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CLASSICS

BOB CHILCOTT  
**CANTICLES  
OF LIGHT**

NFM Choir  
Agnieszka Franków-Żelazny *conductor*



# CANTICLES OF LIGHT

	<b>Canticles of Light</b>	Bob Chilcott	
[ 1 ]	Te lucis ante terminum		[4.19]
[ 2 ]	Christe, qui, splendor et dies		[6.56]
[ 3 ]	O nata lux de lumine		[4.42]
	<b>Move him into the sun</b>	Bob Chilcott	
[ 4 ]	Song of Songs		[4.55]
[ 5 ]	Spring Offensive		[4.36]
[ 6 ]	Apologia pro Poemate meo		[4.01]
[ 7 ]	Futility		[7.56]
[ 8 ]	Winter Song		[4.35]
	Soloists: Małgorzata Cieżka-Kątnik, Bianka Maxim, Aleksandra Turalska, Ewelina Wojewoda <i>Upper Voices</i> Sebastian Mach <i>Tenor</i>		
[ 9 ]	<b>Standing as I do before God</b>	Cecilia McDowall	[6.08]
	Soloist: Dagmara Kołodziej-Gorczyrzyńska <i>Soprano</i>		
[ 10 ]	<b>Lament</b>	Francis Pott	[4.19]
[ 11 ]	<b>A Child's Prayer</b>	James MacMillan	[4.07]
	Soloists: Aleksandra Turalska <i>Soprano</i> Dagmara Kołodziej-Gorczyrzyńska <i>Soprano</i>		
[ 12 ]	<b>Sing the Colour of Peace</b>	Bob Chilcott	[3.42]
	Soloist: Sebastian Mach <i>Tenor</i>		
	Total timings:		[60.26]

NFM CHOIR  
INSTRUMENTALISTS OF THE NFM WROCŁAW PHILHARMONIC  
AGNIESZKA FRANKÓW-ŻELAZNY CONDUCTOR

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Darkness to light is a theme which continues to engage artists, musicians, philosophers and thinkers through time, and this theme, coupled with thoughts of remembrance, hope, redemption and acceptance is the thread that ties together all the music performed on this recording.

Three Latin texts, well-known to singers and composers, *Te lucis ante terminum*, *Christe, qui splendor et dies* and *O nata lux* are the texts that I use in the piece *Canticles of Light*. The first two of these texts come from the evening service of Compline and they ask God for protection through the darkness of the night. The third text, *O nata lux*, comes from the morning service of *Lauds* and sings of God as ‘*the light born from light*’. This work was written in 1999 for Winchester Music Club to sing alongside the Winchester Cathedral Girls’ Choir who were newly formed at the time. I included the bell at the suggestion of Michael Till, the then Dean of Winchester and a friend, who loved the sound of the bells of Winchester Cathedral.

Wilfred Owen is known to many as the poet who died as a young man, and who wrote so vividly and emotionally about the horror and futility of war. However, other passionate themes are ever-present in his poetry, the two principal ones being those of beauty and love, the latter not only for the

natural world around him but also for his fellow human beings, comrades, and friends. In my piece *Move him into the sun*, the image of the sun as a source of light, life, and energy is that on which I have focused. Portrayed here largely by the upper-voice singers, it ultimately becomes a source of redemption and an expression of feeling at one with life, which is so beautifully articulated in Owen’s poetry. *Move him into the sun* was commissioned by the Trustees of St Chad’s Music Festival and Shrewsbury Bookfest in memory of Wilfred Owen, the Shropshire soldier/poet who lived in Shrewsbury from 1907. The piece was first performed in November 2018, one hundred years after he was killed in action near Ors, in Northern France.

