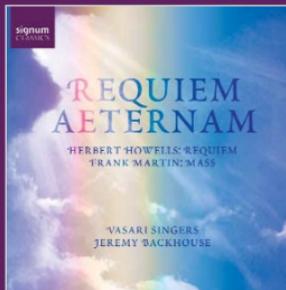
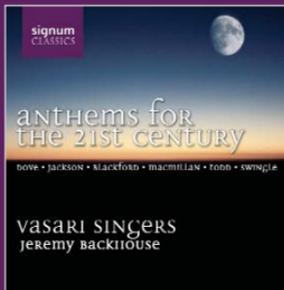


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# Will Todd MASS IN BLUE



BETHANY HALLIDAY

VASARI SINGERS

JEREMY BACKHOUSE

## MASS IN BLUE

### WILL TODD

#### Mass in Blue (jazz mass) Op.28 (2003)\*

1. Kyrie	[6.39]	11. <b>The Rose</b>	[4.42]
2. Gloria	[3.50]	12. <b>Lead me Lord</b>	
3. Credo	[8.32]	Soprano solo: Fiona McWilliams	[3.14]
4. Sanctus	[5.10]	13. <b>Lighting the way</b>	[3.10]
5. Benedictus	[4.16]	14. <b>Every stone shall cry</b>	[2.27]
6. Agnus Dei	[8.52]		
7. <b>Christus est stella</b>	[3.42]	Total time	[64.19]
8. <b>The Christ-Child</b>	[3.53]		
9. <b>Ave verum corpus</b>	[3.33]		
10. <b>None other Lamb</b>	[2.12]		

WILL TODD PIANO \*BETHANY HALLIDAY SOPRANO

VASARI SINGERS  
CONDUCTED BY JEREMY BACKHOUSE

\*Jim Fleeman drums • \*Gareth Huw Davies double bass • \*Adrian Revell, Ben Castle,  
Mike Smith woodwind and saxophones • \*Chris Storr, Dominic Glover trumpets • \*Fayyaz Virji, Patrick Hartley trombones •  
\*Richard Henry bass trombone • \*Matthew Turner timpani

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## MASS IN BLUE

### Mass in Blue (jazz mass) Op. 28 (2003)

Written in 2003 in response to a commission from David Temple and Hertfordshire Chorus and originally premiered under the title *Jazz Mass*, Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* is a brilliant blend of driving jazz grooves and clear, strong, choral writing against which the solo piano and solo soprano voice weave and blend in a delightful aural tapestry. The work reflects not only the composer's love of jazz music and his admiration of jazz performers, but also his own experience as an improviser. It also allows Todd to make use of his extensive choral skills which he deploys so effectively in works such as the oratorios *The Burning Road* (Op.10) and *Saint Cuthbert* (Op.7) or the chorus writing of his opera *The Blackened Man*. It is a confident work by a composer who understands and responds to the jazz idiom, making free use of the 12-bar blues sequence (which has been fundamental in the development of jazz music) as well as more complex harmonic processes.

The **Kyrie** opens with an energetic cadenza for the trio section which builds into the first set tempo of the work. Over this the first vocal entry is heard, a bluesy theme reminiscent of negro spirituals and therefore apt for the text 'Kyrie eleison' ('Lord have mercy'). Gradually other lines join the initial melody until the full choir is singing. On a move to the sub-dominant (B flat) the choir ecstatically bursts forth with 'Christe eleison' ('Christ have mercy') and as this music subsides we hear the

soprano enter on a soulful melody with a strong improvised feel, which builds over the return of the original key of F minor. The music of the opening 'Kyrie eleison' is repeated with the soloist interwoven around the vocal lines in a virtuosic display. The movement slows and closes on a thrilling F minor 11 chord.

The **Gloria** is set up with a fanfare from the brass which punctuates the whole movement. From the moment the choir enters there is an uplifting rhythmic drive to this setting with the full brass section adding a distinctive colour. In the central section of the Gloria a pulsating 5/8 time is set up which gradually builds until a recapitulation of the opening material brings the movement to a close.

The **Credo** features the soprano in a colourful 12-bar blues in 12/8 time. There is a strong gospel feel with the choir repeating lines from the soloist and humming soft backing harmony. Again in three sections, the first blues part gives way to a more sombre section at the 'Crucifixus', and after 'Et sepultus est' ('and he was buried') a piano solo leads the band into a blazing depiction of the moment of resurrection. The 'Et resurrexit' is set with a scorching up-tempo swing which eventually cuts back into the 12/8 as the movement builds to a thrilling climax.

