An Immortal Legacy
The complete repertoire from one of The Sixteen’s best-loved concert programmes on CD.

Music of the Kingdom
“Purcell’s Thou knowest, Lord, is an anthem so well known and loved by church choirs that it needs a performance as sublime as this to remind us of its manifest wonders.”

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

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What would composers do without poets and dramatists? More often than not, the better the text the more inspired the composer becomes; and that is the same for singers: they can find more to savour when the text is good. This album is very much the best of ‘poetry in music’ by British composers spanning five centuries. All save two are settings of sacred texts and I have framed the whole programme with four settings of When David heard that Absalom was slain.

The Old Testament story of King David and the death of his son Absalom, is brilliantly encapsulated in the heart-rending beauty of the language of the King James Bible’s Book of Samuel. All four composers represented here, from the Tudor and Stuart eras, convey through their very personal sacred madrigals a harmonic language that is both expressive and thought-provoking and, to help heighten this expression, we have performed each with reduced forces.

16th-century poets, whether metaphysicals, like Donne, or simply great writers of verse, such as Spenser and Herrick, provide most of the sacred texts for composers from the last two centuries. Two superb double-choir compositions by Sir William Harris bookend our programme. We open with Edmund Spenser’s hymn of heavenly beauty *Faire is the heaven* and close with John Donne’s sublime prayer *Bring us, O Lord God* – their sumptuous harmonies and colourful language are a gift for singers.

Some composers forged fruitful partnerships with their literary colleagues and there are no better examples of this than the collaborations between Benjamin Britten and W.H. Auden, and Sir Michael Tippett and the playwright Christopher Fry.

Every work on this album is a gem; many of them will be familiar to you, but there are some which will be a revelation and, I hope, a delight.

Harry
Christopher.
Poetry in Music

William HARRIS (1883-1973)  Faire is the heaven  5.25
Michael TIPPETT (1905-1998)  Dance, clarion air  4.03
Thomas WEELKES (1576-1623)  When David heard  3.37
James MacMILLAN (b.1959)  The Gallant Weaver  5.48
Ivor GURNEY (1890-1937)  Since I believe in God the Father Almighty  5.54
Robert RAMSEY (c.1590-1644)  When David heard  2.37
Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)  Hymn to Saint Cecilia  10.58
Edmund RUBBRA (1901-1986)  There is a spirit  5.35
Michael EAST (c.1580-1648)  When David heard  4.19
Herbert HOWELLS (1892-1983)  Take him, earth, for cherishing  8.18
Robert PEARSSALL (1795-1856)  Lay a garland  3.14
Edmund RUBBRA  Eternitie  2.48
Thomas TOMKINS (1572-1656)  When David heard  4.17
William HARRIS  Bring us, O Lord God  3.50
Total running time  70.51

Songs of departure and farewell are deeply rooted in the great tradition of British choral music, nourished by ancient myths of testing journeys, wayside transformations and homecomings. Many of the works on this album deal with the transition from this life to the next, often seen from the perspective of those left behind or projected as a vision of paradise, a divine state of being. The Christian path, like those of many faiths, offers a way to liberation, not an easy route but a course that can deliver souls from earthly suffering to eternal rest. Its final destination is clearly stated by William Harris in Faire is the heaven and again in his setting of John Donne’s poetic prayer Bring us, O Lord God. The transcendent nature of music and the power of poetry to challenge and alter perceptions of reality – harnessed by English composers over many centuries – flow through a programme that invites contemplation of life and death, of love and loss, creation and eternity.

Sir William Harris was engaged for most of his professional life as an organist, holding posts at Oxford’s New College and Christ Church Cathedral, and also serving St George’s Chapel, Windsor for almost 30 years. Although the conservative character of Harris’s compositions took shape under the strong influence of Stanford and Charles Wood, his double-choir anthem, Faire is the heaven, was recognised soon after its composition in 1925 as a model example of a forward-looking, dramatic approach to anthem writing. In his treatment of lines condensed from Edmund Spenser’s Hymn of Heavenly Beauty, Harris exploits the ‘stereo’ possibilities of two groups of voices. The composer, constantly alive to colourful verbal effects and sonorities, establishes a reflective mood for the work’s introduction. He raises the emotional temperature to describe ‘those eternall burning Seraphins’, injecting fresh energy with a brief passage of counterpoint followed by an
intensification of alternating outbursts from two distinct choirs. The exuberant company of ‘Angels and Archangels, which attend on God’s owne person’ is strikingly evoked by Harris’s creation of a busy dialogue between Choir I and Choir II. Bring us, O Lord God, written in 1959, presents a more tranquil vision of heaven. The anthem’s sonorous harmonies and captivating shifts of texture capture the essence of John Donne’s prayer, tranquil yet fervent. Harris allows the poet’s words to resonate with the listener in the work’s sublime closing ‘Amen’.

