

THE CHOIR OF



STJOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

**NEW MILLENNIUM
NETHSINGHA**



NEW MILLENNIUM

1	O give thanks unto the Lord	James MacMillan	[0.00]
2	Sitivit anima mea *	David Nunn	[0.00]
3	Vertue I: Vertue	Judith Weir	[0.00]
4	Cedit, Hyems	Abbie Betinis	[0.00]
5	Vanity of Vanities *	Ben Comeau	[0.00]
6	O nata lux	Piers Connor Kennedy	[0.00]
7	Celebration	Iain Farrington	[0.00]
8	Alleluia, I heard a voice	Janet Wheeler	[0.00]
9	Leaf from leaf Christ knows	Judith Weir	[0.00]
10	Conversations	Iain Farrington	[0.00]
11	Carmina mei cordis I: Aeterna lux, divinitas	Abbie Betinis	[0.00]
12	Oriens... *	Anna Semple	[0.00]
13	Quiet Stream *	Sophie Westbrooke	[0.00]
14	Laudes *	Francis Pott	[0.00]
15	Salvator mundi, Domine *	Alexander Hopkins	[0.00]
16	oh pristine example *	David Nunn	[0.00]
17	A Blessing	Cheryl Frances-Hoad	[0.00]
18	Nova, nova *	Iain Farrington	[0.00]

* Commissioned for the College Choir

Total timings: [0.00]

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NEW MILLENNIUM

Andrew Nethsingha's tenure as Director of Music of St John's College, Cambridge, has been transformative. Termly evensongs built round Bach cantatas, regular broadcasts (notably of the Advent Carol Service) and a series of ground-breaking CDs have enhanced the already enviable reputation of the Choir of St John's. Most noteworthy, perhaps, has been Nethsingha's commitment to new music. Most directors of major choral establishments regularly include premieres in their music lists but few, if any, have been more innovative in the types of music they have commissioned. Over the past fifteen years, Nethsingha has shown that combining voices and organ with instruments not typically heard in Anglican liturgy – saxophone, recorder, cello – has not brought down the walls of the temple. On the

contrary, new forms of music have drawn new audiences – and, in some cases, new composers – to the Church.

So it is fitting that one of Nethsingha's final CDs should be devoted to music of the last twenty years, much of it commissioned by and written for St John's College. That many of the works heard here are by composers near the beginning of their career and by women – recently admitted, in another major innovation, to the Choir of St John's – is testament to the outgoing Director of Music's eagerness to offer



James MacMillan

© Philip Garward

opportunities to groups whose voice has not always been heard in the Anglican Church.

Sir James MacMillan's 'O give thanks unto the Lord' provides a festive opening to this celebration of twenty-first-century music – appropriately so, as it was commissioned by the Friends of Cathedral Music to mark their diamond jubilee in 2016. The words are taken from Psalm 105 and 'To Music. A Song' by Robert Herrick, who matriculated at St John's College in 1613. The combination of joyful text from the Bible with a short poem that praises music's soothing powers allows MacMillan to create a loose ternary form: the outer psalm-based sections contain wild syncopations and repetitions – the challenging organ part marked at one point 'obsessive' – while Herrick's words are set as a dreamy treble rhapsody supported by soulful harmonies in the lower voices and tremolos in the organ. It has often been noted that MacMillan's music is informed by his religious faith. Herrick's verse, though remembered mainly for its high sensuousness, was also deeply rooted in faith. As the poet put it: 'I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall) of Heaven, and hope to have it after all'.



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David Nunn

David Nunn is a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music; his teachers include Helen Grime and Julian Anderson. 'Sitivit anima mea' is one of two pieces commissioned by Andrew Nethsingha for the Choir of St John's College, and it was premiered while Nunn was still an undergraduate. Like the MacMillan anthem, 'Sitivit anima mea' draws on the Book of Psalms, in this case Psalm 42. Though it is the second line of the psalm ('My soul thirsteth [for God]') that supplies the anthem's title and the text of

the first section, the psalm's opening, 'Sicut cervus' (Like as the hart), emerges powerfully towards the end of the piece – unsurprisingly perhaps, given Nunn's interest in music 'driven by circular processes'. The anthem, which is written in such a way that it can follow seamlessly from Palestrina's motet 'Sicut cervus', is set for choir and electronics, with the performance of the choral parts sometimes prescribed, sometimes not; 'at the noise of thy waterspouts', for example, pits free incantatory repetitions in some voices against co-ordinated



© Ben Ealovega

Judith Weir

chanting in others. The electronic sound is generated entirely from samples of water – Nunn prefers to rely on 'a single integral and organic idea' when using electronics – while the combination of chanting voices and electronic textures is designed to generate a meditative state. This reflects Nunn's stated mission to make contemporary classical music appealing to new audiences.

The music of Judith Weir, appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2014, reached a global audience in 2022 with the performance at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II of her setting of 'Like as the hart'. In several respects, Weir's career parallels that of James MacMillan. Both grew up in Scotland; despite writing in styles that can challenge listeners, both have come to be regarded as establishment figures; and both have cultivated a wide range of genres, while retaining deep sympathy for choral music. 'Vertue', a meditation on the transience of earthly pleasures, is the first of three short George Herbert poems set by Weir in 2005. The collection was commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival in memory of Peter Lerwill, a generous supporter of the festival and a friend of the composer. Indeed, Weir claimed that the start of Herbert's final stanza, 'a sweet and

virtuous soul, like season'd timber', immediately brought Lerwill to mind. The work is structured in what might be termed a textural crescendo, beginning with a solitary voice-part and building to sustained six-part writing, before dying back in the final achingly poignant bars. Weir has compared 'Vertue' to a madrigal, suggesting her goal was to achieve the clearest possible setting of Herbert's 'wonderful' words.



