

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge

Illumina oculos meos
Lighten mine eyes
Donne à mes yeux la clarté
Erleuchte meine Augen
(Psalm 13, v. 3)

And God said, Let there be light:
and there was light.
Et Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit! Et la lumière fut.
Und Gott sprach: Es werde Licht!
Und es ward Licht.
(Genesis 1, v. 3)

This album explores the theme of light. The first act recounted in the Bible was the creation of light, which has always held symbolic significance both within and beyond the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Poets and composers of many centuries have been inspired by the primal miracle of light—a miracle preceding even life itself—and there is a remarkable body of choral music embodying the response of their imaginations to the many facets of light: morning and evening light, holy light, light as a symbol of Christ, light as the conqueror of darkness and sin, even (in our age of radio astronomy) the light of distant galaxies as seen in musical terms by György Ligeti.

Composers have returned again and again to certain key texts, and the eighteen *a cappella* pieces chosen for this recording afford fascinating points of comparison: two settings of the medieval Compline hymn *Christe, qui lux es et dies*, four of the Canticle of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*), and four of the third-century Greek hymn text best known in the John Keble translation as *Hail, gladdening Light*.

The music ranges in date from the dawn of notation in the middle ages to Ligeti in 1966; geographically there is a spread from Tallis's England, via Hildegard of Bingen's Germany and Palestrina's Italy, to Finland and Russia, whose fervent sacred music is presently winning new audiences throughout the choral world.

This rich programme, recorded in the magnificent acoustic of the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral, marks the debut on the Collegium label of Timothy Brown and the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge.

JOHN RUTTER

Cet album explore le thème de la lumière. Le premier acte raconté dans la Bible est celui de la création de la lumière, qui a depuis toujours conservé une signification symbolique à la fois au sein et au-dehors de la tradition judéo-chrétienne. Les poètes et les compositeurs de nombreux siècles ont été inspirés par le miracle premier de la lumière—miracle précédant même celui de la vie—et il existe un ensemble remarquable de musique chorale exprimant la réponse de leur imagination aux nombreuses facettes qu’a la lumière : la lumière du matin et celle du soir, la lumière sainte, la lumière symbole du Christ, la lumière comme conquérante des ténèbres et du péché, ou encore (en ces jours de radio-astronomie) la lumière de galaxies distantes vue par György Ligeti en tant que termes musicaux.

Les compositeurs se sont à chaque fois retournés vers certains textes-clés, et les dix-huit œuvres *a cappella* choisies pour cet enregistrement offrent des points de comparaison fascinants : deux mises en musique de l’hymne de Complies médiéval *Christe, qui lux es et dies*, quatre du Cantique de Siméon (*Nunc dimittis*), et quatre mises en musique de l’hymne grec du III^{ème} siècle *O lumière joyeuse*.

Les compositions s’étendent temporellement depuis l’aube de la notation au Moyen Âge jusqu’en 1966 avec l’œuvre de Ligeti; géographiquement elles nous font voyager depuis l’Angleterre de Tallis, via Hildegard de Bingen en Allemagne et Palestrina en Italie, jusqu’en Finlande et en Russie, dont la ferveur de la musique sacrée est actuellement en train de gagner une audience toujours plus large au sein du monde choral.

Ce programme d’une grande richesse a été enregistré dans la Lady Chapel de la Cathédrale d’Ely dont l’acoustique est magnifique, et marque le début chez Collegium de Timothy Brown et du Chœur de Clare College de Cambridge.

JOHN RUTTER
(Traduction: Claire de Burbure)

Dieses Album widmet sich der Thematik des Lichts. Das erste Ereignis, von dem in der Bibel berichtet wird, ist die Erschaffung des Lichts—eine Tat, die ihre symbolische Bedeutung sowohl innerhalb der jüdisch-christlichen Tradition als auch über sie hinaus bis heute nicht verloren hat. Dichter und Komponisten vieler Jahrhunderte ließen sich von diesem ersten Wunder des Lichts inspirieren—von einem Wunder, das sogar dem Leben selbst vorausging. Heute existiert ein bemerkenswertes Repertoire an Vokalmusik, in dem Dichter und Komponisten auch ihre Vorstellungen zu den verschiedenen Facetten des Lichtes festgehalten haben: zum Morgen- und Abendlicht, zum heiligen Licht, zum Licht als Symbol Jesu Christi, zum Licht als Sieger über Dunkelheit und Sünde, sogar (in unserem Zeitalter der Radioastronomie) zum Licht ferner Galaxien, so wie es sich musikalisch im Blick György Ligetis darstellt.

