

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Directed by Michael Harris



‘THIS SCEPTR’D ISLE’

Saturday 13th March 2004

St Giles’ Cathedral
High Street
Edinburgh

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Director: Michael Harris

Organist: Simon Nieminski

DIANA BURRELL
(b.1948)

BENEDICAM DOMINUM

GABRIEL JACKSON
(b.1962)

O SACRUM CONVIVIUM

WILLIAM WALTON
(1902–1983)

LITANY

CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD
(1852–1924)

THREE MOTETS

JUSTORUM ANIMAE
COELOS ASCENDIT HODIE
BEATI QUORUM VIA

KENNETH LEIGHTON
(1929–1988)

GLORIA FROM
MISSA DI GLORIA (DUBLIN FESTIVAL MASS)
(ORGAN)

CRUCIFIXUS PRO NOBIS

CHRIST IN THE CRADLE
CHRIST IN THE GARDEN
CHRIST IN HIS PASSION
HYMN

PROGRAMME NOTES

INTERVAL of 15 minutes

HERBERT HOWELLS TAKE HIM, EARTH, FOR CHERISHING
(1892–1983)

JAMES MACMILLAN CHRISTUS VINCIT
(B.1959)

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
(1872–1958) MASS IN G MINOR

KYRIE

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

CREDO

SANCTUS – OSANNA I –

– BENEDICTUS – OSANNA II

AGNUS DEI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This concert is subsidised by Making Music, The National Federation of Music Societies, with funds provided by the Scottish Arts Council.



Diana Burrell's motet for choir and organ *Benedicam Dominum* is one of two works in tonight's concert (the other being James Macmillan's *Christus vincit*) to have been commissioned by the Musicians' Benevolent Fund to celebrate the Festival of St Cecilia. Written in 1996, and first performed by the choir of Westminster Cathedral in November of that year, the setting is of words of Psalm 33. The setting combines two bold ideas, the opening dance-like tutti choral figure, and the more melismatic group of figures heard after the first extended organ interlude. A robust toccata-like passage for the organ heralds the return of the opening material, with the conclusion bringing together choral and organ elements in a final bold series of statements.

Gabriel Jackson's *O sacrum convivium* is a mystical setting of the text of a Corpus Christi antiphon. The timeless nature of the opening section is interrupted by the central section *mens impletur gratia*, with a radical change of pace and tonality. Gabriel Jackson was a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, and later a prize-winning student at the Royal College of Music.

William Walton's youthful miniature masterpiece, *A Litany*, written when he was a boy at Christ Church Cathedral School in Oxford, was first scored as an anthem for upper voices, in 1915, but revised a year later for mixed voices. The anguish inherent in the text is immediately captured in the dissonance of the opening augmented triad, with the soprano part having the motto falling figure.

Charles Villiers Stanford was one of the great music educators of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and among his pupils were Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells and Gustav Holst. The Three Motets for unaccompanied choir, Op.38, were published in 1905, though they probably date from 1892 when Stanford relinquished his post as organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. Each is contrasted in character; *Justorum animae*, with a text from the Book of Wisdom, is initially contemplative, before a more agitated and sometimes malicious central section intervenes. The six-voiced *Beati quorum via* is more reflective. The most exuberant is the Ascensiontide motet *Coelos ascendit hodie*, written for double choir, with its antiphonal effects between the choral forces and a bold concluding *Amen*.

Kenneth Leighton, the seventy-fifth anniversary of whose birth is celebrated this year, was, though born and bred in Yorkshire, very much associated with Edinburgh for a greater part of his career, holding the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University.

