

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Hodie

(Christmas Cantata)

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Janice Watson • Peter Hoare • Stephen Gadd

Guildford Choral Society • Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Hilary Davan Wetton



Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
Fantasia on Christmas Carols • Hodie

1	Fantasia on Christmas Carols ^{3,4}	11:42
	Hodie (This Day)	59:17
2	Prologue: Nowell! Nowell! ⁴	3:56
3	Narration: Now is the birth of Jesus Christ ^{2,5}	4:54
4	Song: It was the winter wild ^{1,4}	4:46
5	Narration: And it came to pass in those days ⁵	1:55
6	Choral: The blessed son of God ⁴	2:25
7	Narration: And there were in the same country ^{1,2,4,5}	7:06
8	Song: The Oxen ³	3:20
9	Narration: And the shepherds returned ^{4 (female chorus only), 5}	1:12
10	Pastoral: The shepherds sing ³	3:04
11	Narration: But Mary kept all these things ⁵	0:34
12	Lullaby: Sweet was the song the Virgin sang ^{1,4 (female chorus only)}	2:32
13	Hymn: Bright portals of the sky ²	3:55
14	Narration: Now when Jesus was born ^{4,5}	3:00
15	The March of the Three Kings: From kingdoms of wisdom ^{1,2,3,4}	7:33
16	Choral: No sad thought his soul affright ⁴	2:18
17	Epilogue: In the beginning was the Word ^{1,2,3,4}	6:49

Janice Watson, Soprano ¹ • **Peter Hoare, Tenor** ² • **Stephen Gadd, Baritone** ³
Guildford Choral Society ⁴
St Catherine's School Middle Chamber Choir ⁵ (Director: Andrew Lamb)
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Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Fantasia on Christmas Carols · Hodie

Ralph Vaughan Williams, fresh down from Cambridge, first went to the Royal College of Music as a student in 1895. We tend to forget that he was composing throughout his student years, because later he suppressed almost everything which he had written before he found his mature voice, except some songs. At the time this was a clear-sighted and sensible policy which must have required a great deal of self-discipline to carry out, but it meant that when he achieved national recognition in the five years before the First World War with *Toward the Unknown Region*, *On Wenlock Edge*, the *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*, *A Sea Symphony*, the *Five Mystical Songs* and the *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, he had not only achieved a remarkable artistic tour-de-force but in six or seven years had evolved an idiom and a usage which in the space of very few years was characteristic of those who would supplant most of the previously established British music of the Victorian Era.

The elements that came together to produce so distinctive a personal style, and so dramatic and beneficial a change of direction for the British music of his time, were folk-song, impressionism in both harmony and orchestration, and the use of very varied anthologies of English (including American) literature for his vocal works, with extracts from the King James Bible.

Curiously, Christmas has been a ready theme throughout Vaughan Williams's music, an interest generated by his enthusiasm for folk-music, and first in evidence in his work on the *English Hymnal*, first published in 1906. There in his early Christmas music he took many folk-tunes for what then were new carols that became popular favourites. In 1912 came his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, discussed below, and written for Hereford where his friend Mrs E M Leather was the source of two of the tunes he set. After the war he turned to this attractive music again and in 1920 he published *Twelve Traditional Carols from Herefordshire* which he and Mrs Leather edited for publication. Then in 1926

came the Dickensian masque – folk ballet would be a better description – *On Christmas Night* – heard in London in 1929 as *A Christmas Carol Suite*. After this twenty years passed, until in 1949 he wrote *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons* for the National Federation of Women's Institutes, sung at the Royal Albert Hall by a vast female choir; from our perspective the fourth movement, 'Winter' again takes Christmas as his theme. So when in 1953 he started writing *Hodie*, he was making a final summation of a lifetime's sympathy in celebrating the Nativity. Even then he had not done with Christmas and in 1958, only months before his death at the age of 86, he completed a final setting for voices, *The First Nowell*.

In 1911 Vaughan Williams set George Herbert's poetry in his *Five Mystical Songs* and found the style in which within a year he created his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, using similar forces, also with the baritone Campbell McInnes as soloist. Significantly Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* is dedicated to Cecil Sharp, which places it squarely in the mainstream of his folk-song works. It incorporates four traditional English carols, the second 'Come all you worthy gentlemen' collected by Sharp. Otherwise there are three other tunes treated in full: 'This is the truth sent from above', 'On Christmas night all Christians sing' and 'God bless the ruler of this house, and long may he reign' (tune: 'There is a fountain'). The first and the last of these came from Herefordshire, the composer acknowledging 'Mrs Leather' as his source, and 'On Christmas Night' collected in Sussex by Vaughan Williams himself in 1904. Fragments of other well-known carols appear from time to time as links or counter-melodies.

