



ORCHID CLASSICS

MALCOLM ARNOLD

London Choral Sinfonia
Michael Waldron

Jack Liebeck
Alexander Sitkovetsky
violins

James Orford
organ

ORC100362

THE MUSIC OF MALCOLM ARNOLD

Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006)

Concerto for Organ and Orchestra	
1 I Vivace	5.18
2 II Lento	5.57
3 III Allegretto	3.09
4 Song of Praise	2.54
Two Ceremonial Psalms*	
5 I O come let us sing unto the Lord	2.12
6 II Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands	1.49
7 Psalm 150 'Laudate Dominum'	7.23
The John Clare Cantata*	
8 I Winter Snow Storm	2.56
9 II March	1.50
10 III Spring	2.06
11 IV Summer	1.33
12 V Autumn	3.07
13 VI Epilogue	1.30
Two Part Songs*	
14 Spleen	2.36
15 Vitae Summa Brevis Spem Nos Vetat Incohare Longam	1.55

16 This Christmas Night*	2.07
Concerto for Two Violins and String Orchestra	
17 I Allegro risoluto	6.01
18 II Andantino	7.12
19 III Vivace	2.53
20 The Pilgrim Caravan (Christmas Hymn)	3.35
21 The Padstow Lifeboat*	4.47
<i>Arranged by Owain Park</i>	

Total time **72.54**

London Choral Sinfonia
Michael Waldron, *conductor*
Jack Liebeck & Alexander Sitkovetsky, *violin*
Edward Picton-Turbervill & Cameron Richardson-Eames, *piano*
James Orford, *organ*

*World Premiere Recording

My first introduction to Arnold's music came at a very young age. Through an enthusiastic music teacher at school - himself a very accomplished brass player - a trumpet was pushed under my nose around the age of 6. I played and practised with great gusto, but it would be fair to say my achievements in this field were fairly unremarkable...

By my teenage years I had stopped playing completely, but had never forgotten the bits of Arnold I'd played in the school wind/brass bands, and even a couple of solo pieces. The music felt energised and direct - I loved it.

A long silence fell over my connection with Arnold's music. Besides finding myself listening to the odd piece at the Proms or on the radio, my attachment to it, regrettably, largely disappeared. It was a chance rewatch of *The Belles of St Trinian's* during lockdown that started the wheels moving again. Before long I had made my way through the Symphonies, along with the vast amount Arnold wrote for wind, concert and brass bands. The light was relit.

Sometime later, it was purely by chance I stumbled across a recording of Arnold's *Organ Concerto*. A lapsed organist myself, I had no idea the piece existed. The beauty of today's streaming services is that they will keep feeding music to you, even once you've finished listening to the tracks/albums you originally selected. Sometimes the algorithms throw you something wildly inappropriate, but in this instance a recording of Poulenc's *Organ Concerto* gave way to the opening of Arnold's *Organ Concerto*. It was captivating.

I immediately thought it would be a piece to keep up my sleeve to programme in a concert one day, and so I went online to buy a copy of the score. Entering 'Arnold' + 'Organ' in the search field of a sheet music website was when the floodgates really opened. Suddenly appeared a multitude of pieces for choir and organ by the composer, none of which I had any knowledge of, and

basically none of which have been recorded. In went a rather large order via the website, and before long I was devouring the scores at the piano.

George's excellent notes below describe this music far more eloquently than I ever could. It's a wonderful mix of the overtly direct (*Two Ceremonial Psalms*, *The Pilgrim Caravan*, and the *Song of Praise*), and the enigmatic (*Two Part Songs* and *Laudate Dominum*). The *Laudate Dominum* is particularly remarkable: such a boisterous and celebratory text has, inevitably, inspired similarly boisterous musical settings by almost all the composers I can think of who have approached it. Arnold's isn't lacking any grandeur in the middle sections, but the hushed and mysterious sections bookending the work are a masterstroke. *The John Clare Cantata* deserves a thesis all of its own. The colours and textures he summons from 4-part choir and piano duet are truly remarkable. This is all top-drawer choral writing, and I am at a loss as to why it's been so overlooked.

