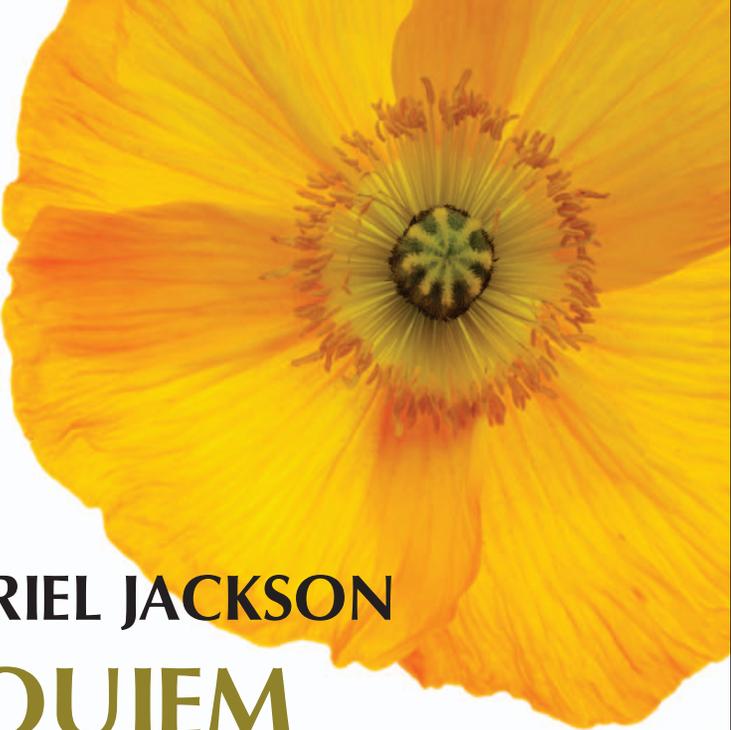


The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, sans-serif capital letters. Above the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a stylized sound wave or a barcode.

NAXOS

A large, close-up photograph of a bright yellow flower, possibly a poppy, with a dark center and numerous stamens. The petals are slightly ruffled and have a gradient from yellow to orange.

**GABRIEL JACKSON**  
**REQUIEM**

**Vasari Singers • Jeremy Backhouse**

## Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962): Requiem

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955) • John Tavener (b. 1944) • Francis Pott (b. 1957)

Sometimes, when creating CD or concert programmes, one discovers a thread emerging from a seemingly disparate group of pieces that takes on a life of its own. Our starting-point here was the *Requiem*, a work about personal loss and how humankind in all its diversity prepares for and reacts to death. As the principal companion piece we chose Francis Pott's searingly intense interpretation of the *When David heard* text. With the addition of two works by Gabriel Jackson, which both are extremely personal to members of the choir, the recording gradually assumed the mantle of a memorial, honouring specifically a close friend, an inspirational mentor, a beloved daughter, and more universally loved ones we have all lost. The underlying focus of our CD however is not one of mourning, but an uplifting celebration of life and love; we hope the listener may draw inspiration and comfort from the spirit and beauty of the music.

Jeremy Backhouse

Gabriel Jackson was born in Bermuda in 1962 and studied composition at the Royal College of Music, first in the Junior Department with Richard Blackford, and subsequently with John Lambert, graduating in 1983. He is acclaimed particularly for his choral works and his liturgical pieces are in the repertoire of many of Britain's leading cathedral and collegiate choirs. In 2003 he won the liturgical category at the inaugural British Composer Awards and won a second award, in the choral category, in 2009. He is regularly commissioned and performed by the leading choirs of Europe and the USA and in January 2010 was appointed Associate Composer to the BBC Singers.

## Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962): Requiem

I have long wanted to write a Requiem and I am very grateful to the Vasari Singers for giving me this

opportunity. My initial idea for the piece was to combine the solemn, hieratic grandeur of the great Iberian Requiems with something more personal, more intimate, even, that could reflect the individual, as well as the universal, experience of loss. So I have replaced the even-numbered movements of the standard Mass for the Dead with poems from other cultures and spiritual traditions so as to embrace a more wide-ranging perspective on human mortality than the traditional Christian one, though in the end all the texts express a similar view of death – that it is not the end but the gateway to a better world. The result is radiantly optimistic, suffused as it is with images of light.

