

signum
CLASSICS

A WALK WITH IVOR GURNEY

T

TENEBRAE

AURORA ORCHESTRA
DAME SARAH CONNOLLY
SIMON CALLOW
NIGEL SHORT



A WALK WITH IVOR GURNEY

CD1

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---------|
| 1 | Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis | Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) | [14.16] |
| 2 | Like as the Hart | Herbert Howells (1892-1983) | [7.09] |
| 3 | Since I believe in God the Father Almighty | Ivor Gurney (1890-1937) | [5.49] |
| 4 | A Walk With Ivor Gurney * | Judith Bingham (b. 1952) | [12.15] |
| 5 | By a Bierside | Ivor Gurney
Orchestrated by Herbert Howells | [4.28] |

CD2

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 1 | In Flanders | Ivor Gurney
Orchestrated by Herbert Howells | [3.15] |
| 2 | Sleep | Ivor Gurney
Orchestrated by Gerald Finzi (1901-1956) | [3.32] |
| 3 | An Oxford Elegy | Ralph Vaughan Williams | [22.51] |
| 4 | Valiant for Truth | Ralph Vaughan Williams | [5.24] |
| 5 | Lord thou hast been our refuge | Ralph Vaughan Williams | [8.18] |

Total timings:

[87.23]

* World Premiere Recording

TENEBRAE
AURORA ORCHESTRA
DAME SARAH CONNOLLY MEZZO SOPRANO
SIMON CALLOW NARRATOR
NIGEL SHORT CONDUCTOR

www.signumrecords.com

A WALK WITH IVOR GURNEY

Philip Lancaster

In September 1910, an Elgar night at the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival began with a new work, holding up the main feature, *The Dream of Gerontius*. It was, the cathedral organist, Herbert Brewer, said, a new work by a 'strange man who lives in Chelsea'; 'something to do with Thomas Tallis the great Tudor composer'. That 'strange man' was Ralph Vaughan Williams, and the new work his *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. The *Fantasia*, for double string orchestra, was based on a tune Tallis had written for Archbishop Parker's metrical psalter, published in 1567, which Vaughan Williams had in 1906 introduced into *The English Hymnal*. For two members of the audience it was a seminal moment: Ivor Gurney and Herbert Howells were both so excited by the *Fantasia* that, following the performance, they walked the streets of Gloucester together into the night, talking, trying to make sense of what they had just heard.

Gloucester Cathedral played an important part in the musical origins of both Gurney and Howells. They studied with Herbert Brewer, and

from late 1907 were allowed use of the organ to try out their works 'in the midst of Gloucester's imperturbable Norman pillars'. Gurney was also a former chorister in the cathedral choir, with a long involvement with the Three Choirs Festival, at which he had first encountered Elgar, who inspired him to become a composer.

With his experience at Gloucester, and later associations with Westminster and Salisbury Cathedrals and St. John's College, Cambridge, Howells would go on to write many works for choir and organ. In early 1941, during the Second World War, he composed a set of six anthems 'in time of war', five of which were written on successive days. *Like as the Hart* was composed in a single sitting on 8 January. Written in London, with air-raids a constant threat, whilst many men were engaged in fighting, and many were lost, the questioning cry of 'where is now thy God?' must have been close to the lips of many.

Gurney wrote very little church music, and little of what he did write has survived. His motet for double choir, *Since I believe in God the Father Almighty*, was written in June 1925, a couple of years before Gurney stopped composing. It is a deeply personal work that

seems to look back to Gloucester Cathedral, with extended pauses written into the piece that allow the great acoustic of that building to sing fully. The reasons for Gurney's attraction to Robert Bridges's poem are obvious. It speaks of an ambivalent relationship with God. The speaker undoubtedly believes in God, but neither he nor anyone else can know or understand him, particularly as one who had 'crie[d] angrily out on God' in poems of the First World War and in his later life. Also, throughout his life, Gurney remained true in his pursuit of beauty. It could have been of Gurney that Bridges wrote of he 'whose spirit within [him...] loveth beauty'. In the final stanza, while the speaker is cherishing the freedom of belief, Gurney, in his 'hours of anguish and darkness', may have been cherishing an idea of a freedom both spiritual *and* physical; freedom from the mental hospital in which he spent the last fifteen years of his life, where he eventually resigned himself to his hopeless abandonment.