Like the *Gloria*, the **Sanctus** is set for the choir and band without the soloist. It is a beautiful, slow ballad set up initially on the piano in which the woodwind players are featured, especially soprano sax. The movement provides a welcome period of tranquility and reflection after the sheer energy of the previous three movements.

The **Benedictus** begins with solo double bass over which the choir sings a theme which builds up from the basses through the rest of the voices. This music is gradually invaded by a new, more driving beat and the solo voice begins to weave into the texture once again. This funky riff gradually takes over and the music emerges into a powerful 'Hosanna' section with punching brass and a jubilant choral sound.

The **Agnus Dei** grows out of the dying echoes of the 'Hosanna' with a haunting soprano ballad accompanied by piano. In the stirring *maestoso* which follows, we hear the main themes of the work on high trumpet fanfares and strong trombone chords. Once again the strong 12-bar blues harmony underpins the texture. A huge climactic entry from the choir subsides into a gentle A minor section in which intricate choral lines are woven over a simple, repeated chordal structure. After another big build this time with the chorus featured, the music returns to the opening ballad theme, the soprano now accompanied by soft choir and brass. This is a substantial movement and is more than beautiful: it is painful, plaintive, a cry for mercy and a prayer for peace. Traditionally the mass would end here, but in another dramatic master-stroke Will Todd leaves the altos hanging

on a soft E after the last chord of the *Agnus Dei*. The air of expectation grows as the sopranos softly recapitulate the Credo theme. Gradually the music builds with the soloist entering and then the tenors and basses. Suddenly the driving 12/8 beat of the Credo is forcing the music forward as the choir sing 'Et expecto resurrectionem' ('we look for the resurrection') and the music comes back to the key in which the work began, F minor. The emphatic final chords of the work leave the listener not in quiet contemplation but jerked forward into praise and belief. Credo! Amen!

© Ralph Woodward

#### 1. **I: Kyrie**

Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

#### 2. **II: Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
et in terra pax hominibus  
bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te  
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus.  
Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris,  
Amen.

Glory be to God on high,  
and in earth peace  
goodwill towards men.  
We praise Thee, we bless Thee,  
we worship Thee, we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee  
For Thy great glory.  
O Lord God, heavenly King,  
God the Father Almighty,  
the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father  
Have mercy upon us.  
For Thou only art holy,  
Thou only art the Lord,  
Thou only art most high.  
Jesu Christ.  
With the Holy Ghost  
in the glory of God the Father,  
Amen.

3. **III: Credo**

Credo in unum Deum,  
Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem coeli et terrae,  
visibilem omnium et invisibilem.

Credo, et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum,  
Filium, Filium Dei unigenitum,  
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula,  
Deum de Deo,  
lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero,  
genitum, non factum,  
consubstantialem Patri,  
per quem omnia facta sunt.

Credo, qui propter nos homines  
et propter nostram salutem  
descendit de caelis.  
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis:  
sub Pontio Pilato:  
passus, et sepultus est.

Et resurrexit tertia die,  
secundum Scripturas.  
Et ascendit in caelum:  
sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria  
judicare vivos et mortuos:  
cujus regni non erit finis.

believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
And of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
begotten of his Father before all worlds,  
God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Very God of Very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
By whom all things were made.

Who for us men  
and for our salvation  
Came down from heaven.  
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
He was crucified also for us  
under Pontius Pilate:  
he suffered and was buried.

On the third day rose again  
According to the scriptures  
and ascended into heaven:  
He sitteth at the right hand of the Father.  
And he shall come again in glory  
to judge both the quick and the dead  
Whose kingdom shall have no end.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum,  
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.  
Qui cum Patre et Filio  
simul adoratur et conglorificatur:  
qui locutus est per prophetas.

Et unam sanctam Ecclesiam

Confiteor unum baptismum  
in remissionem peccatorum.  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum.  
Et vitam venturi saeculi.  
Amen.

4. **IV: Sanctus**

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.

5. **V: Benedictus**

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine.  
Osanna in excelsis.

6. **VI: Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit  
Who proceedeth from the Father;  
Who with the Father and the Son  
together is worshipped and glorified;  
Who spake by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy, catholic,  
and apostolic church.

I acknowledge one baptism  
For the remission of sins.

And I look for the resurrection of the dead  
And the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of Sabaoth.  
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory  
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,  
Have mercy upon us.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona nobis pacem.