One of the challenges for any composer writing a Requiem is to achieve the contrasts of texture and colour, of motion and stasis, that are necessary to sustain a multi-movement work when the overall mood is so restrained and reflective. I have tried to adhere to my original inspiration in that the Latin movements are more objective, more purely architectural in construction than those with words in English. *Requiem aeternam I* is largely slow-moving and homophonic; *Requiem aeternam II* is made of simple melodies and drones, while the final *Lux aeterna* is calm and sustained, full of hypnotically overlapping repetitions. The *Sanctus and Benedictus* is the 'odd one out' in this scheme, being a hymn of praise that makes no reference to death at all (though that is redressed by the interpolation of lines from Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*); as well as being the longest and most substantial movement, it is also the most animated, with the most ecstatic climax. I have tried to give each English-language movement its own unique character without seeking to imitate Aboriginal, Japanese, or Indian music. *Epitaph* alternates highly-decorated monody with simple block chords, culminating in a pantheistic susurrance of nature-sounds and a prolonged stutter-rhythm as a musical image of eternity. *Autumn wind of eve* has an aerated texture, full of whispering wind-sounds, to reflect the heavenly evanescence of Ujijima's poem.

*Peace, my heart* is, for me, the most beautiful of all the texts; the best a composer can do is to keep out of the way and try to give Tagore's sublime words the reflective glow they cry out for.

## Gabriel Jackson: In all his works

For over thirty years Allan Wicks was Organist and Master of the Choristers at Canterbury Cathedral. Jeremy Backhouse and I both came under his spell as young trebles and for all of us who were privileged to sing for him he was a uniquely inspirational figure whose charisma and musical integrity were profoundly influential.

*In all his works* was requested by Elizabeth Wicks for Allan's memorial service which was held in Canterbury Cathedral last year. The extraordinary text might have been written about him, and in the piece I tried to achieve a little something of the solemnity, the joy and, at times, the ecstatic intensity that were characteristic of his great musicianship.

## Gabriel Jackson: I am the voice of the wind

*I am the voice of the wind* was commissioned by long-time Vasari alto Elizabeth Atkinson and her husband Chris, in



Geraldine Atkinson

memory of their daughter Geraldine. Geraldine had just qualified as a doctor when she died of a sudden illness on holiday in Iceland in 2009, aged just 24. The words are by Geraldine herself, a poem she called *The Spirit*, which was written when she was only thirteen. It is a remarkable work, rich and profound, with beautiful images and a structural integrity that make it ideal for musical setting.

I have tried to capture its myriad moods, its mercurial evanescence, as well as its quiet inner strength, and to create a piece that is as celebratory as it is memorialising.

Gabriel Jackson

## Bob Chilcott (b. 1955): Canon (Rosa Mystica) after Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Bob Chilcott has been involved with choral music all his life, first as a Chorister and then a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge. Later, he sang and composed music for twelve years with The King's Singers. His experiences with that group, his passionate commitment to young and amateur choirs, and his profound belief that music can unite people, have inspired him both to compose full-time and to promote choral music worldwide.

This moving rendition of Pachelbel's *Canon* sets the *Requiescat* from Oscar Wilde's *Rosa Mystica* (1890). Chilcott displays his sensitivity as a vocal arranger, exploiting the richness of the double choir format and the lyricism of the guitar accompaniment.

## John Tavener (b. 1944): Song for Athene

Sir John Tavener's long career in composition has been informed throughout by his spirituality and his creativity is rooted in his Orthodox faith. *Song for Athene* was written in 1993 as a tribute to a family friend, Athene Hariades, a gifted actress, tragically killed in a cycling accident. The composer writes, "Her beauty, both outward and inner, was reflected in her love of acting, poetry, music and of

the Orthodox Church." The composer had heard Athene read Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey, and following her funeral came upon the idea of combining text from the closing scene of *Hamlet* with portions of the Orthodox liturgy. Each phrase is linked with an *Alleluia* with the whole piece set over an 'ison' or drone in the traditional Byzantine manner.