In his freedom, Gurney was an inveterate walker. He perhaps knew Gloucestershire more intimately than any other in his day. He walked endlessly the county's meadows and hills, across the Severn plain westwards to May Hill, north towards Elgar's Malvern hills, and east into the

Cotswolds. He walked with friends, talking of music and poetry, and alone, often reading, declaiming Shakespeare to unsuspecting cattle, and pausing to write ideas in his notebook. Gurney's connection with Gloucestershire, however, was not merely circumstantial or aesthetic. As Thomas Hardy observes in his novel *The Woodlanders*, one who truly inhabits a place knows 'those invisible ones of days gone by': they know 'whose feet have traversed the fields', 'whose hands planted the trees', and the 'domestic dramas' that have been enacted in that place. In his late poem 'Gloucester Song', Gurney writes, 'I walk the land my fathers knew, wide to distants blue / And summon all the tales unseen, the good earth lets them through.' Memory is an inherent part of his landscape, summoning up the Elizabethans, Danes and Romans. He felt that connection with the past in his veins also: upon seeing a Roman brooch, discovered in a field, he declared, 'how the centuries in my blood shouted and woke!'

Part of Gurney's attraction to the Roman presence in Gloucestershire may have arisen from a shared experience of war in a foreign territory. Gurney's studies at the Royal College of Music were interrupted in 1915 by his volunteering for active service in the First

World War. Whilst serving with the 2/5 Gloucestershire Battalion near Arras in June 1917, Gurney began a song setting of a poem by A.E. Housman, 'On Wenlock Edge', which tells how little the human condition has changed: each generation must weather the storms of their age; 'Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I'. When writing *A Walk with Ivor Gurney*, commissioned by Tenebrae in 2013, Judith Bingham identified something of that common circumstance: '[T]he Romans were foreign invaders here, and we don't feel the same sympathy for them as we do for the men in the trenches. And yet, on the tomb memorials found in Gloucestershire, one gets a sense of men stranded far from home, and of the gulf of time between them and us.' In *A Walk with Ivor Gurney*, Bingham sets passages from several Gurney poems and intersperses them with inscriptions from some of those Roman memorials, 'evok[ing] the sense Gurney had of time and people of the past residing in the landscape. The mezzo-soprano solo is 'the spirit of that landscape', while the male voices of the choir, always "off-stage", sing Roman tomb memorials of soldiers long dead.'

With the coming of the war, the Royal College of Music – as other institutions – emptied of many of its students as they volunteered for active service.

Hubert Parry, the director of the college, worried greatly for his students, and felt any losses very deeply. He tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade Vaughan Williams from volunteering; and in April 1917 he wrote to Howells, 'Gurney's case I feel to be quite a special martyrdom. His mind is so full of thoughts and feelings far removed from crude barbarities that it seems almost monstrous. But war is monstrous and we have to take it as far as we can from the collective point of view.'

It was only whilst serving in France that Gurney began to write poetry in earnest, serving his apprenticeship in the trenches and behind the lines. It was more difficult to write music, but he did compose a handful of songs. Amongst these, *In Flanders* – a setting of a poem by his boyhood friend Will Harvey – is an expression of homesickness, composed in January 1917. *By a Bierside* sets a poem that first appeared within John Masefield's play, *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910), where it is spoken by four centurions, lamenting the death of a young Roman soldier. It was written in August 1916, whilst lying on a damp sandbag in a disused trench mortar emplacement. Gurney wrote at some length on the song, which begins as 'a rhapsody on beauty, full of grief but not bitter, until the unreason of death closes the

thought of loveliness, that Death unmakes. Then the heart grows bitter with the weight of grief and revelation of the impermanence of things[...] But, anger being futile, the mind turns to the old strangeness of the soul's wandering apart from the body, and to what tremendous mysteries! And the dimly apprehended sense of such before us all overpowers the singer, who is lost in the glory of the adventure of Death.' In another letter, he wrote that he imagined 'some poet-priest pronouncing an oration over the dead body of some young Greek hero.' This description, and that of the soul 'wandering apart from the body', recall Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, and particularly the Priest's parting declamation over the dying Gerontius – 'Proficiscere, anima Christiana' – which is echoed musically in Gurney's declamatory setting of the words 'It is most grand to die!' Both *In Flanders* and *By a Bierside* were orchestrated by Howells at the behest of Sir Charles Stanford, for performance at the Royal College of Music.