I'm thrilled James was so keen to learn the *Organ Concerto*, and the organ at St John's, Islington, is absolutely perfect for what Arnold intended. I hope that both the solo and orchestral elements of this piece fizz and sparkle as much through the speakers as they did in the recording sessions.

The *Concerto for Two Violins* appeared on my lockdown rediscovery of Arnold's music. In another bizarre twist of fate, it was a random text message from Jack Liebeck one day, just as we were finalising the programme for this project - "Hey - do you know the Arnold double violin concerto?" - which got it firmly on the map for inclusion. In some ways it's a darker piece than others on this album, but the ravishing, vulnerable middle movement prevents it being one-dimensional. I also pick up a 'twinkle in the eye' in the final movement: the mechanical Swiss-watch quality of the rhythmic dialogue between soloists and orchestra is somehow punctuated by just a little bit of cheekiness and playfulness.

As the album concludes, so do my thoughts by returning back to school. *The Padstow Lifeboat* needs little introduction. Knowing we would have some spare time in the *Organ Concerto* sessions, I couldn't resist asking Owain Park to rescore the piece for these forces. I crashed through the cornet part at school, and it's safe to say I was far from any brass instruments to trouble the waters on this occasion. As perhaps a metaphor for this great composer, even as the lifeboat gets into difficulty in the middle section, there's an underlying cheekiness and wit which ultimately triumphs.

Michael Waldron

A prolific composer, Malcolm Arnold nevertheless made few sorties into the realm of choral music. Much of his choral output represented on this disc remains little known – certainly as compared to such a popular piece as *The Padstow Lifeboat*, written in 1967, the last year of his creative life to be sampled here.

The earliest pieces here are the Two Part Songs [14+15], written during the summer holidays in 1939 while Arnold was a 17-year-old student at the Royal College of Music. The composer had been introduced to the works of Ernest Dowson by his sister Ruth, herself a poet and artist. These five-part unaccompanied settings are the result.

Completed on April 9, 1950, Arnold's setting of *Psalm 150* [7] was commissioned by the recently appointed Vicar of St Matthews' Church, Northampton, the Rev. Canon Walter Hussey, who would later go on to become Dean of Chichester Cathedral. Throughout his career Hussey was an ardent believer in the inclusion of the works of living artists in acts of worship; his other musical commissions included scores by Britten, Tippett, Arnold's fellow-Northamptonian Edmund Rubbra, Gerald Finzi, Lennox Berkeley, and Leonard Bernstein.

For Arnold, the commission came 'at time when I was very down' – something of an understatement. In May 1950 Arnold had a serious mental breakdown, spending nearly six months in a private hospital and discharged home a few days before the birth of his son Robert on 22 September. It is not known if he attended the first performance of *Psalm 150* at St Matthew's Church Northampton on 21 September (St Matthew's Day)

The *Ceremonial Psalms* [5+6] for unaccompanied boys' chorus were written for the wedding of Anne Mendoza to Philip Goldesgeyme at the Marble Arch Synagogue in January 1952. Arnold had got to know Anne's brother Joe when the latter was a scriptwriter (later director) at Denham Studios: they subsequently worked together on two operatic projects, *The Dancing Master* and *Henri Christophe*, the second eventually abandoned. The sung texts were selected from Psalms 95 and 100.

Written in October 1954, Arnold's *Organ Concerto* [1-3] is a relatively short piece composed for the wide-ranging Australian musician Denis Vaughan and the organ of London's Royal Festival Hall, where it was premiered with members of the London Symphony Orchestra under Leslie Woodgate at a Robert Mayer concert on 11 December. For a concerto, the solo part is relatively modest – perhaps more like an extensive obbligato. The orchestra consists of three trumpets (two of them high, Baroque-style instruments), timpani and strings.

The muscular open-air fanfares of the first movement carry distinct Baroque echoes, with the two Handelian trumpets to the fore suggesting something written for a celebratory occasion. Characteristic touches of brilliance alternate with thoughtful, delicate moments on the manuals; later on, there's a soaring theme on violins.

The strings are initially muted in the following Lento, with the organ floating a simple, even sentimental melodic line on top. The solo instrument takes the lead in the rhythmically playful, sometimes fugal finale, which near the end refers back to the opening movement. The trumpets return for the jubilant close.