Remembrance, redemption, and acceptance are three themes that resonate most strongly in the remaining pieces on this recording. In *Standing as I do before God* Cecilia McDowall uses Edith Cavell’s poignant words, sung here principally by a soprano soloist in combination with a new, complimentary text by Seán Street, which is sung mainly by the choir. After the German occupation of Brussels, Nurse Edith Cavell sheltered wounded soldiers and helped them to safety. She was arrested and executed for treason. Her last words were, ‘*Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.*’

James Macmillan's piece, *A Child's Prayer*, was written in memory of the sixteen young pupils and the one teacher who died in the 1996 Dunblane massacre at Dunblane Primary School, near Stirling in Scotland. Remembering a traditional text from his childhood, James Macmillan, in what is perhaps an expression of a redemption of sorts, focuses tellingly on two words that resonate through the piece, 'Welcome' and 'Joy'.

Francis Pott's *Lament* is a very personal response to the death of Staff Sergeant Olaf Schmid in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, who died attempting to defuse an explosive device while on active service. Francis discovered that Olaf Schmid had lived close to his own family home, not far from Winchester. Here he sets the heartfelt poetry of Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, who writes so

powerfully and simply of how loss and love can perhaps be reconciled through memories.

These thoughts also permeate the gentle but deeply resonant words of the poet Charles Bennett, in a piece written specially for the NFM Choir. Charles' words in *Sing the colour of peace* speak, like Wilfred Owen's did one hundred years before, of the futility of war.

I would like to thank the NFM Choir, the players from the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic, Izabela Grad, sound engineer Agnieszka Szczepańczyk, Val Withams of Choral Connections, and finally the architect of it all, Agnieszka Franków-Żelazny, a wonderful choral musician.

Bob Chilcott



### 1 - 3 Canticles of Light

Bob Chilcott

Text: Three Latin Hymns from the Liturgia Horarum

Te lucis ante terminum, rerum creator, poscimus,  
ut solita clementia sis praesul ad custodiam.

Te corda nostra somnient, te per soporem  
sentient, tuamque semper gloriam vicina luci  
concinant.

Vitam salubrem tribue, nostrum calorem refice,  
taetram noctris caliginem tua collustret claritas.  
Praesta, Pater omnipotens, per Jesum Christum  
Dominum, qui tecum in perpetuum regnat cum  
Sancto Spiritu. Amen.

Christe, qui, splendor et dies, noctis tenebras  
detegis, lucisque lumen crederis, lumen beatis  
praedicans. Precamur, sancta Domine, hac nocte  
nos custodias; sit nobis in te requies, quietas  
horas tribue. Somno si dantur oculi, cor semper  
ad te vigilet; tuaque dextra protegas fideles, qui  
te diligunt. Defensor noster, aspice, insidiantes  
reprime, gubernata tuos famulos, quos sanguine  
mercatu es. Sit, Christe, rex piissime, tibi Patrique  
Gloria, cum Spiritu Paraclito, in sempiterna  
saecula. Amen.

*Before the end of the day, creator of all things,  
we ask you with your wonted kindness be our  
protector and guardian. Let our hearts dream of  
you, let us feel you near while sleeping, and let us  
celebrate always your eternal glory in the light of  
the new dawn. Grant our bodies health, restore  
our strength, and let the foul gloom of the night  
be illuminated by your brightness. Do all this,  
omnipotent Father, through Jesus Christ the Lord  
who reigns with you and the Holy Ghost for ever.  
Amen.*

*Christ, brightness of the light of day, you who roll  
away the shadows of the night, who bestowed the  
light of light, telling of the light to come for the  
blessed. We pray, Holy Lord, that you watch over  
us this night; let us find rest in you, and grant us  
peaceful hours. Though our eyes be given over to  
sleep, let our hearts be filled with you through the  
night; and with your right hand protect the faithful  
who cherish you. Look upon us, our protector, check  
those who beset us, and guide your servants whom  
you have redeemed with your blood. Glory be to  
you, Christ, holiest of kings, and to the Father, and  
to the Holy Ghost, forever and ever. Amen.*

O nata lux de lumine, Jesu redemptor saeculi,  
dignare clemens supplicum laudes preces que  
sumere. Qui carne quondam contegi dignatus es  
properditis. Nos membra confer effici, tui beati  
corporis.