The score is notable for the opening cello solo and for the varied treatment of the choir, who are not only asked to sing conventionally, but also to do so with closed lips (as in the humming tone at the outset), to vocalise to 'ah' and to singing with half-closed lips, as the composer described it 'with a short "u" sound as in

the word “but” developing the choral treatment he had first used in the *Five Mystical Songs* of the previous year. This makes for a very varied and atmospheric choral-orchestral texture. The *Fantasia* was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford on 12th September 1912 with the composer conducting.

Vaughan Williams sets *Hodie* (This Day) in sixteen movements, and Anglican listeners unfamiliar with it will almost certainly immediately relate it to the familiar Christmas service of nine lessons and carols, here Vaughan Williams giving us seven lessons and songs or carols, with a prologue and epilogue. Nor must we forget that Vaughan Williams conducted Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* in his own idiosyncratic edition for some thirty years, and debts to Bach may be felt in the treatment, though not the actual sound.

From the opening celebratory *Prologue* with its fanfares and the brilliant shouts of the Vespers for Christmas day, this is clearly a work of celebration. Vaughan Williams sets the Latin text, which translates as:

Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
Christmas Day, Christ was born on Christmas Day.
Christmas Day, on earth are Angels singing,
archangels rejoicing.
Christmas Day, rejoice ye just men, saying
Glory to God in the highest.
Alleluia.

Throughout Vaughan Williams gives us seven passages of narration, largely sung by the boy chorists to simple organ accompaniment. We first hear them in the second number as St Matthew tells us of the birth of Jesus, the voice of the angel appearing to Joseph in a dream being sung by the solo tenor.

For his first song Vaughan Williams quarried Milton’s *Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity* and he returns to it at the end. Here he sets ‘*It was the winter wild*’ for solo soprano coloured by the sound of the women’s choir. This is a poised, soaring setting, its feeling of frozen sculptured lines reinforced by the orchestral textures, all flute and strings.

The boys continue the Narration with more of the

familiar Christmas words, now from St Luke: ‘*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*’ This leads to what Vaughan Williams calls a ‘Choral’, an unaccompanied choral setting of Miles Coverdale’s English words, *The blessed son of God*, translating Martin Luther.

The Narration resumes with ‘*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field*’. The boys sing of the Angel of the Lord, the solo tenor, whose entry is heightened by the entry of the accompanying orchestra, and it builds to a brief but blazing climax – then tells of the baby lying in a manger, now to evocative harp accompaniment. We hear the opening *Glorias* again, and the section ends with the words ‘*Good will towards men*’, the tempo now *Allegro vivace*, which is given extended treatment.

We reach the third song, a set piece setting of Thomas Hardy’s familiar poem ‘*The Oxen*’, given to the baritone soloist, as one of the shepherds, the flute and winds being very prominent in the accompaniment. The chorists continue the Narration ‘*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God*’, and ending with a brief outburst ‘*Glory to God in the highest*’. Vaughan Williams now turns to George Herbert for a second baritone solo which he characterizes as a pastoral, with the words ‘*The shepherds sing*’.

The Narration continues from Luke: ‘*But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart*’ leading straight into the Lullaby for chorus and solo soprano ‘*Sweet was the song the Virgin sang*’. So simple and heartfelt an invention was something Vaughan Williams could always achieve supremely well. In 1954 one might well imagine it seemed old fashioned, in fact we can now see it was timeless.

Trumpet and brilliant orchestral sounds announce the radiant tenor solo, setting words by William Drummond in the hymn ‘*Bright portals of the sky, / Emboss’d with sparkling stars.*’ No ordinary hymn, this celebratory panegyric to the glory of the heavens is illuminated by the coruscating orchestral textures, belying the view sometimes heard that Vaughan Williams had no feeling for the orchestra.

The contrast with the organ announcing the following Narration is striking. This time the male chorus soon reinforce the boys in Matthew's words: 'Now when Jesus was born, behold, there came wise men from the east'. Vaughan Williams loved a vividly imagined set-piece like *The March of the Three Kings* which his wife Ursula Vaughan Williams provided for him as a penultimate climax. The composer pulls in all his forces, three soloists, choir and orchestra. They sing of the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and eventually the movement ends quietly and is followed by Ursula Vaughan Williams's gentle interlude 'No sad thought his soul affright' – another Choral – heralded by wide-spanning strings, the chorus entering unaccompanied.