The cantata *Crucifixus pro nobis* was written in 1961, and dedicated to David Lumsden and the choir of New College, Oxford. The text is taken from poems by two seventeenth-century poets, Patrick Carey and Phineas Fletcher. *Christ in the cradle* is set for solo voice and organ; in the following *Christ in the Garden*, the agony of doubt is portrayed in the agitato choral parts. Soloist and choir combine in *Christ in his Passion*, which, after the intensity of the choral climax, subsides to the pianissimo ending at *Thou didst make Him all those torments bear*. The final, unaccompanied section is a setting of Phineas Fletcher's hymn, *Drop, drop, slow tears*; here Leighton sums up all that has gone before rather in the manner of a latter-day Bach chorale.

It was from Gustav Holst that Herbert Howells inherited the post of Director of Music at St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith. He was to teach there until the early 1960s, although he continued to compose until well into his eighties. His motet *Take him earth for cherishing* arose from an American commission to write a work to mark the assassination of John F Kennedy.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

DIANA BURRELL: BENEDICAM DOMINUM

Howells himself wrote the following: “Within the year following the tragic death of President Kennedy in Texas, plans were made for a dual American-Canadian Memorial Service to be held in Washington. I was asked to compose an *a capella* work for the commemoration. The text was mine to choose, biblical or other. Choice was settled when I recalled a poem by Prudentius (348–413AD). I had already set it in its medieval Latin, years earlier, as a study for *Hymnus Paradisi*. But now I used none of that unpublished setting. Instead, I turned to Helen Waddell’s faultless translation:

Take him, Earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

Here was the perfect text - the *Prudentius Hymnus Circa Exsequias Defuncti*.

Formally it is roughly A–B–A; in texture variably 4 to 8-part. Tonality anchors (first and last) on B, but admits chromatic phrases, as at

Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand.

Finally, a near funeral march, tethered again to B, but in the more consoling major mode.

At the Washington memorial service, the motet’s first performance was given by the choir of the Cathedral Church of St George, Kingston, Canada, under the direction of Dr George Maybee.”

James Macmillan’s double choir anthem, *Christus vincit*, setting a text from the 12th century Worcester Acclamations, was written for St Paul’s Cathedral, London, and was first performed at the St Cecilia’s Day service in November 1994. The motet makes use of the resonance of the original performance space, with many moments of silence punctuating the flow of the opening phrases. The simple opening lines give way to some melismatic embellishment in solo lines before the concluding Alleluias produce a sonorous climax, after which a single soprano voice is left floating in space.

The early years of the twentieth century saw a revival of interest in English Tudor music which was led in no small way by R R Terry, who had been appointed in 1901 to direct the newly founded choir of Westminster Cathedral. He had spent much of his career to that point in the study of the English polyphonic tradition, and his new post allowed him to air this music in public. **Vaughan Williams** sent a copy of his completed Mass, which he had written in 1921, to Terry; he was delighted by it, and was to give the work its first liturgical performance in March 1923 (the premiere had been in Birmingham Town Hall in December 1922). He wrote to Vaughan Williams: “I’m quite sincere when I say that it is the work one has all along been waiting for. In your individual and modern idiom you have really captured the old liturgical spirit and atmosphere.”

The Mass was written for Gustav Holst and his Whitsuntide Singers, and in its musical language is very close to other works of the English pastoral movement such as *The Lark Ascending* and *Sir John in Love*. However it is also very much in the mould of earlier English polyphony with its plainchant inspired melodies, modal harmony and use of imitation.

Programme notes by Michael Harris

*Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore:
semper laus ejus in ore meo.
In Domino laudabitur anima mea: audiant
mansueti et laetentur.*

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise
shall be ever in my mouth.
In the Lord shall my soul be praised: let the
meek hear and rejoice.

Psalm 34:1–2

GABRIEL JACKSON: O SACRUM CONVIVIUM

*O sacrum convivium in quo Christus
sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis ejus,
mens impletur gratia, et futuræ gloriæ nobis
pignus datur. O sacrum convivium.*

O sacred banquet in which Christ is
received, the memory of his passion is
recalled, the mind is filled with grace, and
the pledge of future glory is given to us.
O sacred banquet.

Magnificat antiphon at second vespers
on the feast of Corpus Christi.

