Nine Lessons and Carols

A traditional Christmas service, from one of Oxford's finest buildings, the fifteenth century chapel of Magdalen College, Oxford, where there has been a continuous choral tradition since the 1480s. Boys' voices soar in the fine acoustics, in an evocative and moving programme of Christmas music and readings.

1 **Once in royal David's City** *arranged* David Willcocks (b 1919)
Soloist: Adam Blackwell

2 **Bidding Prayer**, followed by **The Lord's Prayer**
Rev Dr Michael Piret, Dean of Divinity

3 **The truth sent from above** Traditional *arranged* R Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) Soloist: Oliver Hayes

4 **1st Lesson: Genesis 3:8–15** *God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head*
Read by William Roome, Head Chorister

5 **De profundis** Arvo Pärt (b 1935)

6 **2nd Lesson: Genesis 22:15–18** *God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed*
Read by Romy Cerratti, Graduate Student

7 **O remember Adam's fall** Grayston Ives (b 1948)
Soloists: Michal Czepiel (treble), Oliver Morris (tenor)

8 **3rd Lesson: Isaiah 9:2,6-7** *Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah* Read by Sian Williams, Graduate Student

9 **Riu, riu chiu** Mateo Flecha (1481–1553) Soloists: Ian Machacek, Oliver Hayes, Michael Holiday, Richard Olney

10 **4th Lesson: Isaiah 11:1–9** *The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown* Read by Patrick Porter, Graduate Student

11 **How beautiful upon the mountains**
John Stainer (1840–1901)

12 **5th Lesson: Luke 1:26–38** *The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary* Read by Sarah Cotterill, Undergraduate

13 **Es ist ein' 'Ros entsprungen**
Michael Praetorius (c1571–1621)

14 **6th Lesson: Matthew 1:18-23** *St Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus* Read by Mark Blandford-Baker, Fellow of the College

15 **Unto us is born a Son** *arranged* David Willcocks

16 **All sons of Adam** Anonymous Scottish 15th century

17 **Sweet was the song** Grayston Ives

18 **7th Lesson: Luke 2:8–16** *The shepherds go to the manger*
Read by Judith Strutt, Member of College Staff

19 **Rise up, shepherd!** Spiritual *arranged Grayston Ives*
Soloist: Michael Holiday

20 **8th Lesson: Matthew 2:1–11** *The wise men are led by the star to Jesus* Read by Rev Michael Wright, Honorary Chaplain

21 **There shall a star** Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)
Soloists: Stefan Roberts (treble), David Willey (tenor), Oliver Hayes (baritone), Ian Machacek (bass)

22 **9th Lesson: John 1:1-14** *St John unfolds the mystery of the Incarnation* Read by Anthony Smith, President of the College

23 **All this time** William Walton (1902–83)

24 **Collect for Christmas Eve**
Rev Dr Michael Piret, Dean of Divinity

25 **O come, all ye faithful** *arranged* David Willcocks

26 **The Blessing** Rev Dr Michael Piret, Dean of Divinity

27 **Paean** Kenneth Leighton (1929–88) Richard Pinel, organ

The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
Directed by Bill Ives
Richard Pinel, organ