*Credo reprise*

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,  
Grant us thy peace.

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,  
His hair was like a fire.  
O weary, weary is the world,  
But here the world's desire.

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,  
His hair was like a crown.  
And all the flowers looked up at Him,  
And all the stars looked down.

*G K Chesterton*

## 7. **Christus est stella**

Written to a commission from The Durham Singers in 2000, with financial assistance from Durham City Arts. This choir have been very supportive of my music over the years, travelling long distances to appear in my performances all over the country with other choirs. The words are a prayer of The Venerable Bede who is buried in Durham Cathedral, one of my favourite religious buildings. The text appears above the tomb in the Galilee Chapel with the Latin interwoven with English translation. I also set this text in English for my sister's wedding in 1992.

WT

Christus est stella matutina, Alleluia;  
Qui nocte saeculi transacta, Alleluia;  
Lucem vitae sanctis promittit, Alleluia;  
Et pandit aeternam, Alleluia.

Christ is the morning star, Alleluia;  
Who when the night of this world is past, Alleluia;  
Promises and reveals to his saints, Alleluia;  
The everlasting light of life, Alleluia.

*The Venerable Bede*

## 8. **The Christ-child**

A work written (in 1997) for St Oswald's Church Choir where I sang initially as a treble and where I continued to sing well into my 20s. It was this experience that cemented my life-long love of choral music and these beautiful G K Chesterton words seem to cry out for soft, heartfelt harmonies. The piano part provides the simple chordal harmonies over which the voices weave their lines.

WT

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,  
His hair was like a light.  
O weary, weary were the world,  
But here is all aright.

## 9. **Ave verum corpus**

Commissioned by David Grubb for Sidcup Grammar School in 2001 for their tour of Italy. This work makes use of a plainsong style melody and minimalist piano accompaniment to create a sense of muted worship and awe. I first set this famous text as a ten year old, modelling my piece on the popular Elgar setting with which I was familiar from church choir. Another favourite is the Mozart *Ave verum corpus*, as well as other more modern offerings. It is a wonderful, inspiring text and deserves to be set again and again.

WT

Ave verum corpus natum  
de Maria Virgine.  
Vere passum immolatum  
in cruce pro homine.  
Cujus latus perforatum  
unda fluxit sanguine.  
Esto nobis praegustatum  
in mortis examine.  
O dulcis, O pie,  
O Jesu fili Mariae  
miserere mei.  
(Ave verum corpus, etc.)

Hail true body, born  
Of the Virgin Mary  
Who has truly suffered and was sacrificed  
On the cross for mankind.  
Whose side was pierced  
Whence flowed water and blood.  
Be for us a foretaste of heaven,  
In our hour of our death.  
O sweet one, O merciful one,  
O Jesu Son of Mary,  
Have mercy on me.  
(Hail true body, etc.)

*14th century hymn, attrib. Pope Innocent VI*

#### 10. None Other Lamb

This setting of Christina Rossetti's poem is another written for St Oswald's Church Choir, and their Organist David Higgins, in 1998. David was my first composition teacher and very supportive of my teenage musical efforts. The heartfelt intimacy of the poet's words seems to demand the simplest of treatments.

WT

None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other hope in Heav'n or earth or sea,  
None other hiding place from guilt and shame,  
None beside Thee!

My faith burns low, my hope burns low;  
Only my heart's desire cries out in me  
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,  
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life, though I be dead;  
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be:  
Nor Heav'n have I, nor place to lay my head,  
Nor home, but Thee.

*Christina Rossetti*

#### 11. The Rose

This anthem is the central movement of *A Pageant for Christmas*, commissioned by Roger Muttitt for Durham School in 1998. The outer movements are both settings of existing hymns ('Of the Father's Love Begotten' and 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing') and these beautiful WR Rodgers words provide the spiritual heart of the larger work.

WT

Deep in the fading leaves of night  
There lay the flower that darkness knows,  
Till winter stripped and brought to light  
The most incomparable Rose  
That blows.

The flashing mirrors of the snow  
Keep turning and returning still:  
To see the lovely child below  
And hold him is their only will;  
Keep still.

And to let go his very cry  
The clinging echoes are so slow  
That still his wail they multiply  
Though he lie singing now below.

Even the doves forget to grieve  
And gravely to His greeting fly,  
And the lonely places that they leave  
All follow and are standing by  
On high.

