mostly been with the music. Some carols remain classics: it would be a hard-hearted Director who would exclude Pearsall's *In dulci jubilo* or Darke's *In the bleak mid-winter*. But there were always new carols, some composed by the leading British composers of the day: in the 1960s we had, among others, Peter Maxwell Davies, Richard Rodney Bennett, and William Mathias. Then, when Stephen Cleobury arrived in 1982, he established a tradition of commissioning a new carol each year. The 39 carols so far commissioned offer us a fascinating series of snapshots of what was happening in the world of choral composition over a time span of more than thirty years – and they remind us that different composers attach very different meanings to the word 'carol', ranging from a tunefully simple ditty to an elaborate and challenging choral motet.

No composer has ever turned down Stephen's invitation to write 'the new carol', though I almost did: in 1987 I was ill for most of the year and wondered if I would be able to come up with anything suitable to fill the vacant slot which came after the eighth lesson about the wise men. Fortunately, I found the energy and composed *What sweeter music*. Then, in 1999 (restored to health), *Dormi, Jesu* came in response to a second invitation. Looking at the list of distinguished composers who have written the commissioned carols, I have always felt rather



overawed in their company. At the same time, I feel honoured to have contributed to an annual event that sheds a beam of light and hope into what sometimes seems like an impossibly dark world. The Christmas story remains extraordinarily moving and powerful,

a symbol and reminder of the world as it might be if we could only cast aside our differences and focus on the love of a mother and her child, and nowhere is it more fittingly and beautifully celebrated than in King's College Chapel each Christmas Eve.





## REFLECTIONS ON 100 YEARS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

**Judith Bingham - commissioned composer**

I first visited Kings in the early 70s. I was starting out at the Royal Academy of Music, and my parents had retired from Sheffield to north Norfolk. We traipsed

round Cambridge as tourists, and I duly noted in my diary seeing David Willcocks outside the Chapel, still with a couple of years to go as Director. In the 50-odd years that have passed since then, I've visited many times in different guises: as a singer, a composer, showing other people around, and just going to evensong, to bathe in the *ne plus ultra* of acoustics for voice: golden, like a halo of light round the voice, neither boomy nor dry, but somehow magical and iridescent. I have often felt that the combination of acoustic, architecture and music can produce a special genre of church music. At King's I would add to that the light, which at Christmas plays its own





special part. These considerations definitely played a big part in my thoughts when I was commissioned to write the new carol for Christmas Eve 2004. I wanted to write a piece that referenced the fan vaulting, and a piece that was expansive and muted enough to be bathed in that acoustic.

The composers are often left to choose their own text, and for years I had kept a Christmas card from a friend in America which had printed on it a four line poem:

*Lo, in the silent night a child to God is born,  
And all is brought again that ere was lost or lorn,  
Could but thy soul, O Man, become a silent night,  
God would be born in thee, and set all things aright.*

Underneath it said 'anon medieval', which was good news, since this meant the words were out of copyright! I doubted that it really was medieval, though: all the medieval Christmas texts are well known and have been set many times – it's unusual to come across something no-one has ever set. With the help of friends and colleagues it wasn't long before we identified the author as Angelus Silesius, a 17<sup>th</sup> century German mystic.

The long melodic lines that resulted are accompanied by an organ part that continuously fans out, and on paper looks like a rudimentary rendering of the exquisite lace-like ceiling. It also seemed right to have some text from the same era in which the Chapel was built, and so a short hymn to the Virgin from the 15<sup>th</sup> century forms a dance like interlude in the middle.

I had listened to so many broadcasts of the service since I was a child that I wondered whether

the actual event would be an anti-climax. Not so: like Venice, or Prague, it is better than you imagine. As a member of the congregation I experienced the beautiful light in the Chapel: the colours through the stained glass, and the setting of the sun as we moved through the nine lessons and carols.

Before the service there is about an hour's worth of organ music. Everybody is seated by this time, and to add to my nerves, I had two organ pieces in this sequence too! The concentrated atmosphere in the Chapel is quite extraordinary, and I don't think I can describe it better than to quote from my diary:

*'The atmosphere in the Chapel is amazing: a great communal feeling of anticipation. The Rubens casts an extraordinary spell; its warm colours and sweeping action stunning even from a distance. At two it is still light, but the light gradually fades so that by the end of the service it is dark and the Chapel completely candlelit. At the end of the organ recital, there is a pause – the service starts at three minutes past three to take account of the news on Radio 4. The organ improvises, repeating D, F sharp, G: the beginning of Once in royal David's city. A great stillness falls and in the final pause you feel that the whole world is focussed on the silence into which the boy's voice will enter. 250 million people listening! In spite of it all being so familiar and iconic, it is quite mesmeric being there, somehow at that moment at the centre of the world.'*



## GUY JOHNSTON

### Cello

Guy Johnston is one of the most exciting British cellists of his generation. His early successes included winning the BBC Young Musician of the Year, the Shell London Symphony Orchestra Gerald MacDonald Award and a Classical Brit. He has performed with many leading international orchestras including the London Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Moscow Philharmonic and St Petersburg Symphony.