#### **Francis Pott (b. 1957): When David heard**

This work, written for the singers of the St Louis Chamber Chorus, was first performed by them in April 2008 under the direction of their British-born conductor, Philip Barnes. Choice of text was influenced by Philip's enthusiasm for bringing together early seventeenth-century and contemporary settings of the same words: in this instance, Pott and Thomas Weelkes; yet the new piece had actually been commissioned by John and Gailya Barker in memory of their parents. King David's lament for his son therefore lent a kind of inversion to this commemorative intent, while yet providing the vehicle for an aptly poignant order of expression.

First glimmerings of inspiration can sometimes take a highly improbable form; in this case, a cinematic one. I had an image in mind of the King in some crowded place, oblivious as grim tidings inexorably closed in on him. Beneath this, a shade bizarrely, lay some very distant memory of the 1949 Warner Brothers / Raoul Walsh film *White Heat*, in which, seated in a gaol refectory, a criminal

psychopath (portrayed by James Cagney) asks after his mother outside, only for news of her death to be whispered along the length of the immense table, apparent by lip-reading long before it reaches its recipient. The fitful workings of memory had divested these characters of their identities, allowing them to blur into archetypes of human experience and take on a kind of pathos. I borrowed from the idea by detaching the words 'Absalom' and 'slain' from their place in the text, then allowed these to loom ever more ominously from the general rumour, at the same time clinging to an increasingly insistent B flat: a kind of eye of the storm. Later I discovered that Philip Barnes entertained a longstanding interest in James Cagney, in person a cultured man and a highly accomplished painter. Sometimes even the strangest ideas come to seem providential.

In all other respects the music nods towards its early seventeenth-century antecedents, especially the setting of the same words by Thomas Tomkins, yet perhaps goes further in reflecting an imagined scenario. The King's controlled ascent towards his chamber gives way to naked grieving almost before the door closes upon his retreat. Numbness and tender retrospection alternate with upsurges of raw emotion, the last of these echoing and exceeding the music's first climax before a hushed epilogue which serves finally to consign narrative and lamentation to a far-distant past.

**Francis Pott**

#### **Carl Herring**



Photo: Dan O'Leary

Having graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with first class honours and the *Julian Bream Prize*, Carl Herring has performed worldwide and has given solo recitals for many of Britain's leading guitar societies and festivals in venues such as the Sage, Gateshead, and Kings Place, London. Recipient of the prestigious *Worshipful Company of Musicians' Ivor Mairants Award*, he is known for his diverse interests. He plays regularly for opera and film as well as touring worldwide with flamenco/jazz guitarist Eduardo Niebla. He has performed alongside jazz luminaries Tim Garland and Joe Locke and is a member of TETRA, one of the world's finest guitar quartets. He has appeared with the London Sinfonietta and as a concerto soloist with Northern Sinfonia. Carl Herring's already impressive recording portfolio includes three solo albums as well as Schumann's masterpiece *Dichterliebe*, transcribed by him for the first time in its entirety and committed to disc with the acclaimed tenor Kevin Kyle. He has released *Russian Guitar Music*, a CD which includes several world première recordings.

#### **Vasari Singers**



Photo: Sim Cannyetty-Clarke

Founded in 1980, Vasari Singers is among the leading chamber choirs in Britain, performing music ranging from Renaissance to contemporary. The choir performs regularly in London as well as visiting many of England's cathedrals to sing services, with recent trips to Canterbury, Salisbury, Bath and Ripon. The choir and Jeremy Backhouse are deeply committed to contemporary music and have commissioned over twenty works since 2000, including the oratorio *The Cloud of Unknowing* by Francis Pott and works by Gabriel Jackson. Vasari's extensive discography reflects the choir's versatility and quality and showcases its unique choral sound, whether singing a *cappella* or accompanied. Two CDs of works by Marcel Dupré received *Gramophone's* 'Editor's Choice' award. The Howells *Requiem* and Frank Martin *Mass* CD was *Gramophone* Award-nominated, and the 2007 disc *Noel Nouvelet* was *MusicWeb International's* Recording of the

Month. 2012 saw Vasari Singers open the London A Cappella Festival at King's Place, performing alongside members of the Swingle Singers.