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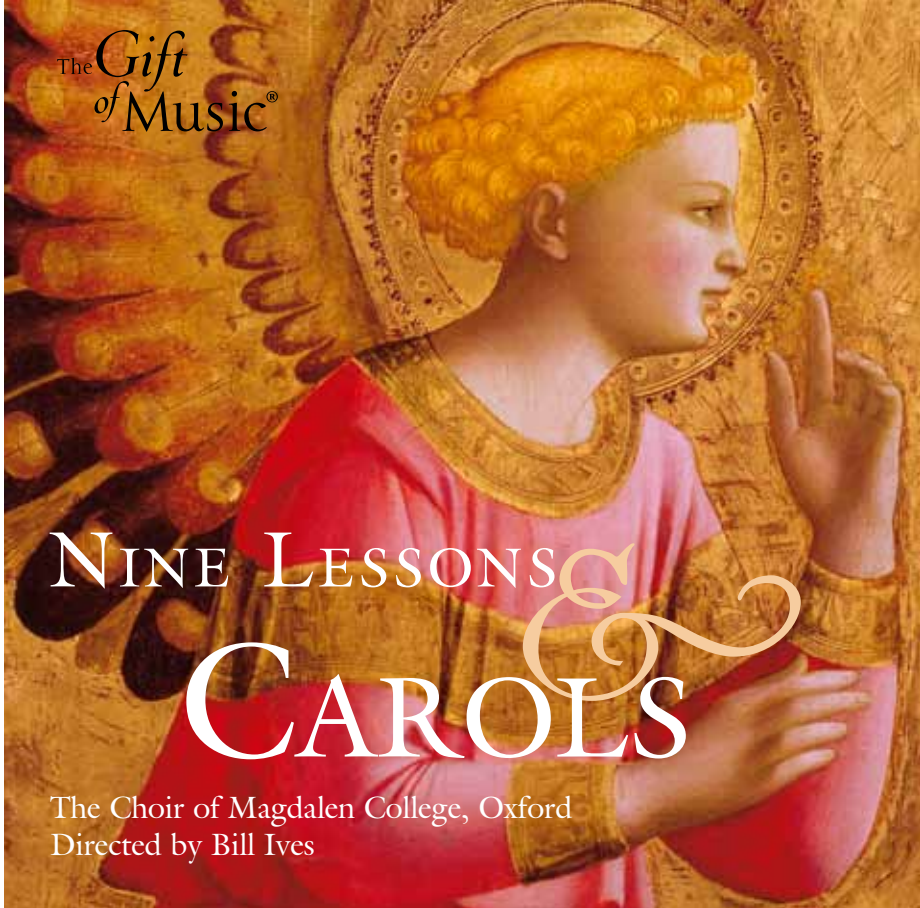

Nine Lessons and Carols

The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
directed by Bill Ives
Richard Pinel, organ

The fifteenth century tower of Magdalen College is one of Oxford's most famous and beautiful landmarks. Situated at the Eastern end of the famous 'High', a street universally acknowledged as one of the finest in Europe, the college was founded in 1458 by William of Waynflete. In 1480 provision was made for eight singing-men, four chaplains and 16 boy choristers, thus creating one of the oldest and largest choral foundations in late-medieval England. With the more recent addition of four clerks and two Organ Scholars, that tradition has been maintained to this day. The Choristers are educated at Magdalen College School, while the Academical Clerks are all undergraduates at Magdalen reading a variety of subjects. The Director of Music, Bill Ives, still retains the ancient Latin title, Informator Choristarum (Instructor of the Choristers). Many notable musicians have held this post, including John Sheppard, Daniel Purcell (brother of Henry), Sir John Stainer, Sir William McKie and Bernard Rose.

The choir has a particular assocation with Christmas carols, since it was Sir John Stainer together with a Magdalen colleague, Rev. HR Bramley, who published in 1871 one of the first ever collections of Christmas carols, 'Carols New and Old'. This volume's mixture of historically researched carols from medieval England onwards, with the addition of newly-composed pieces, provided a model for carol collections which has remained in common use ever since.

The main duty of the Choir is to sing daily in the College Chapel; during the University Term there are seven choral services each week. The Choir also sings at a number of special occasions throughout the academic year, including the great May Day celebrations, an ancient tradition dating back to c.1509.

In recent years Magdalen College Choir has sung in Japan, USA, Hungary, Italy, Belgium and France. In 1997 they made their debut at the BBC Proms. They have also featured on film and television, most notably in Richard Attenborough's acclaimed movie, Shadowlands. Other soundtracks and appearances include Ever After for 20th Century Fox, and Longitude for Channel Four. In 2001 the Choir presented the first public performance of a new choral work, Ecce Cor Meum, written especially for them by Sir Paul McCartney. A new film soundtrack by George Fenton for the movie Deep Blue (adapted for the big screen from the remarkable BBC TV documentary series, Blue Planet) features the Choir with the Berliner Philharmoniker (the orchestra's first-ever film score).

The Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford
directed by Bill Ives with Richard Pinel, organ

Choristers
William Roome
Daniel Smith
Adam Blackwell
Benjamin Goodall
Billy Harpin
Robert Henderson
Michal Czepiel
Stefan Roberts
Nicholas Tollemache
Nicholas Doig
Sebastian Carter
Charlie Hicks
George Boulton
Jez Alleyn

Altos
Matthew Ingleby
Daniel Parkes
Matthew Rogers
Magid El-Bushra

Tenors
Oliver Morris
Daniel Turner
David Willey
Andrew McAnerney

Basses
Oliver Hayes
Michael Holiday
Ian Machacek
Richard Olney

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Richard Pinel, organ

Readings by members of the college

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