While the Romans were a tangible and inspiring presence in the Gloucestershire landscape, it was the music and poetry of the Elizabethan age that proved particularly fertile for Gurney. Gurney's first acknowledged masterpiece came

in the form of a set of *Five Elizabethan Songs*, composed in December 1913–January 1914. Shortly after the publication of these songs, in 1920, the young Gerald Finzi took a copy of one of them – a setting of John Fletcher's 'Sleep' – to his composition lesson with Edward Bairstow in York. Soprano Elsie Suddaby was there, and she and Bairstow tried the song through. It was Finzi's 'moment' on the road to Damascus: *Sleep* demonstrated to Finzi the power of song, and reinforced his determination to become a composer. It also sent him to Gloucestershire – the birthplace of not only Gurney and Howells, but also of Hubert Parry, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst – to discover what it was about that county that inspired such music. Finzi was later to spend many years working on Gurney's behalf, striving to bring his work to a wider public. In 1949 he paid tribute to the song that had provided him with such inspiration, scoring *Sleep* and three other songs for string orchestra for a performance by his Newbury String Players, sung again by Elsie Suddaby.

In 1901, Ralph Vaughan Williams had begun making sketches for an opera based on Matthew Arnold's poem *The Scholar Gypsy*. Over four decades later, when he returned to the idea in 1947, it became not an opera but a melodrama,

for narrator, chorus and orchestra: *An Oxford Elegy*. Adapted from two poems by Arnold, 'The Scholar Gypsy' and 'Thyrsis', it recounts the story of a disillusioned Oxford scholar who, two centuries earlier, went to live with the gypsies, to discover their arts before returning to relate them to the world. Two centuries on, the scholar is still glimpsed in the countryside, wandering, still seeking the truth that he set out to find, and while the lonely elm tree still stands on the top of Ilsley Downs he shall wander yet. Vaughan Williams presents us with a rich, Samuel Palmer-like vision of an England-Eden; a vivid depiction of a midsummer idyll that is more a state of mind than a reality – perhaps the idyll where lies the wisdom that the Scholar was hoping to find in his wanderings; that he still seeks.

Vaughan Williams's biographer, Michael Kennedy, has suggested that *An Oxford Elegy* recalls and pays tribute to those friends who were lost in the wars, including Gurney, who survived the war but was effectively lost to the world a few years afterwards when he was committed. In the closing stanzas of the *Elegy* the speaker tells how 'thou art gone, and me thou leavest here / Sole in these fields', and says of their shared journey and aspirations, 'the light we

sought is shining still.' This pastoral invocation of the *Elegy* is something that Gurney would have related to, in both his poetry (particularly that poetry influenced by Edward Thomas) and his music. For Gurney, music – like his sense of the past – 'clung to', and was 'exhaled' by, the landscape, while poetry 'fill[ed] up spaces in landscape and life with human interest and memory'. Gurney's *Gloucestershire Rhapsody* for orchestra (1919-21) depicts a similarly enchanted pastoral idyll, wandering the landscape and seeking its truth, imbued also with that keen sense of the former inhabitants of that place.

Vaughan Williams was fascinated by the idea of the wanderer and the 'journey' in his work, in pieces such as *Songs of Travel* and *A Sea Symphony*. In 1949 another project that had been in gestation for four decades was finally completed: an opera based on John Bunyan's 1678 allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. His association with this book began in 1906, when he was invited to provide incidental music for some scenes adapted from *The Pilgrim's Progress*, to be staged at Reigate Priory. In this incidental music, a certain melody by Thomas Tallis was used as the basis for a movement for strings, which accompanied a tableau in which Christian arrives at, and passes through the

wicket gate at the start of his journey. A few years later, this portion of the score was removed and developed into the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. Between the writing of the incidental music in 1906 and the completion of the opera in 1949, there were further 'Pilgrim' works, including a one act 'pastoral episode' (1922) and music for a radio production (1943). In 1941 he composed *Valiant for Truth*: a choral setting of a passage that tells of the passing of Mr. Valiant-for-Truth 'from this world, to that which is to come', crossing the river of death and being welcomed into the Celestial City.

The programme concludes with Vaughan Williams's 1921 setting of psalm 90, combining both the original psalm and a metrical version by Isaac Watts, 'O God our help in ages past', sung to the hymn tune St. Anne. Whether in Roman times or the present, on the journey of life, even in the face of war or incarceration, faith has been a refuge; a source of strength and hope.

SONG TEXTS

CD1

2 Like as the Hart

Herbert Howells

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks,
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God,
yea, even for the living God.
When shall I come to appear
before the presence of God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
while they daily say unto me,
"Where is now thy God?"

Words: Psalm 42 vv. 1–3

3 Since I believe in God the Father Almighty

Ivor Gurney

Since I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,
'Twere strange should I praise anything
and refuse Him praise,
Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
Nor unto Him in suff'ring and sorrow turn me:
Nay how could I withdraw me from His embracing?