Komponisten haben immer wieder auf bestimmte Schlüsseltexte zurückgegriffen, und die achtzehn *a cappella*-Stücken der vorliegenden Einspielung bieten in diesem Zusammenhang faszinierende Vergleichsmöglichkeiten: zwei Sätze der mittelalterlichen Hymne (zur Komplet) *Christe, qui lux es et dies*, vier Sätze des *Nunc dimittis* (Canticum Simeonis) und ebenfalls vier Sätze eines griechischen Hymnentextes aus dem dritten Jahrhundert, *O frohes Licht*.

Zeitlich bewegt sich die Musik von den Anfängen der musikalischen Notation im Mittelalter bis zu Klängen György Ligetis aus dem Jahre 1966; geographisch werden das England des Thomas Tallis, das Deutschland Hildegards von Bingen, das Italien Palestrinas, aber auch Länder wie Rußland und Finnland gestreift, deren ausdrucksstarke Vokalmusik immer mehr Publikum auch in der internationalen Welt der Chormusik gewinnt.

Mit diesem vielseitigen Programm präsentieren sich Timothy Brown und der *Choir of Clare College* (Cambridge) erstmals bei Collegium.

JOHN RUTTER
(Übersetzung: Christine Hartlieb)

Illumina

The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge
directed by Timothy Brown

Total playing time: 76 08

Note: Words credits are given at the end of each text.

- 1 **Lumen** (2 32) Gregorian chant
Cantor: Alexander Jupp
- 2 **Bring us, O Lord God** (4 15) William Harris (1883–1973)
- 3 **Ehtoohymni (*Evening hymn*)** (2 35) Einojuhani Rautavaara (*b.* 1928)
(from *Vigilia*)
- 4 **Nyínye otpushcháyeshi (*Nunc dimittis*)** (3 35) Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943)
(from the *All-Night Vigil*, *op.* 37)
Tenor solo: Nicholas Mulroy
- 5 **O Lux beata Trinitas** (4 54) William Byrd (1543–1623)
- 6 **O coruscans lux stellarum** (3 10) Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)
- 7 **O nata lux** (1 35) Thomas Tallis (*c.*1505–85)
- 8 **Te lucis ante terminum** (1 36) Thomas Tallis
- 9 **Hymn to the Creator of Light** (7 30) John Rutter (*b.* 1945)
- 10 **Hail, gladdening Light** (3 20) Charles Wood (1866–1926)
- 11 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (3 17) Robert Whyte (*c.*1538–74)
- 12 **Nunc dimittis** (4 00) Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

- 13 **Christe, qui lux es et dies** (5 03) G. P. da Palestrina (1525–94)
- 14 **Nunc dimittis** (6 20) Josquin Desprez (*c.*1440–1521)
- 15 **Svyétye tíkhii (*Hail, gladdening Light*)** (3 05) Alexander Grechaninov (1864–1956) (*from the Liturgy of Holy Week*, *op.* 58)
- 16 **Svyétye tíkhii (*Hail, gladdening Light*)** (2 20) P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840–93)
(from the *All-Night Vigil*, *op.* 52)
- 17 **Lucis Creator optime** (5 20) G. P. da Palestrina
- 18 **Lux aeterna** (10 02) György Ligeti (*b.* 1923)

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Clare College Choir

Sopranos: Emily Benson, Angela Billington, Victoria Brentnall, Iona Coltart, Rebecca Daker, Caroline Fullman, Vanessa Huntly, Christina Sampson, *Elin Thomas

Altos: *Ally Barrett, Gabriel Gottlieb, Ruth Massey, Andrew Radley, James Rivett, *Mythili Vamadevan

Tenors: Jerome Finnis, John Harte, Alexander Jupp, Alastair Long, Matthew Moon, Nicholas Mulroy, Michael Stevens

Basses: Hywel Dafydd, Thomas Elias, *Neil Greenham, Andrew Henderson, Benjamin Lumsden, Jonathan Midgley, John Reid, Jonathan Saunders, Edward Snow.