Abbie Betinis

'Cedit, hyems' (Be gone, winter) by the American composer Abbie Betinis juxtaposes lines from a hymn by Prudentius with a fourteenth-century text from a manuscript

belonging to Benediktbeuern, the Bavarian abbey that gave its name to Orff's *Carmina Burana* (literally, songs from Benediktbeuern). Together, the words describe the transition from the darkness of winter to the light associated with the coming of Christ. The work is scored for choir and flute, played here by Anna Ryan. Both are intended to sound uncertain at the outset; according to the composer, the flute should seem lost 'as it wanders through unpredictable chords', while the voices are so cold, physically and emotionally, that they can only whisper. As Christ's love surrounds them,



Ben Comeau

flute and choir gradually cast aside winter's desolation, and the piece ends in cries of ecstasy.

'Vanity of vanities' was commissioned in 2016 from Ben Comeau, who had recently graduated from Girton College, Cambridge, after a highly distinguished student career. The anthem sets the adult voices of the choir against the organ and a solo violin part that was performed at the premiere by Stephanie Childress, at the time a Music undergraduate at St John's. On this recording, the violin is played by Alex Semple, a bass in St John's Choir and brother of Anna, the composer of *Oriens* (see below). The homophonic setting of the words allows the violin scope for different types of material; these include affecting solo lines, extended sections in double stops and virtuosic passagework. The celebrated text from Ecclesiastes that provides the anthem's title frames words from Isaiah, Psalm 90 and Romans. The result is a type of musical arch: quiet chanting in the outer passages brackets a livelier central section. Comeau's sensitivity to harmony is evident throughout and, at times, his ability to create powerful expressive effects from very simple material – frequently nothing more than juxtaposed triads – recalls Benjamin Britten.



Piers Connor Kennedy

Piers Connor Kennedy's 'O nata lux' was written in 2014 in memory of Ian Bell, a bass in the Choir of Worcester Cathedral. Kennedy has specialised in choral music, and much of his output has been written for institutions (including the choirs of Worcester Cathedral, St John's College, Cambridge, and Christ Church, Oxford) of which he was a member. Like Ben Comeau's 'Vanity of vanities', 'O nata lux' is scored for lower voices. And, as in Comeau's anthem, the choral parts are set in homophony. However, Kennedy's quasi-strophic setting is unaccompanied, evoking Thomas Tallis's



Iain Farrington

famous setting of the same words. The texture, strictly three-part throughout but marked by frequent suspensions, creates a chaste Renaissance-like effect.

‘Celebration’, for solo organ, is taken from *Fiesta*, a suite of seven short movements composed by Iain Farrington in 2003. The composer describes this two-minute movement as in ‘a bright, jazzy style’ with ‘jumpy, knock-about rhythms, and champagne-popping spirit’. Farrington ranks as one of the most versatile of

recent St John’s College organ scholars. Equally at home on organ, piano and harpsichord, he almost certainly enjoyed his largest audience performing alongside Rowan Atkinson at the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics. Farrington’s compositions have been heard at both the opening and closing concerts of the Proms; in 2022, his work featured at the ‘Earth Prom’ and the Last Night. Through a



Janet Wheeler

remarkable series of reworkings of well-known works, he has also gained a reputation as one of the most successful arrangers of his generation. Janet Wheeler, an alumna of Newnham College, Cambridge, who studied composition with

Hugh Wood and Robin Holloway, has devoted much of her life to choral music, both as composer and conductor. ‘Alleluia, I heard a voice’ is a setting for unaccompanied choir of two verses from Revelation 19 familiar to church musicians through Thomas Weelkes’s famous setting. At times, Wheeler’s version appears to nod to Renaissance models, but it is unmistakably a product of our age, not least in the unusually restrained, almost Stravinskian way in which Wheeler treats the word ‘Alleluia’ in the opening and closing sections. The anthem begins and ends on middle C, creating the impression of a loose palindrome. Almost entirely diatonic in language though with a subtle palette of dissonance, ‘Alleluia, I heard a voice’ becomes more animated in its central section; this is built round a series of rhythmically sprung lines that use ostinatos, imitation and, sometimes, canon.

The second Judith Weir composition on this recording, ‘Leaf from leaf Christ knows’, is a setting of a poem in eight short stanzas by Christina Georgina Rossetti. Each of the stanzas focuses on one attribute of Christ, and Weir’s choral parts reflect the studied naivety of Rossetti’s lines, exploring patently expressive registers only occasionally. The organ part mixes quasi-formulaic rhythms with arabesques, the

latter seeming to win out, only for the final bar to end on an ambiguous note.

‘Leaf from leaf’ is followed by ‘Conversations’, the second movement of Iain Farrington’s *Fiesta*. Again, the composer provides a memorable description: this sparkling miniature, he notes, depicts the ‘lively natterings and gossipings’ of individuals who argue and laugh about life. Much of the movement’s wit derives from the way in which the interlocutors, while slipping in and out of different tonal areas, keep returning to the same pitch, G – a conversational *point de repère*, one might suggest.

Abbie Betinis’s ‘Aeterna lux, divinitas’, a setting of an eighteenth-century hymn from the *Liturgia Horarum*, is the first of two short pieces issued under the title *Carmina mei cordis* (Songs of my heart). As the composer explains, because the text invokes the unity of the Trinity, the music modulates initially between two main tonal centres which ultimately amalgamate to form a third: ‘in the end, all modalities combine into a canon which spirals on, encircling and unifying all voice parts in its course’. The final bars are dominated by the word ‘Alleluia’, added by Betinis to the traditional Catholic hymn text to create a type of refrain.



Anna Semple

Since graduating from Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in 2018, Anna Semple has pursued a dual career as freelance singer and composer; she has already had commissions from the Royal Opera House and the Edington Music Festival. The solo organ piece *Oriens* was composed for the 2021 Advent Carol Service, and was premiered by George Herbert, who appears here as soloist. (St John's has also recorded a *Nunc dimittis* by Semple for choir and solo violin; this was commissioned by *Choir and Organ* and will

appear in the album *Magnificat 4*, to be released in 2024.) The harmonic language of *Oriens* is marked by the recurrent use of adjacent notes; despite the use of dissonance, the piece is generally meditative in character – a feature that can be ascribed in part to references to the Advent-tide chant 'O oriens' that emerge only to disappear almost immediately. The notation allows the performer some freedoms: the score includes unspecified rhythms and motivic cells looped *ad libitum*.