Vaughan Williams called his closing sequence 'Epilogue'. Here he revisits the two themes we may remember from the message to Joseph at the beginning.

Janice Watson

Janice Watson studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and first came to prominence as winner of the Kathleen Ferrier memorial award. In opera she has sung Pamina with the Paris Opéra; Vitellia for the Flanders Opera; Strauss's Daphne, Arabella, Salome and Mozart's Elettra (*Idomeneo*) at the Santa Fe Festival; Daphne, Arabella and Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) with the San Francisco Opera; Pamina, Countess Almaviva and Arabella at the Bavarian State Opera; Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) at the Vienna State Opera, Netherlands Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Britten's *Gloriana* under Richard Hickox at the Aldeburgh Festival; Countess Almaviva for the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin and in Tokyo, Micaela at both the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera, and both Countess Almaviva and Liù at the Metropolitan Opera. She has been a regular guest with both English National Opera (most recently as the Marschallin and Madama Butterfly) and Welsh National Opera (most recently as Strauss's Ariadne). She returned to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Jennifer (*The Midsummer Marriage*) returned to the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin as Salome and sang Kat'á Kabanová both for the Royal Opera and in her début at La Scala, Milan. Her concerts include the Boston Symphony Orchestra under both Norrington and Previn, the San Francisco Symphony under Tilson-Thomas, the London Symphony Orchestra under Colin Davis, Previn and Chailly, the Orchestre de Paris under Brüggén, the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields under Marriner, the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Haitink and both the Chicago Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw Orchestras under Riccardo Chailly. Janice Watson's many recordings include Orff's *Carmina Burana* for Virgin Classics, Poulenc's *Gloria* for Chandos and Howells' *Missa Sabriensis* under Rozhdestvensky. She recorded Ellen Orford under Richard Hickox for Chandos (for which she received a Grammy Award) and with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Colin Davis on the LSO Live label; Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under Sir Colin Davis for Philips Classics and the title rôle in *Jenůfa* under Sir Charles Mackerras for Chandos. She sang *A Streetcar Named Desire* under André Previn with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Oslo Philharmonic in Oslo and Vienna and in the new production at the Theater an der Wien.

The baritone, like the very voice of God, solemnly intones 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' For his ecstatic finale Vaughan Williams again turns to Milton's *Hymn on the morning of Christ's Nativity*, revisiting the tune of the earlier setting in No 3. He changes the order of Milton's verses starting with 'Ring out, ye crystal spheres' and with a typical march, all bells and running strings, the chorus lead us into the gloriously affirmative finale, saving for the end 'Yea, truth and justice then'. Tumultuous is the only adequate word to describe the close. Its first performance at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester Cathedral on 8th September 1954 conducted by the composer was almost exactly 42 years since he had appeared at neighbouring Hereford with his *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*.

Lewis Foreman © 2007

Peter Hoare

Peter Hoare was born in Bradford and studied percussion at the Huddersfield School of Music. Following several years as a freelance percussionist, he began his professional singing career in 1992. Operatic rôles include Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the Captain in *Wozzeck*, Vaudemont in *Iolanta*, Tito in *La clemenza di Tito*, Narraboth in *Salome*, the Simpleton in *Boris Godunov*, the Witch in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Tikhon in *Kat'a Kabanová* and Golitsyn in *Khovanshchina* for Welsh National Opera; Bardolfo in *Falstaff*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Mr Upfold in *Albert Herring*, Idomeneo and Arbace in *Idomeneo* and Brother Elusaf in *A Betrothal in the Monastery* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Arbace for the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle in Berlin, Lucerne, and at the Salzburg Festival, Herod in *Salome* for Opera North, the Schoolmaster in *The Cunning Little Vixen* for Scottish Opera; Desportes in *Die Soldaten* for Kultur Ruhr, Tikhon for Grand Théâtre de Genève, Bardolfo with the London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Colin Davis, Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* for Opéra de Lausanne; Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Concert engagements include *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Daniel Harding; the Royal Flemish Philharmonic conducted by Daniele Callegari in Brussels and Antwerp and the Nash Ensemble conducted by Martyn Brabbins at the Cheltenham Festival, Tippett's *A Child of our Time* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gerard Schwarz, Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, Janáček's *The Diary of One who Disappeared* and Elliot Carter's *In Sleep, In Thunder* with Contrechamps in Geneva and at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Bochumer Symphoniker, *Roméo et Juliette* with the Bochumer Symphoniker, *Judas Maccabaeus* recorded for Anglia Television, *La damnation de Faust* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland). Recordings include Delius's *Song of the High Hills* and the Master of Ceremonies in Britten's *Gloriana* conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras for Decca Records, and Leonard Meryll in *Yeomen of the Guard* with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Orchestra of the Welsh National Opera for the Telarc Label.