Assisted by: Edmund Connolly, Adrian Hutton

*graduate members

1 **Lumen** (Gregorian chant)
(men's voices)

This evocative chant is proper to Candlemas (February 2nd), the ancient Christian festival commemorating the infant Christ's presentation in the temple when Simeon took him in his arms and proclaimed him as the Light of the World. The old man's words, as quoted in St Luke's gospel, have long been used as a canticle—the *Nunc dimittis*—at Compline and at Anglican Evensong, but here the third verse is repeated as an antiphon before and between the verses to emphasise the idea of light. During the singing of the chant candles were blessed, lit, and carried in procession.

Lumen ad revelationem gentium: et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.

Lumen &c.

Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.

Lumen &c.

Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum.

Lumen &c.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

Lumen &c.

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Lumen ad revelationem gentium: et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

(*Luke 2, vv. 29–32*)

(*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. A light &c. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. A light &c. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A light &c. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. A light &c. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*)

2 **Bring us, O Lord God** (William Harris, 1883–1973)
(double choir SATB: SATB)

For most of his long life Sir William Harris was a cathedral organist and teacher; from 1933–61 he was organist at St George's Chapel, Windsor. His published compositions are few, all of them church or organ music. *Bring us, O Lord God*, published in 1959, is a spacious double-choir anthem in the rich key of D flat (like Harris's earlier and equally renowned *Faire is the heaven*), with Donne's visionary text looking towards a heaven where 'there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light'. The unmistakably English aura of the music is combined with a perhaps rather un-English intensity of passionate emotion overtly revealed in a harmonic language of almost Straussian ripeness.

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity; in the habitation of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

(*John Donne, 1572–1631*)

3 **Ehtooymni (*Evening hymn*)** (Einojuhani Rautavaara, *b.* 1928)
from *Vigilia* (1972) (SATB)

Rautavaara has long been acknowledged within Finland as the leading Finnish composer of his generation, but internationally his work has gained full recognition only recently. Prolific in both instrumental and vocal music, his music for choir is nourished by Finland's rich, thriving choral tradition. The *Evening hymn* comes from his All-Night Vigil setting, written in 1972 in response to a joint commission from the Helsinki Festival and the Orthodox Church of Finland. The text is a Finnish version of the same third-century Greek evening hymn set to music by Wood in English translation (no. 10), and by Grechaninov (no. 15) and Tchaikovsky (no. 16) in Church Slavonic.

Jeesus Kristus,
Rauhaisa Valkeus
Kuolemattoman Isän,
Taivaallisen, Pyhän Autuaan
rauhaisa Valkeus.

Auringon laskiessa ehtoovalon nähtyämme
me veisaten ylistämme Jumalaa,
Isää, Poikaa ja Pyhää Henkeä.
Jumalan Poika, Elämänantaja,
Kristus.
Otolista on autuain äänin
ylistää Sinua kaikkina aikoina.
Sentähden maailma Sinulle kiitosta kantaa.
Jumalan Poika.

(translated from a 3rd-century Greek hymn)

(For English translation, see No. 10.)

4 **Nýinye otpushcháyeshi (Nunc dimittis)**

(Sergei Rachmaninov, 1873–1943)

(tenor solo and SATB choir)

