

Joanna Marsh

Sanctifica Nos

Works for Choir,
Organ & Viol Consort

The Choir of Sidney Sussex
College, Cambridge
Fretwork
Martin Baker *organ*
David Skinner *director*



Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)

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Martin Baker *organ*

Andrew Arthur *conductor* Track 9

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About The Choir of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge:

'They sing with as much sensitivity and soul as many more famous rivals'
Gramophone

About Joanna Marsh:

'Joanna Marsh's 2010 St Paul's Service [...] imaginatively pulls the harmonic idioms of 16th-century choral music into attractive new polyphony'
The Observer

Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)

1. **Martha and Mary** [8:05]

Missa Brevis: Christina of Markyate

2. Kyrie [2:22]

3. Gloria [4:20]

4. Sanctus [1:41]

5. Benedictus [1:42]

6. Angus Dei [1:55]

Evening Canticles (St Paul's Service)

7. Magnificat [5:43]

8. Nunc Dimittis [3:30]

9. **Ottomania** [7:45]

10. **Thou has searched me and known me** [3:32]

11. **Sanctifica nos** [6:35]

12. **Mensch, willst du leben seliglich** [2:29]

13. **Evergreen** [4:48]

14. **O magnum mysterium** [4:03]

Total playing time [58:37]



**Joanna Marsh: Works for Choir,
Organ & Viol Consort**

Martha and Mary
SSAATB with viol consort

The anthem Martha and Mary was commissioned to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the admission of women to Sidney Sussex College. This particular biblical story is usually interpreted as an example of Christ's affirming the place of women as disciples and teachers. In her composition, Joanna reaches into the Tudor era to find a musical vocabulary that points towards the origins of the college. It opens with a direct quotation from the composer William Byrd, *Why do I use my paper, ink and pen?* It is likely that Byrd would have been known personally by the foundress, Lady Frances Sidney of Sussex.

Missa Brevis: Christina of Markyate
(Nov 2014)
SATB unaccompanied

This Missa Brevis was commissioned by the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban for performance by the cathedral choir during the year of the 900th anniversary of the consecration of the Norman Abbey Church.

Christina of Markyate was a twelfth-century

recluse who became prioress of Markyate, near St Albans in Hertfordshire. Determined to devote her life to God and to remain a virgin, Christina repulsed the sexual advances of the bishop of Durham. In revenge he arranged her betrothal to a young nobleman but Christina steadfastly defied her parents and refused to consummate the marriage. Sustained by visions, she found refuge with the hermit Roger, and lived concealed at Markyate for four years, enduring terrible physical and emotional torment until it was safe to live openly again.

In this setting of the Missa Brevis, the text of each movement is linked to a period in Christina's life.

The Kyrie reflects on Christina's early spiritual awakening at St Alban's Abbey which she visited as a teenager. Inspired by the lives of the monks she saw there, she made a private vow of chastity.

After a terrible series of persecutions by her family, Christina eventually fled her home and went into hiding at Roger's hermitage. There she endured intense physical discomfort, was plagued by physical ailments and had vivid and often very frightening visions. The music of the Gloria depicts this period.

The music of the Sanctus reflects Christina's

determination and resolve (echoing that of earlier in her life; the Kyrie) and the Benedictus the hard times that befell her family which lead to them eventually begging her forgiveness. At this resolution she was able to come out of hiding, to get her marriage formally annulled and to determine her next path (Osanna).

The visions that came to Christina; ecstatic, consolatory, and prophetic are the subject of the Agnus Dei. Her ecstatic visions were characterized by experiencing a strong feeling of passion or by the mere presence of God, who was often imageless. Her consolatory visions were dreams of promises of divine help and her prophetic visions were a way of her seeing into the future.

St Paul's Service SSA with viol consort

The St Paul's Service was commissioned by Lucy Winkett for Aurora Nova on the occasion of her final day at St' Paul's Cathedral after over twelve years as both Chaplain and Canon Precentor.

The first performance was during Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday 1 August 2010, sung by Aurora Nova, directed by Patrick Craig with James McVinnie (organ).

The canticles are inspired by the church music of William Byrd and Thomas Weelkes. Echoes of their figurations and extensions of their harmonic idioms are found throughout both the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. This arrangement for viols was created for the choir of Sidney Sussex and the viol consort Fretwork for their tour of Dubai in 2012.

Sanctifica Nos SATB with organ

Written to commemorate the foundation of Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, the anthem *Sanctifica Nos* is a setting of words from Philip Sidney's poetic realisation of the Psalm 145. The passage is an interpretation of verses 14–15, which in their Latin translation, Oculi Omnium ad te spectant, Domine are also found within the Sidney Sussex College Grace. The piece was written so that the College Grace could be removed from the setting and sung as an independent unaccompanied work.

