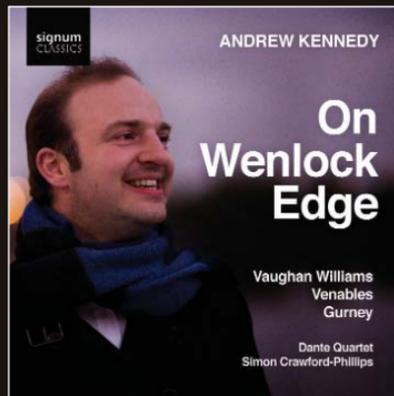
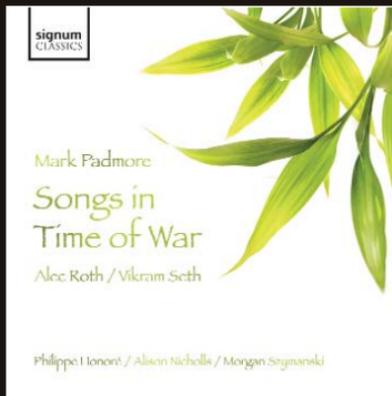


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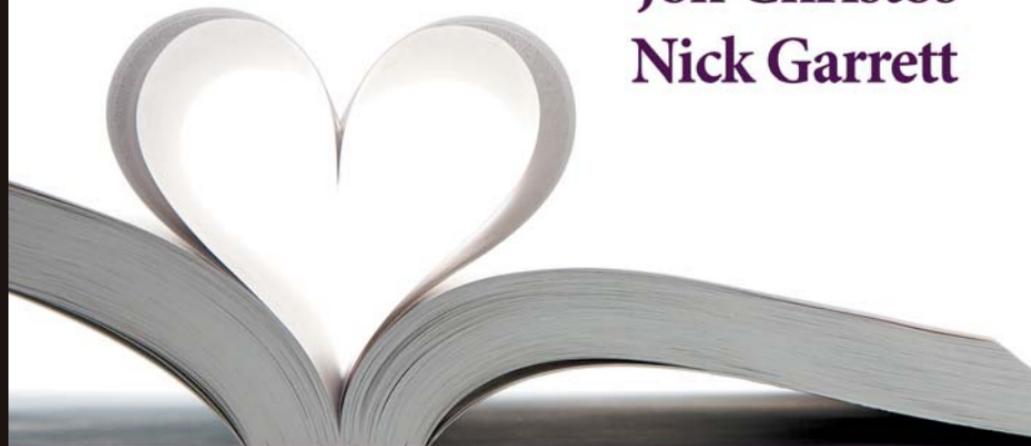
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# Poetry Serenade

Brian Knowles

**Elin Manahan Thomas**  
**Juliette Pochin**  
**Jon Christos**  
**Nick Garrett**



The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra / RSVP Voices  
Brighton Festival Youth Choir Conducted by James Morgan

POETRY SERENADE  
BRIAN KNOWLES

- |                                       |   |        |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------|
| 1. Written In March                   | <i>Soloist: Elin Manahan Thomas</i>                     | [3.08] |
| 2. Lord Of The Winds                  | <i>Soloist: Nick Garrett</i>                            | [3.02] |
| 3. He Wishes For The Cloths Of Heaven | <i>Soloist: Juliette Pochin</i>                         | [3.52] |
| 4. I Remember, I Remember             | <i>Soloist: Jon Christos</i>                            | [3.49] |
| 5. The Daffodils                      | <i>Soloist: Elin Manahan Thomas</i>                     | [3.19] |
| 6. The Soldier                        | <i>Soloist: Nick Garrett</i>                            | [4.35] |
| 7. Night Mail                         | <i>Brighton Festival Youth Choir</i>                    | [2.52] |
| 8. Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep  | <i>Soloist: Juliette Pochin</i>                         | [4.21] |
| 9. She Walks In Beauty                | <i>Soloist: Jon Christos</i>                            | [3.32] |
| 10. In Memoriam                       | <i>RSVP Voices</i>                                      | [2.22] |
| 11. I Sing Of A Maiden                | <i>Soloist: Elin Manahan Thomas</i>                     | [2.30] |
| 12. Weathers                          | <i>Soloist: Juliette Pochin</i>                         | [1.35] |
| 13. Come, Sweetheart, Come            | <i>Soloists: Jon Christos &amp; Elin Manahan Thomas</i> | [2.35] |
| 14. Crossing The Bar                  | <i>Soloist: Nick Garrett</i>                            | [3.49] |
| 15. The Lake Isle Of Innisfree        | <i>Soloist: Jon Christos</i>                            | [3.07] |