This is the fifth of the fifteen movements comprising the *All-Night Vigil*, op. 37 (sometimes mis-named the Vespers), Rachmaninov's most enduring contribution to the repertoire of Russian church music. The interest of Russia's leading composers in the liturgy of the Orthodox church had been rekindled by Tchaikovsky's 1878 setting of the Liturgy of St John Chryostom, though creative freedom was limited since the traditional chants were held to be sacred, and over-elaborate or personal treatment of them was frowned upon by the church authorities; instruments, moreover, were forbidden. Rachmaninov's own 1910 setting of the Liturgy (which made no use of pre-existing chants) was in fact never sanctioned for liturgical use. Perhaps to make amends for this official rebuff, in 1915 he wrote the *All-Night Vigil*, in which he did incorporate a number of chant melodies, reverently treated though in his own distinctive style. The work was very well received, though its success was short-lived, since the 1917 Revolution led to the suppression of the church and its music. Rachmaninov retained a particular affection for the Nunc dimittis movement, and wanted it sung at his funeral: he could not have foreseen that in the very different environment of Beverly Hills, his home at

the time of his death, this proved to be impractical. The Nunc dimittis is based on a chant of the Kiev tradition, sung by the tenor soloist, surrounded with a lullaby-like accompaniment from the choir. The final bars have the basses descending to a low B flat; Danilin, the conductor of the Synodal Choir who were to give the first performance, asked the composer 'Where are we to find such basses? They are as rare as asparagus at Christmas.'

Nýinye otpushcháyeshi rabá Tvoyegó, Vladyíko, po glagólu Tvoyemú s mírom:
yáko vídyesta óchi moyí spassyéniye Tvoyé, yézhye yessí ugotóval,
pried litsým vsyehk lyudyéi,
svyet vo otkrovyéniye yazýikov,
i slávu lyudyéi Tvoyikh Izráyila.

(Canticle of Simeon: Luke 2, vv. 29–32)

(Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.)

5 **O Lux beata Trinitas** (William Byrd, 1543–1623)

(SSAATB)

The text of Byrd's motet (proper to Vespers) is one of twelve hymns ascribed to St Ambrose, the fourth-century French bishop who is credited with establishing and codifying a tradition of chant in the Western church, preceding the more renowned Pope Gregory in this endeavour by some 200 years. Byrd's setting, which he designated 'hymnus', is in fact in a fairly contrapuntal motet style, though unusually clear and lucid in texture despite its six voices, and divided into three sections corresponding to the stanzas of the text. The third section is a triple canon, perhaps symbolic of the Holy Trinity. *O Lux beata Trinitas* dates from early in Byrd's career, appearing in his first collection of church music, the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1575 in which seventeen of his compositions were published together with seventeen by Tallis.

O Lux beata Trinitas,
Et principalis Unitas,
Iam sol recedit igneus,
Infunde lumen cordibus.

*O Trinity of blessed light,
O Unity of princely might,
The fiery sun now goes his way;
Shed thou within our hearts thy ray.*

Te mane laudum carmine,
Te deprecamur vesperi,
Te nostra supplex gloria,
Per cuncta laudet saecula.

*To thee our morning song of praise,
To thee our evening prayer we raise;
Thy glory suppliant we adore
For ever and for evermore.*

Deo Patri sit gloria,
Eiusque soli Filio;
Cum Spiritu Paracleto,
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.

*All laud to God the Father be;
All praise, eternal Son, to thee;
All glory, as is ever meet,
To God the holy Paraclete. Amen.*

(St Ambrose, 340–397)

(tr. J. M. Neale)

[6] O coruscans lux stellarum (Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179)

(women's voices)

The music and poetry of Hildegard of Bingen—abbess, mystic and writer—has come to be widely appreciated only in recent years. She gathered together her 77 sacred songs in a liturgically ordered collection called the *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*; *O coruscans lux* is designated as proper to the ceremony of dedicating a church. Its text apostrophizes the church as a place of divine splendour and light; the melody is of appropriately soaring, rhapsodic freedom.

O coruscans lux stellarum,
o splendidissima specialis forma regalium nuptiarum,
o fulgens gemma,
tu es ornata in alta persona,
quae non habet maculatam rugam.

Tu es etiam socia Angelorum
et civis sanctorum.
Fuge, fuge speluncam antiqui perditoris,
et veniens veni in palatium Regis.

(O twinkling light of the stars, O most shining and special image of royal marriage [between Christ and his church], O dazzling jewel, you are dressed in high raiment without blemish or wrinkle. You are truly the abode of the angels and the realm of the saints. Flee, flee, from the cave of the old Satan, and come, come into the palace of the King.)