But since that I have seen not,
and cannot know Him,
Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly
His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose eternal;
Therefore will I be bound to no studied system
Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,
Nor seek to please Him in any foolish invention,
Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty
And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy:

But I cherish my freedom in loving service,
Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking
Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness
Confiding always on His excellent greatness.

Words: Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

4 A Walk With Ivor Gurney

Judith Bingham

[The] stars are sliding wanton [through trees].
(*Stars sliding*)

On uplands bleak and bare to wind
Beneath a maze of stars I strode;
Phantoms of Fear haunted the road,
Dogging my footsteps close behind.

Till Heaven blew clear of cloud, showed each
Most tiny baby-star as fine
As any jewel of kings. Orion
Triumphed through bare tracery of beech.

So unafraid I journeyed on
Past dusky rut and pool alight
With Heaven's chief wonder of night
Jupiter, close companion.
(*The Companions*)

Dis Manibus Lucius Valerius Aurelius
veteranus legionis vicensimae. Hic situs est.
(*To the spirits of the dead, Lucius Valerius Aurelius
veteran of the 20th Legion. He lies here.*)

My God, the wind is rising! On those edges
[Of Cotswold,] dark glory might swing my soul –
Mystery sounds, the wind's drum roll.

None care to walk there.
(Hell's Prayer)

All night the fierce wind blew-
All night I knew
Time, like a dark wind, blowing
All days, all lives, all memories
Down empty endless skies –
A blind wind, strowing
Bright leaves of life's torn tree
Through blank eternity.
(The Wind)

Rufus Sita, eques Cohortis Sextae Thracum,
annorum quadraginta, stipendiorum duo et viginti.
Hic situs est.
*(Rufus Sita, a horse trooper of the 6th Cohort of
Thracians, 40 years old, paid for 22. He lies here.)*

I think of the gods, all their old oaths and gages.
Battered now tonight with huge wind-bursts
and rages,
Flying moon glimpses like a shattered and
flimsy sail –
O Rome immortal,-
How my love labours you repaid with love
and promises.
They were there, Romans, quiet comrades
and ponderers...
(Fort Yukon)

The wind of Autumn has touched there,
the beech trees have changed.
All the willowherb of all the world
falling steep to the Villa
Where once the Romans ranged,
is a wonder of light chanced
Upon... O friend are you not drunken
with the sea of far lost mystic colour?
(Above the Villa)

Dis manibus...

Words: Ivor Gurney (poems identified in brackets) & Roman tomb
memorials from Gloucestershire.

5 **By a Bierside**
Ivor Gurney, orchestrated by Herbert Howells

This is a sacred city built of marvellous earth.
Life was lived nobly here to give such beauty birth.
Beauty was in this brain, and in this eager hand.
Death is so blind and dumb. Death does not
understand.

Death drifts the brain with dust
and soils the young limbs' glory.
Death makes justice a dream
and strength a traveller's story.
Death drives the lovely soul
to wander under the sky.

Death opens unknown doors.
It is most grand to die.

Words: John Masefield (1878-1967), reprinted with permission of
The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate
of John Masefield.

CD2

1 **In Flanders**
Ivor Gurney, orchestrated by Herbert Howells

I'm homesick for my hills again,
My hills again,
To see above the Severn plain
Unscabbarded against the sky
The blue high blade of Cotswold lie;
The giant clouds go royally
By jagged Malvern with a train of shadows.
Where the land is low
Like a huge imprisoning O,
I hear a heart that's sound and high,
I hear the heart within me cry:
"I'm homesick for my hills again!
My hills again!
Cotswold or Malvern, sun or rain!
My hills again!"

Frederick William Harvey (1888-1957). Reproduced with kind
permission of Elaine Jackson and Eileen Griffiths.

2 **Sleep**
Ivor Gurney, orchestrated by Gerald Finzi

Come, sleep, and with thy sweet deceiving
Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dream beguile
All my fancies; that from thence
I may feel an influence
All my powers of care bereaving.
Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
Let me know some little joy;
We that suffer long annoy
Are contented with a thought
Thro' an idle fancy wrought,
O let my joys have some abiding,
O let my joys have some abiding.

John Fletcher (1579-1625)

3 **An Oxford Elegy**
Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;
Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes;
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,

And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green;
Come Shepherd, and again begin the quest.

Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn –
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sundown, Shepherd, will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep:
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers:
That sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not summer for beauty's heightening,
Lovely all times she lies, lovely today!

Come, let me read the oft-read tale again:
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Who, one summer morn forsook his friends,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm green-muffled Cumnor hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.
Leaning backwards in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream,
Still waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumnor range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ Church hall –
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what – I dream! Two hundred years are flown;
And thou from earth art gone

Long since and in some quiet churchyard laid –
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours.
Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven! and we,
Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await it too?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
Today from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days;
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.
Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Up past the wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames? –
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west – I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Scholar Gipsy, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.
Needs must I, with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.
He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see.
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill.