- |                     |                                     |        |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 16. A Child's Sleep | <i>Soloist: Elin Manahan Thomas</i> | [2.29] |
| 17. Everyone Sang   | <i>RSVP Voices</i>                  | [2.06] |

**Bonus Track**

- |                                 |   |        |
|---------------------------------|---|--------|
| 18. Love Came Down At Christmas | <i>Quartet: Jon Christos / Nick Garrett<br/>Juliette Pochin / Elin Manahan Thomas</i> | [2.10] |
|---------------------------------|---|--------|

Total Timings [57.27]

JON CHRISTOS · NICK GARRETT  
JULIETTE POCHIN · ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS  
THE CITY OF PRAGUE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
RSVP VOICES - DIRECTOR ROB JOHNSTON  
(TRACKS 2, 6, 10, 14, 17)

BRIGHTON FESTIVAL YOUTH CHOIR - DIRECTOR JULIETTE POCHIN  
(TRACKS 7, 8, 11)

CONDUCTED BY JAMES MORGAN

## FOREWORD BY ALAN TITCHMARSH

Brian Knowles is that rare thing - a composer of great originality who can also write good tunes! This CD is a terrific example of his work in setting some of the nation's favourite poems to music. Having enjoyed Brian's work myself for many years now, I'm happy to think that this CD will ensure it of a wider audience. His is a talent that deserves greater recognition and I congratulate him on a tremendous achievement.

Alan Titchmarsh MBE



I have always had a love of great poetry, both as a reader and a composer, and it is from this rich source that I have gained inspiration for writing many of my compositions. Indeed this source sometimes seems endless and has provided me with many opportunities to compose passionately about the joys, tribulations, love and despair of life. It has enabled my creative spirit to flourish through setting such poetry to music.

A few years ago I composed settings of "He Wishes For The Cloths Of Heaven" by W B Yeats and "The Soldier" by Rupert Brooke. It would take a stony heart not to be inspired by such glorious poetry! The experience certainly whetted my appetite to set more of these texts to music and, further encouraged by my family, especially my sister, Sheila, the *Poetry Serenade* project was born. I feel an affinity with all of these poems, which has made my task as composer uncomplicated and so pleasurable.

When writing music, every composer owes so much to the great masters of the past. Purcell, Handel and Schubert all invigorate me with their own unique qualities, and the wonderful works of more recent British composers such as John Ireland and Ralph Vaughan Williams have been inspirational. They have helped to mould the composer I am today. I have also been influenced by Irish folk

songs and sometimes a certain Celtic flavour can be found in my music. No doubt my Irish mother accounts for much of this! Even when growing up in Liverpool in the early sixties, I would eagerly await each new release of The Beatles; their instinctive genius for song writing hugely impressed me. I have always enjoyed a melodic style of writing and although as a student composer at the Royal Academy of Music in the mid sixties I was somewhat out of vogue, serialism being the fashionable pursuit, I remained loyal to my musical instincts, and to those who had such a prodigious influence on my approach to composition.

It has been a joyous labour setting these poems to music, and the eighteen songs of this album *Poetry Serenade* have been chosen to give the listener an eclectic array of the differing texts and contrasting styles of composition. I have received much welcomed support and encouragement from my family, my manager Rob Johnston and my producers James Morgan and Juliette Pochin, all of whom have spurred me on. I can only hope that you enjoy these settings, so skilfully orchestrated by James and Juliette, and performed with such expertise and artistry by my soloists and all the musicians who took part in this project. I am greatly indebted to everyone who has helped to make *Poetry Serenade* a reality.

Brian Knowles

## TEXTS

### 1 WRITTEN IN MARCH

William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850)

THE cock is crowing,  
The stream is flowing,  
The small birds twitter,  
The lake doth glitter,  
The green field sleeps in the sun ...

