

*Agnus Dei • Miserere*  
Barber Allegri

# *Classics for Choir*

**Choir of Trinity College Cambridge**  
**Richard Marlow**



**Hear My Prayer**  
**Shepherd's Farewell**  
**Nunc Dimittis**  
**Ave Maria**  
**Evening Hymn**  
**Panis Angelicus**  
*& many more ...*

**alto**

# Agnus Dei • Miserere

## Classics for Choir

- |    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 1  | Gregorio Allegri: <i>Miserere mei, Deus</i>   | 8:25  |
| 2  | William Byrd: <i>Rejoice, rejoice in Christ</i>   | 1:07  |
| 3  | Hildegard von Bingen: <i>O ignis Spiritus Paracliti</i>                                     | 5:26  |
| 4  | Michael Praetorius: <i>Vom Himmel hoch,<br/>da komm ich her</i>                             | 2:28  |
| 5  | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: <i>Ave verum corpus, K618</i>                                      | 2:57  |
| 6  | Franz Schubert: <i>Ave Maria, D839</i>  | 3:42  |
| 7  | Felix Mendelssohn: <i>Hear My Prayer, WoO 15</i>  | 10:21 |
| 8  | Hector Berlioz: <i>L'Enfance du Christ, Op. 25 –<br/>L'Adieu des bergers</i>                | 3:30  |
| 9  | César Franck: <i>Panis Angelicus</i>  | 3:33  |
| 10 | Gabriel Fauré: <i>Requiem, Op. 48 – In Paradisum</i>  | 3:43  |
| 11 | Francis Poulenc: <i>Quatre Motets pour le temps<br/>de Noël, Op. 152 – Videntes stellam</i> | 3:14  |
| 12 | Camille Saint-Saëns: <i>Messe, Op. 4 –<br/>O salutaris hostia</i>                           | 2:14  |
| 13 | Charles Villiers Stanford: <i>Te Deum in B flat</i>   | 6:12  |
| 14 | Geoffrey Burgon: <i>Nunc dimittis</i>   | 3:01  |
| 15 | Henry Balfour Gardiner:<br><i>Evening Hymn "Te lucis ante terminum"</i>                     | 5:37  |
| 16 | Samuel Barber: <i>Agnus Dei</i>   | 9:32  |

Choir of Trinity College Cambridge  
Richard Marlow, conductor

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### NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

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**Gregorio Allegri** (1582–1652), who composed a considerable amount of choral music, was a member of the Papal Chapel choir at the Sistine Chapel. Today he is largely remembered for this celebrated setting of Psalm 51 *Miserere mei, Deus* scored for five-part and four-part choirs (usually solo singers). Despite it being forbidden to transcribe any work performed in the Sistine Chapel during Holy Week, it is alleged that Mozart did just that, copying down this hauntingly beautiful work one Ash Wednesday and returning two days later on Good Friday to correct mistakes. It should be noted that the famous top C was probably not sung in Allegri's time but is a later addition

**William Byrd** (1543–1623), who was raised as a Catholic, never renounced his faith. It is likely that he was taught by Thomas Tallis at the Chapel Royal whence he returned as a gentleman in 1572, having been Organist and Choir Master at Lincoln Cathedral. In 1575 Queen Elizabeth granted both Byrd and Tallis a joint licence to publish their own music as well as to import scores from Europe; several collections (the *Cantiones sacrae*) were printed and in 1588–9, Byrd published his *Songs of sundrie natures*. This collection included *Rejoice, rejoice*, part of a Christmas Day carol *From Virgin's womb*. From 1593 Byrd lived in Essex where his pupils included Morley and Tomkins. There he also composed music for Catholic recusants, some of which appeared in *Gradualia* (1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot). Demand for such collections both at home and abroad led to a further collection being published in 1607.