WILLIAM WALTON: LITANY

Drop, drop slow tears
And bathe those beauteous feet
Which brought from heaven
The news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat;
To cry for vengeance,
Sin doth never cease.

Drop, drop slow tears
In your deep flood
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let His eye see
Sin, but through my tears.

Phineas Fletcher, *Poetical Miscellanies*, 1633

KENNETH LEIGHTON: CRUCIFIXUS PRO NOBIS

STANFORD: JUSTORUM ANIMAE

*Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,
Et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,
Illi autem sunt in pace.*

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of
God, and the torment of malice shall not
touch them: in the sight of the unwise they
seemed to die, but they are at peace.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1, 2a, 3b

STANFORD: COELOS ASCENDIT HODIE

*Coelos ascendit hodie
Jesus Christus Rex gloriae. Alleluia!*

Today Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, has
ascended into the heavens. Alleluia!

*Sedet ad Patris dexteram,
Gubernat coelum et terram. Alleluia!*

He sits at the Father's right hand, ruling
heaven and earth. Alleluia!

*Jam finem habent omnia
Patris Davidis carmina. Alleluia!*

Now are David's songs fulfilled.
Alleluia!

*Jam Dominus cum Domino
Sedet in Dei solio.
In hoc triumpho maximo – Alleluia!*

Now is the Lord with his Lord,
He sits upon the royal throne of God.
In this is greatest triumph. Alleluia!

*Benedicamus Domino,
laudatur Sancta Trinitas,
Deo dicamus gratias.
Alleluia! Amen.*

Let us bless the Lord;
Let the Holy Trinity be praised;
Let us give thanks to the Lord.
Alleluia! Amen.

Anonymous, from the Cowley Carol Book

STANFORD: BEATI QUORUM VIA

*Beati quorum via integra est:
Qui ambulant in lege Domini.*

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalms 119:1

1: Christ in the cradle

Look, how he shakes for cold!
How pale his lips are grown!
Wherein his limbs to fold
Yet mantle has he none.
His pretty feet and hands
(Of late more pure and white
Than is the snow
That pains them so)
Have lost their candour quite.
His lips are blue
(Where roses grew),
He's frozen everywhere:
All th' heat he has
Joseph, alas,
Gives in a groan; or Mary in a tear.

2: Christ in the garden

Look, how he glows for heat!
What flames come from his eyes!
'Tis blood that he does sweat,
Blood his bright forehead dyes:
See, see! It trickles down:
Look, how it showers amain!
Through every pore
His blood runs o'er,
And empty leaves each vein.
His very heart
Burns in each part;
A fire his breast doth sear:
For all this flame,
To cool the same
He only breathes a sigh, and weeps a tear.

3: Christ in his passion

What bruises do I see!
What hideous stripes are those!
Could any cruel be
Enough, to give such blows?
Look, how they bind his arms
And vex his soul with scorns,
Upon his hair
They make him wear
A crown of piercing thorns.
Through hands and feet
Sharp nails they beat:
And now the cross they rear:
Many look on;
But only John
Stands by to sigh, Mary to shed a tear.

Why did he shake for cold?
Why did he glow for heat?
Dissolve that frost he could,
He could call back that sweat.
Those bruises, stripes, bonds, taunts,
Those thorns, which thou didst see,
Those nails, that cross,
His own life's loss,
Why, oh, why suffered he?
'Twas for thy sake.
Thou, thou didst make
Him all those torments bear:
If then his love
Do thy soul move,
Sigh out a groan,
weep down a melting tear.

Patrick Carey d. 1651

4: Hymn

Drop, drop slow tears	Cease not, wet eyes,
And bathe those beauteous feet	His mercies to entreat;
Which brought from heaven	To cry for vengeance,
The news and Prince of Peace.	Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let His eye see
Sin, but through my tears.