Like an army defeated  
The snow hath retreated,  
And now doth fare ill  
On the top of the bare hill;  
The plowboy is whooping-anon-anon:

There's joy in the mountains;  
There's life in the fountains;  
Small clouds are sailing,  
Blue sky prevailing;  
The rain is over and gone!

### 2 LORD OF THE WINDS

Mary Coleridge (1861 - 1907)

Lord of the winds, I cry to thee,  
I that am dust,  
And blown about by every gust  
I fly to thee.

Lord of the waters, unto thee I call.  
I that am weed upon the waters borne,  
And by the waters torn,  
Tossed by the waters, at thy feet I fall.

### 3 HE WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

W.B. Yeats (1865 - 1939)

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

The words from *He Wishes For The Cloths Of Heaven* are set to music by permission of A P Watt Ltd on behalf of Gráinne Yeats.

### 4 I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

Thomas Hood (1799 - 1845)

I REMEMBER, I remember,  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon,  
Nor brought too long a day,  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away! ...

I remember, I remember  
The fir trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky:  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heaven  
Than when I was a boy.

### 5 THE DAFFODILS

William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850)

I wander'd lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretch'd in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:-  
A Poet could not but be gay  
In such jocund company!  
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the daffodils.

### 6 THE SOLDIER

Rupert Brooke (1887 - 1915)

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,

Gave, once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blessed by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts a peace, under an English heaven.

#### 7 NIGHT MAIL

W.H. Auden (1907 - 1973)

THIS is the Night Mail crossing the border,  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,  
Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,  
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.  
Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:  
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.  
Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,  
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,  
Snorting noisily, she passes  
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.  
Birds turn their heads as she approaches,  
Stare from the bushes at her blank-faced coaches.  
Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;  
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,  
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes ...

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#### 8 DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP

Do not stand at my grave and weep;  
I am not there. I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die.

#### 9 SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788 - 1824)

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:  
Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impair'd the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

#### 10 IN MEMORIAM

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892)

RING out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind ...

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good ...

#### 11 I SING OF A MAIDEN

Anonymous - 15<sup>th</sup> Century

I sing of a maiden  
That is matchless:  
King of all kings  
For her son she ches\*.

He came all so stillè  
Where his mother was,  
As dew in Aprillè  
That falls on the grass.

He came all so stillè  
To his mother's bower,  
As dew in Aprillè  
That falls on the flower.

He came all so stillè  
Where his mother lay,  
As dew in Aprillè  
That falls on the spray.

I sing of a maiden  
That is matchless:  
King of all kings  
For her son she ches.

Mother and maiden  
Was never none but she  
Well may such a lady  
God's mother be.

\*ches: chose

## 12 WEATHERS

Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1928)

THIS is the weather the cuckoo likes,  
And so do I;  
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,  
And nestlings fly;  
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,  
And they sit outside at 'The Traveller's Rest',  
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,  
And citizens dream of the south and west,  
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,  
And so do I;  
When beeches drip in browns and duns,  
And thresh and ply;  
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,  
And meadow rivulets overflow,  
And drops on gate bars hang in a row,  
And rooks in families homeward go,  
And so do I.

## 13 COME, SWEETHEART, COME

COME, sweetheart, come,  
Dear as my heart to me,  
Come to the room  
I have made fine for thee.

Here there be couches spread,  
Tapestry tented,  
Flowers for thee to tread,  
Green herbs sweet scented.

Here is the table spread  
Love, to invite thee,  
Clear is the wine and red,  
Love, to delight thee.

Sweet sounds the viol,  
Shriller the flute,

A lad and a maiden  
Sing to the lute ...

Dearest, delay not,  
Ours love to learn,  
I live not without thee,  
Love's hour is come ...

MSS of Salzburg, Canterbury, and Limoges 10th Century

Translated by Helen Waddell

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## 14 CROSSING THE BAR

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892)

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar.

## 15 THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

W.B. Yeats (1865 - 1939)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and  
wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace  
comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where  
the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a  
purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

The words from *The Lake Isle Of Innisfree* are set to music by  
permission of A P Watt Ltd on behalf of Gráinne Yeats.