Texts from the Liturgia Horarum with English translations by  
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#### 4 - 8 Move him into the sun

Bob Chilcott

Texts from: Wilfred Owen: The War Poems ed. Jon  
Stallworthy (1935-2014) (Chatto & Windus 1994)

##### *I. Song of Songs*

*Extracts from 'The Promisers' (Upper voices)*

When I awoke, the glancing day looked gay;  
The air said: Fare you fleetly; you will meet him!  
And when the prosp'rous sun was well begun  
I heard a bird say: Sweetly you shall greet him!

*'Song of Songs' (SATB)*

Sing me at morn but only with your laugh;  
Even as Spring that laugheth into leaf;  
Even as Love that laugheth after Life.

*O light born of the light, Jesus the redeemer of  
mankind, kindly deign to accept the praises and  
prayers of your suppliants. You who once stooped  
to take on human form on behalf of those who  
were lost, grant that our weary limbs find a resting  
place in you.*

Sing me but only with your speech all day,  
As voluble leaflets do; let violets die;  
The least word of your lips is melody!

Sing me at eve but only with your sigh!  
Like lifting seas it solaceth; breathe so,  
Slowly and low, the sense that no songs say.

Sing me at midnight with your murmurous heart!  
Let youth's immortal moaning chords be heard  
Throbbing through you, and sobbing, unsubdued.

##### *II. Spring Offensive*

*Extract from 'The Promisers' (Upper voices)*

The sun felt strong and bold upon my shoulder;  
It hung, it clung as it were my friend's arm.

The birds fife on before, shrill-piping pipers,  
Right down to town; and there they eased to  
charm.

*Extract from 'Spring Offensive' (SATB)*

Hour after hour they ponder the warm field  
And the far valley behind, where the buttercups  
Had blessed with gold their slow boots coming up;  
When even the little brambles would not yield,  
But clutched and clung to them like sorrowing  
arms;  
They breathe like trees unstirred.

Till like a cold gust thrills the little word  
At which each body and its soul begird  
And tighten them for battle. No alarms  
Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous haste –  
Only a lift and flare of eyes that faced  
The sun, like a friend with whom their love is done.  
O larger shone that smile against the sun –  
Mightier than his whose bounty these have  
spurred.

##### *III. Apologia pro Poemate Meo*

*Extract from 'Apologia pro Poemate Meo'*

I, too, saw God through mud –  
The mud that cracked on cheeks when wretches  
smiled.

War brought more glory to their eyes than blood,  
And gave their laughs more glee than shakes a  
child.

I, too, have dropped off Fear –  
Behind the barrage, dead as my platoon,  
And sailed my spirit surging light and clear  
Past the entanglement where hopes lay strewn.

I have made fellowships –  
Told of happy lovers in old song.  
For love is not the binding of fair lips  
With the soft silk of eyes that look and long.

I have perceived much beauty  
In the hoarse oaths that kept our courage straight;  
Heard music in the silentness of duty;  
Found peace where shell-storms spouted reddest  
spate.

##### *IV. Futility*

*Extract from 'Sonnet, to a child' (Upper voices)*

To all men else uncouth;  
Save me, who know your smile comes very old,  
Learnt of the happy dead that laughed with gods;  
For earlier suns than ours have lent you gold;  
Sly fauns and trees have given you jigs and nods.

*'Futility' (SATB)*

Move him into the sun –  
Gently its touch awoke him once,  
At home, whispering of fields half-sown,  
Always it woke him, even in France,  
Until this morning and this snow.  
If anything might rouse him now  
The kind old sun will know.

Think how it wakes the seeds –  
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.  
Are limbs, so dear achieved, are sides  
Full-nerved – still warm – too hard to stir?  
Was it for this the clay grew tall?  
- O what made fatuous sunbeams toil  
To break earth's sleep at all?