*WR Rodgers*

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#### 12. Lead Me Lord

This simple setting was written for the chapel choir of Durham School in 1997. The words are adapted from Psalm 5 and the setting makes use of soprano solo, which might be sung by semi-chorus if desired.

WT

Lead me, Lord in your righteousness  
Make your Way clear before my face  
Only my Lord brings me safety  
So lead me, Lord.

*Verses from Psalm 5*

#### 13. Lighting The Way (A Song for Pilgrims)

Written for the 'Lighting the Way Festival' in Durham Cathedral in 2000, this song was sung by thousands of North East school children as part of their visits to the Cathedral over the course of several weeks. It was written with the intention of being easy to pick up, and this has made it a popular worship song, beyond the context of the original commission.

WT

In the stars I see you;  
In a flower, you're there;  
In a song I hear you;  
You are everywhere;  
You are the light that starts the day  
And with you I'm lighting the way.

When I'm lost you find;  
When I cry you hear;  
When I fall you bind me  
And you calm my fear;  
You are the path I take each day  
And with you I'm finding my way.

In a lighted candle;  
In a window fair;  
In an ancient building;  
You are everywhere;  
You are the beacon of each day  
And for you I'm lighting the way.

In a friend I touch you;  
In a smile you're there;  
In a prayer you're near me;  
You are everywhere;  
Help me to follow you each day  
For with you I'm lighting the way.

*Will Todd*

#### 14. Every Stone Shall Cry

I came across this poem in an anthology of Christmas writing and was immediately struck by its rhythmic energy and brightness. The setting is an AABA song form and the jazzy block chords and added 9ths harmony reflect the joy of the Christmas message. The syncopated choir rhythms also make the text bounce along.

WT

A stable lamp is lighted  
Whose glow shall wake the sky;  
The stars shall bend their voices  
And every stone shall cry.  
And every stone shall cry,  
And straw like gold will shine;  
A barn shall harbour heaven  
And an oxen stall become a shrine.

This child through David's city  
Shall ride in triumph by.  
The palm shall strew its branches  
And every stone shall cry.  
And every stone shall cry,  
Though heavy, dull and dumb,  
And lie within the roadway  
To pave His kingdom come.

Yet He shall be forsaken  
And yielded up to die.  
The sky shall groan and darken  
And every stone shall cry.  
And every stone shall cry,  
For stony hearts of men;  
God's blood upon the spearhead,  
God's love refused again.

But now as at the ending  
The low is lifted high.  
The stars shall bend their voices  
And every stone shall cry.  
And every stone shall cry,  
In praises for the child

By whose descent among us  
The world was reconciled.

Amen.

*Richard Wilbur*

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Composer's Notes © Will Todd, 2006

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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WILL TODD

Will Todd was born and brought up in the North East of England and studied composition at Bristol University with Raymond Warren. His output includes opera, musicals, oratorio, orchestral works and works for children and amateur performers, and his work has been featured on BBC Radio Two and Three and Classic FM, and been performed all over the UK and in the USA.

His opera *The Blackened Man* won second prize in the 2002 International Giuseppe Verdi Opera Competition and was subsequently showcased at Royal Opera House Linbury Studio, with

the first staged performances at the Buxton Festival in July 2004. *The Screams of Kitty Genovese* has been produced several times in the US following successful development work both there and in the UK. Will Todd has also written the music for a number of other stage works including *Isambard Kingdom Brunel* (operatic musical), *Tales from the End of Northworld* (music drama), *Sweetness and Badness* (chamber opera commissioned by Welsh National Opera) and *Whirlwind* (chamber opera commissioned by Streetwise Opera).

The oratorio *Saint Cuthbert* (based on the life of the great Northumbrian saint) has been performed many times and recorded by The Hallé Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Christopher Austin. Another work with a North Eastern theme is the cantata *The Burning Road: a stirring reflection on the 1936 Jarrow March* which was commissioned by Northampton Bach Choir to celebrate the march's 60th anniversary. It has since received six further performances and been released on Silva Classics with Crouch End Festival Chorus conducted by David Temple. *Gala and Gloria*, a large-scale setting of the traditional 'Gloria' with new interpolations from Ben Dunwell, was commissioned by Durham Choral Society and premiered in Durham Cathedral in 2004.

Other choral works include *Midwinter* commissioned by Queen's College, Cambridge and recorded by the Brunel Ensemble and *A Song of Creation*, a large-scale work commissioned by Derby Choral Union for the millennium celebrations in Derby Cathedral. Will Todd has also written a large body of smaller-scale choral works including a rite *A communion service*, a *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* and many anthem settings. Notable orchestral works

include *Winter Dances*, Concertos for violin, saxophone and trumpet, *Concert Suite from Brunel*, and *Yorkshire Dance*.