[7] O nata lux (Thomas Tallis, c.1505–85)

(SATTB)

The Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6th) commemorates the incident when Christ took three apostles up a mountain 'and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light' (Matthew 17, v. 2). *O nata lux* is the office hymn for Lauds on this feast day. Tallis's brief but much-loved setting comes from the *Cantiones Sacrae* of 1575 (see note on No. 5).

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu Redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes precesque sumere.

*O Light of light, by love inclined,
Jesu, Redeemer of mankind,
With loving-kindness deign to hear
From suppliant voices praise and prayer.*

Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es pro perditis,
Nos membra confer effici
Tui beati corporis.

*Thou who to raise our souls from hell
Didst deign in fleshly form to dwell,
Vouchsafe us, when our race is run,
In thy fair Body to be one.*

(10th-century Office hymn)

8 **Te lucis ante terminum** (Thomas Tallis)
(SATTB)

Another of Tallis's contributions to the 1575 *Cantiones Sacrae* (though probably composed some years earlier), *Te lucis ante terminum* is a simple setting of the famous Compline hymn believed to date from before the eighth century and surviving in many medieval manuscripts. As the final evening office of the monastic day, Compline is filled with references to light and darkness, imagery which had particular force in a medieval world 'lit only by fire'.

Te lucis ante terminum,
Rerum Creator, poscimus
Ut pro tua clementia
Sis praesul et custodia.

*Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.*

Procul recedant somnia,
Et noctium phantasmata;
Hostemque nostrum comprime,
Ne polluantur corpora.

*From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know.*

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice;
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum. Amen.

*O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally. Amen.*

(Office hymn for Compline: pre-8th century)

(tr. J. M. Neale)

9 **Hymn to the Creator of Light** (John Rutter, b. 1945)
(double choir SATB: SATB)

The occasion for the first performance of this piece was the dedication of a memorial window to the composer Herbert Howells in Gloucester Cathedral at the 1992 Three Choirs Festival. Howells was born near Gloucester in 1892, and the new stained-glass window was a tangible

memento of his centenary celebrations, as was the commissioning of this anthem. Lancelot Andrewes, the author of the main part of the text, was a leading Anglican theologian of his day, one of the translators of the King James Bible, and Bishop of Winchester from 1618 until his death. His *Preces privatae*, from which the text is taken, is a collection of Latin prayers and meditations.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the visible light,
the sun's ray, the flame of fire;
Creator also of the light invisible and intellectual:
that which is known of God, the light invisible.
Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee,
Creator of the light.

for writings of the law, glory be to thee:
for oracles of prophets, glory be to thee:
for melody of psalms, glory be to thee:
for wisdom of proverbs, glory be to thee:
experience of histories, glory be to thee:
a light which never sets.
God is the Lord, who hath shewed us light.

(Lancelot Andrewes, 1555–1626, tr. Alexander Whyte)

Light, who dost my soul enlighten;
Sun, who all my life dost brighten;
Joy, the sweetest man e'er knoweth;
Fount, whence all my being floweth.
From thy banquet let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep its treasure;
Through the gifts thou here dost give us,
As thy guest in heaven receive us.

(J. Franck, 1618–77, tr. Catherine Winkworth (adapted))

10 Hail, gladdening Light (Charles Wood, 1866–1926)

(double choir SATB: SATB)

The text of this resplendent double-choir anthem is one of the earliest known Christian hymns, first referred to by St Basil in the fourth century and used in the early church at the lighting of the evening lamp at sunset, hence its nickname of ‘the candlelight hymn’. It was incorporated into the Orthodox liturgy of the All-Night Vigil, hence its many settings by Russian composers. John Keble’s English translation attracted the attention of Charles Wood, who set it to music in 1912 as one of a set of anthems for the major festivals of the church. Wood was then Lecturer in Music at Cambridge University (he succeeded to the professorship on the death of Stanford in 1924) and also organist of Gonville and Caius College; the college choir very likely gave the first performance, though publication was delayed until 1919 because of the World War. This anthem has remained a cornerstone of the Anglican repertory ever since.

Hail, gladdening Light, of his pure glory poured,
Who is the immortal Father, heavenly, blest,
Holiest of holies, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Now we are come to the sun’s hour of rest;
The lights of evening round us shine;
We hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit divine.