*V. Winter Song*

*Extract from 'Winter Song'*

From off your face, into the winds of winter  
The sun-brown and the summer-gold are blowing;  
But they shall gleam again with spiritual glinter,  
When paler beauty on your brows falls snowing,  
And through those snows my looks shall be  
soft-going.

*Extract from 'Happiness'*

The sun may cleanse,  
And time, and starlight. Life will sing sweet songs.  
And gods will show us pleasure more than men's.

Text by Wilfred Owen, edited Jon Stallworthy © Chatto & Windus.  
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**9 Standing as I do before God**

*A reflection on the execution of Edith Cavell,  
October 12, 1915*

Cecilia McDowall

Text: Edith Cavell (1865-1915) and Seán Street  
(b. 1946)

'I have seen death so often that it is not strange or  
fearful to me.  
Standing as I do in view of God and eternity,  
I realize patriotism is not enough.  
I must have no hatred or bitterness towards  
anyone.' "

And when the time was close,  
for once her eyes filled, (with tears)  
then she quietly rose,  
walked silently through the stilled  
prison, the grey dawn light,  
passed gas flame, tired flowers,  
out beyond her final night,

a flame alight in hours  
before infinity,  
in the presence of death  
leaving all enmity:  
we are air after breath.'

Text by Edith Cavell\*\* (1915) and Seán Street\* (2013) © Seán  
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**10 Lament**

Francis Pott

Text: Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878-1962)

We who are left, how shall we look again  
Happily on the sun or feel the rain  
Without remembering how they who went  
Ungrudgingly and spent  
Their lives for us loved, too, the sun and rain?

A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings –  
But we, how shall we turn to little things  
And listen to the birds and winds and streams  
Made holy by their dreams,  
Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things?

Text by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson from 'Whin' © Pan MacMillan,  
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**11 A Child's Prayer**

James MacMillan

Text: Traditional

Welcome Jesu,  
Deep in my soul forever stay:  
Joy and love my heart are filling  
On this glad and sacred day.

Text traditional, remembered by the composer from childhood  
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composer under licence to Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.  
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**12 Sing the Colour of Peace**

Bob Chilcott

Text: Charles Bennett (b.1954)

Rows of white stones  
each of them wearing a name  
and someone, possibly you, bringing flowers.

Someone is bringing flowers  
as if this were a garden  
where each of the stones might blossom.

If each of the stones could blossom  
their petals would show  
the colour of being at peace.

If each of the stones could speak  
they'd sing the colour of peace,  
like one white cloud in a blue sky.

One white cloud in a blue sky  
does not see the lines  
between our lands.

Lines between our lands  
bring rows of white stones  
and someone, possibly you, bringing flowers.

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## NFM CHOIR

The NFM Choir was formed in 2006 by Andrzej Kosendiak as a resident ensemble of the Wrocław Philharmonic. Directed for its first 15 years by Agnieszka Franków-Żelazny, Lionel Sow became its Artistic Director in 2021. The ensemble has a well-earned reputation for its work in several genres, performing a cappella works as well as large-scale oratorios, operas, and symphonic compositions. The choir has collaborated with such renowned conductors as Giovanni Antonini, Bob Chilcott, Iván Fischer, Jacek Kasprzyk, Stephen Layton, James MacMillan, Paul McCreech, and Krzysztof Penderecki, performing more than 300 concerts, including at the Barbican Centre and Royal Albert Hall in London, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, and the Philharmonie de Paris and Salle Pleyel in Paris.

The NFM Choir is frequently invited to perform at international festivals such as the BBC Proms, International Ankara Music Festival, Gent Festival van Vlaanderen, Gstaad Menuhin Festival and Academy, Klarafestival, Serenade! Choral Festival, and Warsaw Autumn. The choir has worked with, among others, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Gabrieli Consort and Players, Il Giardino Armonico, and the Polish National Radio Symphony

Orchestra (NOSPR). At the core of the ensemble's activity are world premières of choral and vocal-instrumental works, including by such composers as Penderecki, Zubel, Panufnik, Augustyn, Łukaszewski, Wolfe, and Chilcott.

