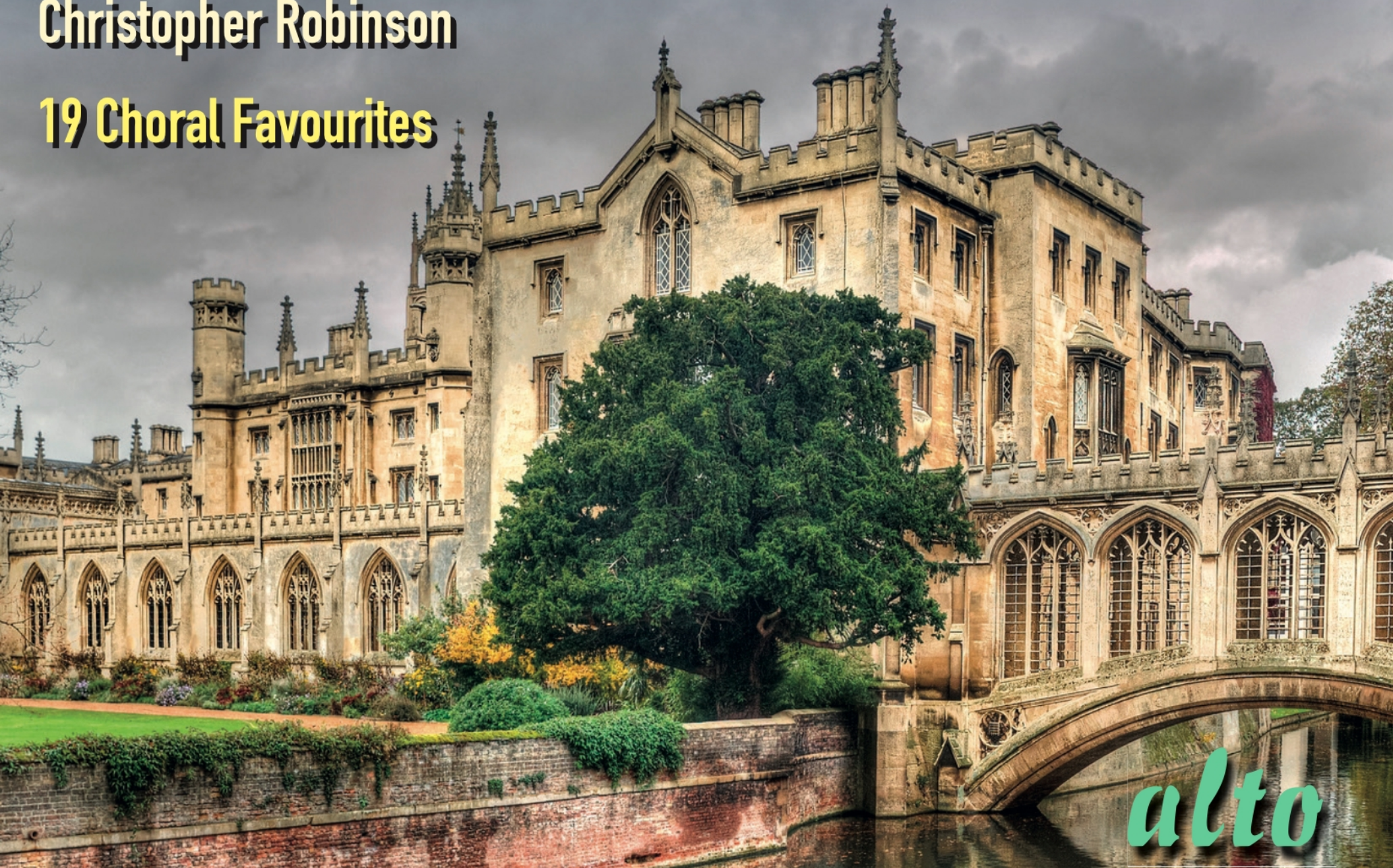


Very Best of
St. John's College Choir Cambridge
Christopher Robinson
19 Choral Favourites