Scored for the unusual combination of SATB chorus and piano duet, *the John Clare Cantata* [8-13] was commissioned by William Glock for the advanced music students of the 1955 Dartington Summer School. Consisting of settings of six poems that chart the year from one winter to the next, it was first performed at Dartington on 5 August 1955 conducted by John Clements.

It is a piece of great charm. Arnold suggests a frozen landscape in the opening *Winter Snow Storm*. Given their own motifs, insects start to appear in *March*, while the outdoor freshness of May provides the aural background to *Spring*. *Summer* at its joyous height buzzes once more with insects, reaching a climax of merrymaking. The year's decline is depicted in the falling lines of unaccompanied *Autumn*, though there's a resurgence in the *Epilogue* with the return of winter and its promise of spring to come.

Like Arnold, Clare – sometimes known as 'the Northamptonshire peasant poet' – had strong links to the county. He was born in Helpston in 1793 and died in Northampton in 1864 as an inmate of what was then called the General Lunatic Asylum, later to become St Andrew's Hospital, where Arnold himself would spend the years 1979-83. The composer was naturally aware of this connection.

John Clare's *Song of Praise: Imitation of the 148th Psalm* [4] was the source of the text of Arnold's unison setting commissioned by Ruth Railton (whom Arnold had long supported in her endeavours for the National Youth Orchestra) for the platinum jubilee of Wycombe Abbey School for Girls, where it was premiered on 6 July 1956. Here it is performed with organ accompaniment.

A unique work in Arnold's output, the 'nativity masque' *Song of Simeon* remains little known, despite a general consensus is that it is a fine piece: choral expert Simon Toyne has described it as 'an unqualified success,' and 'utterly charming,' while in their ground-breaking biography of the composer, *Rogue Genius*, Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris call it a 'jeu d'esprit.'

It was written for a charity matinee in aid of the church of St Martin-in-The-Fields, given at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on 5 January 1960. The libretto was by the experienced Christopher Hassall while John Cranko supplied the choreography, and the show was directed by Colin Graham. Arnold himself conducted.

We hear a short extract from the piece, *The Pilgrim Caravan* [20] for SATB chorus and piano (here organ), which was published separately in various arrangements as a Christmas hymn.

In January 1962 Arnold spent some time in India researching music for the film *Nine Hours to Rama* whose subject was the assassination of Gandhi. There he made a start on a concerto [17-19] commissioned by Yehudi Menuhin for himself and his pupil Albert Lysy to play at the 1962 Bath International Music Festival, which Menuhin was then directing. When Arnold conducted the Bath Festival Orchestra in the premiere on June 24, 1962, the piece was rewarded with an instant encore.

Arnold had initially intended to incorporate Indian music into the piece but subsequently dropped the idea. Instead he seems to have made the piece a personal memorial to two of his elder brothers who had both died in 1961: Clifford and Aubrey, the latter, together with his wife, having committed suicide following the failure of a family business.

Menuhin considered the piece 'absolutely stunning, full of brilliance and not a little pathos ... There is that element in the work of a teasing nature. To some extent

it is mocking itself and mocking the sentiments -- I mean the sentimentality and sweetness of the slow movement is handled in such a way that it is transparent, one feels that Malcolm was possibly hiding something from his depths.'

Bach's concerto for two violins and strings is an obvious model. Replete with some taut modernist gestures, the first movement is tense, the two violins not so much in competition as operating as a pair. The mood is mettlesome, even truculent, though the second subject is gentler and somewhat melancholy; yet overall the spirit is wiry, thin, and discomfiting and there is an uneasy throwaway ending.

In the Andantino the soloists float two lyrical lines as part of a more widely spaced though still scarcely consoling melody. Something more characteristically Arnoldian takes over after a minute or so in a sad though not desolate theme, but the overall mood remains sombre. Near the end, a duo cadenza offers little in the way of showiness.

The final Vivace, though, is more virtuosic, with some darkly playful echoes of the Baroque. Its progress is once again tense and terse, with a sudden, jubilant finish.

In January 1965 Arnold moved to St Merryn in Cornwall with his second wife, Isobel, subsequently identifying with the county and its people to the extent that he became a proud Cornishman: his appointment as a Bard of the Cornish Gorsyth in 1968, for instance, meant a lot to him.