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I? –
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far, descried,
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time.
They are all gone, and thou art gone as well.

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields; yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
That lonely Tree against the western sky.
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May
Know him a wanderer still.
Then let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear.

Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.

Words: Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), adapted from *The Scholar Gypsy and Thyrsis*

4 **Valiant for Truth**
Ralph Vaughan Williams

After this it was noised abroad that Mr Valiant-for-Truth was taken with a summons ...; and had this for a token that the summons was true, 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain.' When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then, said he, 'I am going to my Father's, and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill, to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battles, who now will be my rewarder.' When the day that he must go hence, was come, many accompanied him to the riverside, into which, as he went, he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

Words: John Bunyan (1628-1688)

5 **Lord thou hast been our refuge**
Ralph Vaughan Williams

O God our help in ages past, our hope for years
to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast and our
eternal home.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one
generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever
the earth and the world were made, thou art God
from everlasting and world without end.
Thou turnest man to destruction; again thou sayest
Come again ye children of men;
For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday,
seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

As soon as thou scatterest them they are even as
a sleep
and fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green and groweth up,
but in the evening it is cut down, dried up and
withered.

For we consume away in Thy displeasure,
and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation.
For when thou art angry at our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told:

so passeth it away and we are gone
The years of our age are three score years and ten,
and though men be so strong that they come to
four score years,
yet is their strength but labour and sorrow.
Turn Thee again O Lord at the last.
Be gracious unto Thy servants.
O satisfy us with Thy mercy and that soon.
So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge from one
generation to another.
Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever
the earth and the world were made, thou art God
from everlasting and world without end.

And the glorious Majesty of the Lord be upon us.
O prosper thou the work of our hands,
O prosper thou our handiwork.

Words: Psalm 90

TENEBRAE

Soprano

Fiona Fraser
Katy Hill
Joanna L'Estrange *
Emilia Morton
Laura Oldfield †
Bethany Partridge
Josephine Stephenson
Katie Trethewey

Alto

Tom Lilburn
Martha McLorinan
Eleanor Minney
Elisabeth Paul

Tenor

Ben Alden
Jeremy Budd
Nicholas Madden
Tom Robson

Bass

Tom Bullard *
William Gaunt †
Jimmy Holliday
Stephen Kennedy
Owain Park
Mark Williams

* *An Oxford Elegy* only

† all choral pieces apart from *An Oxford Elegy*



© Sim Canethy-Clarke

Described as 'phenomenal' (The Times) and 'devastatingly beautiful' (Gramophone Magazine,) award-winning choir Tenebrae, under the direction of Nigel Short, is one of the world's leading vocal ensembles renowned for its passion and precision.

Tenebrae's ever-increasing discography has brought about collaborations with Signum, Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, and Warner Classics. In 2012 Tenebrae was the first-ever ensemble to be multi-nominated in the same category for the BBC Music Magazine Awards, securing the accolade of 'Best Choral Performance' for their recording of Victoria's *Requiem Mass, 1605*. The following year the choir's recording of Fauré's *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra was nominated for the Gramophone Awards, having been described as 'the very best Fauré Requiem on disc' (Gramophone Magazine) and 'the English choral tradition at its zenith' (Richard Morrison). In 2014 the choir's recording of Russian Orthodox music was launched on its own label, Bene Arte, receiving glowing reviews and reaching number 1 in the UK Specialist Classical Chart. In 2016 Tenebrae received its second BBC Music Magazine Award for a recording of

Brahms and Bruckner Motets, the profits from the sale of which benefit Macmillan Cancer Support. In order to mark Tenebrae's fifteenth anniversary in 2016-17, the choir re-released its first major commission by Joby Talbot, *Path of Miracles*, alongside a new work by composer, Owain Park. *Music of the Spheres*, Tenebrae's album of part songs from the British Isles, received a Grammy nomination for 'Best Choral Performance' in 2018.

Tenebrae is a dedicated advocate for contemporary composers, having worked with Judith Bingham, Ola Gjeilo, Alexander Levine, Alexander L'Estrange, Paweł Łukaszewski, Paul Mealor, Hilary Tann, Sir John Tavener and Will Todd. The choir is renowned for its highly-acclaimed interpretations of choral music with repertoire ranging from hauntingly passionate works of the Renaissance through to contemporary choral masterpieces.