Worthiest art thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue,
Son of our God, giver of life, alone;
Therefore in all the world thy glories, Lord, they own. Amen.

(3rd century, Greek; tr. John Keble)

11 Christe, qui lux es et dies (Robert Whyte, c.1538–74)

(SSATB)

Little is known of Robert Whyte’s life. Possibly born in London, he was first a chorister and then a student at Trinity College, Cambridge. He held cathedral posts in Ely and Chester before becoming Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey in 1569, remaining there until his death. His vocal music represents the older tradition of Latin polyphonic

composition and was much admired in his century. He wrote four settings of the medieval Compline hymn *Christe, qui lux es et dies*, of which the present one is the simplest, with the chant melody appearing in the top part in the second and sixth stanzas and in the alto for the fourth stanza. The remaining stanzas are sung to the Gregorian chant unharmonized.

Christe, qui lux es et dies,
Noctis tenebras detegis:
Lucisque lumen crederis,
Lumen beatum praedicans.

Precamur, sancte Domine,
Defende nos in hac nocte;
Sit nobis in te requies,
Quietam noctem tribue.

Ne gravis somnus inruat,
Nec hostis nos subripiat,
Nec caro illi consentiens
Nos tibi reos statuat.

Oculi somnum capiant,
Cor ad te semper vigilet.
Dextera tua protegat,
Famulos qui te diligunt.

Defensor noster, aspice,
Insidiantem reprime;
Guberna tuos famulos
Quos sanguine mercatus es.

Memento nostri, Domine,
In isto gravi corpore;
Qui es defensor animae,
Adesto nobis, Domine.

*O Christ, who art the Light and Day
Thou drivest night and gloom away:
O Light of Light, whose word doth show
The light of heaven to us below.*

*All-holy Lord, we pray to thee,
Keep us tonight from danger free;
Grant us, dear Lord, in thee to rest,
So be our sleep in quiet blest.*

*Our sleep be free from sin and pain;
Let not the Tempter vantage gain,
Or our unguarded flesh surprise,
And make us guilty in thine eyes.*

*Asleep though wearied eyes may be,
Still keep the heart awake to thee;
Let thy right hand outstretched above
Guard those who serve the Lord they love.*

*Behold, O God our shield, and quell
The crafts and subtleties of hell;
Direct thy servants in all good,
Whom thou hast redeemed with thy Blood.*

*O Lord, remember us who bear
The burden of the flesh we wear;
Thou, who dost o’er our souls defend,
Be with us even to the end.*

Deo Patri sit gloria
Eiusque soli Filio
Sancto simul cum Spiritu
Nunc et per omne saeculum. Amen.

*All praise to God the Father be,
All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
Whom with the Spirit we adore
For ever and for evermore. Amen.*
Lenten Compline hymn (c. 800)
tr. from W. J. Copeland (19th century)

12 Nunc dimittis (Gustav Holst, 1874–1934)
(SSAATTBB)

In 1914 R. R. Terry, organist of the then recently-built Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral in London, invited four composers (including the young Herbert Howells) to write unaccompanied eight-part *Nunc dimittis* settings for use at the cathedral's Compline services during Holy Week. Holst's setting was performed on Easter Sunday 1915 but not then published. After lying forgotten for many years, it was revised and published in 1979 by the composer's daughter Imogen, quickly establishing itself in the repertoire as an imaginative and assured setting of its familiar text: Holst seized the opportunities offered by the eight-voiced medium and the very reverberant acoustic of the cathedral to create a setting of exceptionally full, sonorous texture, with a lovely opening that seems to evoke the gentle lighting of candles.

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

(Luke 2, vv. 29–32)

(Translation as for No. 4)

13 Christe, qui lux es et dies (G. P. da Palestrina, 1525–94)
(SATTB)

Gregorian chant runs like a golden thread through the sacred music of most Renaissance composers. In Palestrina's case it is most clearly to be discerned in his only collection of polyphonic hymn settings, published in 1589, where the outlines of the chant melodies are

recognizable in most of the voice parts, notably the soprano, rather than the tenor which had been favoured by earlier composers. *Christe, qui lux es et dies* comes from the 1589 publication; its version of the chant differs slightly from that used by Whyte in No. 11. Palestrina achieves an impressively cumulative effect by reserving the use of all five voices until the final stanza.