Thou hast searched SSAATBB unaccompanied

One of Joanna's most performed works, *Thou hast searched* was originally written to be performed by the choir of Peterborough Cathedral at the memorial service of Joanna's mother Barbara Marsh

who died in 2013. The piece revolves around a repetitive cadential sequence with a low root that evaporates away into ethereal upper registers; thick textures quickly reducing to thin ones. These thin textures are frequently left hanging in the air and unresolved.

Evergreen SSATBB unaccompanied

The text of *Evergreen* has a bittersweet character. It refers to Christ's birth and also like many carols, to his death. These references are framed by the cyclical tale of a tree that is cut down, displayed, and then put away until the following Christmas.

Evergreen takes familiar 'carol-type' elements; a rhythmic lilt, short upper voice sections contrasting with the full choral sound, and sews them into pattern of harmonic movement that drops away downwards just a little further than expected. The result is a kind of 'pulling at the tonality', as if widening it very slightly before it snaps back together jubilantly at the chorus sections of the piece.

Mensch, willst du leben seliglich Organ solo

Commissioned by the Orgelbuchlein Project

and sponsored by the Royal College of Organists the first performance was given at on 29 November 2017 at Westminster Cathedral by Martin Baker. The brief was to create a chorale prelude on one of the remaining chorales left un-set by J.S. Bach. This is a short movement takes on the chorale with a bold and pithy energy.

Ottomania Organ and viol consort

Written for a single manual instrument, the piece was originally inspired by the tale of the Thomas Dallam organ that was given by Queen Elizabeth I to the Ottoman Sultan Mohammed III. The work musically resembles a quasi-rondo. It has a kind of centrifugal force: a circling repetitive device on the organ which is accompanied by slower moving chords in the viols. The music shoots off into other directions before being repeatedly pulled back again to this original central idea.

O Magnum Mysterium Viol consort

Although originally commission for choir, the work was written for Westminster Cathedral choir and premiered at Cadogan Hall 3 December 2019, this reworking for instrumental ensemble was

already in the composer's mind at the time of composition. The piece combines major and minor tonalities with flowing lines and a nod to the idiomatic writing of the sixteenth century.



Texts & translations

1. Martha and Mary

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

Luke 10: 38-42; New Revised Standard Version

Missa Brevis: Christina of Markyate

2. Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

*Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.*

3. **Gloria** in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, rex caelestis, Deus pater omnipotens. Domine fili unigenite, Iesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, filius patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi,

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world,

miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes
ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Iesu Christe. Cum sancto
spiritu, in gloria Dei patris. Amen.

4. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

5. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

6. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Evening Canticles (St Paul's Service)

7. Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit
hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his
handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth: all generations
shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me:

*have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away
the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou
that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,
have mercy upon us. For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with
the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of
God the Father. Amen.*

*Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the
world, grant us peace.*

and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him:
throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm:
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his
servant Israel: as he promised to our
forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and
to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be, world without end. Amen.

8. Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in
peace: according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared: before the face
of all people; To be a light to lighten the
Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people
Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and
to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be: world without end. Amen.

10. Thou has searched me and known me
O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known
me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine
uprising, thou understandest my thought
afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down,
and art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue,
but, Lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before,
and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high, I cannot attain to it.

Psalm 139: 1-6; King James Version

11. Sanctifica nos

Thou dost the faint from falling stay,
Nay, more, the fall'n again does raise.

Sanctifica nos. [*Sanctify us.*]

On these their looks all creatures lay,
Whose hunger in due time allays

Thy hand, which when thy will displays,
Then all that on the air do feed,

Receive besides what food they need.

Sanctifica nos. [*Sanctify us.*]

Oculi omnium ad te spectant, Domine;
tu das eis escam eorum in tempore opportuno.
Aperis tu manum tuam,
et imple omne animal benedictione tua.
Sanctifica nos, quaesumus,
per verbum et orationem;
Istisque tuis donis,
quae de tua bonitate sumus percepturi,
benedicito.

The eyes of all, Oh Lord, look toward thee
though givest in due season.
Thou openest thine hand and fullest every
living thing with thy blessing.

Per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen. *Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Text is a combination of Sir Philip Sidney's
translation of Psalm 145: 43-49, and the
Sidney Sussex College Latin Grace.*

13. Evergreen
Evergreen have its branches been,
It is king of all the woodland scene;
For Christ our King is born today!
His reign shall never pass away.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis!