alto

Very Best of St John's College Choir

[1]	Joseph Haydn: <i>Insanae et vanae curae, Hob.XX:1/13c</i> (anonymous Latin text)	6:49
[2]	Gabriel Fauré: <i>Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11</i> (text: Jean Racine)	5:28
[3]	Samuel Sebastian Wesley: <i>Thou wilt keep Him in perfect peace</i> (Bible, KJV Psalm 112:7 & 1 John 1:5)	4:00
[4]	Johannes Brahms: <i>Ein Deutsches Requiem, Op. 45</i> – How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings (Bible, Psalm 84:1-2, 4)	5:31
[5]	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: <i>Ave verum corpus, K. 618</i> (text: Thomas Aquinas)	3:38
[6]	Malcolm C Boyle: <i>Thou, O God, Art Praised</i> (Bible, Psalm 48:1)	6:10
[7]	Edward Elgar: <i>Ave verum</i> (text: Thomas Aquinas)	2:46
[8]	Anton Bruckner: <i>Locus iste</i> (Bible, Exodus 15:17)	2:38
[9]	William H. Harris: <i>Bring us, O Lord</i> (text: Anglican liturgy)	3:55
[10]	Sergei Rachmaninov: <i>Hymn of the Cherubim</i> (medieval Latin hymn text)	3:24
[11]	William Byrd: <i>Ave verum</i> (text: Thomas Aquinas)	4:18
[12]	Gioachino Rossini: <i>O salutaris Hostia</i> (text: Thomas Aquinas)	3:29
[13]	Edvard Grieg: <i>Ave maris Stella, FWV C13 No. 4</i> (medieval Latin hymn text)	2:54
[14]	Antonio Lotti: <i>Crucifixus</i> (Christian liturgy)	3:25
[15]	Felix Mendelssohn: <i>Lobgesang, Op. 52</i> – Denn er hat seinem Engeln befohlen (Bible, Psalm 91:11)	3:04
[16]	Robert Parsons: <i>Ave Maria</i> (Bible, Luke 1:28)	4:45
[17]	Cesar Franck: <i>7 Pièces pour orgue</i> – Panis Angelicus (text: Thomas Aquinas)	3:33
[18]	Charles Villiers Stanford: <i>Hymn</i>	3:39
[19]	Maurice Duruflé: <i>Requiem, Op. 9</i> – Pie Jesu (Requiem Mass)	3:22

St John's College Choir
Christopher Robinson, conductor

The motet *Insanae et vanae curae*, thought to be by **Joseph Haydn** (1732-1809) and published in the year of his death in 1809, opens dramatically but eventually finds calm at *Quid prodest O mortalis*. Following this quiet section the opening music is repeated and is followed by a repetition of this more reassuring passage, on which the piece ends. *Insanae et vanae curae invadunt mentes nostras / Saepe furore replent corda, privata spe. / Quid prodest O mortalis canari pro mundanis, si coelos negligas. / Sunt fausta tibi cincta, / Si Deus est pro te.*

Gabriel Faure's (1845-1924) *Cantique de Jean Racine*, composed in 1865 when the composer was twenty and teaching at the Ecole Niedermeyer (training school for church musicians), is a restful work, inward looking and contemplative rather than over-persuasive and sentimental. It was originally scored for string quartet and harmonium but is more usually heard today with organ accompaniment. The work was dedicated to Cesar Franck. *Verbe égal au Très-Haut, notre unique espérance, / Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux, / De la paisable nuit nous rempons le silence: / Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux! / Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante; / Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix; / Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante, / Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois! / O Christ, sois favorable à ce peuple fidele / Pour te bénir maintenant rassemblé; / Reçois les chants qu'il offre à ta gloire immortelle; / Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé!*

Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-76) had been a chorister in the Chapel Royal and also at St Paul's Cathedral. Between 1832 and his death he was organist at Hereford and Exeter Cathedrals, Leeds Parish Church, Winchester College and Cathedral, and lastly at Gloucester Cathedral, but his somewhat abrasive personality prevented him from holding any post except those in Winchester for any length of time. The anthem *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace* is a profoundly beautiful work with excellent contrast between light and dark passages. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, / Whose mind is stayed on Thee. / The darkness is no darkness with Thee, / But the night is as clear as day: / The darkness and the light are to Thee both alike. / God is light, and in Him is no darkness*

at all. / O let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee. / For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for evermore.