The Old Testament story of King David’s turbulent relationship with Absalom, his favourite son, is marked by Homeric episodes of intrigue, deceit and bloody violence. Absalom repaid his father’s love with treachery. He ingratiated himself with the people and, from his power base in Hebron, led a rebellion against the king. David’s cause was aided by his spies and supporters in Absalom’s camp. They sowed doubt in the young pretender’s mind, prompting him to decide not to pursue David in haste and risk defeat but rather to raise a mighty army and destroy the king and his warriors in battle. The tactic provided David with time to strengthen his forces and launch a counter-attack at the wood of Ephraim, before which he instructed his captains to show mercy to his son. Absalom, ensnared in an oak tree, was put to death by the king’s commander Joab and ten of his company.

When news of the battle reached David, he asked the messengers ‘Is the young man Absalom safe?’ The language of the King James Version of 2 Samuel 18:33 projects the pain of the king’s response to his son’s death with words that fly from the page: ‘And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! ’ The verse in slightly modified form proved irresistible to a generation of English composers, yielding over a dozen settings of When David heard that Absalom was slain. Scholars have conjectured that such an extraordinary proliferation of pieces was triggered by the death in 1612 of Henry Frederick Stuart, Prince of Wales and heir to his father’s kingdoms. While little direct evidence supports their theory, we know that contemporary authors often described James I as David and that a few, one of the king’s counsellors among them, associated his precocious eldest son with Absalom. Prince Henry was certainly critical of his austere father’s reign and, for a time before his premature death, displayed impressive leadership skills. The many poems and mourning songs written in Henry’s memory, including works by Sir Walter Ralegh, John Donne and Thomas Campion, contain more favourable biblical references to the prince, comparing him, for example, to Abner, the mighty cousin of Saul and eventual ally of David. And yet it is possible that 2 Samuel 18:33, with its unequivocal expression of grief, offered composers a strong rhetorical device to carry their reflections on Henry’s death.

By the beginning of the 17th century, paraphrases of biblical texts and even lines from the Bible had found their way into collections of madrigal verse. Thomas Weelkes stands among the best madrigal composers of the late Tudor and early Stuart age. Although the manuscript containing his setting of When David heard suggests that the piece is a full anthem, conceived for church use, its musical style and expressive language share much in common with that of his finest madrigals. The austerity of Weelkes’ part-writing, slow and simple in essence, creates the conditions for the work’s lachrymose flow of harmonic suspensions and eloquent silences to hold the listener’s full attention. Michael East’s
setting of When David heard was among the first to appear in print, published in 1618 in his Fourth Set of Bookes of anthems, madrigals and “songs of other kinds”. East, a Londoner, was appointed master of the choristers at Lichfield Cathedral shortly before his work’s publication. Although he remained at Lichfield until his death 30 years later, his extensive published works were widely circulated throughout England. It is possible that East modelled his sacred madrigal When David heard on Weelkes’ setting, echoing its harmonic language and heightened expression.

Thomas Tomkins, organist at Worcester Cathedral and a member of the Chapel Royal during the reign of James I, is best known today for his exquisite treatment of When David heard. The work was published in 1622 in the composer’s Songs of 3, 4, 5. & 6. Parts, an anthology dedicated by Tomkins to “my ancient, & much reverenced Master [or teacher], William Byrd”. When David heard, like Weelkes’ setting of the same text, belongs to the genre of sacred songs. Its spiritual value lies in the depth of the composer’s compassionate engagement with a father’s grief for his lost son, inviting listeners to contemplate the nature of earthly suffering and the Christian promise of eternal salvation. Robert Ramsey’s setting, shorter and less ornate than Tomkins’, reflects his knowledge of the latest Italian developments in expressive vocal writing, not least in its telling use of repetition and lucid part-writing for six voices. The composer also created a set of four Dialogues of Sorrow upon the Death of the Late Prince Henrie, preserved in a manuscript of 1615. Perhaps Ramsey’s When David heard was likewise conceived as a song of mourning for the prince.