One of the best-known results of his Cornish years is the march *The Padstow Lifeboat* [21], a piece apparently written over just three days in 1967.

Arnold knew that the Padstow lifeboat had 'a long, heroic and distinguished record' in saving lives at sea. Two years earlier one such rescue had been led by coxswain Gordon Elliott: the piece was originally to be called the Joseph Hiram Chadwick after the lifeboat whose crew were involved on that occasion.

The outlandish sound made by the Trevoze Head Foghorn was a central inspiration. 'The new lifeboat station', Arnold explained, 'is near Trevoze lighthouse, whose foghorn varies in pitch between middle C and D. For the sake of musical unity, it remains in D throughout this March' – making an indelible mark in the overall key of A flat (or in this arrangement in B flat, with E the 'wrong' note).

There are clearly some moments of danger on the gallant crew's plucky rescue mission, though otherwise, the result – essentially a traditional march with a big tune in the middle 'trios' section that returns in glory at the end, surrounded by a whirl of decoration – is both thrilling and witty. Arrangements have been made by various hands: this new one by Owain Park is for three trumpets, organ, strings and percussion.

The march's first performance was given by the Black Dyke Mills Band and the BMC Concert Band under the composer at the Royal Festival Hall on 10 June 1967 as part of the BBC International Festival of Light Music. Its first Cornish performance took place at the inauguration of a new lifeboat near Trevoze Head Lighthouse when the Saint Denis Silver Band played it in Padstow Harbour on 19 July 1968; both performances were conducted by the composer.

In 1967 the *Daily Telegraph* invited Arnold to make a setting of a Christmas carol text by the poet Mary Wilson, wife of the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The result was first performed at 10 Downing Street on December 22, 1967. [16]

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London Choral Sinfonia

"Fast becoming the go-to champions for contemporary British choral music" (Gramophone), the London Choral Sinfonia has secured a reputation as one of the leading chamber choir and orchestral ensembles. A busy performance schedule throughout the year sees the group appearing at venues including Cadogan Hall, St Paul's Cathedral, Kings Place and Sinfonia Smith Square.

Aside from many of the major cornerstones of the repertoire, the LCS also seeks to champion new music, having premiered new works and recordings with numerous composers including Tarik O'Regan, Owain Park, Richard Pantcheff and Ian Assersohn. Recent premieres include former Composer-in-Residence Oliver Rudland's *Christmas Truce*, with a libretto by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

Recent performance highlights include Bach *Jauchzet Gott* with Katherine Watson (soprano) and Crispian Steele-Perkins (trumpet), Bach Motets and Cello Suites with Guy Johnston (cello), Mozart *Exsultate Jubilate* with Mary Bevan (soprano), Britten *St Nicolas* with Nick Pritchard (tenor), and Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with Matthew Brook (baritone).

In addition to a busy concert schedule, the extensive LCS discography includes the three-volume collection of works for choir and orchestra by Richard Pantcheff and the award-winning Christmas album, *O Holy Night*. Their album, *Colourise*, featuring baritone Roderick Williams and tenor Andrew Staples, was released to critical acclaim. Described by Gramophone as 'intensely moving', the album reached over a million streams within the first months of its release. *Sword in the Soul* - was described as 'beautifully judged' (Gramophone) and 'sublime' (BBC Radio 3). Their double-disc release of works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor in July 2023 features many world-premiere recordings, and was praised for its 'fine recordings' (The Sunday Times). Their recording of music by Stephen Hough was received to great critical acclaim: 'Waldron directs his fresh-voiced choir with energising, always scrupulous ardour' (BBC Music Magazine), and

was selected as both Editor's Choir and one of the 'Best Albums of 2023' (Gramophone). Their album, *Retrospect: Vaughan Williams*, was again selected as Editor's Choir and one of the 'Best Albums of 2024', alongside featuring in the Top 20 Vaughan Williams recordings of all time (Gramophone).

Michael Waldron

Conductor

Michael is founder and Artistic Director of the London Choral Sinfonia (LCS), and has worked with many of the top choirs and orchestras in the UK and beyond, including the Philharmonia Orchestra, Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Polyphony, London Mozart Players, Holst Singers and City of London Choir. He is Musical Director of Islington Choral Society, Artistic Director of London Lyric Opera, and has held the posts of Interim Director of Music with the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Musical Director of Epworth Choir.

