Fen and Meadow
Britten Choral Works III

Choral Dances from 'GLORIANA'

Five Flower Songs

Sacred and Profane

Ian Partridge
The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS

To find out more about The Sixteen, concerts, tours, and to buy CDs, visit www.thesixteen.com
In December 1977, as a member of the choir of Westminster Abbey, I sang at Britten's memorial service; at that time, I was also a member of English Music Theatre, successor to English Opera Group and the brainchild of conductor Steuart Bedford and producer Colin Graham but with the blessing and support of Britten. Unfortunately, I never had the privilege of meeting Benjamin Britten but I felt I knew him through his music and working closely with not only Steuart and Colin but also Peter Pears. It had taken England many centuries to produce such a distinctive musical personality. Indeed there would be many that would agree with me that he was the first of such stature since Henry Purcell.

Having sung most of the works on this disc as a boy chorister and as a rather indifferent tenor, I found it most refreshing to look over these scores from a conductor's viewpoint. I am always astounded how years of misguided interpretation lead to the composer's intentions being flagrantly ignored and then termed "tradition" but I didn't really expect it in performances of more recent composers' works. And so it was doubly refreshing to attempt to be faithful to Britten's requests. His music is never easy but it is always challenging for performers, be they singers or instrumentalists. However, and take note all budding composers, he never sets impossible tasks!

Harry Christopher

Fen and Meadow
Benjamin Britten

Britten's opera Gloriana celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's coronation by depicting scenes from the life of Elizabeth I. The affection she inspired among her subjects is captured in the simple radiance of the masque they present during her royal progress to Norwich. The Spirit of the Masque, a solo tenor, introduces the dancers. First comes Time, his youthful buoyancy chorally depicted by cross-rhythm and canonic propulsion in Britten's brightly affirmative C major. Time's spouse, Concord, dances to entirely concordant (but beautifully unpredictable) harmonies, and together they dance From springs of bounty, a lilting canon between women and men. Girls present flowers to an airy rustic dance duet and with a more stolid animation the men bring the fruits of land and sea. These tokens are offered to the queen in the Final Dance of Homage; again unclouded C major and canonic unanimity are warmly expressive, while the flattening inflexions at 'Norwich city you are leaving' add a delicate tinge of regret.

Advance Democracy, to an embarrassingly earnest text by Randall Swingler, reflects Britten's commitment to left-wing causes in the 1930s; it was composed at the time of the Munich crisis in Autumn 1938. The splendid Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard was composed in 1943 for a friend, Richard Wood, who was in a prison camp in Germany, for him and his fellow prisoners to perform there. The score was sent out page by page by microfilm letter. The Wedding Anthem, Amo Ergo Sum, composed for the marriage of Marion Stein to the Earl of Harewood in 1949 (in St Mark's, North Audley Street in London), is an exuberant setting of Ronald Duncan's high-flown text (shades of Lucretia), and includes arias for the soprano and tenor soloists, and a duet whose phrases answer each other in mirror imitation and reach a climactic unison on the words 'Amo Ergo Sum'.

How the conventions of the English partsong are accepted yet revalued in Britten's Five Flower Songs (1950) is typified in the first, where mellifluous harmonies avoid cliché, often because of the persistence of the opening shape, 'Fair daffodils'. Herrick's 'four sweet months', one to each part, enter in quasi-fugal succession, later intensified by closer overlaps. George Crabbe, whose Peter Grimes inspired Britten's opera, is set here without softening his dour realism, so 'the contracted Flora of our town' have angular lines. They are relieved by a few touches of warmer harmony, but no textures as simple as those which, aided by a gentle flexibility of metre, characterize The Evening Primrose. Instrumental style returns for the jaunty accompaniments against which the Ballad of Green Broom is projected, and for its sonorous climax.
Sacred and Profane, composed in the winter of 1974-5, was Britten’s last work for unaccompanied voices. It was written for the Wilbye Consort, a madrigal group which Peter Pears had founded, and the settings are characteristically madrigalian in their five-part writing. The texts are medieval English lyrics and a typical mixture of the devotional and the rumbustiously secular. The sacred lyrics all have a simple dignity, and the two passion settings a tragic intensity worthy of Bach. The second one, Ye that pasen by, takes up the refrain of the preceding Carol—an apparently innocent piece which however is marked ‘with parody!’ like Mahler at his most ironic. The secular lyrics range from a joyful invocation of spring (Lenten is come) to a chilling little song about madness (I mon waxe wod) and the final grim catalogue of the ills of old age, A Death, to which Britten, who was facing his own fast-approaching death, first reacts with horror, then with gallows humour.