Personal tragedy and public shock stand behind Herbert Howells’ Take him, earth, for cherishing. The piece, completed in London in June 1964, conflates the despair surrounding President John F. Kennedy’s assassination with its composer’s abiding grief at the loss of his young son to polio almost 30 years earlier. Howells chose Helen Waddell’s elegant translation of an ancient Latin verse by Prudentius, the original of which he had used as a study for his Hymnus Paradisi, an earlier work informed by the composer’s grief for his son. The work and its text, as the Precentor of Coventry Cathedral observed in a letter to Howells, “seems to me to hold out the promise, the intimation anyhow, of a realm where the bitterest tears will be assuaged”.

Benjamin Britten’s Hymn to Saint Cecilia was completed in 1942 on board the Swedish cargo ship Axel Johnson, as the composer returned to wartime England following a long stay in the United States. Customs officials in New York had confiscated the work’s original draft, concerned that it might carry encoded details of merchant shipping traffic across the Atlantic. Britten successfully reconstructed his work from memory on the slow journey home. The Hymn sets three linked poems by Britten’s friend W.H. Auden, with whom he had collaborated many times. The composer, whose birthday fell on 13 November, St Cecilia’s Day, reflects the pure, almost spiritual nature of the text, reserving his most beautiful music for the recurrent refrain ‘Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions / To all musicians, appear and inspire’, and the heartfelt gentleness of ‘O dear white children casual as birds’, a beautiful counterblast to the third poem’s theme of lost innocence. Elsewhere, Britten calls on the singers to imitate the sounds of instruments, including violin, flute, timpani and trumpet, before concluding with a serene final statement of the work’s refrain.

Edmund Rubbra, the son of a poor working-class family, was encouraged
to study music by his parents. He gained a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music, where his composition teachers included Gustav Holst and Vaughan Williams. Music for Rubbra possessed mystical qualities. The composer reflected on the spiritual dimensions of his art and character in a lecture delivered in 1953: "I'm old-fashioned enough to believe that the highest function of music is to release one from personal pre-occupation in order to know something of the Divine forces that shape all existence. To have this the composer must have a faith that man is NOT the end of all things, that man is NOT unaided, the sole arbiter of his destiny, that he is an instrument, even if a weak one, of a purpose that, even if beyond our understanding, is immovably present at each point in time".

Rubbra's faith embraced Eastern as well as Christian thought, the latter informed not least by his conversion to Catholicism in 1948; above all, it grew out of a mystical relationship to something other than ego, the insubstantial small self at odds with the apparently innate human desire to connect with God or discover the path of salvation. *There is a spirit*, one of three motets published in the year before the aforementioned lecture, conveys the composer's reverence for the invisible divine. The work's chant-like chordal writing for choir and plangent soprano solo draw their texts from two sources: the radical words of the Beatitudes, as recorded in St Matthew's Gospel, and the deathbed testimony of James Nayler (1616-60), an English Quaker condemned by the Second Protectorate Parliament to be tortured and imprisoned for blasphemy. *Eternitie*, the first of Rubbra's Five Motets Op.37 of 1934, offers an intense setting of Robert Herrick's meditation on the fleeting nature of life and the prospect of the eternal day beyond death. The composer instils his setting of the word 'farewell' with faith-filled optimism, repeating it as a refrain throughout and crowning the short piece with a final uplifting statement for three solo voices.

Faith in God and faith in the human spirit provide the secure foundations for James MacMillan's art. The Scottish composer's feeling for the landscape and culture of his homeland likewise informs his musical language, directly so in his haunting setting of *The Gallant Weaver*. MacMillan married Robert Burns' love lyric to an original melody that echoes gestures of traditional Scots folksong without slipping into pastiche or subjecting its tender heart to sentimentality. The work was written for, and first performed by, Paisley Abbey Choir and George McPhee in 1997.