**16 A CHILD'S SLEEP**

Carol Ann Duffy (b 1955)

I stood at the edge of my child's sleep  
hearing her breathe;  
although I could not enter there,  
I could not leave.

Her sleep was a small wood,  
perfumed with flowers;  
dark, peaceful, sacred,  
acred in hours.

And she was the spirit that lives  
in the heart of such woods;  
without time, without history,  
wordlessly good.

I spoke her name, a pebble dropped  
in the still night,  
and saw her stir, both open palms  
cupping their soft light;

then went to the window. The greater dark  
outside the room  
gazed back, maternal, wise,  
with its face of moon.

Text © Carol Ann Duffy  
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**17 EVERYONE SANG**

Siegfried Sassoon (1886 - 1967)

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;  
And I was filled with such delight  
As prisoned birds must find in freedom  
Winging wildly across the white  
Orchards and dark-green fields; on; on; and out  
of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,  
And beauty came like the setting sun.  
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror  
Drifted away . . . O but every one  
Was a bird; and the song was wordless;  
the singing  
will never be done.

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**Bonus Track**

**18 LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS**

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830 - 1894)

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;  
Worship we our Jesus:  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love shall be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and to all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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### BRIAN KNOWLES

Brian was born in Belfast in 1946 and was educated at the Liverpool Blue Coat School. He went on to study composition at the Royal Academy Of Music. In 1970 he formed the group "Saffron". Brian subsequently became Musical Director of concerts worldwide for Roger Whittaker, many of his songs being performed and recorded by both Saffron and Roger. In 2002 Brian's anthem 'Jubilee Tribute' was composed and performed

especially for HRH The Queen at the Service Of Remembrance, and was broadcast worldwide from the Royal Albert Hall. In recent years Brian has been working on setting these well-loved poems to music - *Poetry Serenade*. He is also Composer In Residence at The Royal School, Haslemere.

[www.brianknowlesmusic.com](http://www.brianknowlesmusic.com)

### JON CHRISTOS

Jon Christos was educated at Chetham's School of Music and The Royal Northern College of Music, both as a Major Scholarship recipient. He has performed leading operatic roles throughout the UK and Europe and is greatly in demand on the concert platform. Jon has also appeared on numerous national TV and radio shows including *Songs Of Praise*, and *Friday Night is Music Night*. Jon also hosts 2 radio shows of his own on Premier and BBC Radio Lancashire. Having been the first artist to perform at the New Wembley Stadium, he has also performed at the Powergen Cup Final at Twickenham, the Heineken Cup Final in Cardiff,



© Jerry Clifford

great houses including the Royal Opera, English National Opera and Opera National de Paris. Although Nick's roots are firmly in opera, his repertoire crosses all musical boundaries and he has performed music worldwide from Boulez to Radiohead.

Nick is an accomplished pianist and composer and was a founding member and vocal arranger for the multi-platinum selling quintet "Amici Forever".

[www.nickgarrett.net](http://www.nickgarrett.net)

and The City of Manchester Stadium for the UEFA Cup final. After the success of his debut album *Northern Light*, Jon's second album *Artist* will be released at the end of 2008.

[www.jonchristos.com](http://www.jonchristos.com)

### NICK GARRETT

Nick Garrett studied voice and piano at Trinity College, London and is the recipient of a Wolfson Foundation Award. He has sung over forty operatic roles including *Don Giovanni*, *Scarpia* and *Figaro* and has performed for many of the



© Hugh O'Malley



© Michael Chevis

## JULIETTE POCHIN

Cambridge educated, Juliette has a hugely varied and successful career as singer, composer, and Brit-nominated record producer - from singing the Angel in *Dream of Gerontius* with the CBSO to writing the music for *The Kumars at No.42*. She released her critically acclaimed debut album *Venezia* in 2006 (Classic FM Record of the Week), and the follow up - *The Domestic Diva* - is due for release in 2009. As well as her international performing career, she is a regular anthem singer at Wembley and the Millennium Stadiums and has performed for the UN. Other recordings include *The Sky Shall*

*be our Roof* with Iain Burnside and the compilations *Classical Voices* and *Classical Greats*.