Adapted from notes by Peter Evans and David Matthews.

### CHORAL DANCES FROM ‘Gloriana’

**solo tenor: Ian Partridge**

- The Masque begins 0.53
- First Dance: Time 1.43
- Second Dance: Concord 2.39
- Third Dance: Time and Concord 1.48
- Fourth Dance: Country Girls 1.14
- Fifth Dance: Rustics and Fishermen 1.19
- Sixth Dance: Final Dance of Homage 2.16
- Advance Democracy 3.15
- The Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard 8.28
- A Wedding Anthem
  - solos: Ruth Dean, Neil MacKenzie 8.59

### FIVE FLOWER SONGS

- To Daffodils 1.50
- The Succession of the Four Sweet Months 2.06
- Marsh Flowers 1.56
- The Evening Primrose 2.44
- Ballad of Green Broom 1.53

### SACRED AND PROFANE

- St Godric’s Hymn 1.34
- I mon waxe wod 0.38
- Lenten is come 2.43
- The long night 1.19
- Yf ic of luve can 2.38
- Carol 1.36
- Ye that pasen by 2.18
- A death 3.03
- Total playing time 60.10

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**THE SIXTEEN**

**SOPRANO**
- Fiona Clarke, Libby Crabtree†, Sophie Daneman*, Ruth Dean, Sally Dunkley, Micaela Haslam†, Nicola Jenkin*, Nicola-Jane Kemp*, Carys Lane, Rebecca Outram†
- Deborah Miles-Johnson†, Philip Newton, Christopher Royall, Nigel Short†, Helen TEMPLETON*, Caroline Trevor†
- Peter Burrows*, Philip Daggett, Duncan MacKenzie†, Neil MacKenzie†, Nicolas Robertson, Matthew Vine†
- Simon Birchall, Michael Bundy*, Roger Cleverdon*, Robert Evans†, Timothy Jones, Francis Steele†, Jeremy White†

**ALTO**
- Simon Birchall, Michael Bundy*, Roger Cleverdon*, Robert Evans†, Timothy Jones, Francis Steele†, Jeremy White†

**TENOR**
- Peter Burrows*, Philip Daggett, Duncan MacKenzie†, Neil MacKenzie†, Nicolas Robertson, Matthew Vine†
- Simon Birchall, Michael Bundy*, Roger Cleverdon*, Robert Evans†, Timothy Jones, Francis Steele†, Jeremy White†

**BASS**
- Simon Birchall, Michael Bundy*, Roger Cleverdon*, Robert Evans†, Timothy Jones, Francis Steele†, Jeremy White†

**PIANO**
- Stephen Westrop

**ORGAN**
- Margaret Phillips

**HARP**
- Helen Tunstall

**THE BALLAD OF LITTLE MUSGRAVE AND LADY BARNARD**

**TENOR**
- Simon Berridge, Andrew Carwood, Nicolas Robertson, Matthew Vine

**BARITONE**
- Matthew Brook, Michael Bundy, Robert Evans, Timothy Jones

**BASS**
- Simon Birchall, Charles Gibbs, Francis Steele, Jeremy White

**SACRED AND PROFANE**

**SOPRANO**
- Fiona Clarke, Libby Crabtree, Ruth Dean, Sally Dunkley, Rosemary Hattrell, Lucinda Houghton
- Sarah Connolly, Philip Newton, Christopher Royall, Nigel Short

**ALTO**
- Simon Berridge, Andrew Carwood, Nicolas Robertson, Matthew Vine

**TENOR**
- Simon Birchall, Robert Evans, Timothy Jones, Jeremy White

**BASS**
- Simon Birchall, Robert Evans, Timothy Jones, Jeremy White
The masque begins.

Melt earth to sea, sea flow to air;
And air fly into fire!
The elements, at Gloriana's chair,
Mingle in tuneful choir.

And now we summon from this leafy bower
The demi-god that must appear!
'Tis Time! 'tis Time! 'tis Time!

Yes, he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.
No reaper he
That cries "Take heed!"
Time's at his apogee!
Young and strong, in his prime:
Behold the sower of the seed!
Time could not sow unless he had
a spouse to bless his work, and gave it life;
Concord, his loving wife!

Second Dance: Concord
Concord, Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endure
With plenty, peace and happiness.
Concord, Concord and Time,
Each needeth each;
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two can reach.

Now Time with Concord dances
This island doth rejoice:
And woods and waves and waters
Make echo to our voice.