**Abbess Hildegard of Bingen** (1098–1179) took the veil at the age of fifteen and became Superior at the Disibodenberg Benedictine monastery in 1136. She later founded a new monastery near Bingen in the Rhine Valley. One of the most remarkable figures of the Middle Ages, Hildegard held forceful views on morality, medicine and theology and set her own poetry to highly expressive music. Among her later texts are a remarkable book of apocalyptic visions and a morality play *Ordo Virtutum* which contains over eighty melodies. *O Ignis Spiritus Paracliti* is a Pentecostal hymn.

**Michael Praetorius** (c1571–1621) left a considerable quantity of highly



elaborate vocal and instrumental music and although much of his work was influenced by a strict Lutheran upbringing, he was indebted to contemporary Italian polychoral style, especially the works of Giovanni Gabrieli. This can be fully appreciated in the magnificent eight-part *Von Himmel hoch da komm ich her* which was included in the collection *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica*, published two years before his death. Praetorius also wrote a famous treatise on music of his time *Syntagma musicum* which has since proved an invaluable source of information to music historians. His *Dances from Terpsichore* is an ALTO ALC 1076)

One of the most sublime settings of the *Ave verum corpus* is by **Mozart** (1756–91) which, dating from the final year of his life, is reminiscent of some of the priestly music from *Die Zauberflöte*, also written at that time.

The Latin words to the prayer *Ave Maria* is often sung to fit **Franz Schubert's** famous melody, composed in 1825. However, the original words set by Schubert were a German translation of *Ellen Douglas's prayer* from Sir Walter Scott's epic poem *Lady of the Lake*.

Not every precocious talent becomes a mature genius: **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809–47) however continued to compose works of genius throughout his tragically short life. Visits to Britain inspired some of his finest music such as his setting of Psalm 55 *Hear My Prayer* composed in 1844. For many years this piece became familiar to all though the recording made by Ernest Lough and the Temple Church Choir (November 1927), a performance that has since fired the ambition of every chorister to perform this famous solo. Mendelssohn was the first nineteenth century composer to champion and encourage a reassessment of the works of J S Bach.

*The Shepherd's Farewell* was originally composed as an organ piece in 1850 and advertised by **Hector Berlioz** (1803–69) as the work of an unknown baroque composer. Designed to wrong-foot critics of his music, his ruse was an immediate success! Three years later Berlioz rewrote it for chorus, inserting it into the second section of his oratorio *L'enfance du Christ* which dealt with the flight of The Holy Family into Egypt.

**César Franck** (1822–90) studied at the Paris Conservatoire and as Organist and Choirmaster at Sainte Clothilde, he attracted considerable attention for

his famous improvisations. Originally scored for choir with cello, double bass, harp and solo voice, *Panis angelicus* was composed in 1872, the year he became Organ Professor at the Conservatoire. Now more often used for weddings than as part of a service it has sadly become tainted with Victorian sentimentality.

The works of **Gabriel Fauré** (1845–1924) were slow to gain popular recognition and his *Requiem*, his best-known composition today, was scarcely known until some years after his death despite the advocacy of other musicians. In 1877 Fauré was appointed Choir Master and then Organist at La Madeleine in Paris and in 1896 he became Professor of Composition at the Paris Conservatoire where his pupils included Boulanger, Ravel, Enescu, Schmitt and Koechlin. Fauré lost both parents between 1885 and 1888 and it was during this painful period that he composed the *Requiem* which, in contrast with other nineteenth century Requiems, is noted for its restraint and essential gentleness. The final movement is the antiphon *In Paradisum* in which treble voices bring the work to a restful, serene close.

**Francis Poulenc** (1899–1963) had a tendency to display almost inappropriately his dry, almost flippant wit in his music. Yet he was also capable of disarming the listener with passages of such simplicity and tenderness that can almost move one to tears. His religious works were often inspired by tragic personal events such as the death of a close personal friend in a car crash, but it is said that his *Gloria* was inspired by seeing a game of football played between rival teams of monks! *Videntes stellam* is the third of 4 *Motets pour le temps de Noël* (1952) and describes the progress of the Magi beneath a starry sky with gifts for the Christ child.