Once the pride of the mountainside,
Now cut down to grace our Christmastide;
For Christ from heav'n to earth came down,
To gain, thro' death, a nobler crown.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis!

*The eyes of all look toward thee, O Lord;
thou givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest thine hand
and fillest every living thing with thy blessing.
Sanctify us, we beseech thee,
through word and prayer;
and give thy blessing
to these thy gifts, which of thy bounty we
are about to receive.*

Every bough bears a burden now,—
They are gifts of love for us, we trow;
For Christ is born, His love to show,
And give good gifts to men below.
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis!

Twelve months o'er, we shall meet once more,
Merry welcome singing, as of yore:
For Christ now reigns, our Saviour dear,
And gives us Christmas every year!
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in excelsis!

*Text adapted from Gather around the
Christmas Tree by Rev. John H. Hopkins,
Jr. (1820–1891)*

Joanna Marsh (composer)

Described in *The Guardian* as ‘one of today’s leading composers for the voice’, Joanna Marsh is a British composer who, since 2007 has divided her time between Dubai and the UK.

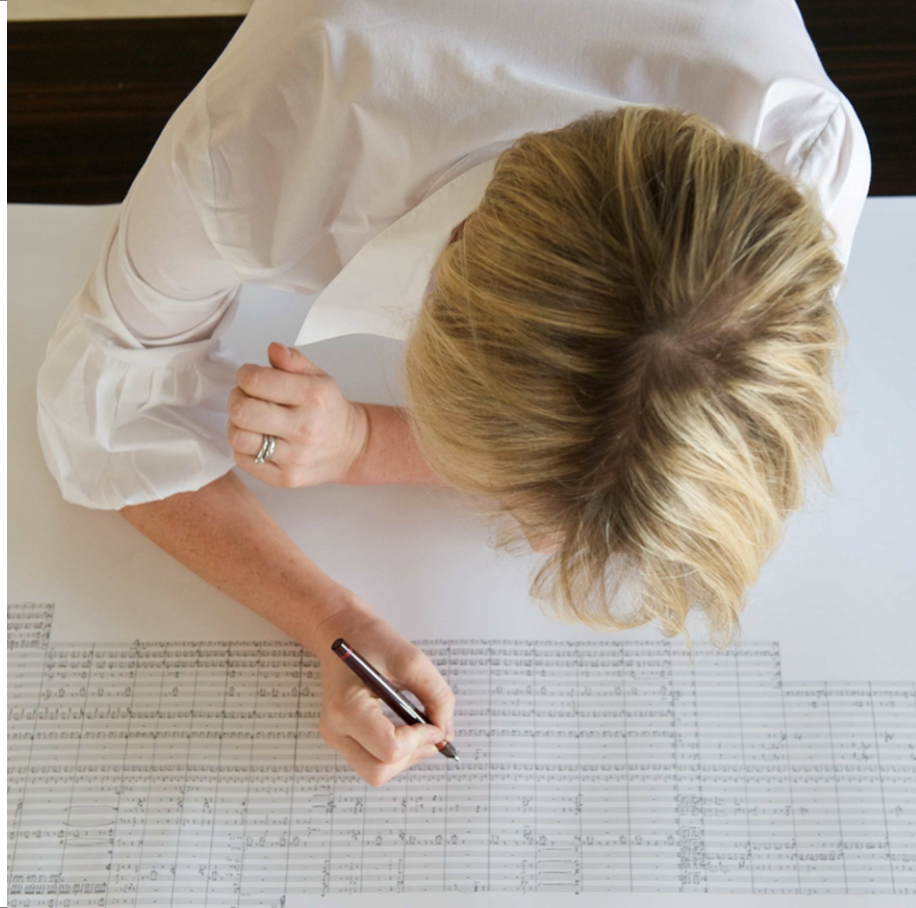
Her life in the Middle East has led to many unique musical opportunities including writing an orchestral work to celebrate the building of the Burj Khalifa, a commission for the BBC Symphony Orchestra for the BBC Proms in Dubai, and a fanfare for the Queen’s visit to Abu Dhabi. Her first opera was also inspired by Dubai life: ‘My Beautiful Camel’, collaborating on this with librettist David Pountney.

The inspiration for Joanna’s compositions often comes from the past. She has a strong interest in Tudor and Elizabethan choral music which is reflected in some of her choral output, for example her Evening for St Paul’s Cathedral’s women’s choir *Aurora Nova*, and *Martha and Mary*, written for the choir of Sidney Sussex College Cambridge. She also enjoys looking at contemporary subjects from an ironic historical perspective.