Tenebrae is regularly engaged with the world's finest orchestras and has appeared at major national and international festivals and venues including the BBC Proms, Edinburgh International Festival, Three Choirs Festival, Leipzig Gewandhaus (Germany) and Melbourne Festival (Australia). Other highlights include

Tenebrae's annual Holy Week Festival at St John's Smith Square, London, as well as concerts throughout the UK, Europe and the USA. Alongside concert performances, the choir presents its inspirational workshop method, *The Tenebrae Effect*, designed to challenge and advance every participant by instilling skills essential to a Tenebrae performance.

'Passion and Precision' are Tenebrae's core values. Through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, Tenebrae's vision is to deliver dramatic programming, flawless performances and unforgettable experiences, allowing audiences around the world to be moved by the power and intimacy of the human voice.

www.tenebrae-choir.com

AURORA ORCHESTRA

An Oxford Elegy

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Violin 1

Alexandra Wood (*Leader*)
Alessandro Ruisi
Kate Suthers
Lara Sullivan
Gillon Cameron
Bea Phillips
Cassandra Hamilton
Charlotte Reid
Kirsty Lovie
Tamara Elias

Violin 2

Maria Spengler
Naoko Keatley
Michael Jones
Ciaran McCabe
Tom Aldren
Alexandra Caldon
Antonia Kesel
Rebecca Dinning

Viola

Nicholas Bootiman
Oliver Wilson
Francis Kefford
Jenny Lewisohn
Richard Waters
Amanda Verner

Cello

Hetty Snell
Reinoud Ford
Clare O'Connell
James Barralet
Richard Birchall
Jonathan Rees

Double Bass

Ben Griffiths
Elena Hull
Roger McCann

Flute

Jane Mitchell

Oboe

Thomas Barber

Cor anglais

Patrick Flanagan

Clarinet

Peter Sparks
Joseph Shiner

Bassoon

Amy Harman

Horn

Pip Eastop
James Pillai

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis
Ralph Vaughan Williams
By a Bierside, In Flanders, Sleep
Ivor Gurney

Violin 1
Alexandra Wood (*Leader*)*
Maria Spengler
Cassandra Hamilton †*#
Tamara Elias **
Lara Sullivan †*#
Michael Jones †*#
Minn Majoe †*#
Greta Mutlu †*#
Natasha Hall †
Anna Caban †*#
Non Peters †
Nathaniel Anderson-Frank **†
Katerina Nazarova **†*#

Violin 2
Jamie Campbell †
Natalie Klouda
James Toll †*#
Ciaran McCabe †*#
Alexandra Caldon †*#
Davina Clarke †*#
Paloma Deike †*#
Amy Heggart †
Alessandro Ruisi *
Michael Trainor **†

Viola
Ruth Gibson †

Francis Kefford
Morgan Goff
Meghan Cassidy
Luba Tunnicliffe
Laurie Anderson
Asher Zaccardelli *
Tetsuomi Nagata **†

Cello
Robin Michael †
James Barralet †*#
Jonathan Rees †*#
Vanessa Lucas-Smith †
Jessie-Ann Richardson †
Rebecca Herman †*#
Clare O'Connell *
Ben Chappell *

Bass
Elena Hull
Roger Linley †*#
Alice Kent †
Vera Pereira †
Ben Russell *

Flute
Harry Winstanley *#
Clare Findlater *#

Clarinet
Thomas Lessels *#
Richard Russell *#

Bassoon
Jonathan Davies *#
Dominic Tyler *#

Horn
John Ryan *#
Richard Stroud *#
Caroline O'Connell *#
Sam Pearce *

Trumpet
Simon Cox *
David Hilton *

Trombone
Mark Templeton *
Tom Berry *
Josh Cirtina (bass) *

Tuba
Sasha Koushk-Jalali *

Timpani
Henry Baldwin *

Harp
Sally Pryce #

Organ – *Lord thou hast been our refuge and Like as the Hart*
James Sherlock

Trumpet solo – *Lord thou hast been our refuge*
Christopher Deacon

† *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* only

* *By a Bierside* only

In Flanders only

± *Sleep* only

* Orchestra 2, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*

† *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* string quartet soloist

With its signature creative ethos, Aurora Orchestra combines world-class performance with adventurous programming and trailblazing presentation. Founded in 2005 under Principal Conductor Nicholas Collon, it has quickly established a reputation as one of Europe's leading chamber orchestras, garnering several major awards including two RPS Awards and a German ECHO Klassik Award.