Sophie Westbrooke

Sophie Westbrooke came to prominence as a finalist in the 2014 BBC Young Musician competition. Though also a pianist and violinist, she competed on the recorder, an instrument that has featured only rarely in the competition. She went on to read Music at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. 'Quiet stream' was commissioned for St John's Choir and first performed in 2020 with the composer as soloist. The text is taken from a notebook entry written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1802, while he was living in the Lake District. Westbrooke's setting translates Coleridge's coupling of nature and the divine into music of hushed rapture. The scoring, with the recorder effectively taking the place of the trebles, hints at transcendence, and the music offers a highly atmospheric mix of instrumental flourishes with awe-struck 'ahs' in the voice parts.

Francis Pott's organ piece *Laudes*, like so many works on this CD, was commissioned by St John's College. It was premiered by Edward Picton-Turbervill in a 2014 BBC Radio 3 live broadcast. The composer, an alumnus of Magdalene College, Cambridge, revealed that the work, composed in a single sitting, was designed to fill the short gap between the end of the service and the start of the next programme.



Francis Pott

However, the title, which translates as 'praises', allows for performance in many contexts. The composition's harmonic language is dominated by perfect fourths and fifths, but varied textures allied to unpredictable rhythms avoid any sense of the routine. With its brief hints of recapitulation, the work references the divisions of a traditional sonata form but, according to Pott, it 'should feel like a single sustained exhalation'.



Alexander Hopkins

‘Salvator mundi Domine’ was commissioned in 2021 from Alexander Hopkins, who was a bass in the St John’s Choir at the time. The text is taken from a Sarum plainsong hymn traditionally associated with Christmas Eve and the service of Compline. Scored for divided alto, tenor and bass voices *a cappella*, ‘Salvator mundi Domine’ uses overlapping parts to create a wash of sound from which passages in rhythmic unison sometimes emerge. Viewed as a whole, the composition traces a path from B major to F major, an extreme progression

designed, perhaps, to reflect the long Advent journey from darkness to light. Is this an echo of Part II of J. S. Bach’s *Clavierübung*, where the keys of B minor and F major are used to represent the fundamental difference in style between a French overture and an Italian concerto?

David Nunn’s ‘oh pristine example’, like ‘Sivivt anima mea’, was commissioned for the Choir of St John’s College. Both works make use of electronics, and both move between metred music and free sections that, in the words of the composer, can resemble ‘timeless islands or oases, constantly shimmering and never static’. The text of ‘oh pristine example’ is macaronic, comprising extracts from Isaiah and Revelation in Vulgate Latin and the final words, in English, of *A Rushed Account of the Dew* by Alice Oswald, Oxford University’s first female Professor of Poetry. By invoking the idea of water in a dry land, the two Biblical passages promise a type of resurrection. And, though ostensibly about morning dew, Oswald’s words form, according to Nunn, ‘a striking analogy for the Lenten story of Jesus’s death on Good Friday’. Initially, the Latin extracts are set in a combination of free-form melisma and incantatory imitation built round rising fifths; the English words, in contrast, are presented in simple parallel

movement. However, the choral parts are gradually subsumed into what the composer has called ‘an immersive electronic texture’ formed from sounds of seashells, dropping bullet shells, wind chimes, a reverberating church bell and a music box that, in the final section, is heard ‘chiming out’.



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Cheryl Frances-Hoad

Since graduating from Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, in 2001, Cheryl Frances-Hoad has established a reputation as one of the leading composers of her generation. Her oeuvre, which embraces genres from opera and concerto to works for solo instruments,

has reached wide audiences: career highlights include an appearance on BBC Radio 3’s *Composer of the Week* and a BBC Proms debut in 2015. ‘A blessing’ was written as a memorial to Ken Hutchinson, an admired teacher from Frances-Hoad’s native Essex. The text is an abbreviated version of the passage in the Book of Numbers known as the Priestly Blessing or Aaronic Blessing; the setting is texturally simple but harmonically subtle.

Iain Farrington’s ‘Nova, nova’ was commissioned by Andrew Nethsingha for his last Advent Carol Service at St John’s and premiered in November 2022. A virtuosic *tour de force* that has the makings of a choral classic, ‘Nova, nova’ requires the singers to click fingers, stamp feet, clap hands and negotiate verbal repetitions at breath-taking speed, while co-ordinating with a rhythmically far-from-predictable organ part. Not everything in this setting of the traditional fifteenth-century text has performers (and listeners) on the edge of their seats: a central section built round the story of the Annunciation provides a moment of relative calm. However, the overall effect is one of extreme exhilaration. A fitting conclusion to an energising journey through twenty years of new sacred music.

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CONDUCTOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Contemporary music and Commissioning have been central features of the last fifteen years at St John's. It's been a joy to work with talented student composers, singers and instrumentalists; my own musicianship has been greatly enriched by their creativity and energy. As on several previous discs, I am grateful to Martin Ennis for his insightful writing about the music. I'm embarrassed by his kind and flattering words at the start; I tried to persuade him to tone them down! At this time the spotlight should not be on me but on my excellent successor, Christopher Gray. I'm delighted that the College has chosen another person who is committed to commissioning new music. Although I've now left Cambridge, I feel it's important for the composers - and for the 2022 generation of superlative singers and instrumentalists - that their work should be preserved for posterity through recording.

After a 30-month break from sessions during the pandemic, we were very pleased to be able to record again in 2022. The material on this album comes from various times of year, whilst we were also continuing our *Magnificat* series. For the final sessions in December the outdoor

temperature was forty degrees colder than it had been for the previous recording in July! The personnel of the lower voices had also largely changed, but I hope you will hear a successful continuity of sound-world. All the composers are alive today but, at the suggestion of one of them, we have omitted dates of birth so as not to intrude on their privacy. I've curated a sequence of music which aims to celebrate some of the broad range of styles in 21st-century choral writing. The premiere of Iain Farrington's *Nova Nova* was the final piece in my last St John's broadcast - I have often enjoyed pushing the boundaries of the Anglican choral tradition!