The NFM Choir has made a series of award-winning recordings under the direction of Paul McCreech issued by Winged Lion, and an a

cappella disc of Bob Chilcott's music, *The Seeds of Stars*, on Signum. Its recording of *De profundis* won 2017 Album of the Year in the category for choral music, oratorio, and opera from the Fryderyk Awards. Recent releases include *Ubi caritas*, *The Phantoms* by Stanisław Moniuszko, Beethoven's Symphony No.9, and an album of works by Marcin Józef Żebrowski.



## CHOIR

### Soprano

Małgorzata Ciężka-Kątnik  
Dagmara Kołodziej-Gorczyńska  
Patrycja Kujawa  
Maria Kulisiewicz  
Monika Michaliszyn  
Agnieszka Niezgoda  
Joanna Palac  
Agnieszka Ryman  
Aleksandra Turalska  
Violetta Wysocka-Marciniak

### Alto

Bianka Maxim  
Marta Mączewska  
Aleksandra Michniewicz  
Ewelina Nawrocka  
Agata Ranz  
Joanna Rot  
Aleksandra Sosna  
Ewelina Wojewoda  
Ewa Wojtowicz  
Magdalena Wolska

### Tenor

Jakub Bieszczad  
Marek Belko  
Łukasz Czartowski  
Krzysztof Domański  
Andrzej Górniak  
Jarosław Kawałko  
André Khorsik  
Sebastian Mach  
Łukasz Wilda  
Paweł Zdebski

### Bass

Maciej Adamczyk  
Jerzy Butryn  
Filip Chudzicki  
Marek Fras  
Maciej Gorczyński  
Krzysztof Kmieć  
Marek Paško  
Jan Pieter  
Michał Pytlewski  
Piotr Woroniecki

## INSTRUMENTALISTS OF NFM WROCLAW PHILHARMONIC

### Violin

Radosław Pujanek  
Anita Koźlak

### Viola

Michał Mazur

### Cello

Jan Skopowski

### Double Bass

Damian Kalla

### Flute

Jan Krzeszowiec  
Monika Konstantynowicz

### Oboe

Joanna Kucharski-Żmijewska\*

### Clarinet

Maciej Dobosz  
Arkadiusz Kweciński

### Bassoon

Alicja Kieruzalska  
Łukasz Łacny

### Horn

Mateusz Feliński

### Percussion

Bartłomiej Dudek\*  
Miłosz Rutkowski  
Adrian Schmid

### Piano

Katarzyna Neugbauer-Jastrzębska\*

\**guest*

## AGNIESZKA FRANKÓW- ŻELAZNY

Agnieszka Franków-Żelazny is one of the most influential choral conductors in Poland and Europe, a professor of musical arts, teacher (AMKL and UMFC), singer, and arts manager. She has conducted over 20 albums and won more than 70 individual and collective awards, including the Honorary Badge of Merit for Polish Culture (2008), the "Iuvenes Wratlaviae" Award of the Polish Academy of Sciences (2012), the Bronze Medal for Merit for Polish Culture – Gloria Artis (2014), and the prestigious Fryderyk Award in 2017 and 2019. In 2018, she led the Choral Academy to



achieve a nomination for the “Koryfeusz Muzyki Polskiej” Award.

In 2000 she founded the Medical University Chamber Choir (now Medici Cantantes Choir of Wrocław Medical University), winning several awards and distinctions at national and international competitions. Between 2006 and 2021 she was Artistic Director of the Choir of the National Forum of Music, and in 2013 became the founder and Artistic Director of the Polish National Youth Choir, a nationwide educational project. In January 2015, she became the programme director of the Choral Academy, a project of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. During 2013-2016 she curated the music programme of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016, co-implementing an artistic programme consisting of several hundred music events.