Third Dance: Time and Concord
From springs of bounty
Through this county
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow!
Where life was scanty
Fruits of plenty
Swell resplendent
From earth below!
No Greek nor Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heav'n above
As she whose presence
Is our pleasure
Gloriana
Hath all our love!

Fourth Dance: Country Girls
Sweet flag and cuckoo flower,
Cowslip and columbine,
Kingcups and sops in wine,
Flower deluce and calaminth,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay with rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen.

Behold a troop of rustic swains,
Bringing from the waves and pastures
the fruits of their toil.

Fifth Dance: Rustics and Fishermen
From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets
They bring ensamples
Of all they grow.

Sixth Dance: Final Dance of Homage
These tokens of our love receiving,
O take them, Princess great and dear,
From Norwich city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.

William Plomer

ADVANCE DEMOCRACY
Across the darkened city
The frosty searchlights creep
Alert for the first marauder
To steal upon our sleep.
We see the sudden headlines
Float on the muttering tide
We hear them warn and threaten
And wonder what they hide.

There are whispers across tables,
Talks in a shutter’d room.
The price on which they bargain
Will be a people’s doom.

There’s a roar of war in the factories
And idle hands on the street
And Europe held in nightmare
By the thud of marching feet.

Now sinks the sun of surety,
The shadows growing tall
Of the big bosses plotting
Their biggest coup of all.

Is there no strength to save us?
No power we can trust
Before our lives and liberties
Are powder’d into dust.

Time to arise Democracy
Time to rise up and cry
That what our fathers fought for
We'll not allow to die.

Time to resolve divisions,
Time to renew our pride,
Time to decide
Time to burst our house of glass.

Rise as a single being
In one resolve arrayed:
Life shall be for the people
That’s by the people made.

Randall Swingler

The Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard

As it fell on one holyday,
As many be in the year,
When young men and maids together did go
Their matins and mass to hear,
Little Musgrave came to the church door –
The priest was at private mass –
But he had more mind of the fair women
Than he had of Our Lady’s grace.

The one of them was clad in green
Another was clad in pall,
And then came in my Lord Barnard’s wife,
The fairest amongst them all.
Quoth she, ’I've loved thee, Little Musgrave,
Full long and many a day’.
"So have I lov’d you, my fair ladye,
Yet never a word durst I say”.

But I have a bower at Bucklesfordberry,
Full daintily it is dight,
If thou’lt wend thither, thou Little Musgrave,
Thou's lig in my arms all night.'

With that heheard a little tiny page,
By his lady's coach as he ran.
Says, "Although I am my lady's foot-page,
Yet I am Lord Barnard's man!"
Then he's cast off his hose and cast off his shoon,
Set down his feet and ran,
And where the bridges were broken down
He bent he bow and swam.

"Awake! awake! thou Lord Barnard,
As thou art a man of life!
Little Musgrave is at Bucklesfordberry
Along with thine own wedded wife”.

He called up his merry men all:
"Come saddle me my steed;
This night must I to Bucklesfordberry,
F’r I never had greater need”.

But some they whistled, and some they sang,
And some they thus could say,
Whenever Lord Barnard’s horn it blew:
"Away, Musgrave away!"

"Methinks I hear the threstlecock,
Methinks I hear the jay;
Methinks I hear Lord Barnard’s horn,
Away Musgrave! Away!”

"Lie still, lie still, thou little Musgrave,
And huggle me from the cold;

"Tis nothing but a shepherd’s boy
A-driving his sheep to the fold.”
By this, Lord Barnard came to his door
And lighted a stone upon;
And he’s pull’d out three silver keys,
And open’d the doors each one.
He lifted up the coverlet,
He lifted up the sheet:
"Arise, arise, thou Little Musgrave,
And put thy clothes on;
It shall ne’er be said in my country
I’ve killed a naked man.
I have two swords in one scabbard,
They are both sharp and clear;
Take you the best, and I the worst,
We’ll end the matter here."
The first stroke Little Musgrave struck
He hurt Lord Barnard sore;
The next stroke that Lord Barnard struck,
he struck.
Little Musgrave ne’er struck more.
"Woe worth you, my merry men all,
You were ne’er born for my good!
Why did you not offer to stay my hand
When you saw me wax so wood?
For I’ve slain also the fairest ladye
That ever did woman’s deed.
A grave,” Lord Barnard cried,
"To put these lovers in!
But lay my lady on the upper hand,
For she comes of the nobler kin”.

Anon.
A WEDDING ANTHEM

Now let us sing gaily
Ave Maria!
And may the Holy Virgin
Who was the Mother of Jesus
Grant that these two children
May live together happily
For Faith releases Gaiety
As Marriage does true Chastity!
Ave Maria!