#### Soprano

Nicola Balzan  
Harriet Gritton  
Lizzie Isherwood  
Caroline Osborne-White  
(soloist 7 12)  
Julia Mackinder  
Fiona McWilliams  
(soloist 7)  
Rosalind Lewis  
Julia Smith  
Jocelyn Somerville  
(soloist 1 2 4 5 7 9)  
Jess Stansfield  
Susan Waton  
(soloist 12)  
Frances Wimpress

#### Alto

Elizabeth Atkinson  
Alex Brougham  
(soloist 1 4 7)  
Julia Field  
Sarah Kendrick  
Stephanie May  
Sarah Mistry  
Julia Ridout  
Helen Riley

#### Tenor

Daniel Burges  
(soloist 1 2 5 7 9)  
Simon Burges  
Roger Carpenter  
David Jackson  
Tom Shorter  
Chris Riley

#### Bass

Matt Bernstein  
Malcolm Field  
John Hunt  
Paul Newis  
Nick Wakelin  
Matthew Wood  
(soloist 1 5 7)

### Jeremy Backhouse



Photo: Sim Cannetty-Clarke

Jeremy Backhouse is one of Britain's leading conductors of amateur choirs. He began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was Senior Chorister. He has been the sole conductor of the Vasari Singers since its inception in 1980. Since winning the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1988, the Vasari Singers have performed regularly in cathedrals and concert halls throughout Britain and abroad, and have a substantial discography. In 1995 Backhouse became Music Director of the Vivace Chorus and in May 2011, conducted a performance of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand* in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2009 he was appointed Music Director of the Salisbury Community Choir, a 180-strong non-auditioned choir. He has also guest conducted the BBC Singers, the Brighton Festival Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus, the London Chorus and many other leading British adult and youth choirs.

### 1 Requiem aeternam I

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.  
Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Ierusalem: exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro veniet.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion, and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem: O hear my prayer,  
all flesh shall come to Thee.  
Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

*Text: Latin Mass for the dead*

### 2 Epitaph

Weep not for me for Death is but the vehicle that unites my soul with the Creative Essence, God.  
My spiritual Being, my love is still with you, where ever you are until forever. You will find me in the quiet moments in the trees, amidst the rocks, the cloud and beams of sunshine indeed, everywhere for I, too, am a part of the total essence of creation that radiates everywhere about you, eternally. Life, after all, is just a passing phase.

*Text: Kevin Gilbert (Wiradjuri poet) (1933-1993), from Black from the Edge  
Reproduced by kind permission of the poet's Estate*

### 3 Requiem aeternam II

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.  
In memoria aeterna erit iustus: ab auditione mala non timebit.

*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
The just shall be in everlasting remembrance: and shall not fear the evil hearing.*

*Text: Latin Mass for the dead*

#### 4 Autumn wind of eve

Autumn wind of eve,  
blow away the clouds that mass  
over the moon's pure light  
and the mists that cloud our mind,  
do thou sweep away as well.

Now we disappear,  
well, what must we think of it?  
From the sky we came.  
Now we may go back again.  
That's at least one point of view.

*Text: Hôjô Ujimasa (1538-1590)  
English translation by Arthur Lindsay Sadler (1882-1970)  
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#### 5 Sanctus and Benedictus

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

*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

Come lovely and soothing death,  
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,  
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,  
Sooner or later delicate death.

...Approach strong deliveress,  
When it is so, when you have taken them I joyously sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

...I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Text: Latin Mass for the dead / Walt Whitman (1819-1892), from When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

#### 6 Peace, my heart

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.  
Let it not be a death but completeness.  
Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.  
Let the flight through the sky end in the folding of the wings over the nest.  
Let the last touch of your hands be gentle like the flower of the night.  
Stand still, O Beautiful End, for a moment, and say your last text in silence.  
I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.

*Text: Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), from The Gardener  
Reproduced by kind permission of the author's Estate*

#### 7 Lux aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.  
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis: Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.