His debut album release with the London Choral Sinfonia, *O Holy Night*, was selected by *The Guardian* as one of their top Christmas albums. Together with the LCS, he has since embarked on a multi-album project for Orchid Classics recording orchestral and choral music by Richard Pantcheff. His album, *Colourise*, features a previously unrecorded cantata by Lennox Berkeley, and the first recording of Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* in an original chamber orchestration, featuring baritone Roderick Williams. *Colourise* was selected by *The Times* as one of their Best Albums of 2022. His album of music by Stephen Hough, *Mirabilis*, was selected by Gramophone Magazine as one of their Top Albums of 2023. Michael's latest recording with LCS, *Retrospect*, which features many lesser-known works by Vaughan Williams was selected by Gramophone as Editor's Choice.

Michael enjoys an extensive operatic career, including shows and projects for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Buxton International Festival, Opera Della Luna and West Green Opera.

Michael Waldron began his musical training as a chorister at St Ambrose College, Hale Barns. After a gap year Organ Scholarship at Worcester Cathedral, he held the Organ Scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, for four years. Here he studied under Stephen Layton, during which time he was involved with the Choir's numerous international tours, concerts, broadcasts and recordings.

More information can be found at: www.michael-waldron.com

Jack Liebeck

Violin

In the 25 years since his debut with the Hallé, Jack Liebeck has worked with some of the world's leading conductors including Andrew Litton, Leonard Slatkin, Karl-Heinz Steffens, Sir Mark Elder, Sakari Oramo, Vasily Petrenko, Sir Neville Marriner, Brett Dean, Daniel Harding, Jukka Pekka Saraste, David Robertson, Jakub Hrůša and major orchestras across the globe including Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Swedish Radio, Oslo Philharmonic, Belgian National, MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony, Moscow State Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Spokane Symphony, St Louis Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony and most of the UK orchestras.

Jack's fascination with all things scientific culminated in the founding of his own festival in 2008 to combine Music, Science and Art, Oxford May Music. He has collaborated with physicist Professor Brian Cox in several unique symphonic science programmes which have included the world premieres of two violin concertos written especially for Jack, Voyager Concerto by Dario Marianelli commissioned by the Queensland Symphony and Swedish

Radio orchestras, and A Brief History of Time by Paul Dean, commissioned by Melbourne Symphony. Jack gave the online premiere of Taylor Scott Davis' new concerto for violin, choir & orchestra To Sing of Love: a Triptych with the VOCES8 Foundation Choir and Orchestra conducted by Barnaby Smith.

Jack is the Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music from 2022, Émile Sauret Professor of Violin at the Royal Academy of Music and a member of Salieca Piano Trio. Also a professional photographer, he enjoys collaborating across many mediums and can be heard in the film soundtracks of The Theory of Everything, Jane Eyre and Anna Karenina.

Jack plays the 'Ex-Wilhelmj' J.B. Guadagnini violin dated 1785, and the 'Professor David Bennett' Joseph Henry bow.

Alexander Sitkovetsky

Violin

Born in Moscow, Alexander Sitkovetsky comes from a family with a well-established musical tradition. At the age of eight, he made his concerto debut, and the same year, he moved to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School where he is now an Associate Artist. He went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London and later at the Kronberg Academy in Germany. Both as a soloist, a director, and a chamber musician, he has received several awards, including the 1st prize at the 2011 Trio di Trieste Duo Competition, performing with pianist Wu Qian with whom he still regularly performs.

As soloist and director he has performed with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, the Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Verbier Chamber, the Camerata Salzburg, Munich Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony, the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, The Yumiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra and many others.

Alexander is the Artistic Director of the NFM Leopoldinum Chamber Orchestra in Wroclaw, Poland. Together they perform throughout the year at their home at the NFM National Forum of Music as well as around the world.

As a chamber musician, he is a founding member of the renowned Sitkovetsky Trio, one of the foremost piano trios performing today and he also performs with the Julia Fischer String Quartet. Since 2012, Alexander has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, first through the Bowers Artist program and later as a full member. His regular festival appearances have included the Verbier, Schubertiade, Rheingau, Prague Spring, the Sonoro, the Surrey Hills International Music Festivals and the Oxford May Music to name but a few.