It's been very enjoyable to choose the cover designs for our series; I'll miss our search for interesting circles in the future! The Large Hadron Collider (L.H.C.) has been much discussed with my academic colleagues in College - an iconic example of 21st-century science to complement our 21st-century music. The L.H.C. is the world's highest-energy particle collider, situated in a tunnel of 17-mile circumference beneath the France/Switzerland border. We thank the authorities at CERN for giving us permission to use this striking image; they have been supportive of the educational aspect of our project. The image is

of the Experiment Tracker Outer Barrel whilst it is being cleaned. (It would be frivolous to push the analogy too far, but it is the L.H.C. which enables research into the Higgs Boson, colloquially known as the *god particle*...)

Generous rehearsal time and exactly the same singers each day - these things contribute to St John's being an ideal place for performing contemporary liturgical music. I was still nervous about commissioning when I arrived at St John's, following a bad experience fifteen years earlier. Early on in Cambridge I was grateful to be given two wonderful catalysts for commissioning. One was St John's being invited by *Choir & Organ* to be their inaugural *New Music* partners in 2010. The other was an anonymous donor coming forward in 2007 to sponsor commissions for our annual Advent broadcasts. I'm pleased to say that all but one of these fifteen Advent pieces will have appeared on St John's recordings by the end of 2023, following the release of new works by Frances-Hoad and Grime. The exception is Ben Comeau's 'The Last and Greatest Herald', a fine work which I'd planned to record if I'd not been leaving.

Had I stayed in Cambridge I would have completed a recording project made up of pieces we were commissioning based on themes relating to Water. The present album's works by Nunn and Westbrooke were written for this purpose. Other new works in the project, which have sadly remained unrecorded, have been written by Lara Weaver, Anna Semple and Piers Conor Kennedy. In rehearsals I often ask the choristers to try to make their sound glisten like the sun shining on rippling water. The fragment of text in Sophie Westbrooke's piece seems to epitomise what we liturgical musicians strive to do every day - to evoke a sense of the divine.

*Quiet stream, with all its eddies,
and the moonlight playing on them,
quiet as if they were*

Ideas in the divine mind anterior to the Creation

Andrew Nethsingha

Andrew Nethsingha is Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey. He was Director of Music at St John's College between 2007 and 2022.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

1 O give thanks unto the Lord

James MacMillan

O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name:
make known his deeds among the people.
Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him:
talk ye of all his wondrous works.
Glory ye in his holy name:
let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.
Seek the Lord, and his strength:
seek his face evermore.
Remember his marvellous works that he hath done,
his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.

Music thou queen of heaven, Care-charming spell,
That strik'st a stillness into hell:
Thou that tam'st Tygers, and fierce storms (that rise)
With thy soul-melting Lullabies;
Fall down, down, down, from those thy chiming
spheres,
To charm our souls, as thou enchant'st our ears.

Psalm 105 vv. 1-5

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

2 Sitivit anima mea

David Nunn

Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fortem, vivum.
Abyssus abyssum invocat,
in voce cataractarum tuarum;
omnia excelsa tua,
et fluctus tui super me transierunt.
Sicut cervus ad fontes aquarum,
ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

Deep calleth unto deep

at the noise of thy waterfalls:

all thy waves

and thy billows are gone over me.

*As a hart longs for the flowing streams,
so longs my soul for thee, O God.*

Psalm 42 vv. 1, 2, 7

3 Virtue I: Vertue

Judith Weir

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridle of the earth and sky:
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

4 Cedit, Hyems

Abbie Betinis

Nox, et tenebrae, et nubila,
confusa mundi et turbida,
(Cedit hyems!)

*Night, and darkness, and clouds,
disorder and confusion of the world,
(Be gone, winter!)*

Cedit, hyems, tua durities,
rigor abiit, rigor et glacies,
brumalis et feritas, rabies,
torpor et improba segnitias,
pallor et ira, dolor et macies.

*Winter, give up your rigour;
the cold has gone, the hard and ice,
the solstice and wildness, the frenzy,
lethargy and cruel sloth,
pallor and anger, pain and leanness.*

Nunc amor aureus advenies,
indomitotis tibi subjecias,
tendo manus.
Lux intrat, albescit polus,
Christus venit, discedite!

*Now come, golden love,
tame the wild,
I stretch my hands.
Light breaks in, the dawn grows bright,
Christ comes, depart!*

*Anonymous, 14th century
Manuscript of Benedictbeuern*

5 **Vanity of Vanities**

Ben Comeau

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!

Ecclesiastes 1 vv. 2, 4, 14 Isaiah 40 vv. 6ii-8, 17-18 Psalm 90 vv. 1-2 Romans 11 v. 33

6 **O nata lux**

Piers Connor Kennedy

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
dignare clemens supplicum
laudes precesque sumere.

*O Light born of Light,
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
mercifully deign to accept the praises and prayers of
your suppliants*

Qui carne quondam contegi
dignatus es pro perditis
nos membra confer effici
tui beati corporis.

*O you who once deigned to be hidden in flesh on
behalf of the lost,
grant us to be made
members of your blessed body.*

*Edited from 'Cantiones Sacrae' 1575
by Edmund H. Fellows (1870-1951)
English words by Laurence Housman (1865-1959)*

8 **Alleluia, I heard a voice**

Janet Wheeler

Alleluia.

I heard a voice as of strong thunderings, saying:
Alleluia.

Salvation and glory and honour
and power be unto the Lord
our God, and to the Lamb for evermore.
Alleluia.

Revelation 19 vv. 1, 6

9 **Leaf from leaf Christ knows**

Judith Weir

Leaf from leaf Christ knows;
Himself the Lily and the Rose:

Sheep from sheep Christ tells;
Himself the Shepherd, no one else:

Star and star He names,
Himself outblazing all their flames:

Dove by dove, He calls
to set each on the golden walls:

Drop by drop, He counts
the flood of ocean as it mounts:

Grain by grain, His hand
numbers the innumerable sand.