Percy Scholes, in his *Oxford Companion to Music*, notes that it would be impossible to provide a complete list of part-song composers, "for during the 19th century it was as inevitable that every English organist should write a few part-songs as that he should write a few anthems". The market for part-songs was fuelled during the 1800s by efficient new methods of printing and a massive appetite among the middle classes for material to sing at social gatherings and choral concerts. Robert Lucas Pearsall, born in 1795, created many fine part-songs for the Bristol Madrigal Society. He took composition lessons after moving to Mainz in the 1820s and devoted much effort to the revival of the English madrigal style of the late 16th century. Pearsall also bought a ruined castle overlooking Lake Constance and wrote sacred vocal works for the nearby monastery of St Gall. *Lay a garland*, written in 1840 and scored for the sumptuous combination of two sopranos, two altos, two tenors and two basses, marries its composer's understanding of Renaissance choral music with a Romantic feeling for
grandeur. The work sets a song from Beaumont and Fletcher’s play *The Maid’s Tragedy*, adapted by Pearsall from its original first-person to a third-person point of view.

Christopher Fry wrote *Dance, clarion air* as one of two poems for Michael Tippett to consider setting for his contribution to *A Garland for the Queen*, an ambitious choral project conceived to mark Elizabeth II’s coronation in 1953. Tippett and the future playwright Fry met in 1929 and became close friends during their time as teachers at Hazelwood Preparatory School in Surrey. In keeping with the spirit of *A Garland for the Queen*, a fresh counterpart to *The Triumphs of Oriana* from the first Elizabethan age, Tippett evokes the tuneful confidence, rhythmic energy and contrapuntal ingenuity of the late Tudor madrigal in his sonorous setting of *Dance, clarion air*.

Although the composer-poet Ivor Gurney’s creativity was deeply scarred by his experience as a frontline soldier in Flanders during the First World War, it survived and briefly flourished following his recovery from shellshock. The last 15 years of Ivor Gurney’s life, however, already blighted by psychotic illness, were made more difficult by the decision to transfer him from Barnwood Mental Hospital in his beloved Gloucester to the City of London Mental Hospital in Dartford. It was here that he wrote his setting of Robert Bridges’ *Since I believe in God the Father Almighty*, completed in July 1925. Gurney’s extraordinary composition for double choir, recently unearthed by Philip Lancaster, makes considerable technical demands on its performers as they reveal the work’s vision of the creative artist’s ‘loving service’ to his unseen and unknowable God.

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**TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS**

[William HARRIS (1883-1973)] *Faire is the heaven*

>Faire is the heav’n, where happy soules have place  
In full enjoyment of felicitie,  
Whence they doe still behold the glorious face  
Of the Divine, Eternall Majestie;  
Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins,  
Which all with golden wings are overdiight.  
And those eternall burning Seraphins,  
Which from their faces dart out fiery light;  
Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright,  
Be th’ Angels and Archangels,  
which attend on God’s owne person, without rest or end.  
These then in faire each other farre excelling,  
As to the Highest they approach more neare,  
Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling,  
Fairer than all the rest which there appear,  
Though all their beauties joyn’d together were;  
How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse  
The image of such endless perfectnesse?*

Edmund Spenser (1552-99)
Michael TIPPETT (1905-1998)  
*Dance, clarion air*

Semi-chorus  
*Soprano:* Ruth Provost, Kirsty Hopkins  
*Alto:* David Clegg  
*Tenor:* Jeremy Budd  
*Bass:* Ben Davies

Dance, clarion air,  
Shine, stones on the shore,  
Swept in music by the ocean,  
Shine, till all this island is a crown.  
This island, and these realms and territor'ies  
Rememb'ring all that human is,  
Sound with love and honour for a Queen.  
O morning light enfold a morning throne.

Christopher Fry (1907-2005) from *A Garland for the Queen*

Thomas WEELKES (1576-1623)  
*When David heard*

*Soprano:* Julie Cooper, Ruth Provost, Emilia Morton, Grace Davidson  
*Alto:* Edward McMullan, David Clegg, Ian Aitkenhead, Kim Porter  
*Tenor:* Mark Dobell, Jeremy Budd  
*Bass:* Ben Davies, Alex Ashworth

When David heard that Absalom was slain,  
he went up to his chamber over the gate and wept;  
and thus he said:  
O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom,  
would God I had died for thee!  
O Absalom, Absalom, my son, O my son.