See how the scarlet sun
Overthrows the heavy night
And where black shadows hung
There reveals a rose, a rose so pure and white,
Thus did Jesus bring
To the blind world of man
That faith which is their sight
And Love that is their light.

As mountain streams
find one another
Till they are both merged
there - in a broad, peaceful river
As it flows to the sea
and it
are lost forever,
So those who love
seek one another
But when they are joined
here - to Christ’s Love, oh so tender

Though their years may be brief
yet through Him
These two are not two
Love has made them one
Amo Ergo Sum!
And by its mystery
Each is no less but more
Amo Ergo Sum!
For to love is to be
And in loving Him, I love Thee
Amo Ergo Sum!

Per vitam Domini
Spes nobis cantavat,
Per fidem Domini
Lux diem novavit,
Per mortem Domini
Mors mortem fugavit,
Amen!

— Ronald Duncan

FIVE FLOWER SONGS

To Daffodils

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early-rising Sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay

Until the hasting day
Has run
But to evensong:
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you,
We have as short a Spring!
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or any thing.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer’s rain;
Or as the pearls of morning’s dew,
Ne’er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

The Succession of the Four Sweet Months

First, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers;
Then after her comes smiling May,
In a more rich and sweet array:
Next enters June and brings us more
Gems than those two that went before:
Then (lastly,) July comes and she
More wealth brings in than all those three;
April! May! June! July!

Robert Herrick

The Evening Primrose

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dewdrops pearl the evening’s breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew
And, hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while night is by;

— George Crabbe

Here the strong mallow strikes her slimy root,
Here the dull nightshade hangs her deadly fruit:
On hills of dust the henbane’s faded green,
And pencil’d flower of sickly scent is seen,
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume.
At the wall’s base the fiesty nettle springs
With fruit globose and fierce with poison’d stings;
In ev’ry chink delights the fern to grow,
With glossy leaf and tawny bloom below;
The few dull flowers that o’er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed.
These, with our seaweeds rolling up and down,
Form the contracted Flora of our town.

— George Crabbe

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Ave Maria!
And may the Holy Virgin
Who was the Mother of Jesus
Grant that these two children
May live together happily
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And, hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while night is by;

— George Crabbe
Sainte Marye, Christes bur
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie min sinne, rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne with the self God.

II: I mon waxe wod

Foweles in the frith,
The fisses in the flod,
And I mon waxe wod;
Mulch sorw I walke with
For beste of bon and blod.

III: Lenten is come

Lenten is come with love to toune,
With bloomen and with bridhes roune,
That all this blisse bringeth.
Dayeseyes in this dales,
Notes sweete of nightegales,
Uch fowl song singeth.
The threstelcok him threteth oo.
Away is huere winter wo
When woderofe springeth.
This fowles singeth ferly fele,
And wliteth on huere wynne wele,
That all the wode ringeth.
The rose raileth hire rode,
The leves on the lighte wode
Waxen all with wille.

Ballad of Green Broom

There was an old man liv'd out in the wood,
And his trade was a-cutting of Broom,
green Broom,
He had but one son without thought
without good
Who lay in his bed till t'was noon, bright noon;
The old man awoke one morning and spoke
He swore he would fire the room, that room,
If his John would not rise and open his eyes,
And away to the wood to cut Broom,
green Broom.
So Johnny arose and slipp'd on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut Broom,
green Broom.

Sacred and Profane

I: St Godric's Hymn

Sainte Marye Virgine,
Moder Jesu Christes Nazarene,
Onfo, schild, help thin Godric,
Onfang, bring heylich with thee in Godes Riche.

St Mary the Virgin, Mother of Jesus Christ of
Nazareth, receive, defend and
Help thy Godric (and,) having received (him,)
Bring (him) on high with thee in God's Kingdom.

II: St Godric's Hymn

Onfang, bring heylich with thee in Godes Riche.

Onfo, schild, help thin Godric,

He sharpened his Knives and for once he
contrives
To cut a great bundle of Broom,
green Broom,
When Johnny pass'd under a lady's fine room,
fine room,
She call'd to her maid: "Go fetch me," she said,
"Go fetch me the boy that sells Broom,
green Broom,
Go fetch me the boy!"
When Johnny came in to the Lady's fine house,
And stood in the Lady's fine room, fine room,
"Young Johnny" she said, "Will you give up
your Trade
And marry a lady in bloom, full bloom?"
Johnny gave his consent, and to the church they
both went,
And he wedded the Lady in bloom,
full bloom,
At market and fair, all folks do declare,
There's none like the Boy that sold Broom,
green Broom.