**Camille Saint-Saëns's** *Messe à quatre voix* (which includes St Thomas Aquinas's text *O salutaris hostia*) is an early work, composed in 1856 after a visit to Italy. Saint-Saëns (1835–1921), who had early on shown precocious musical talent, was then Organist at the church of Ste-Merry in Paris and soon to take up a similar appointment at La Madeleine. His score, which looks back to an earlier era, was much admired by Liszt who was impressed by the devotional nature of the work. *O salutaris hostia* was transcribed for

organ almost 50 years later.

In addition to holding the post of Organist at Trinity College **Sir Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852–1924) was also Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music from 1883 until his death in 1924. There he taught many of the greatest choral composers of the twentieth century including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland and Howells. His own church music continues to be hugely popular and includes several Services regularly performed in churches and cathedrals today. The stirring *Te Deum* heard in this collection forms part of the *Morning Service in B flat* (1879) and was later performed at the coronation of Edward VII. An unusual aspect of this work is the use of plainsong by the staunchly Protestant Stanford.

**Geoffrey Burgon** (1941–2010), who studied composition with Peter Wishart at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, began his professional career as a jazz trumpeter. His first successful work was *Requiem* (1976) which was premiered at the Three Choirs Festival. However he made his name with works composed for film and TV including Novello award-winning scores the *Numc Dimittis* written for *Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy*, *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (both 1979), *Brideshead Revisited* (1981) and *Chronicles of Narnia* (1988).

**Henry Balfour Gardiner** (1877–1950) was born into a wealthy family and after graduating from Oxford, he studied music in Frankfurt, achieving popularity with his orchestral miniatures, songs and piano pieces. Perhaps his best-known work, *Evening Hymn*, dates from 1908. Later his enthusiasm for composition waned and he devoted his energy instead to promoting the works of other composers (notably Holst and Quilter) and also managing his estate in Dorset. He was the great uncle of a currently highly successful choral conductor: John Eliot Gardiner.

**Samuel Barber** (1910–81) trained as a singer as well as a pianist and composer at the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia and although still best known for his romantic and dramatic orchestral scores, his songs and other vocal works have become increasingly performed. His most familiar vocal work *Agnus Dei*, is actually a choral arrangement of the gravely beautiful and moving orchestral piece *Adagio*, itself adapted from the slow movement of his *String Quartet* (1936).

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## NOTES ON THE ARTIST

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**Trinity College** was founded in 1546 by King Henry VIII following the amalgamation of two earlier foundations dating from the early fourteenth century. From the beginning, music played a vital role in the life of Trinity, with members of the choir being drawn from the choral foundation established during Mary Tudor's reign in 1553. Early in its history the choir included Tudor composers Robert White and Thomas Preston and later alumni include Ralph Vaughan Williams, who studied there in the 1890s. During its long and distinguished history, Directors of Music at Trinity College have included Thomas Attwood Walmisley during the first half of the nineteenth century, Charles Villiers Stanford (1873–82), Alan Gray (1893–1930), Hubert Stanley Middleton (1930–57) and Raymond Leppard (1957–68) and Richard Marlow (1968–2006). The current Director of Music is Stephen Layton.

The choir school closed during Gray's tenure in charge; instead the trebles were chosen from a local grammar school whilst the lay clerks broadly came from King's and St John's Colleges. In 1957 Leppard once again called upon Trinity undergraduates to form the tenor and bass section and in 1982, following their admission to the College, women replaced trebles and male altos. The choir sing three services weekly and during college holidays perform concerts, make recordings and take part in overseas tours. In recent years the choir was voted fifth best in the world by *Gramophone* magazine.

Leppard's successor **Dr Richard Marlow** took up the post of Director of Music in 1968. Previously he sang as a chorister at Southwark Cathedral, participated in the Coronation service in 1953 and as an Organ Scholar at Selwyn College he studied under Thurston Dart. Marlow was not only a busy teacher, recordings director and performer at home and abroad; he also contributed articles to various scholarly publications including *The New Grove*.

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