Lord, I lift to Thee
in peace what is and what shall be:

Lord, in peace I trust
to Thee all spirits and all dust.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

11 **Carmina mei cordis I: Aeterna lux, divinitas**
Abbie Betinis

Aeterna lux, divinitas,
in unitate Trinitas,
te confitemur debiles,
te deprecamur supplices. Alleluia.

*Eternal light, divinity,
O unity in Trinity,
thy holy name thy servants bless,
to thee we pray, and thee confess. Alleluia.*

Christum rogamus et Patrem,
Christi Patrisque Spiritum;
unum potens per omnia,
fove precantes, Trinita. Alleluia.

*O Father, source of God the word,
O word with him co-equal Lord,
O Spirit of like majesty,
O Triune God, all praise to thee. Alleluia.*

Qui finis et exordium
rerumque fons es omnium,
tu solus es solacium,
tu certa spes credentium. Alleluia.

*Thou First and Last, from whom there springs
the Fount of all created things,
Thou art the Life which moves the whole,
sure hope of each believing soul. Alleluia.*

O veritas, o caritas,
o finis et felicitas,
sperare fac et credere,
amare fac et consequi.

*O verity! O charity!
O ending and felicity!
in thee we hope, in thee believe,
thyself we love, to thee we cleave.*

Qui cuncta solus efficit
cunctisque solus sufficit,
tu sola lux es omnibus
et praemium sperantibus. Alleluia.

*Thou who alone the world hast made,
art still its one sufficing aid,
the only Light for gazing eyes,
and, unto them that hope, the Prize. Alleluia.*

Liturgia Horarum, 18th century

13 Quiet Stream
Sophie Westbrooke

Quiet stream, with all its eddies,
and the moonlight playing on them,
quiet as if they were
Ideas in the divine mind anterior to
the Creation

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

15 Salvator mundi, Domine
Alexander Hopkins

Salvator mundi, Domine
qui nos salvasti hodie:
in hac nocte nos protege,
et salva omni tempore.

*Lord, Saviour of the world,
Who has redeemed us today,
Protect us in this night,
And save us at any time.*

Adesto nunc propitius,
Et parce supplicantibus:
Tu dele nostra crimina,
Tu tenebras illumina.

*Propitiously help us now
And have mercy on us, entreating you,
Erase our crimes,
Lighten our darkness.*

Te, reformator sensuum,
Votis precamur cordium,
Ut puri castis mentibus
surgamus a cubilibus.
Amen.

*We ask you, reformer of our senses,
With our heartfelt prayers,
That pure, with chaste minds,
We may rise from our beds.
Amen.*

Compline Hymn setting for the Vigil of Christmas

16 oh pristine example
David Nunn

ego sitienti dabo de fonte aquae vivae gratis
to the thirsty I will give water without cost from
the spring of the water of life

Revelation 21 v. 6

to be brief

effundam enim aquas super sitientem
for I will pour water on the thirsty land

Isaiah 44 v. 3

to be almost actual

et fluenta super aridam effundam
and streams on the dry ground

Isaiah 44 v. 3

oh pristine example
of claiming a place on the earth
only to cancel

*Text in English from A Rushed Account of the Dew
Alice Oswald (b.1966)*

17 A Blessing
Cheryl Frances-Hoad

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6 vv. 24-25i, 26ii

18 **Nova, nova**

Iain Farrington

Nova! Nova!
Gabriel of high degree,
He came down from the Trinity
From Nazareth to Galilee,

He met a maiden in a place;
He kneeled down before her face;
He said: "Hail, Mary, full of grace!"

When the maiden saw all this,
She was sore abashed, ywis,
Lest that she had done amiss.

Then said the angel: "Dread not you,
You shall conceive in all virtue
A child whose name shall be Jesu."

Then said the maid: "Verily,
I am your servant truly,
Ecce ancilla Domini."
Nova! Nova!

Traditional 15th century

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE 2021-2022

Trebles

Ingrid Birchall
Arthur Cobb
Amelia Crichton-Stuart
Angus Crichton-Stuart
Joshua Davidson
George Ducker
Nicholas Garcia
Gabriel Gritten
Martha Gritten
Caspar Johnson

Kevin Ke
Charles Lipscomb
Kieran McGurran
Lucas Nair-Grepinet
Ivan Popov
Samuel Smith
Montague Tatnell
Aiden Wee

Altos

Alasdair Austin
Francis Bamford
Richard Decker
Hannah Dienes-Williams †
Alec D'Oyly
Thomas Lilburn †
Guy James †

Tenors

James Gant
Joseph Hancock
Hamish MacGregor
Carlos Rodríguez Otero
James Gant
Louis Watkins †
Joseph Wicks †

Basses

Gregory Bannan †
Thomas Butler
Alexander Hopkins
David McIntyre
Henry Montgomery
Alexander Semple
Max Todes
George Vines

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

George Herbert †

Junior Organ Scholar

Alex Trigg

† This organist was playing for the recording

† Deputy

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE 2022-2023

Trebles

Ingrid Birchall
Arthur Cobb
Amelia Crichton-Stuart
Angus Crichton-Stuart
Nicholas Garcia
Gabriel Gritten
Martha Gritten
Caspar Johnson
Kevin Ke
Charles Lipscomb
Kieran McGurran
Samuel Smith
Montague Tatnell
Aiden Wee

Altos

Alasdair Austin
Olivia Hawkins
Alice Hilder-Jarvis
Alice Markham
Matthew Monaghan

Tenors

James Gant
Joseph Hancock
Theodore Horch
Garbhan McEnoy
Carlos Rodríguez Otero

Basses

George Butler
Jonathan Hatley
David McIntyre
John Moore
Henry Montgomery
Alexander Semple
Max Todes

Assistant Organist

George Herbert †

Herbert Howells Organ Scholar

Alexander Robson

† This organist was playing for the recording

For a more detailed version of the choir lists, view the online booklet at [lead.me/newmillennium](https://www.lead.me/newmillennium)

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge is one of the finest collegiate choirs in the world, known and loved by millions from its broadcasts, concert tours and recordings. Founded in the 1670s, the Choir is known for its distinctive rich, warm sound, its expressive interpretations and its breadth of repertoire. Alongside these musical characteristics, the Choir is particularly proud of its happy, relaxed and mutually supportive atmosphere. The Choir is directed by Christopher Gray who follows a long line of eminent Directors of Music, recently Dr George Guest, Dr Christopher Robinson, Dr David Hill and Andrew Nethsingha.