Alexander performs on the 1679 "Parera" Stradivari violin, loaned to him through the Beare's International Violin Society by a generous sponsor.

Currently, Alexander is serving as Artist in Residence at the Meadows School of the Arts at SMU University in Dallas, Texas and is Professor of Violin at the Zurich Hochschule of the Arts in Switzerland. IN the past he has held positions at the Royal Northern College and the Royal Academy of Music in the UK.

James Orford

Organ

James Orford is a prize-winning organist and pianist based in London. He has recently taken up the post of Organist at St Paul's Cathedral, London, before which he was the Organist and Assistant Director of Music at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge. He has previously held posts at Eton College and Westminster Cathedral and completed organ scholarships at St Paul's and Truro Cathedrals, the Royal Hospital Chelsea, and King's College, London. He was a student at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with David Titterton and Bine Bryndorf, where he achieved top marks in both his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

James enjoys a busy performing schedule and has given recitals and concerts in notable UK venues including St Paul's, Westminster, and Liverpool Cathedrals, Westminster Abbey, the Royal Festival Hall, and the Royal Albert Hall. He has also performed abroad, including in Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, and Denmark.

As an accompanist, James has worked with many professional and amateur choirs, including The Sixteen, the Monteverdi Choir, Tenebrae, the London Choral Sinfonia and Sansara; and has accompanied choral performances in North America, Europe and Africa. He has performed on many radio broadcasts and appears on several choral recordings, among which are premiere recordings of works by Langlais, Vaughan Williams, Berkeley, Coleridge-Taylor, Francis Grier, and Sir Stephen Hough.

James is also an accomplished pianist and continuo player. In 2023, he recorded an English Song disc with baritone Alex Bower-Brown, which features the solo baritone version of the *Five Mystical Songs*, the *Songs of Travel*, and shorter cycles by Amy Beach and Jonathan Dove. As a continuo player, he has played alongside the City of London Sinfonia, the London Mozart Players, The Sixteen, and La Nuova Musica.



Song of Praise

John Clare (1793-1864)

Warm into praises, kindling muse,
With grateful transport raise thy views
To Him, who moves this ball,
Who whirls, in silent harmony,
The earth, the ocean, air, and sky--
O praise the Lord of all!

Ye angels—hymning round your king,
Praise Him who gives you power to sing,
Ye hosts—with raptures burn;
Who station'd you in bliss, proclaim!
Oh, bless your benefactor's name,
Betokening kind return.

Ye minstrel birds, wild woodland's charms,
Whose song each child of nature warms
With your lov'd haunts in view;
From Him you borrow'd every note,
Then open wide your chanting throat
To give the tribute due.

Till o'er this sin-consuming world
Destruction's fated doom is hurl'd,
And ruin's self decays;
Then, freed from sin and Adam's fall,
All join, and hail Him Lord of all,
In everlasting praise.

Two Ceremonial Psalms

I O come let us sing unto the Lord

Psalms 95, 19

O come let us sing unto the Lord;
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.
For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlight'ning the eyes,
And His truth endureth to all generations.

O come let us sing unto the Lord;
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.

Two Ceremonial Psalms

II Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands

Psalms 100, 95, 148

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Make a loud noise and rejoice, and sing praise.
For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods.
O come, let us sing unto the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens: Praise him in the heights
Praise Him, all His angels: Praise Him all his hosts.
Praise Him the sun and the moon: Praise the stars of light.

Let them praise the name of the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Psalm 150 'Laudate Dominum'

O praise God in his holiness:
praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him in his noble acts:
praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him in the sound of the trumpet:
praise him upon the lute and harp.
Praise him in the cymbals and dances:
praise him upon the strings and pipe.
Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals:
praise him upon the loud cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath:
praise the Lord.