Stephen Gadd

Stephen Gadd is one of Britain's best known and most versatile concert and opera singers: he has made numerous appearances at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and he broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio. After graduating from St John's College, Cambridge, he studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. He was twice a finalist in the Plácido Domingo International Singing Competition, and among other numerous awards he won the 1990 Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship. Since then he has performed with major orchestras in concerts throughout Europe and the Orient. His opera performances have included the title rôle in Verdi's *Macbeth* and Melot in *Tristan und Isolde* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Paolo in Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* for the Salzburg Festival, Der Führer der Prévôté in *Cardillac* for Opéra de Paris, Germont Père in *La traviata* for Den Norske Opera, Oslo, Lysiart (*Euryanthe*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Ping (*Turandot*) for Covent Garden, Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*) for Opéra de Montpellier, Valentin (*Faust*) for the Opéra National du Rhin, Renato (*Un Ballo in Maschera*) for English National Opera, Escamillo in *Carmen* for Welsh National Opera, Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Riccardo (*I Puritani*) and Yeletsky (*The Queen of Spades*) for Opéra de Nantes, the Conte di Luna (*Il trovatore*), Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Germont Père (*La traviata*) and Yeletsky (*The Queen of Spades*) - all for Scottish Opera, de Sirix in *Fedora* for Opera Holland Park, Marcello (*La Bohème*) for the Beijing International Festival, Silvio (*I Pagliacci*) and Scarpia (*Tosca*) at the Festival de la Vézère, Escamillo (*Carmen*) in Hong Kong, Ferryman (Britten's *Curlw River*) for Opéra de Rouen, and the Duke in Rachmaninov's *The Miserly Knight* for

BBC Radio 3. His concert repertoire is equally diverse, including Britten's *War Requiem*, Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Brahms's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Stephen Gadd's recordings for Deutsche Grammophon include Mozart's *Krönungsmesse* and *Vesperae Solenne Confessore* and Purcell's *Dioclesian*, and for Hyperion he has recorded Hamish MacCunn's opera *Jeannie Deans*. He has also recorded highlights from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and *La Bohème* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and his wife, the soprano Claire Rutter.

Guildford Choral Society

Guildford Choral Society was founded at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, making it one of the longest established choirs in England yet it remains one of the most dynamic and ambitious amateur choirs in the South East. Its 200 members are drawn from all over the region and represent a broad spectrum of ages and occupations. Musical Director Hilary Davan Wetton was appointed in 1968 and the choir's achievements owe much to his commitment and the support of Associate Conductor, David Gibson, who was appointed in 1975.

Promoting concerts in Guildford and in the major London concert halls and occasionally abroad, the Society performs with professional orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic, the BBC Concert Orchestra, The Hanover Band and the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as renowned soloists such as Roderick Williams, Mary Nelson, Mark Wilde and Michael George. Several concerts have been recorded for broadcast by BBC Radio 3, and the choir has made a number of commercial recordings.

The choir has developed a wide-ranging repertoire, featuring twentieth-century music in particular. It also arranges tutorials, singing days and residential workshops that promote the development of singing technique and musical knowledge and the enjoyment of choral music and are open to non-members.

Further information is available from www.guildfordchoral.org

Guildford Choral Society acknowledges with gratitude the generous bequests from the estates of Ian Douglas and Tessa Kershaw that made this recording possible.

St Catherine's School Choir

St Catherine's School, Bramley, is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged 4 -18. Founded in 1885, the School enjoys over a century of tradition and prides itself on its own very special blend of academic excellence and pastoral care. St Catherine's has one of the most comprehensive music departments in the country with a national reputation for choral music. The Middle Chamber Choir comprises 40 girls aged under 14 who have passed an audition; it has competed very successfully in local music competitions and festivals. The Choir is trained by Andrew Lamb, Assistant Director of Music.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Founded in 1946 by Sir Thomas Beecham, with his vision of bringing world-class performances of the greatest music written to the length of the country, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra continues to maintain Beecham's legacy by offering the highest possible standards of music-making, accompanied by some of the most acclaimed artists of the day. The RPO has been directed by some of the world's finest conductors, most notably Rudolf Kempe, Antal Doráti, André Previn and Vladimir Ashkenazy, followed in 1996 by their present Music Director, Daniele Gatti, and looks forward to welcoming Charles Dutoit as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor from 2009.