In 2001, Will Todd was commissioned by Glyndebourne to write *Fire Work* for their Youth Opera Group and has also worked for the education departments of Welsh National Opera, English National Opera and the Northlands Festival in Scotland.

Recent performances include *Angel Song II*, a new *a cappella* choral work for the Vasari Singers commissioned as part of their 25th Anniversary celebrations. *Among Angels*, a work for choir and two harps, which incorporates material from *Angel Song II*, was premiered by The Sixteen in Salzburg in March 2006. Will Todd was Composer in Residence at the National Opera Studio in 2005/06 season.

Will Todd's music is published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd and Tyalgum Press.



BETHANY HALLIDAY - SOPRANO

Bethany Halliday premiered *Mass in Blue* at The Cambridge Corn Exchange in 2003 and has continued to perform the work frequently since that time. Venues have included the London Barbican, The Sage Gateshead, Durham Cathedral and she has sung excerpts from the *Mass in Blue* live on BBC Radio 3.

Bethany enjoys a wide range of performing throughout the UK including opera, oratorio and jazz. She has worked for ENO, Grange Park Opera, Eastern Opera, British Youth Opera, D'Oyly Carte, Opera Omnibus and her operatic roles include Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Sandman and Dew Fairy (*Hansel and Gretel*), Leila (*Pearl Fishers*), Yum Yum (*Mikado*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), Oscar (*Masked Ball*), Berta (*Barber of Seville*) and

Nannetta (*Falstaff*). Oratorio performances include Haydn Nelson Mass, Bach *St John Passion*, Fauré Requiem, Handel *Israel in Egypt*, Vivaldi *Gloria*, Handel Messiah, Kodaly *Missa Brevis*, Duruflé Requiem, Bach *Magnificat* and the Verdi Requiem.

Bethany also performs solo recitals blending opera and song repertoire with jazz. She has appeared with the Will Todd Trio on a number of occasions.

#### JEREMY BACKHOUSE - CONDUCTOR

Jeremy Backhouse enjoys a growing reputation in the UK and overseas for inspiring vivid, passionate performances from choirs and choruses in a wide range of repertoire. Equally at home with Renaissance music through to contemporary commissions, he is widely recognised as one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He has been the sole Music Director of the award-winning chamber choir Vasari Singers since 1981 and is also Conductor of the 150-voice Guildford Philharmonic Choir, now Vivace Chorus.

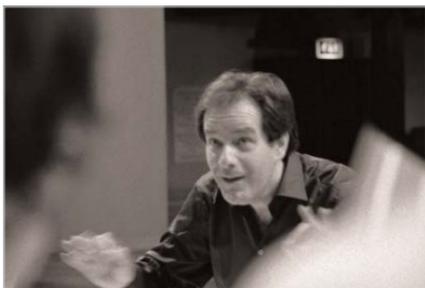
Senior Chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, Jeremy Backhouse studied music and composition at Liverpool University and began his career as a Music Editor with EMI. From 1998 to December 2004 he was Conductor of the Wooburn Singers - only the third in the choir's history, following Richard Hickox and Stephen Jackson. He has also worked with the BBC Club Choir, Kent Youth Choir, Brighton Festival Chorus, London Choral Society, Trinity College of Music Chamber Choir, Philharmonia Chorus and the BBC Singers in a series of programmes for BBC Radio 3.

Major concert works include Mahler *Symphony no. 2* and Mahler *Symphony no. 8*, Prokofiev *Alexander Nevsky* and Rachmaninov Piano *Concerto No.3* at Guildford Cathedral with the Guildford



Philharmonic Choir; *Bach B Minor Mass* with the Hanover Band and the Wooburn Singers; Tallis *Spem in Alium* and works by Jonathan Dove, James MacMillan and Francis Pott at St John's, Smith Square with Vasari Singers, Karl Jenkins *The Armed Man (A Mass for Peace)*, Mendelssohn *Symphony no.2 (Lobgesang)* and Bach *Magnificat* all at Guildford Cathedral.

Jeremy champions contemporary choral music and works closely with many composers including Richard Blackford, Francis Pott and Gabriel Jackson. He has recorded choral music for EMI, Cala/United, Guild and Signum record labels. Recent recordings with Vasari Singers include *Anthems for the 21st Century*, the world premiere of Dupré's *De Profundis* and *La France au Calvaire* (both selected as Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*) and Brahms' *German Requiem* in Brahms' original version for two pianos.