Collaborating widely across art forms and musical genres, Aurora has worked with an exceptional breadth of artists ranging from Ian Bostridge, Imogen Cooper and Sarah Connolly to Edmund de Waal, Wayne McGregor, and Björk. A champion of new music, it has premiered works by composers including Julian Anderson, Benedict Mason, Anna Meredith, Nico Muhly, and Judith Weir. In recent years, it has pioneered memorised performance (without the use of printed sheet music), and is thought to be the first orchestra worldwide to perform whole symphonies in this way.

Based in London, Aurora is Resident Orchestra at Kings Place, and Associate Orchestra at Southbank Centre, where its pioneering 'Orchestral Theatre' series has featured a variety of spoken word, film, circus and theatre

collaborations. The orchestra also appears regularly at other major venues including the Royal Opera House, Globe Theatre, and Wigmore Hall; and has performed in the past nine BBC Proms. Aurora regularly tours internationally, with recent and upcoming highlights at The Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Kölner Philharmonie, Victoria Concert Hall Singapore, Melbourne Festival, and Shanghai Concert Hall.

At the heart of Aurora is a commitment to challenging expectations of what an orchestra can and should do on the concert stage, and inspiring audiences of all ages and backgrounds to develop a passion for orchestral music. Through an award-winning learning and participation programme, Aurora engages diverse audiences and brings orchestral music to schools, families, and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

www.auroraorchestra.com

DAME SARAH CONNOLLY

Born in County Durham, mezzo-soprano Dame Sarah Connolly studied piano and singing at the Royal College of Music, of which she is now a Fellow.

Her repertoire in opera ranges from Monteverdi, Handel and Gluck to Wagner, Strauss and Britten and particular highlights include *Dido (Dido and Aeneas)* at Teatro alla Scala, Milan and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Clairon (*Capriccio*) at The Metropolitan Opera, New York; Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) and the title role in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; the title role in *Giulio Cesare* and Phèdre (*Hippolyte et Aricie*) for the Glyndebourne Festival; Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) for The Royal Opera, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Gran Teatro del Liceu in Barcelona and the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden; the title role in *Ariodante* and Sesto (*La clemenza di Tito*) at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence; Phèdre (*Hippolyte et Aricie*) at Opéra national de Paris; the title role in *Ariodante* for the Dutch National Opera and the Wiener Staatsoper and Fricka (*Das Rheingold & Die Walkure*) for The Royal Opera



© Jan Capinski

and the Bayreuth Festspiele. She has also appeared frequently with Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera and Opera North and is particularly associated with the English National Opera.

She has appeared in recital in London, New York, Boston, Paris, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Atlanta, Stuttgart; at the BBC Proms, the Incontri in Terra di Siena La Foce

and the Schubertiada Vilabertran and at the Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Edinburgh and Oxford Lieder Festivals. She is regularly partnered by Eugene Asti, Julius Drake, Malcolm Martineau and Joseph Middleton.

In concert she has performed at the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg, and Tanglewood festivals, and she is a frequent guest at the BBC Proms where, in 2009, she was a memorable guest soloist at the Last Night. She appears regularly with many of the world's great orchestras under conductors such as Ivor Bolton, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Daniel Harding, Philippe Herreweghe, Vladimir Jurowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Riccardo Chailly, and Sir Simon Rattle. Sarah Connolly has recorded prolifically and twice been nominated for a Grammy Award. She was made a DBE in the 2017 Birthday Honours, having previously been made a CBE in the 2010 New Year's Honours. In 2011 she was honoured by the Incorporated Society of Musicians and presented with the Distinguished Musician Award. She is the recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society's 2012 Singer Award.

SIMON CALLOW

Simon Callow is an actor, author and director. He studied at Queen's University, Belfast, and then trained as an actor at the Drama Centre in London. He joined the National Theatre in 1979, where he created the role of Mozart in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus*. His many one-man shows include *The Mystery of Charles Dickens*, *Being Shakespeare*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Inside*



Wagner's Head, *Juvenalia* and, most recently, *The Man Jesus*. He has appeared in many films including *A Room with a View*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Phantom of the Opera* and is currently playing The Duke of Sandringham in the television series *Outlander*. He directed *Shirley Valentine* in the West End and on Broadway, *Single Spies* at the NT and *Carmen Jones* at the Old Vic, as well as the film of *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. He has written biographies of Oscar Wilde, Charles Laughton and Charles Dickens, and three autobiographical books: *Being An Actor*, *Love Is Where It Falls*, and *My Life in Pieces*. The third volume of his massive Orson Welles biography, *One Man Band*, appeared in 2016; *Being Wagner: The Triumph of the Will*, a short biography of Wagner, was published last year. Music is his great passion, and he has made many appearances with the LPO, the LSO and the London Mozart Players.