(Text and translation as for No. 11, verses 1, 3, 5, and 7)

14 Nunc dimittis (Josquin Desprez, c.1440–1521)
(SATB)

Such was the prestige enjoyed by the music of Josquin during and immediately after his lifetime that an unusually large number of compositions which he probably or definitely did not write were attributed to him, some no doubt on the principle that an orphan given a famous name is more likely to succeed in the world. This appears to be the case with the present *Nunc dimittis*, which was included in the collected Josquin edition but subsequently shown to be of unreliable attribution. Whoever the composer, it is a setting of affecting simplicity and expressiveness which bears some of the hallmarks of Josquin's style, notably in the alternation of high and low pairs of voices. Particularly effective is a reprise near the end (unusual in Renaissance motets) of the opening words and music.

(Text and translation as for No. 12)

15 Svyétye tikhii (Hail, gladdening Light)
(Alexander Grechaninov, 1864–1956) (SATB)

Grechaninov's life began in Moscow and ended in New York. He was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and enjoyed some early success in various genres, notably songs, piano pieces, and music for children, but it is his church music, a lifelong interest, which has best endured. In 1910 the Tsar granted him a pension in recognition of his music for the Orthodox church. In 1925 he settled in Paris, and in 1940 emigrated to America where he continued to compose church music, not all for the Orthodox liturgy, however. The present *Svyétye tikhii*, a typical example of his warmly resonant choral writing, is from his *Liturgy of Holy Week*, op. 58 (1911).

Svyétye tikhii svyatyíya slávyi, byessmyéртnago Otsá nyebyéssnago,
Svyatágo blazhénnago, Iissússye Khristyé!

Prishyédsbye na západ sólnitsa, vídyevshye svyet vyechyérnii,
Poyém Otsá, Syina i Svyatago, Dúkha, Boga!
Dostóyin yessí vo vssyá vryemyená pyet byíti glássyi pryepodóbnymi,
Syínye Bózhi, zhivót dayai; tyem zhe mir Tya slávit.

(Slavonic translation of a 3rd-century Greek hymn)

(For English translation, see No. 10.)

[16] Svyétye tikhii (Hail, gladdening Light) (P. I. Tchaikovsky, 1840–93)
(SATB)

Tchaikovsky's setting of the same text as No. 15 comes from his 1881 *All-Night Vigil*, op. 52, the second of his two substantial liturgical works. His 1878 *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* had incurred the disapproval of the church authorities, and, like Rachmaninov thirty years later, Tchaikovsky seems to have been anxious to avoid further trouble. In a lengthy preface to the *All-Night Vigil*, he stresses the care with which he approached the task of harmonizing the traditional chants and his determination to purge his style of all 'foreign' influences which might dilute its essential Russianness. His approach to the text of *Svyétye tikhii* is more joyous, less consistently reflective and homophonic than Grechaninov's, and he is willing to risk a hint of contrapuntal writing in the second section of the piece, a technique liable to incur the disapproval of the church. In fact, his *All-Night Vigil* was officially sanctioned for liturgical use and became very popular, serving as a model for other composers including Rachmaninov.

(Text and translation as for No. 15)

[17] Lucis Creator optime (G. P. da Palestrina)
(SATTB)

This is a setting (from the same 1589 publication as No. 13) of an Office hymn generally used at Sunday Vespers, believed to be by Pope Gregory—from whom Gregorian chant takes its name. As with No. 13, Palestrina reserves his full five voices for the final stanza; here he achieves additional contrast by setting the middle stanza for just three voices.

Lucis Creator optime, *O blest creator of the light,*
Lucem dierum preferens, *Who mak'st the day with radiance bright,*

Primordiis lucis novae
Mundi parans originem.

*And o'er the forming world didst call
The light from chaos first of all;*

Ne mens gravata crimine,
Vitae sit exsul munere,
Dum nil perenne cogitat,
Seseque culpīs illigat.