[www.juliettepochin.com](http://www.juliettepochin.com)

## ELIN MANAHAN THOMAS

Born and bred in Swansea, before graduating from Clare College Cambridge in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, in 2007 Elin released her debut album with Universal Classics and Jazz, *Eternal Light*, which entered the classical charts at number two.

She is the first singer ever to record Bach's *Alles mit Gott*, a birthday ode written in 1713 and discovered in 2005. Elin received great acclaim for her *Pie Jesu* on Naxos' award-winning recording of the Rutter *Requiem*, and was praised as soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, under Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

Elin performed in Classic FM's fifteenth birthday concert, at *Songs of Praise's* 'The Big Sing' at the Royal Albert Hall, and in the World Premiere of Sir John Tavener's *Requiem* in Liverpool Cathedral. Concert performances range from Monteverdi to Mozart, and Purcell to Poulenc.

[www.elinmanahan-thomas.co.uk](http://www.elinmanahan-thomas.co.uk)

## THE CITY OF PRAGUE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra is an exclusive recording orchestra which comprises the cream of musicians from the various Czech orchestras, including many from the world renowned Czech Philharmonic.

Formed in 1992 by Josef Pokluda, George Durovic and James Fitzpatrick of Tadlow Music, the initial aim of the orchestra was to provide inexpensive

but high quality orchestral recording in Prague for Film, TV and Videogame scores. In some 15 years the orchestra has recorded over 1000 media scores, working with composers like Elmer Bernstein, Maurice Jarre, Rachel Portman, Carl Davis, Julian Nott, Alexandre Desplat, Joby Talbot, Wojciech Kilar and Gabriel Yared.

The orchestra have recorded more than 500 albums of music ranging from Christian Pop to Avant-Garde Icelandic Minimalism, from Modernist Italian Opera to Vintage Film Scores of the Golden Age of Hollywood, as well as solo albums for Katherine Jenkins, Sarah Brightman, John Barrowman, Libera Me, The Ten Tenors and Karl Jenkins.

[www.tadlowmusic.com](http://www.tadlowmusic.com)



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## BRIGHTON FESTIVAL YOUTH CHOIR

Brighton Festival Youth Choir consists of talented young singers aged between 11 and 18. Their first performance was a live broadcast on BBC Radio 3, 2002, while their concert debut was at the Brighton Festival with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Brighton Festival Chorus under Paul Daniel. Since their debut, this dynamic young choir have worked with the RPO, LPO, the Philharmonia, the City of London Sinfonia, the Brodsky Quartet, Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra, L'Orchestra National de Lorraine, and the Brighton Youth Orchestra, under such conductors as Richard Hickox, Jacques Mercier, David Angus and Carl Davis. They have undertaken foreign tours to Prague and Belgium and brought home a silver



cup from the Verona International Choir Competition 2008 competing against adult choirs. Members of the choir have also been used in professional recordings with BMG and radio adverts. In 2009 they will perform at the O2 arena and will also feature on Juliette Pochin's new solo album.

## RSVP VOICES

RSVP Voices was founded in 2002 by their director Rob Johnston and is made up from London's finest professional singers. The choir has a busy and varied schedule and specialises in the recording of film and TV soundtracks as well as recording for CDs. Recent credits include: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *The Magic Roundabout*, *Finding Neverland* (Oscar winner), *Elizabeth 1* (BAFTA winner), *Dracula*, *Silent Witness* and *Daniel and Pascoe*. RSVP Voices also provided the backing vocals for Jarvis Cocker's debut album and performed live with Jarvis at the Royal Festival Hall.

[www.rsvpvoices.com](http://www.rsvpvoices.com)

Recorded at Barrandov Studios/Smecky Studio, Prague (Autumn 2007) and Ashmead Studios, London (Spring 2008).

Concert Masters - Petr Matejak and Lucie Svehlova

Recording Engineer - Jan Holzner

Translator - Stanja Vomackova

Orchestral Contractor - James Fitzpatrick - Tadlow Music Ltd [www.tadlowmusic.com](http://www.tadlowmusic.com)

Produced, orchestrated and mixed by James Morgan and Juliette Pochin for Morgan Pochin Music Productions [www.morganpochin.com](http://www.morganpochin.com)

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