The John Clare Cantata

John Clare (1793-1864)

I Winter Snow Storm

Winter is come in earnest & the snow
In dazzling splendour—crumping underfoot
Spreads a white world all calm & where we go
By hedge or wood trees shine from top to root
In feathered foliage flashing light & shade
Of strangest contrast—fancys pliant eye
Delighted sees a vast romance displayed
& fairy halls descended from the sky
The smallest twig its snowy burthen wears
& woods oer head the dullest eyes engage
To shape strange things—where arch & pillar bears
A roof of grains fantastic arched & high

& little shed beside the spinney wears
The grotesque zemblance of an hermitage

II March

The insect-world, now sunbeams higher climb,
Off dream of Spring, and wake before their time.
Bees stroke their little legs across their wings,
And venture short flights where the snow-drop hings
Its silver bell, and winter aconite
Its butter-cup-like flowers that shut at night,
With green leaf furling round its cup of gold,
Like tender maiden muffled from the cold:
They sip, and find their honey-dreams are vain,
Then feebly hasten to their hives again. —
The butterflies, by eager hopes undone,
Glad as a child come out to greet the sun,
Beneath the shadow of a sudden shower
Are lost — nor see to-morrow's April flower.

III Spring

Come, gentle Spring, and show thy varied greens
In woods, and fields, and meadows, by clear brooks;
Come, gentle Spring, and bring thy sweetest scenes,
Where peace, with solitude, the loveliest looks;
Where the blue unclouded sky
Spreads the sweetest canopy,
And Study wiser grows without her books.
Come hither, gentle May, and with thee bring
Flowers of all colours, and the wild briar rose;
Come in wind-floating drapery, and bring

Fragrance and bloom, that Nature's love bestows--
Meadow pinks and columbines,
Kecksies white and eglantines,
And music of the bee that seeks the rose.

Come, gentle Spring, and bring thy choicest looks,
Thy bosom graced with flowers, thy face with smiles;
Come, gentle Spring, and trace thy wandering brooks,
Through meadow gates, o'er footpath crooked stiles;
Come in thy proud and best array,
April dews and flowers of May,
And singing birds that come where heaven smiles.

IV Summer

These tiny loiterers on the barley's beard,
And happy units of a numerous herd
Of playfellows, the laughing Summer brings,
Mocking the sunshine in their glittering wings,
How merrily they creep, and run, and fly!
No kin they bear to labour's drudgery,
Smoothing the velvet of the pale hedge-rose;
And where they fly for dinner no one knows--
The dew-drops feed them not--they love the shine
Of noon, whose sun may bring them golden wine.
All day they're playing in their Sunday dress--
Till night goes sleep, and they can do no less.

V Autumn

The Spring is gone, the Summer-beauty wanes,
Like setting sunbeams, in their last decline;
As evening shadows, lingering on the plains,
Gleam dim and dimmer till they cease to shine:
The busy bee hath humm'd himself to rest;
Flowers dry to seed, that held the sweets of Spring;
Flown is the bird, and empty is the nest,
His broods are rear'd, no joys are left to sing.
There hangs a dreariness about the scene,
A present shadow of a bright has been.
Oh, sad to prove that Pleasure's golden springs,
Like common fountains, should so quickly dry,
And be so near allied to vulgar things! —
The joys of this world are but born to die.

VI Epilogue

Winter is come in earnest & the snow
In dazzling splendour—crumping underfoot,
Yet neath the blackest cloud a sunbeam flings
its cheering promise of returning spring.

Two Part Songs – Spleen

“After Paul Verlaine - III” by Ernest Dowson (1867-1900)

Around were all the roses red,
The ivy all around was black.

Dear, so thou only move thine head,
Shall all mine old despairs awake!

Too blue, too tender was the sky,
The air too soft, too green the sea.

Always I fear, I know not why,
Some lamentable flight from thee.

I am so tired of holly-sprays
And weary of the bright box-tree,

Of all the endless country ways;
Of everything alas! save thee.

Two Part Songs - Vitae Summa Brevis Spem Nos Vetat Incohare Longam

Ernest Dowson

The brief sum of life forbids us the hope of enduring long - Horace

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:

I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

This Christmas Night

Mary Wilson (1916-2018)

How sweet and clear above the sounds of war
the clamorous bells are pealing their delight!
The angels sing of glory, as they soar
among the man-made stars,
this Christmas night.

And, once again, with spices and with gold,
three Kings are riding through the sparkling snow
to this poor lodging in the bitter cold
where Mary kneels within the lantern glow
to watch her Baby lying in the hay,
and think about the wonder of His birth;
And as He sleeps to hold his hands and pray
for peace to come upon this troubled earth.