*Let us not sink in sin and strife,
And lose the gift of endless life;
While thinking but the thoughts of time,
To weave new chains of woe and crime.*

Praesta, Pater piissime,
Patrique compar Unice,
Cum Spiritu Paraclito,
Regnans per omne saeculum.

*O Father, that we ask be done,
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son;
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
Doth live and reign eternally.*

(6th-century Office hymn, attributed to
Pope Gregory, c.540–604)

[17] Lux aeterna (György Ligeti, b. 1923)
(SSSSAAAATTTTBBBB)

Born in Transylvania, in the border region between Hungary and Romania, Ligeti studied composition at first locally and then at the Budapest Academy, where he became a professor in 1950. Leaving Hungary in 1956, the year of the Uprising, he settled in Vienna, establishing his reputation with a series of avant-garde compositions beginning with *Apparitions* (1959). His *Requiem* (1965), a response to the horrors of World War II, made a deep impression, and was swiftly followed by the present *Lux aeterna* (1966), which can be seen as a pendant to it. The *Lux aeterna* was commissioned by the conductor of the Stuttgart Schola Cantorum for inclusion in a recording of new music. If the prevailing mood of the *Requiem* is one of death, the *Lux aeterna* carries the hope of resurrection, consistent with the eternal light referred to in its text. A sense of harmony and tonality (largely absent in the *Requiem*) is discernible, with the periodic recurrence of clear unison notes and a three-note 'rainbow' chord (E flat, F, A flat on its first appearance). No rhythmic pulse can be detected, because eternity has no sense of time, but the shape and structure of *Lux aeterna* is lucid and even strict. At the time Ligeti wrote it, he was interested in concepts of space and distance—his next work after the *Lux aeterna* was called *Lontano*—and at the top of the score of the *Lux aeterna* appears the general instruction 'as if from afar'. Ligeti divides the choir into sixteen parts, which enables him to form, literally,

nebulous clusters of notes slowly shifting in subtle and ever-changing patterns. All of this suggests that the ‘eternal light’ of the title may be cosmological rather than spiritual; in 1968 the American film director Stanley Kubrick used portions of the *Lux aeterna* and the *Requiem* in his immensely influential film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which further encouraged a ‘galactic’ interpretation of the music. Whether we should think of the eternal light as coming from distant galaxies or from God, there is no doubt that *Lux aeterna* is a masterpiece, taking choral music—and the listener—into a new and eerie sound-world of the imagination.

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat . . .
*(May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord: with all thy saints for evermore, for thy mercy’s sake.
Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord: and may light perpetual shine upon . . .)*

Timothy Brown, Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge, succeeded John Rutter as director of Clare College Choir in 1979. With the choir he has made many recordings and broadcasts, and undertaken numerous overseas tours. He also directs Cambridge University Chamber Choir and the London-based professional chamber choir English Voices. Described recently in a leading newspaper as ‘one of Britain’s most effective choir conductors and a prime custodian of the tradition that makes Oxbridge chapels famous from Seattle to St Petersburg’, he undertakes many freelance conducting engagements and is a popular tutor at international singing courses. He has been a guest chorus-master at the Berlin Staatsoper and, in 1998, at the Flanders Opera. He has edited a number of choral volumes for Faber Music and is a contributing editor to the complete edition of music by William Walton, published by Oxford University Press.



Clare College, founded in 1326, is the second oldest of the colleges of Cambridge University. Situated on the banks of the River Cam in the heart of Cambridge with its main buildings dating from the seventeenth century, Clare is a flourishing community of some 75 fellows, 400 undergraduates, and 130 graduate students. Music plays an important role in the life of the college. In 1971 the hitherto all-male chapel choir was re-established as a mixed-voice group of some 24 voices, since when it has gained an international reputation as one of the leading choral groups in Britain. The choir is conducted by the Director of Music, who is a Fellow of the college, assisted by two undergraduate organ scholars. It exists primarily to sing regular choral services in the college chapel, but in addition gives frequent concerts, both in Britain and abroad. Radio and television broadcasts, and recordings, form a regular part of the choir’s increasingly busy schedule.