How lovely are Thy dwellings is an arrangement for choir and organ of the idyllic fourth movement of **Johannes Brahms'** (1833-97) *A German Requiem* composed between 1857-68. Seen as an opponent to the 'new programme music' of Liszt and Wagner, he was a staunch follower of Schumann but nevertheless composed in classical forms. *How lovely are Thy dwellings fair, O Lord of Hosts, / My soul ever longest and fainteth sore for the blessed courts of the Lord; / My heart and flesh do cry unto God, cry to the living God. / Blest are they that in Thy house are dwelling, / They ever praise Thee, O Lord, for evermore. / How lovely are Thy dwellings fair.*

One of the most sublime settings of the *Ave Verum corpus* is by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-91) dating from his final year is reminiscent of some of the priestly music in *Die Zauberflöte*. *Ave Verum corpus, / Natum ex Maria Virgine, / Vere passum, immolatum / In cruce pre homine. / Cujus latus perforatum / Unda fluxit et sanguine / Esto nobis praegustatum / in mortis in examine.*

The anthem *Thou, O God, art praised in Sion* by **Malcolm Boyle** (1902-76) opens in grandeur but quietens for *Thou that hearest the prayer* and becomes gentler still for trebles at *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace*. A hefty organ passage leads into *Let the people praise Thee, O God* which leads towards the triumphant conclusion. *Thou, O God, art praised in Sion, / and unto Thee shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem. / Thou that hearest the prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come. / Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and receivest unto Thee. / He shall dwell in Thy courts, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of Thy house, / e'en of Thy holy temple. / Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed in Thee. / Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace because he trusteth in Thee. / Trust ye the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. / Let the people praise Thee, O God, / Yea, let all the people praise Thee. / Then shall the earth bring forth her increase: / And God shall give us His blessing.*

Sir Edward Elgar's (1857-1934) *Ave Verum corpus* is one of his

earliest published works dating from 1887 (other parts of this Opus 2 are the *Ave Maria* and *Ave maris Stella*). Exquisite in its simplicity, the lovely treble line is repeated by the full choir in harmony before the coda takes the listener unexpectedly in another direction.

Anton Bruckner's (1824-96) gradual ***Locus iste*** dates from 1869, the decade in which he wrote much of his sacred music prior to composing the great symphonies. He had been organist at the beautiful St Florian monastery and also at Linz Cathedral but this work dates from the period when he had just moved to Vienna. In 1869 Bruckner visited Paris to play on the Notre-Dame organ. A supremely devout man, his choral works have a radiance that stems from his study of the works of Palestrina and his school. *Locus iste a Deo factus est / in aestimabile sacramentum / irreprehensibilis est, / Locus iste a Deo factus est.*

One of the most popular anthems on this disc is **Sir William H Harris'** (1883-1973) ***Bring us, O Lord***, a sublime late Romantic work from 1959 set to words by John Donne. Harris held important appointments at New College Oxford, the Royal College of Music and St George's Chapel Windsor, where he set extraordinarily high standards. *Bring us, O Lord, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heav'n, / Enter into that gate and dwell in that house, / where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, / but one equal light; / no noise, nor silence, but one equal music; / No fears, nor hopes, but one equal possession; / No ends, nor beginnings, but one equal eternity, / in the habitation of Thy Glory and dominion. / World without end, Amen.*

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) wrote his *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* in 1910. This extract, known as ***Hymn to the Cherubim*** has become popular in churches and is in two sections. Although not a religious man, Rachmaninov composed the Liturgy inside three weeks in a rare burst of creativity. Although there is no intended use of traditional church chants, his style is submerged to the extent that one would never guess that his closely succeeding works included the *Piano Concerto No.3* and the *Preludes*. In the service this work occurs at the point when the celebrants proceed

to the altar with bread and wine. *Holy, Holy, Holy, ever blessed Lord God Almighty: / Holy, Holy, Holy, God in three persons, blessed Trinity. / Saints and martyrs bless and praise Thee. / Hearts and voices swell one hymn: / Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord heav'n and earth are full of Thy great glory, Holy blessed Trinity. / Glory be to Thee in the highest. / Hosanna, Thee. / Hearts and voices swell one hymn: / Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord heav'n and earth are full of Thy great glory, Holy blessed Trinity. / Glory be to Thee in the highest. / Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest / To the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; / Glory to Thee in the highest. / Cherubim and Seraphim, angels and Archangels praise and worship Thee, singing: / Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

William Byrd (1542/3-1623), pupil of Thomas Tallis, was the greatest-musical figure of his time who being Catholic composed to both English and Latin texts. Following the Armada few English composers dared to set Latin texts and so this setting of ***Ave Verum corpus***, published in 1605, can be seen as a personal yet possibly reckless affirmation of his faith.