NIGEL SHORT

Award-winning conductor Nigel Short has built up an enviable reputation for his recording and live performance work with leading orchestras and ensembles across the world.

A singer of great acclaim, Nigel was a member of the renowned vocal ensemble The King's Singers from 1994–2000. Upon leaving the group he formed Tenebrae, a virtuosic choir that embraced his dedication for passion and precision. Under his direction, Tenebrae has collaborated with internationally acclaimed orchestras and instrumentalists and now enjoys a reputation as one of the world's finest vocal ensembles.

To date, Nigel has conducted the Academy of Ancient Music, Aurora Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, English Chamber Orchestra, English Concert, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Scottish Ensemble. He has directed the London Symphony Orchestra alongside Tenebrae in a live recording of Fauré's *Requiem*, which was nominated for the Gramophone



© Chris O'Donovan

Symphony Orchestra described as a 'master stroke of programming' (Financial Times).

Nigel has vast recording experience having conducted for many of the world's major labels including Decca Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, LSO Live, Signum and Warner Classics. In 2018, he received a Grammy nomination in the category of 'Best Choral Performance' for Tenebrae's album of parts songs from the British Isles, *Music of the Spheres*. As a Gramophone award-winning producer, Nigel works with many of the UK's leading professional choirs and vocal ensembles including Alamire, Ex Cathedra, Gallicantus and The King's Singers.

Awards (2013), and since then has conducted the orchestra at St. Paul's Cathedral as part of the City of London Festival. Other orchestral recordings include Mozart's *Requiem* and *Ave Verum Corpus* with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and a release of music by Bernstein, Stravinsky and Zemlinsky with the BBC

This recording was made thanks to generous donations from:



**Richard Baker, Lydia Challen, Monica Anne Darnbrough, Ed Frazier Davis,
Adrian Frost, Ivor Gurney Trust, Jane Merrick, Anna O'Connor, Sir Simon and Lady Robey,
RVW Trust, Terence Sinclair, Simon Wood.**

Tenebrae would also like to thank the following people for their support:

**Hugh Cobbe, Dame Sarah Connolly, Jeremy Dibble, Sir Roger Gifford,
John Harte and Megan Russell at Aurora Orchestra,
Jake Kirner at St Giles-without-Cripplegate, Jonathan Lane, Ian Venables.**

Recorded at St Giles-without-Cripplegate, London from 2-4 January and 18 April 2018.

Producer – Nicholas Parker
Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch
Recording Assistant and Voiceover Recording Engineer – James Waterhouse
Editors – Robin Hawkins, Andrew Mellor and Nicholas Parker

Front cover – image captured from the stained glass window at Gloucester Cathedral dedicated to Ivor Gurney, designed by Tom Denny.
Tenebrae and Dame Sarah Connolly first performed much of the repertoire that features on this album at Gloucester Cathedral in August 2013 as part of a fundraising concert for the stained glass window which inspired this recording project.
Reproduced by kind permission of Tom Denny and Gloucester Cathedral.

Design and Artwork – Woven Design www.wovendesign.co.uk

© 2018 The copyright in this sound recording is owned by Signum Records Ltd

© 2018 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records Ltd

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

SignumClassics, Signum Records Ltd., Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JD, UK.
+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 E-mail: info@signumrecords.com
www.signumrecords.com

ALSO AVAILABLE ON SIGNUMCLASSICS



Music of the Spheres

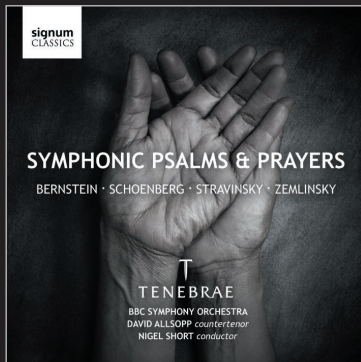
Tenebrae, Nigel Short

SIGCD904

Grammy Award Nominee 2017

Best Choral Performance

"A spooky, flickering account of Elgar's Owls underlines the ability of Short and his outstandingly responsive singers to create riveting atmosphere, and communicate to the listener the import and implications of a song's narrative...[an] intelligently assembled, superbly sung collection" **BBC Music Magazine**



Symphonic Psalms & Prayers

Bernstein • Schoenberg • Stravinsky • Zemlinsky

Tenebrae, BBC Symphony Orchestra

David Allsopp *countertenor*

Nigel Short *conductor*

SIGCD492

"Bringing together Bernstein, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Zemlinsky has turned out to be a master stroke of programming by Nigel Short and his expert, small professional choir, Tenebrae."

Financial Times