Anon.

I: Sacred and Profane

Sainte Marye Christes bur
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie min sinne, rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne with the self God.
The mone mandeth hire ble,
The lilye is lissom to se,
The fennel and the fille.
Wowses this wilde drakes,
Miles murgeth huere makes,
Ase streem that striketh stille.
Mody meneth, so doth mo;
Ichot ich am on of tho
For love that ilkes ille.

When I see on the cross,
Jesu, my lover,
And beside him stand
Marye and Johan,
For the love of man,
Well ought I to weep
And sins to abandon,
If I know of love,
If I know of love,
If I know of love.

A maiden lay on the moor,
Lay on the moor,
A full week,
A full week,
A maiden lay on the moor;
Lay on the moor
A full week and a day.

Good was her food.
What was her food?
The primrose and the violet.

When I see on the cross,
Jesu, my lover,
And beside him stand
Mary and John,
And his back scourged,
And his side pierced,
For the love of man,
Well ought I to weep
And sins to abandon,
If I know of love,
If I know of love,
If I know of love.

IV: The long night

Pleasant it is while summer lasts,
With the birds' song.
But now the blast of the wind draws nigh
And severe weather.
Alas! how long this night is,
And I, with very great wrong,
Sorrow and mourn and fast.

V: Yif ic of luve can

When I see on Rode
Jesu, my lemmen,
And beside him stonden
Marye and Johan,
For the love of man:
Well ou ic to wepen,
And sinnes for to leten,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can,
Yif ic of luve can.

VI: Carol

Maiden in the mor lay,
In the mor lay;
Sevenight fulle,
Sevenight fulle,
Maiden in the mor lay;
In the mor lay,
Sevenightes fulle and a day.

Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the –
The primerole and the –
Welle was hire mete.
What was hire mete?
The primerole and the violet.
VIII: A death

Wanne mine eyhnen misten,
And mine heren sissen,
And my nose coldet,
And my tunge foldet,
And my rude slaket,
And mine lippes blaken,
And my muth grennet,
And my spotel rennet,
And mine her riset,
And mine herte griset,
And mine honden bivien,
And mine fet stivien -
All to late! all to late!
Wanne the bere is ate gate.
Thanne I schel flutte,
From bedde to flore,
From flore to here,
From here to bere,
From bere to putte,
And the putt fordut.
Thanne lyd mine hus uppe mine nose.
Of al this world ne give I it a pese!

VII: Ye that pasen by

Ye that pasen by the weiye,
Abidet a little stounde.
Beholdet, all my felawes,
Yef any me lik is founde.
To the Tre with nailes thre
Wol fast I hange bounde;
With a spere all thoru my side
To mine herte is mad a wounde.

You that pass by the way,
Stay a little while.
Behold, all my fellows
If any like me is found.
To the Tree with three nails.
Most fast I hang bound;
With a spear all through my side.
To my heart is made a wound.

V: A death

When my eyes get misty,
And my ears are full of hissing,
And my nose gets cold,
And my tongue folds,
And my face goes slack,
And my lips blacken,
And my mouth grins,
And my spittle runs,
And my hair rises,
And my heart trembles,
And my hands shake,
And my feet stiffen -
All too late! all too late!
When the bier is at the gate.

Then I shall pass,
From bed to floor,
From floor to shroud,
From shroud to bier,
From bier to grave.
And the grave will be closed up.
Then rests my house upon my nose.
For the whole world I care not one jot.
After nearly three decades of world-wide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world’s greatest vocal ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance and a diversity of 20th century music is drawn from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers. Over ninety recordings, many prize-winning, reflect The Sixteen’s quality in a range of work spanning the music of six hundred years.

The Sixteen has toured throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the Americas and has given regular performances at major concert halls and festivals worldwide, including the Barbican Centre, Sydney Opera House, and Vienna Musikverein; also the BBC Proms, and the festivals of Salzburg, Granada, Lucerne and Istanbul. The vigour and passion of its performance win new fans wherever it performs.

At home in the UK, the group promotes A Choral Pilgrimage, a tour of our finest cathedrals bringing music back to the buildings for which it was written. The choir is enhanced by the existence of its own period instrument orchestra, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, and through it Harry Christophers brings fresh insights to music including that of Purcell, Monteverdi, JS Bach and Handel. 2004 witnessed the launch of the group’s annual Handel in Oxford Festival, a weekend of concerts and events dedicated to the life of this great composer.