Phineas Fletcher 1582–1650

HOWELLS: TAKE HIM, EARTH, FOR CHERISHING

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

Once was this a spirit's dwelling,
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating,
Christ the prince of all its living.
Guard him well, the dead I give thee,
Not unmindful of His creature
Shall He ask it: He who made it
Symbol of his mystery.
Take him, earth, for cherishing.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men,
Then must thou, in very fashion,
What I give, return again.
Take him, earth, for cherishing.
Body of a man I bring thee.
Take, O take him.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away these bones to sand,
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand:

Not though wandering winds and idle
Scatter dust was nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.
Once again the shining road
Leads to ample Paradise;
Open are the woods again,
That the Serpent lost for men.

Take, O take him, mighty Leader,
Take again thy servant's soul.
Grave his name, and pour the fragrant
Balm upon the icy stone.

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

By the breath of God created.
Christ the prince of all its living.
Take, O take him,
Take him, earth, for cherishing.

Prudentius (348–413)
from *Hymnus circa Exsequias Defuncti*
translated by Helen Waddell

MACMILLAN: CHRISTUS VINCIT

*Christus vincit,
Christus regnat,
Christus imperat.*

Alleluia!

Christ conquers,
Christ is King,
Christ is Lord of all.

Alleluia!

Worcester Acclamations (10th century)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: MASS IN G MINOR

Kyrie

*Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.*

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

Gloria

*[Gloria in excelsis Deo] et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te,
glorificamus te.*

*Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam
tuam, Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.*

*Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*

*Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.*

*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.*

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus
Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe,
cum sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.*

Glory be to God in the highest and in earth
peace to men of good will.

We praise thee, we bless thee, we adore thee,
we glorify thee.

We give thee thanks for thy great glory,
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father
almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ:
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father, that takest away the sins of the
world, have mercy upon us.

Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy, thou only art the
Lord, thou only art the Most High,
O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory
of God the Father. Amen.

Credo

*[Credo in unum Deum], Patrem
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilem omnium et invisibilem, et in
unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium
Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante
omnia saecula:*

*Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum
verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum,
consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia
facta sunt.*

*Qui propter nos homines et nostram
salutem, descendit de coelis; et incarnatus est
de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine, et homo
factus est.*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, and of all things
visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus
Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds:

God of God, Light of Light, very God of
very God, begotten, not made, being of one
substance with the Father, by whom all
things were made.

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came
down from heaven, and was incarnate by the
Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was
made man.

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus et sepultus est.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas; et ascendit in coelum; sedet ad dexteram Patris;

et iterum venturus est cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos; cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patri Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas.

Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

**Sanctus – Osanna I –
– Benedictus – Osanna II**

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

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

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

He was crucified also for us: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the scriptures, and ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end.

And (I believe) in the Holy Ghost, the Lord the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke through the prophets.

And (I believe) in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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

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

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Since its formation in 1968, the **Scottish Chamber Choir** has performed throughout Scotland and Northern England to great acclaim. Each season the choir presents four concerts in Edinburgh, climaxing with an appearance at the Festival Fringe. These are usually supplemented by a Christmas concert and guest appearances at local Music Societies and Festivals throughout the year, keeping members quite busy!

The choir sings both shorter items from the chamber choir repertoire and more extended works, such as the Bach B minor Mass at our Festival Fringe concert in 2001. Whilst some concerts are given *a cappella*, at others we are joined by a variety of instrumental forces, making possible an exceptional freedom of programming and great interest for both participants and audience.

The choir's hallmark has always been its breadth of repertoire, encompassing a wide range of music from the 16th century to the present day, with music by living composers featuring in programmes during most seasons. Often there is a thread linking a series of concerts, encouraging regular attendance. The highly successful and critically praised Silver Jubilee season, for example, concentrated on 20th century British music, and was recognised by an Enterprise Award from the Performing Rights Society – one of only three such awards in Scotland.

From time to time, vacancies occur in all sections of the choir. Any singer interested in obtaining further details should contact Bill Wood, the President, on 0131 339 7663. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Napier University's Craighouse campus.