With her choirs, she has performed over 1,200 choral pieces and almost 300 vocal-instrumental works. She has made many world premières of Polish music, conducting in 19 European countries, Israel, the USA, and Brazil. She continues to teach choral conducting and directs the Stanisław Krukowski Choir at the Department of Music Education, Choral Music, and Church Music of the Karol Lipiński Academy

of Music in Wrocław. In 2022 she was appointed Managing Director of the Sudeten Philharmonic in Wałbrzych.

## BOB CHILCOTT

Hailed by The Observer as ‘a contemporary hero of British choral music’, composer and conductor Bob Chilcott has enjoyed a lifelong connection with singing and choirs. He sang in the choir of King’s College, Cambridge as a chorister and choral scholar, and in the vocal group The King’s Singers. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers and is conductor of the Birmingham University Singers. He has guest-conducted choirs in more than thirty countries.

As a composer he has a large catalogue of music published by Oxford University Press that reflects his broad view of musical styles and genres. His large canon of sacred works ranges from *St John Passion* and *Requiem to A Little Jazz Mass*. His catalogue includes music for Christmas, from his extended work *Christmas Oratorio to The Shepherd’s Carol*, written in 2000 for the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge.



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He has collaborated with several writers, principally the poet Charles Bennett, with whom he wrote *The Angry Planet*, composed in 2012 for the BBC Proms, and *The Voyage*, commissioned by Age UK, and nominated for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award. Their first music drama, *Birdland*, was premiered at the Oxford Festival of the Arts in June 2022. In 2020, he collaborated with Delphine Chalmers for the American Choral Directors Association Raymond Brock Memorial Commission, writing *Songs my heart has taught me*,

and they also wrote *Times and Seasons*, a book of songs for children. *Mary, Mother*, written with Georgia Way, received its first performance over Christmas 2022.

His works are widely recorded by many groups including The Sixteen, Tenebrae, The King’s Singers, The Choir of King’s College, Cambridge, Westminster Abbey Choir, Wells Cathedral Choir, Ora, Commotio, and the Houston Chamber Choir. In 2016 he collaborated with the celebrated singer songwriter Katie Melua and the Gori Women’s Choir on the album *In Winter*.

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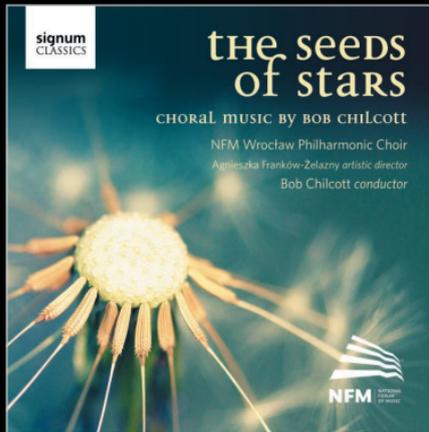
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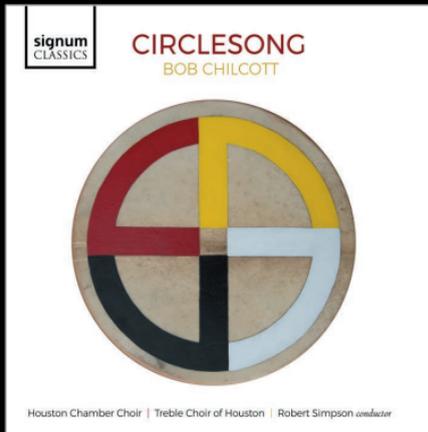
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**Chilcott: The Seeds of Stars**  
NFM Choir  
Bob Chilcott  
SIGCD311

*"Freshness of timbre, individuality in the four voice-sections and genuine versatility of interpretative approach are major characteristics."*

**BBC Music Magazine**



**Chilcott: Circlesong**  
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Robert Simpson  
SIGCD703

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