The Choir is made up of around 20 Choristers and Probationers from St John's College School and around 15 Choral Scholars who are members of St John's College, its primary purpose being to enhance the liturgy and worship at daily services in the College Chapel. The Choir has a diverse repertoire spanning over 500 years of music. It is also renowned for championing contemporary music by commissioning new works, including recent compositions by Judith Bingham, Julian Anderson, Anna Semple, Katrina Toner, Ignacio

Mañá Mesas and Cecilia McDowall. Each term, the Choir is joined by its period instrument ensemble St John's Sinfonia to perform Bach Cantatas in a liturgical setting.

The Choir brings the 'St John's Sound' to listeners around the world through its weekly webcasts (available at www.sjcchoir.co.uk). The Choir has also live-streamed video broadcasts of Chapel services on Facebook, in association with Classic FM. In addition to regular radio broadcasts in this country and abroad, the Choir releases multiple recordings each year. In May 2016 the College launched its 'St John's Cambridge' recording label (in conjunction with Signum Classics). Since then 15 Choir albums have been released. These include single composer albums of Jonathan Harvey (BBC Music Magazine Award winner), Ralph Vaughan Williams and Michael Finnis, the latter of which was a finalist in the 2021 Gramophone Awards. There have also been three 'Magnificat' albums of varied Evensong Canticles, an anthem compilation *Locus Iste*, masses by Poulenc and Kodály, a live anthology *The Tree*, a Psalms collection, and seasonal albums for Advent, Christmas and Ash Wednesday.

The Choir also performs concerts outside of Cambridge and tours internationally each year. Recent destinations have included the USA, the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Hong Kong and Singapore. It also performs regularly in the UK, with venues including Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, London.

GEORGE HERBERT

George is the Assistant Organist at St John's, following three years as the choir's Organ Scholar whilst he studied Music and German. Born in Manchester in 2001, his passion for music was kindled in earnest when he started singing in Manchester Cathedral Choir aged nine.

In his first two years in Cambridge, he was a pianist in Pembroke College's Lieder Scheme, taking regular classes with accompanist Joseph Middleton. He won first prize and accompanist's prize in Clare College's Song Competition in 2021. In his final two years as a student, he was co-musical director of the Gents of St John's, and played in the St John's College Big Band. In 2020 George conducted St John's Sinfonia and the College Choir in Bach's *Actus Tragicus*



© Emily Herbert

cantata, and in 2021 he conducted the choir's Advent Carol Service, which was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. George is a passionate environmentalist: he studied Cold War East Germany's environmental policy and foreign relations for his final year dissertation, and now volunteers with the RSPB. He is now building a varied freelance career as an animator, pianist, organist and trumpeter.

ANNA RYAN, FLUTE

Anna Ryan is a London-based flautist currently studying with Professor Robert Winn in Cologne, Germany, having studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Philippa Davies, Ian Clarke and Christopher Green. She graduated in 2021 with a first-class degree in Music from Murray Edwards College, Cambridge University.

While studying she performed frequently with ensembles including the Cambridge University Orchestra and Opera Society, Guildhall Symphony Orchestra and UBU Ensemble, in various solo and chamber recitals, and as a soloist for the Female Composers' Festival and the Cambridge University Symphony Orchestra. Anna has also performed as a soloist with the Choir of St. John's College Cambridge including services for Epiphany and Advent, broadcast live on Radio 3. She now freelances and regularly plays with the Orion Orchestra.

In 2022, she won 2nd Prize and the Musician's Answering Service Prize in the British Flute Society's Young Artist Competition and a scholarship for the Oxford Flute Summer School Masterclass Course. Anna is generously



© Tom Butler

supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and the Royal Philharmonic Society Julius Isserlis Scholarship.

ALEX SEMPLE, VIOLIN

Alexander began playing the violin at the age of four with his teacher Jana Simms, before then being accepted as a member of The Royal College of Music, Junior Department. Here he studied under Ruth Palmer and then Dr. Felix



© Inis Oifrr Asano Photography

Andrievsky, co-leading the Symphony Orchestra and winning the Freda Dinn and Ida Mabett String Prize following his string quartet's victory in the Chamber Music Competition. He has performed as a chamber musician, soloist and with orchestras in the UK's biggest venues, including the Royal Albert Hall, the Elgar Room (RAH), the Purcell Room (Southbank Centre), and St John's Smith Square. Alexander holds an undergraduate degree in music from St John's College, Cambridge, where

he spent three years as a choral scholar with the college choir. He now sings as a bass/baritone lay clerk for St John's and is hoping to pursue a career as a singer.

SOPHIE WESTBROOKE, RECORDER

Sophie Westbrook is a composer and recorder player based in London. Sophie began performing professionally after reaching the final of BBC Young Musician in 2014. She graduated from Emmanuel College, Cambridge with a double first class degree in music and the Arthur Bliss prize for composition in 2020, continuing her compositional studies on a Hershel Smith scholarship at Harvard University. Sophie has always used her own compositions in the hope of showcasing the vast and wonderful sound-world of the recorder to new audiences, and is grateful to Andrew Nethsingha and the choir for offering this most phenomenal of opportunities to this end.

www.sophiewestbrooke.co.uk

Acknowledgements

The Choir thanks those who continue to support the ‘St John’s Cambridge’ recording label through **The Album Recording Fund**, in particular Mr Archie Burdon Cooper, as well as those who have commissioned compositions on this recording, including:

Herbert Howells Organ Music Fund
Kantorei
The Master and Fellows of St John’s College
Paul & Joanna Lindsell and Jeremy & Jodie Podger, and donors who wish to remain anonymous
Spitalfields Festival in memory of Peter Lerwill
Jackie and Brian Steele