Recent seasons have included concertos of Tchaikovsky, Martinů, Sibelius, Elgar and Haydn with the BBC Philharmonic and Ilan Volkov, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sakari Oramo, the Aurora Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Rheinische Philharmonie. Recent Proms performances include the premiere of Charlotte Bray's *Falling in the Fire*. Guy continues to play chamber music at Wigmore Hall and in festivals across Europe. He gave the premiere of the Howells Cello Concerto in Gloucester Cathedral and is delighted to have recorded this piece. Other recent recordings include a celebration of the tricentenary of his David



Tecchler cello, and *Themes and Variations* with Tom Poster.

Guy is an inspiring leader of young musicians and is involved with several charities promoting music education for young people, including Music First, Future Talent and the Pierre Fournier Award for young cellists.

His mentors have included Steven Doane, Ralph Kirshbaum, Bernard Greenhouse, Steven Isserlis and Anner Bylsma.

He is a founder member of the award-winning Aronowitz Ensemble and founding Artistic Director of Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival, a guest Professor of Cello at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was awarded an Hon. ARAM in 2015, and holds a professorship at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

Guy plays a 1714 David Tecchler cello, generously on loan from the Godlee-Tecchler Trust which is administered by The Royal Society of Musicians.

**[www.guy-johnston.com](http://www.guy-johnston.com)**











## SIR STEPHEN CLEOBURY

**Conductor**

Stephen Cleobury has for over 35 years been associated with one of the world's most famous choirs, that of King's College, Cambridge. His work at King's has brought him into fruitful relationships with many leading orchestras and soloists, among them the Philharmonia Orchestra, the AAM, Britten Sinfonia, the OAE, and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He has complimented his work in Cambridge through the many other musical activities in which he engages throughout the world.

At King's, he has sought to enhance the reputation of the world-famous Choir, broadening considerably the daily service repertoire, commissioning new music from leading composers and developing its activities in broadcasting, recording and touring. He introduced the highly successful annual festival, *Easter at King's*, from which the BBC regularly broadcasts, and, in its wake, a series of high-profile performances throughout the year, *Concerts at King's*.

From 1995 to 2007 he was Chief Conductor of the BBC Singers and since then has been Conductor Laureate. Since 1983 he has been closely involved in the Cambridge University Musical Society, one of the UK's oldest music societies, where he has nurtured generations of young talent. He retired from CUMS in



2016, becoming Conductor Laureate.

Stephen continues to be in demand as a conductor, organist, adjudicator and leader of choral workshops. Until 2008 he was a member of the Royal College of Organists, of which he is a past President. He has been Warden of the Solo Performers' section of the Incorporated Society of Musicians and President of the Incorporated Association of Organists; he is currently Chairman of the IAO Benevolent Fund, which seeks to support organists and church musicians in need. He is President of the Friends of Cathedral Music and of the Herbert Howells Society. King's College announced in 2018 that Stephen would retire in September 2019 after 37 years in post. He was knighted in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to choral music.

**[www.stephencleobury.com](http://www.stephencleobury.com)**







# THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

King's College was founded in 1441 with six 'singing men' and 16 choristers, who were to be poor boys 'of a strong constitution and an honest conversation'. Five centuries later, the Choir comprises 16 boys (Choristers) and 16 men (Choral and Organ Scholars).

The boys, aged between nine and thirteen, are educated across the river at King's College School, a thriving and famously happy school now comprising some 420 girls and boys. The Choristers are selected at audition based on musical potential and, of course, a love of singing. When they join, they spend up to two years in training as 'probationers', after which they join the full Choir.

The men are all undergraduates at the University, who have attained the necessary academic requirements to become undergraduates at Cambridge. Known either as Choral or Organ Scholars, they study many different academic subjects, from music to modern languages to natural sciences. Find out more by searching "King's College Choir".

## **Choristers**

*Year 8 (ages 12-13)* Thomas Alban, Jack Bowley <sup>3</sup>, Samuel Cates, George Hill <sup>1</sup>

*Year 7 (ages 11-12)* Aiken Anderson-Jané, Philip Curtis, Elliot Hasler, Leo McNiff, Charlie Nicholson, Joshua O'Neill, Julius Sirringhaus

*Year 6 (ages 10-11)* Titus Gleave, Alexi Kokkinos-Everest, Vladimir Pantea, Leo Ratnasothy, Charles Sheldon

## **Altos**

George Gibbon, Daniel Henderson, Salim Jaffar, Jacob Partington, Joseph Zubier

## **Tenors**

Matthew Meshkvicev, James Micklethwaite <sup>4</sup>, Protik Moulik, Christopher Nehaul

## **Basses**

Sam Aldersey-Williams, Charlie Baigent <sup>2</sup>, William Crane, Josh Geddes, Trojan Nakade, Joel Robson, Christopher Winkless-Clark

## **Organ Scholars**

Henry Websdale, Dónal McCann

## **Director of Music**

Sir Stephen Cleobury

<sup>1</sup> Soloist, *Once in royal David's city and I saw three ships*

<sup>2</sup> Soloist, *A Spotless Rose*

<sup>3</sup> Soloist, *Joys Seven*

<sup>4</sup> Soloist, *In the bleak mid-winter*

During the service the organ was played by the Senior Organ Scholar, Henry Websdale



**Recorded live at 192kHz 24-bit PCM in the Chapel of King's College,  
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24 December 2018.**

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Manuscript image (p8) from King's Library MS 37, fol.20v

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Double CD set with brand new and historical recordings  
through the years from A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.