2 Samuel 18:33

James MacMILLAN (b.1959)  
*The Gallant Weaver*

*Where Cart rins rowin' to the sea,*  
*By mony a flow'r and spreading tree,*  
*There lives a lad, the lad for me,*  
*He is the gallant Weaver.*  
*I love my gallant Weaver.*

Oh I had wooers aught or nine,  
They gied me rings and ribbons fine,  
And I was feared my heart would tine,  
And I gied it to the Weaver.  
*I love my gallant Weaver.*

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band  
To gie the lad that has the land,  
But to my heart I'll add my hand,  
And give it to the Weaver.  
*I love my gallant Weaver.*

While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;  
While bees delight in op'ning flowers;  
While corn grows green in simmer showers,  
I love my gallant Weaver.

Robert Burns (1759-96)
Ivor GURNEY (1890-1937) Since I believe in God the Father Almighty

Since I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Man’s maker and Judge,
Ovruler of Fortune,
’Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him praise,
Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
Nor unto Him in suffering 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 heavenly 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,
In hours of anguish and darkness.
Confiding always on His excellent greatness.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Robert RAMSEY (1576-1623) When David heard

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept,
and as he went thus he said:
O my son, Absalom, Absalom, would to God I had died for thee!
O Absalom, my son, my son.

2 Samuel 18:33

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976) Hymn to Saint Cecilia

I

In a garden shady this holy lady
With rev’rent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Pour’d forth her song in perfect calm:

And by ocean’s margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer.
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thunder’d out on the Roman air.

Soprano: Grace Davidson, Emilia Morton, Sally Dunkley, Kirsty Hopkins
Alto: Edward McMullan, David Clegg
Tenor: Mark Dobell, Joshua Cooter
Bass: Tim Jones, Ben Davies, Alex Ashworth, Stuart Young
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.
O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.
O dear white children casual as birds, playing so small so gay.
O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.
O law drumm’d out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.
That what has been may never be again.
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.
O bless the freedom that you never chose.
O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.
O wear your tribulation like a rose.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

II
I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play,
I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.
I am defeat
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.
All you liv’d through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.
I shall never be
Diff’rent. Love me.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

III
O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where hope within the altogether strange
From ev’ry outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.
O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
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O wear your tribulation like a rose.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

W. H. Auden (1907-73)
Edmund RUBBRA (1901-1986)  There is a spirit

Soloist: Julie Cooper soprano

SOLO SOPRANO

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil,
not to revenge any wrong,
but delights to endure all things,
in hope to enjoy its own in the end.

Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention
and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty.
It sees to the end of all temptations.
If it be betrayed it bears it,
for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God.

Its crown is meekness,
its life is everlasting love unfeigned;
it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention
and keeps it by lowliness of mind.
In God alone it can rejoice.

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

MAIN CHOIR

Blessed are the poor in spirit:
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn:
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek:
For they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
For they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful:
For they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart:
For they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers:
For they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake:
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you,
and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
Thou wast with me when I fled from the face of mine enemies:
then didst Thou warn me in the night:
Thou carriedst me in Thy power into the hiding place Thou hadst prepared for me;
there Thou coverdst me with Thy Hand,
that in time Thou mightst bring me forth a rock before all the world.
When I was weak Thou stayedst me with Thy Hand,
that in Thy time Thou mightst present me to the world in Thy strength,
in which I stand and cannot be moved.

Adapted by the composer from James Nayler (1616-60)
and the Gospel of St Matthew 3-11
Michael EAST (1580-1648) When David heard

When David heard that Absalom was slain, he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept, and thus he said:

O my son, Absalom, Absalom, would God I had died for thee.

O Absalom, O my son.

2 Samuel 18:33

Herbert HOWELLS (1892-1983) Take him, earth, for cherishing

Take him, earth, for cherishing,
To thy tender breast receive him.
Body of a man I bring thee,
Noble even in its ruin.

Once was this a spirit's dwelling
By the breath of God created.
High the heart that here was beating.
Christ the prince of all its living.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee,
Not unmindful of His creature
Shall He ask it: He who made it
Symbol of His mystery.

Take him, earth, for cherishing.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men.
Then must thou, in very fashion,
What I give, return again.