Publishers:

Abbie Betinis (Betinis *Aeterna, lux, divinitas*)
Aria Editions (Farrington *all works*)
Boosey & Hawkes (MacMillan)
Cadenza (Frances-Hoad)
Chester (*Weir all works*)
Edition Peters (Pott)
G. Schirmer (Betinis *Cedit, Hyems*)

Recorded in St John’s College Chapel, Cambridge, UK on the following dates:

14th-15th January 2022 (Comeau, Pott, Sempole)
22nd-23rd April 2022 (Betinis *Cedit*, Frances-Hoad, Hopkins, Kennedy)
18th-21st July 2022 (MacMillan, Nunn *Sitivit*, *Weir all works*, Wheeler)
12th-13th December 2022 (Betinis *Aeterna*, Farrington *all works*, Nunn *o pristine*, Westbrooke)

Producer – Chris Hazell
Engineers – Simon Eadon (Jan/Dec), Dave Rowell (Jan/Apr/Jul), Alexander Van Ingen (Dec)
Editor – Matthew Bennett
Dean – The Rev’d Dr Mark Oakley
Project Manager – James Beddoe

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www.wovendesign.co.uk

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AWARD-WINNING RECORDINGS FROM THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN’S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Latest Release *Magnificat 3* SIGCD742

Gramophone
Critics’ Choice &
Editor’s Choice

The Psalms SIGCD721

“The diction of the Choir of St. John’s College, Cambridge is so exquisitely perfect that one can take dictation from it, yet there is absolutely no sense of metronomic stiffness... Choral singing at this level of perfection can never be taken for granted” *Fanfare*

“Nethsingha and the Choir of St John’s clearly recognise the importance of these liturgical poems-in-music: the performances here are evidence that they are guided by the principle that everything — metre, emphasis, lyricism, momentum, dynamics and clarity — plays an equally crucial role”

The Sunday Times

Europadisc
Easter Highlight

Eastertide Evensong SIGCD707

★★★★★ “The results are extremely fine, with much attention to musical detail, clear diction, impeccable tuning and a well-balanced choral blend”
Choir & Organ

“Nethsingha is his own man and absolutely his own musician, which is why his choir continues to evolve and lead” *Gramophone*

The Tree SIGCD691

“The whole thing is a beautifully realised tribute to the history of the choir and its hope for the future” *BBC Record Review*

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

Magnificat 2 SIGCD667

“They’re on cracking form right now... there’s that sort of earthy ferocity that is totally exhilarating... the control, the pianissimo and the clarity this recording brings is magnificent” *BBC Radio 3 Record Review*

“This choir’s singular qualities – responsiveness, sophistication of line and texture and a chameleonic stylistic acumen that never loses sight of its own core, identifying sound – are all in play here” *Gramophone*

Advent Live - Volume 2 SIGCD661

“The fantastic balance of anthems, hymns and organ music leaps out in this arresting, fabulously performed Advent programme” *BBC Music Magazine*

Michael Finnissy – Pious Anthems & Voluntaries SIGCD624

★★★★★ “The sequence maintains a powerfully communicative grip... The choir makes the music sound as lived-in as Byrd or Howells” *BBC Music Magazine*

★★★★★ “Exquisitely beautiful, sensual music” *Choir & Organ*

“An 84-minute work that might well change your listening life” *Classical Music*

“This is some of the most compelling music written for the ‘English choral tradition’ in many years... the results are infinitely rewarding” *Europadisc*

Ash Wednesday SIGCD605

“The malleable, sensitive trebles have what seems to me an unparalleled ability to invest text and phrase with meaning” *Gramophone*

“It’s the most glorious, glorious music making” *BBC Radio 3, Record Review*

★★★★★ “Exceptionally satisfying. Bravo. Bravissimo” *AllMusic*

Magnificat SIGCD588

“extreme perception of blend (vowel and timbre), words and phrasing; a true ensemble” *Gramophone*

★★★★★ “A fascinating hour’s music” *Choir & Organ*

« Superbe. Les petits trebles sont en grande forme » *Diapason (France)*

“A finely calibrated sense of tone colour. Don’t miss it” *Limelight (Australia)*

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

Locus Iste SIGCD567

★★★★★ “a glint of sunlight, inspired and inspiring” *BBC Music Magazine*
“Beautifully captured” *BBC Radio 3, Record Review*

Advent Live SIGCD535

“Sung with typical St John’s verve and character, this superbly programmed collection will take your Advent listening in unexpected, but entirely apposite, directions” *BBC Music Magazine*

BBC Music Magazine
Choral & Song Choice

Vaughan Williams – Mass in G Minor SIGCD541

★★★★★ “Formidably attractive” *BBC Music Magazine*

“Director Andrew Nethsingha shapes a performance of profound dignity and power, beautifully sung by this always impressive choir” *The Guardian*

Poulenc | Kodály | Janáček – KYRIE SIGCD489

★★★★★ “...a superb reading from Nethsingha and his forces... Throughout, the choir sing with their justly famed blend and perfect intonation. An essential disc...” *Choir & Organ*

Christmas with St John’s SIGCD458

“proving yet again, they are as good as it gets” *Classic FM*

“an evocatively sung collection...glowing with devotional joy, wonder and a kaleidoscope of colours and emotions” *Choir & Organ*

BBC Music Magazine
Award Winner

Jonathan Harvey – DEO SIGCD456

★★★★★ “ecstatic...the Choir tackles it all with confidence and clarity” *The Observer*

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

★★★★★ “characterful yet authoritative performances of which they can be justly proud” *Choir & Organ*

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice
Finalist (Contemporary)
Gramophone Awards 2021

BBC Music Magazine
Choral & Song Choice

Top Ten Recording
of the Year
Europadisc

Gramophone
Editor’s Choice

THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

DEO HARVEY
NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

CHRISTMAS WITH ST JOHN'S
NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

MAGNIFICAT 2
NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

KYRIE
BY NG. KODAILY JANACEK
NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
CAMBRIDGE