Michael Harris received his earliest musical education as a chorister of Gloucester Cathedral. He was Organ Scholar of St Peter's College, Oxford, and continued his studies at the Royal College of Music. He studied organ with Nicholas Danby, and has taken part in Masterclasses given by, among others, Nicolas Kynaston, Daniel Roth and Piet Kee.

He has been Organist and Master of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, since November 1996; he is also a Lecturer at the Ian Tomlin School of Music in Napier University, Edinburgh. Prior to moving to Edinburgh he held posts as Sub-Organist of Leeds Parish Church and, from 1986, Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral.

His work has involved him in numerous recordings and broadcasts, for both television and radio. As Organist of St Giles' Cathedral he hosts many organ concerts on the famous Rieger organ (built 1992) and has made a number of CD recordings with the instrument.

Elsewhere he has given recitals at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral, Winchester Cathedral, Ripon Cathedral and Leeds Town Hall. He has given many recitals in Germany, including on the historic Silbermann organs in Freiberg (Dom) and Dresden (Hofkirche), and in 1999 was a member of the Jury for the International Gottfried Silbermann Organ Competition in Freiberg.

Since 1998 he has been Musical Director of the Scottish Chamber Choir. He is also much involved in the work of organ education in Scotland and is Director of the Edinburgh Organ Academy, an annual springtime course founded in 1998.

We hope that you have enjoyed the concert and will wish to hear the choir in our next Edinburgh concerts:

Saturday 5th June 2004
St Giles' Cathedral

'The Romantic Mass'

Masses from Austria and Belgium
by Bruckner and Jongen

with the St Giles' Chamber Ensemble

Sunday 15th August 2004
St Mary's Cathedral

Festival Concert

J S Bach *Johannes-Passion*

with the St Giles' Chamber Orchestra

Simon Nieminski is Assistant Organist at St Mary's Cathedral and Organist at Fettes College. Born in London and descended of an unlikely mixture of Edwardian Japanese acrobats, Lancastrian Music Hall artistes and a Polish army veteran, he studied at the Royal College of Music. He was Organ Scholar of Pembroke College, Cambridge and York Minster, then becoming Assistant Organist of Dundee Cathedral and directing the University choirs. Moving to London as Assistant Director of Music at St Bartholomew the Great and Organ Tutor at Kingston University, he regularly conducted the professional church choir, and other semi-professional choirs.

His playing takes him around the UK, Europe and the USA, with TV and radio broadcasts in the UK, Sweden and the USA. He has written articles for various periodicals, and holds ARCM and FRCO diplomas.

His recent CDs on the American *Pro Organo* label have received glowing reviews, *Organists' Review* writing "Simon Nieminski's playing is utterly convincing and at one stroke establishes him as a recording artist of the first rank". A CD of works by Francis Jackson recorded in Edinburgh, including several first recordings and unpublished works, has also been well received. This year he will record volume 3 of Priory Records' *Victorian Organ Sonata* series, and a video project for *Pro Organo*. Further afield, he will make a second tour of the USA and two visits to Germany. On April 3rd, he will appear with harpist Catriona McKay in concert at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival.

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Sopranos	Alison Bishop	Julie Morric
	Lorraine Fraser	Sasha Salina
	Jenny Mackenzie	Erica Schwa
	Anne McAlister	Adriana Ska
	Pauline McClellan	Milda Zinku
Contraltos	Fiona Akers	Louisa Morl
	Jean Brodie	Susan Oliver
	Myra Brown	Sheila Rober
	Emma Forbes	Susan White
Tenors	Michael Lucas	James Verge
	Andrew Morley	Bill Wood
	Andrew Polson	
Basses	Mike Arthur	Hamish Mar
	Wilf Krause	Andrew O'N
	Frank Lucas	Martin Tarr

Details from choir members or from the President,
Bill Wood, on 0131 339 7663