The Pilgrim Caravan (Christmas Hymn)

Christopher Hassall (1912-1963)

On Jordan stream the guiding light
From bank to bank reflected lay.
That bridge of gold we crossed by night
Then onward rode till break of day.

*Ride on, O pilgrim caravan.
Bring worship to the Son of Man.*

Inspired by hope of sacred love
Thro' swamp and snow we journeyed on;
And soon our star was poised above
The waste that once was Babylon.

In doubt by day we halt for rest,
Impatient for the twilight hour:
When lo, Gilboa's wooded crest
Stands beacons with unwonted fire!

Thanks be to God whose Light divine
Became a portent overhead.
Now all Creation sees the Sign
And follows where the sages led.

As once of old by devious ways
Three Wise Men sought their Saviour King,
So we, hereafter, filled with praise,
Our joyful hearts as tribute bring.



Violin I

Juan Gonzalez
Naomi Rump
Anna Szabo
Rebecca Bill
Alex Casson
Henry Salmon
Aleksandra Mansurova
Iryna Glebova
Nicole Stokes

Violin II

Anna De Bruin
Tom Crehan
Eulalie Charland
Emma Fry
Radhika De Saram
Ronan Macmanus

Viola

Stephen Upshaw
Matthew Kettle
Amy Swain
Jordan Sian
Charley Lake

Cello

Brian O'Kane
Ariana Kashefi
Verity Evanson
Kirsten Jensen
Bryony Moody

Double Bass

Sophie Roper
Clare Larkman
Gwen Reed
Andy Marshall
Mark Lipski

Trumpet

Robert Vanryne
Peter Mankarious
Matt Wells

Percussion

George English
Kiyomi Seed

Piano

Edward Picton-
Turbervill
Cameron Richardson-
Eames

Organ

James Orford

Soprano

Rachel Allen
Rachel Ambrose Evans
Katy Cooper
Eloise Irving
Hannah King
Gwen Martin
Alison Ponsford-Hill

Hannah Wight
Amy Wood

Alto

Eleanor Dann
Dan Gethin
Rebekah Jones
Ruth Kiang
Natalie Manning
Miranda Ostler

Tenor

Ben Alden
John Bowen
Peter di Toro
Matt Howard
Rob Jenkins
Gareth Tresseder

Bass

Greg Bannan
Tom Lowen
Tim Nelson
Richard Savage
Chris Webb
Laurence Williams

Specification of the 1963 J W Walker organ

St John the Evangelist RC Church, Duncan Terrace, Islington, London N1

Swell		Ruckpositiv	
Open Diapason	8	Stopped Diapason	8
Chimney Flute	8	Principal	4
Viola da Gamba	8	Koppel Flute	4
Celeste	8	Quint	2 2/3
Principal	4	Block Flute	2
Wald Flute	4	Tierce	1 3/5
Nazard	2 2/3	Scharf	29-33-36 III
Octave	2	Crumhorn	8
Mixture 22-26-29-33	IV	Tremulant	
Bassoon	16	Swell to Positive	
Trumpet	8	Zimbelstern (via thumb & toe piston)	
Vox Humana	8		
Oboe (via thumb piston)	8		
Zink	4		
Tremulant			

		Pedal	
Great		Open Wood	16
Quintaton	16	Subbass	16
Principal	8	Quintaton (Gt)	16
Nachthorn	8	Octave	8
Spitzflute	8	Bass Flute	8
Octave	4	Fifteenth	4
Nason Flute	4	Nachthorn (Gt)	4
Twelfth	2 2/3	Mixture	22-26-29 III
Fifteenth	2	Oliphant	32
Tertian	19-24 II	Bombarde	16
Furniture 19-22-26-29	IV	Bassoon (Sw)	16
Trumpet	8	Posaune	8
Great Sub Octave		Schalmei	4
Swell to Great		Swell to Pedal	
Positive to Great		Great to Pedal	
Gt & Ped. combinations coupled		Positive to Pedal	

Recorded at St John the Evangelist, Islington, London on 10-11 October 2024 & St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead, London on 21 October 2024

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