MAGNIFICAT
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THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN'S
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LOCUS ISTE
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ASH WEDNESDAY
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PIOUS ANTHEMS & VOLUNTARIES
FINNIS NETHSINGHA



THE CHURCH OF
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THE TREE
HILL NETHSINGHA ROBINSON



THE CHURCH OF
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JESTYN DAVIES | JOSEPH MIDDLETON



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THE CHURCH OF
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THE PSALMS
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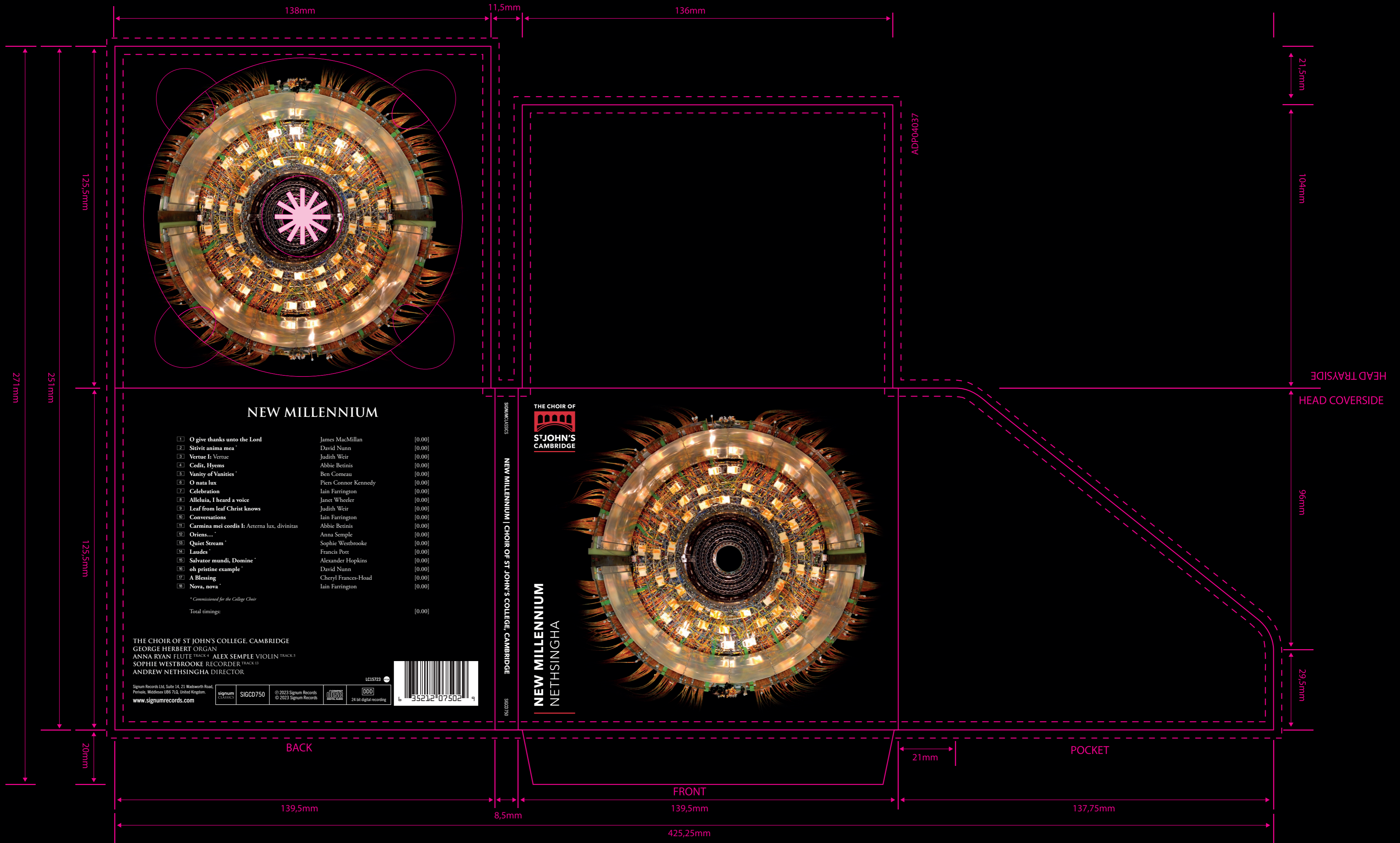
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THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
GEORGE HERBERT ORGAN
ANNA RYAN FLUTE ALEX SEMPLE VIOLIN
SOPHIE WESTBROOKE RECORDER
ANDREW NETHSINGHA DIRECTOR



NEW MILLENNIUM

1	O give thanks unto the Lord	James MacMillan	[0.00]
2	Sitviti anima mea	David Nunn	[0.00]
3	Vertue I: Vertue	Judith Weir	[0.00]
4	Cedit, Hyems	Abbie Betinis	[0.00]
5	Vanity of Vanities	Ben Comeau	[0.00]
6	O nata lux	Piers Connor Kennedy	[0.00]
7	Celebration	Iain Farrington	[0.00]
8	Alleluia, I heard a voice	Janet Wheeler	[0.00]
9	Leaf from leaf Christ knows	Judith Weir	[0.00]
10	Conversations	Iain Farrington	[0.00]
11	Carmina mei cordis I: Aeterna lux, divinitas	Abbie Betinis	[0.00]
12	Oriens...	Anna Semple	[0.00]
13	Quiet Stream	Sophie Westbrooke	[0.00]
14	Laudes	Francis Pott	[0.00]
15	Salvator mundi, Domine	Alexander Hopkins	[0.00]
16	oh pristine example	David Nunn	[0.00]
17	A Blessing	Cheryl Frances-Hoad	[0.00]
18	Nova, nova	Iain Farrington	[0.00]

** Commissioned for the College Choir*
 Total timings: [0.00]

THE CHOIR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
 GEORGE HERBERT ORGAN
 ANNA RYAN FLUTE TRACK 4 ALEX SEMPLE VIOLIN TRACK 5
 SOPHIE WESTBROOKE RECORDER TRACK 13
 ANDREW NETHSINGHA DIRECTOR

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