## VASARI SINGERS

Vasari was recently described as “a consistently outstanding choir” by *Gramophone* magazine (November 2005 review of *Anthems of the 21st Century*) and BBC Radio 3 and *BBC Music Magazine* stated “Vasari Singers and Jeremy Backhouse have few equals” (March 2006 Building a Library) where Vasari’s CD of Vaughan Williams’ *Mass in G Minor* was the recommended recording.

These accolades illustrate Vasari’s versatility and passion in performing choral music from a wide range of styles and eras. The choir enjoys a varied repertoire each year, performing well known choral works as well as lesser-known repertoire from the English and European Renaissance right up to contemporary commissions. In 2005 the choir celebrated its 25th anniversary with a highly regarded project including 10 new commissions, a recording of these and other 21st century anthems and a world premiere concert at St John’s, Smith Square, critically acclaimed in the Observer. Francis Pott’s *The Cloud of Unknowing*, given its world premiere in May 2006, was the largest and most ambitious of these

anniversary commissions. The 80-minute oratorio, performed as the closing concert in the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music, was immensely well received by both audience and critics. Writing in The Times, Richard Morrison commented: “Any choir would find the piece a challenge, not least to its stamina. But Jeremy Backhouse’s excellent Vasari Singers performed it not just accurately, but with bags of heart and soul as well.”

The choir performs regularly in most of London’s major concert venues and has taken part in numerous commercial concerts and festivals, including the BBC Proms. It is often to be heard on BBC Radio 3 and has also featured on BBC TV, including regular appearances on *Songs of Praise*. As well as concerts, taking part in choral evensong is a major feature of Vasari’s schedule. The choir sings regularly in Canterbury Cathedral at the request of the Dean and Chapter and at other main English cathedrals, including in 2005 and 2006 Liverpool and Westminster Abbey.

Vasari’s substantial discography also features recordings across a wide range of periods and styles, from Palestrina and Lotti, to Britten, Fauré, Kodály, and Swingle. The Gramophone Award-nominated recording featuring the Howells Requiem and Frank Martin Mass was re-released by Signum in 2004 and the recent recordings of works by the French composer Marcel Dupré, both received Gramophone’s ‘Editor’s Choice’ accolade. Vasari’s Anthems of the 21st Century on the Signum label has been widely acclaimed.

“one of the most accomplished small choral groups of our time”  
**Gramophone**

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[www.vasarisingers.org](http://www.vasarisingers.org)

### Sopranos

Nicola Balzan  
Sarah Cumbers  
Juliet Hall  
Emma Hardie  
Lizzie Isherwood  
Laura Kirkup  
Julia Mackinder  
Fiona McWilliams  
Ros Newis  
Jess Stansfield  
Susan Waton

### Altos

Elizabeth Atkinson  
Alison Benton  
Julia Field  
Ruth Gibbins  
Sarah Kendrick  
Frances Reid  
Julia Ridout  
Helen Riley

### Tenors

Dan Burges  
Simon Burges  
David Jackson  
Thomas Jackson  
Chris Riley

### Basses

Andrew Angus  
Matt Bernstein  
James Cross  
Jagoba Fadrique  
Malcolm Field  
Paul Newis  
Ben Pilling  
Matt Wood





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Recorded at The Warehouse, London, England, 25 & 26 Feb 2006

Producers - Adrian Peacock & Will Todd (Mass in Blue)

Engineer - Mike Hatch

Editor - David Hinitt

**Mass in Blue:**

Trio & soloist sessions recorded at Signal Creative, London

Producers - Will Todd & Gareth Huw Davies

Engineer - Gareth Huw Davies

Brass & timpani sessions recorded at Kore Studios, London

Producers - Will Todd & Gareth Huw Davies

Engineer - Kevan Gallager

Conductor - Will Todd

Mixed at Signal Creative by Will Todd and Gareth Huw Davies

Design and Artwork - Woven Design [www.wovendesign.co.uk](http://www.wovendesign.co.uk)

Cover Image - Kim Taylor, Warren Photography

Photos of Vasari Singers / Jeremy Backhouse - Sim Canetty-Clarke

[www.signumrecords.com](http://www.signumrecords.com) [www.vasarisingers.org](http://www.vasarisingers.org) [www.tyalgumpress.com](http://www.tyalgumpress.com)

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