Giacomo Rossini's (1792-1868) ***O Salutaris Hostia*** is in turn declamatory and reverential. This unaccompanied four-part anthem was composed towards the end of his life following a long and painful illness, when he had long retired from writing operas and wrote more from the heart. *O salutaris hostia, quae caeli pandis ostium, / bella premunt hostilia, da robur fer auxilium.*

Edvard Grieg's (1843-1907) ***Ave maris Stella*** is a Roman Catholic hymn from 1899, sometimes given an accompaniment but here performed without. It has folksong-like qualities typical of his unjustly neglected vocal music. *Ave maris Stella, Dei Mater alma, / Atque semper Virgo, Felix coeli porta, / Solve vincla reis: profer lumen caecis, / Mala nostra pelle, bona cuncta posce. / Vitam praesta puram, iter para tutum, / Ut videntes Jesum, semper collaetemur. / Sit laus Deo Patri, summo Christo decus, / Spiritui sancto, Tribus honor unus. / Amen.*

Antonio Lotti (1667-1740) sang in the choir of St Mark's in Venice, later becoming organist and then choirmaster. As organist his

duties included composing music for the choir, some of it forming part of its repertory until well into the nineteenth century. With its cleaner textures **Crucifixus** does indeed sound less like a piece of music from the baroque period than a work of the new Classical style. *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; / passus et sepultus est.*

Felix Mendelssohn's (1809-47) choral works have always been held in great affection in Britain. His great oratorio *Elijah*, modelled to some extent on the great choral works of JS Bach and Handel, was first performed in Birmingham and indeed he was one of the first to champion the works of Bach, leading to a great reassessment of that composer. Most of his previous choral music such as the oratorio *Paulus* of 1836 was in German. ***Denn er hat seinen Engeln*** *befohlen iiber dir / Dass sie dich behuten auf alien deinen Wegen, / Dass sie dich auf den Handen tragen, / Und du deinen Fuss nicht an einen Stein stossest.*

Robert Parsons (1535-72) wrote a good deal of Latin church music including three services and a number of anthems. He became a member of the Chapel Royal in 1563 but was drowned in the river Trent at Newark. His ***Ave Maria*** in 6 voices (altos and basses split) is a typical example of his skill as a contrapuntalist. *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, / Benedicta tu in mulieribus, / et benedictus fructus ventris tui. / Amen.*

César Franck (1822-90) studied at the Paris Conservatoire and later became organist and choirmaster at the Sainte Clothilde in that city, attracting attention for his famous improvisations. ***Panis Angelicus*** for choir with cello, double bass, harp and tenor solo was composed in 1872, the year he became Organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire. Now more often used for wedding ceremonies; it has perhaps unfairly become tainted with Victorian sentimentality. *Panis angelicus fi t panis hominum; / dat panis caelicus fi guris terminum: / o res mirabilis: / manducat Dominum pauper servus et humilis.*

Charles Villiers Stanford (1851-1924) was appointed organist of Trinity College Cambridge whilst still an undergraduate at Queen's

College and in 1887 was appointed Professor of Music at Cambridge, also teaching composition at the Royal College of Music. His services, still in use today, are well designed and crafted and, like his anthems, show great sense of purpose. ***O for a closer walk with God*** comes from a group of six anthems published in 1910. *Oh! For a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame: / A light to shine upon the road that leads me to the Lamb! / Return, O holy Dove, return, return, return! / I hate the sins that made Thee mourn, and drove Thee from my breast. / So shall my walk be close with God, / Calm and serene my frame: / So purer light shall mark the road, that leads me to the Lamb.*

Maurice Duruflé's (1902-86) ***Requiem*** of 1947, from which comes the ***Pie Jesu***, is a work that is often linked with Faure's *Requiem* (both works being essentially intensely inward-looking and contemplative) with trebles with cello and organ accompaniment. Duruflé's output was very small but consistently of a high standard. *Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem sempiternam*

St John's College in Cambridge was founded in 1511. The Choir has been in existence since then and has built up a long and worldwide reputation for musical excellence, having made over 100 recordings with a comprehensive repertoire stretching from the 15th century until the present day, much under their long-term Director of Music George Guest who held this prestigious post from 1951-91. This recording was made in the Chapel, under their then new Director, **Christopher Robinson**, in June 1996. They have featured many further famous Music Directors in the years since.

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