Based in London, with a resident series at the Royal Albert Hall and Cadogan Hall, the Orchestra also has a comprehensive UK and overseas touring programme, visiting over thirty countries in the last five years. Highlights have included playing for the late Pope John Paul II in the Vatican, for the President of China in Tiananmen Square and at the tenth anniversary celebration of Kazakhstan's independence, in addition to touring regularly throughout Europe and the USA. The Orchestra has made many recordings and has a commitment to community and education projects, as well as to contemporary composers.

Further information is available from www.rpo.co.uk

Hilary Davan Wetton

Hilary Davan Wetton is one of Britain's most versatile and dynamic conductors. He has been Principal Conductor of the Milton Keynes City Orchestra since 1975; from 1989 to 1996 he was also Principal Conductor of the Wren Orchestra of London. He is Musical Director of two major choirs: the Guildford Choral Society and the City of London Choir. He was Founder-Conductor of the Holst Singers, and directed them from 1978–1992, conducting many first performances and acclaimed discs of Bliss, Elgar, Holst and Vaughan Williams. He has also made several outstanding recordings with the Guildford Choral Society; in 1994 his disc of Holst's *Choral Symphony* was awarded the *Diapason d'Or*. The City of London Choir has a highly regarded annual season at St John's Smith Square as well as performing on London's South Bank and at the Barbican. Hilary appears frequently as a guest conductor with choirs and orchestras both in Britain and overseas – notably with the Philharmonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hanover Band.

Hilary broadcasts regularly on Radio 3 and on Classic FM. He has given many premières both with the BBC Concert Orchestra and with the Ulster Orchestra. Between 1986 and 1990 he conducted a series of first broadcasts of 19th century British symphonies (by Cipriani Potter, Sterndale Bennett, William Crotch and Samuel Wesley) with the Ulster Orchestra. Subsequently he recorded much of this repertoire with the Milton Keynes Orchestra whose conductor he has been since 1975. With this orchestra he has appeared throughout Great Britain (including the Cheltenham, Henley and Stratford Festivals) as well as in the United States and France. The MKCO has broadcast concerts on BBC2, Anglia Television and Classic FM. In the opera pit Hilary has appeared on a number of occasions with Travelling Opera, for whom he has conducted *Così fan tutte*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Carmen* and *The Barber of Seville*. He conducted the first ever danced version of Mozart's *Requiem* in a double bill with Stravinsky's *Apollo* at London's Sadlers Wells Theatre for the French company Ballet du Nord. Recent appearances have included Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* and Walton's *Façade* with Dame Cleo Laine and Vaughan Williams' *Oxford Elegy* with Jeremy Irons.

Hilary's skills as a communicator became known to a large public through his presentation of the *Masterclass* series for Classic FM and his appearances on the BBC *Play it Again* series. He has a long-standing commitment to music-making with young people: from 1983 to 1987 he was conductor of the Orchestra of the Birmingham Conservatoire and he has worked with Youth Orchestras as far afield as Melbourne and Singapore. He was conductor of the Scottish Schools Orchestra from 1984–1995 and of the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra from 1994–1997. He made his début with the National Children's Orchestra in 1997 and has since given many acclaimed performances with them including the Orchestra's concerts at the BBC Proms in 2000, in the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester in 2001 and 2007, and in Birmingham Symphony Hall in 2003. He has been awarded honorary degrees by the Open University (MA) and de Montfort University (DMus).



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Vaughan Williams's Christmas Cantata *Hodie* (This Day) is a brilliant mosaic of musical styles set to poetry from the most diverse sources. Texts by Milton, Hardy, and George Herbert reflecting various Christmas experiences are bound together by a narration of the Gospel Nativity story sung in unison by a boys' choir. With its gripping blend of mysticism, heavenly glory and human hope, *Hodie* flows with a vitality and inventiveness that belie a work written in Vaughan Williams's old age. The *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, which incorporates a number of traditional English carols, is notable for the *obbligato* cello part and for the varied treatment of the choir, which provide an atmospheric choral-orchestral texture.

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

(1872–1958)

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