*May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord: With Thy saints for ever, for Thou art merciful.  
Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them: With Thy saints for ever, for Thou art merciful.*

When it comes time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with  
the fear of death, so when their time comes they weep and pray for a little  
more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and die like a hero going home.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.  
*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord.*

*Text: Latin Mass for the dead / Chief Aupumut (Mohican) c.1725*

### 8 In all his works

In all his works he praised the Holy One most high with glory,  
With his whole heart he sung songs and loved him that made him.  
He set singers also before the altar and by their voices they might make sweet melody  
And daily sing praises in their songs.  
He beautified their feasts and set in order the solemn times until the end  
That they might praise his Holy name and the temple might sound from morning.

*Text: Ecclesiasticus 47: 8-10*

### 9 I am the voice of the wind

I am the voice of the wind on your cheek,  
I am the warmth of fire between fingers.  
I am the smell of spring in the air,  
I am the stars to lead you home.  
I am the echoes in the caves of loneliness,  
I am the rain to cool your skin.  
I may be gone from this life my friend,  
But remember I am not yet dead.

*Text: Geraldine Atkinson (1984-2009)*

### 10 Canon (Rosa Mystica)

#### Requiescat

Tread lightly, she is near  
Under the snow,  
Speak gently, she can hear  
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair  
Tarnished with rust,  
She that was young and fair  
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,  
She hardly knew  
She was a woman, so  
Sweetly she grew.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear  
Lyre or sonnet,  
All my life's buried here,  
Heap earth upon it.

*Text: Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), from Poems 1881*

### 11 Song for Athene

Alleluia. May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.  
Alleluia. Remember me, O Lord, when you come into your kingdom.  
Alleluia. Give rest, O Lord, to your handmaid who has fallen asleep.  
Alleluia. The Choir of Saints have found the well-spring of life and door of paradise.  
Alleluia. Life: a shadow and a dream.  
Alleluia. Weeping at the grave creates the song: Alleluia.  
Alleluia. Come, enjoy the rewards and crowns I have prepared for you.  
Alleluia.

*Text: William Shakespeare (1564-1616), from Hamlet / Orthodox Funeral Service*

### 12 When David heard

When David heard that Absalom was slain, he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept: and thus he said:  
Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!

*Words adapted from the King James Bible; II Samuel, 18:33*



gratefully acknowledges the generous support of  
the RVW Trust and Mr and Mrs John and Gailya Barker.



While the unifying thread which links these works is that of loss, the underlying focus is an uplifting celebration of life and love. Gabriel Jackson's *Requiem* combines traditional solemnity with poems which embrace wide-ranging spirituality, resulting in images of light and radiant optimism. Contrasting poignancy of expression is heard in personal tributes from John Tavener and Francis Pott, while Bob Chilcott uses Pachelbel's famous *Canon* to set Oscar Wilde's *Requiescat*. Vasari Singers' *Great British Anthems* (8.572504) was described as 'essential listening' by *Gramophone*.

Gabriel  
**JACKSON**  
**Requiem**

<b>Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962):</b>		<b>10 Bob Chilcott (b. 1955) after</b>	
<b>Requiem (2008)*</b>		<b>Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706):</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Requiem aeternam I</b>	<b>36:02</b>	<b>Canon (Rosa Mystica)</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Epitaph</b>	<b>6:47</b>	<b>(2007)<sup>†</sup></b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Requiem aeternam II</b>	<b>4:27</b>	<b>3:32</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Autumn wind of eve</b>	<b>3:26</b>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Sanctus and Benedictus</b>	<b>3:05</b>	<b>11 John Tavener (b. 1944):</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Peace, my heart</b>	<b>7:06</b>	<b>Song for Athene (1993)</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Lux aeterna</b>	<b>4:37</b>	<b>6:30</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>In all his works (2009)*</b>	<b>4:48</b>	<b>12 Francis Pott (b. 1957):</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>I am the voice</b>		<b>When David heard</b>
	<b>of the wind (2010)*</b>	<b>6:57</b>	<b>(2008)*</b>
			<b>12:14</b>

\* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

**Carl Herring, Guitar<sup>†</sup>**

**Vasari Singers • Jeremy Backhouse**

Recorded at Tonbridge School Chapel, Tonbridge, Kent, UK, from 25th to 27th February, 2011  
Producer and editor: Adrian Peacock • Engineer: David Hinnitt  
The sung texts can be found in the booklet and may also be accessed at  
[www.naxos.com/libretti/573049.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/573049.htm)  
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