Not though ancient time decaying
Wear away these bones to sand,
Ashes that a man might measure
In the hollow of his hand:

Not though wandering winds and idle,
Drifting through the empty sky,
Scatter dust was nerve and sinew,
Is it given to man to die.

Once again the shining road
Leads to ample Paradise;
Open are the woods again
That the serpent lost for men.

Take him, earth for cherishing.
Body of a man I bring.

Guard him well, the dead I give thee,
Not unmindful of His creature
Shall He ask it: He who made it
Symbol of His mystery.

Take him, earth, for cherishing.

Comes the hour God hath appointed
To fulfil the hope of men.
Then must thou, in very fashion,
What I give, return again.

Robert PEARSCALL (1795-1856) Lay a garland

Lay a garland on her hearse
Of dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches wear,
Say she died true. Her love was false, but she was firm.

Upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

Lay a garland on her hearse
Of dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches wear,
Say she died true. Her love was false, but she was firm.

Upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

Prudentius (348-413)

from Hymnus circa Exsequias Defuncti.
Translated by Helen Waddell (1889-1965)
**Edmund RUBBRA  Eternitie**

O yeares! and Age! Farewell: And these mine eyes shall see
Behold I go, All times, how they
Where I do know Are lost in the sea
Infinitie to dwell. (Farewell.) Of vast Eternitie. (O yeares! and Age! Farewell.)

Where never Moone shall sway
The Starres; but she,
And Night, shall be
Drown’d in one endless Day. (Farewell.)

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

**Thomas TOMKINS (1572-1656)  When David heard**

_Soprano:_ Grace Davidson, Kirsty Hopkins
_Alto:_ Edward McMullan, David Clegg, Ian Aitkenhead, Kim Porter
_Tenor:_ Joshua Cooter, George Pooley
_Bass:_ Tim Jones, Stuart Young

When David heard that Absalom was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept;
and thus he said:
O my son, my son, Absalom
O Absalom my son,
would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom my son.

2 Samuel 18:33

**William HARRIS  Bring us, O Lord God**

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heav’n,
to enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling,
but one equal light;
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity,
in the habitation of thy glory and dominion,
world without end.

Amen.

John Donne (1572-1631)

**The Sixteen**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
<th>Julie Cooper</th>
<th>Ian Aitkenhead</th>
<th>Jeremy Budd</th>
<th>Alex Ashworth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace Davidson</td>
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<td>David Clegg</td>
<td>Joshua Cooter</td>
<td>Ben Davies</td>
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<td>Sally Dunkley</td>
<td>Edward McMullan</td>
<td>Mark Dobell</td>
<td>George Pooley</td>
<td>Tim Jones</td>
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<td>Kirsty Hopkins</td>
<td>Kim Porter</td>
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<td>Stuart Young</td>
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<td>Charlotte Mobbs*</td>
<td>Emilia Morton</td>
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<td>Ruth Provost*</td>
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* tracks 4–7 and 12–14

2 Samuel 18:33
After three decades of worldwide performance and recording, The Sixteen is recognised as one of the world's greatest ensembles. Its special reputation for performing early English polyphony, masterpieces of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods, and a diversity of 20th- and 21st-century music, all stem from the passions of conductor and founder, Harry Christophers.

The Sixteen tours internationally giving regular performances at the major concert halls and festivals. At home in the UK, The Sixteen are ‘The Voices of Classic FM’ as well as Associate Artists of The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. The group also promotes The Choral Pilgrimage, an annual tour of the UK's finest cathedrals.

The Sixteen's period-instrument orchestra has taken part in acclaimed semi-staged performances of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv and London, a fully staged production of Purcell's *King Arthur* in Lisbon's Belém Centre, and new productions of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* at Lisbon Opera House and *The Coronation of Poppea* at English National Opera.

Over 130 recordings reflect The Sixteen's quality in a range of work spanning the music of 500 years. In 2009 the group won the coveted Classic FM Gramophone Artist of the Year Award and the Baroque Vocal Award for Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

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In 2011 the group launched a new training programme for young singers, called Genesis Sixteen. Aimed at 18 to 23 year-olds, this is the UK's first fully funded choral programme for young singers designed specifically to bridge the gap from student to professional practitioner.