Joanna has been Composer in Residence, at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge from 2015

through to 2020 and during that time has written a number of choral works for the college choir and the college organ. She is a Co-Founder of ChoirFest Middle East in Dubai, an annual celebration of the region’s choral music scene which is reached its eighth edition in March 2020. She is also Founder and Artistic Director of the Dubai Opera Festival Chorus a large body of singers that was set up for the BBC Proms in Dubai and continues to undertake concert performances of various types across the UAE.

Joanna was an undergraduate at the Royal Academy of Music in London and following this organ scholar at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge. She studied composition with Richard Blackford and Judith Bingham.



David Skinner (director)

David Skinner divides his time equally as a scholar and choral director. An engaging presenter he has worked extensively for BBC radio, appearing in and writing a variety of shows on Radio 3 and 4. He acted as music advisor for the Music and Monarchy series on BBC 2 with David Starkey, and was Music Consultant for the BBC4 documentary Evensong with Lucy Worsley. He has published widely on music and musicians of early Tudor England, and his latest publications include an historical introduction for a facsimile publication of Royal College of Music, MS 1070 — The Anne Boleyn Music Book — as well as a collected edition of Tallis's Latin church music for Early English Church Music (Stainer & Bell).

David is Fellow and Osborn Director of Music at Sidney Sussex College in the University of Cambridge where he teaches historical and practical topics from the medieval and renaissance periods. He directs the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, with whom he has toured and made highly acclaimed recordings, and is frequently invited to lecture, lead workshops and coach choirs throughout Europe and the USA.

Fretwork

This year, Fretwork celebrates 35 years of performing music old and new, and they look forward to a challenging and exciting future as the world's leading consort of viols. Fretwork have expanded their repertory to include music from over 500 years, from the first printed consort music in Venice in 1501 to music written this year. And, in between, everything that can be played on a consort of viols – Byrd and Schubert, Purcell and Shostakovitch, Gibbons and Britten, Dowland and Grieg.

This great musical adventure has taken them all over the globe, from Russia to Japan to North America to Australia. Audiences have responded enthusiastically to the extraordinary sound world that Fretwork create and to the consistently high standards that they achieve. The future sees many exciting projects based on the thrilling juxtaposition of old and new; making the experience of old music new and bringing the sensibilities of past ages to bear on contemporary music.

The Choir of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge

Sidney Sussex College rose from the ruins of the Cambridge Greyfriars in 1596 and has long been a nest for professional musicians.

Indeed, the large chapel that stood on this site in pre-Reformation times was the regular venue for University ceremonies and was where a number of early English composers took their degrees, including Robert Fayrfax (MusB, 1501; DMus 1504) and Christopher Tye (MusB, 1536). Later, the great Elizabethan composer William Byrd would have been well-known to the foundress, Lady Frances Sidney, and two very fine elegies by Byrd survive for her nephew, the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney. It is thought that a dedicated chapel choir must have existed in some form since the foundation of the College on St Valentine's Day 1596. Since the admission of women to the college in 1976, the Choir of Sidney Sussex has blossomed into one of the most esteemed choral groups in Oxbridge. In 2009, the American composer Eric Whitacre was appointed as Sidney Sussex's first Composer in Residence; in 2015, that mantle was assumed by British composer and Choir alumna Joanna Marsh. Aside from the abundant contribution the Choir makes to the musical life of the College, Sidney is home to a wealth of musical ensembles and choral groups, and Fellows with both academic and practical expertise. The College boasts an active Music Society which organises weekly chamber recitals with guest appearances. Small-scale operas and musicals are often staged in the Master's Garden in

Easter Term. Currently resident in the College are Dr Christopher Page (1991), founder and former director of the multi-award-winning Gothic Voices, and Dr David Skinner (2006).

Andrew Arthur (conductor)

Andrew Arthur enjoys a busy and varied freelance career that has seen him perform extensively throughout the United Kingdom and on tour across Europe, South Africa, Canada and the USA. Best-known for his work in the field of historically informed performance, he is in great demand as a director, soloist, accompanist and continuo player, working with many of the UK's leading period-instrument orchestras and professional choirs. Andrew is Musical Director of his own period-instrument ensemble and vocal consort, Orpheus Britannicus, with whom he records for Resonus Classics; in 2019, the ensemble was nominated for an International Classical Music Award. Alongside his performing activities, Andrew is Fellow, Director of Music and Director of Studies in Music at Trinity Hall, Cambridge where, in addition to his College responsibilities, he works throughout the academic year training the Organ Scholars and conducting the Chapel Choir at Trinity Hall.

Martin Baker (organist)

As an organist, Martin Baker is much in demand all over the world. Performing regularly in the UK and abroad, he has recently given concerts in France, Holland, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Austria, the USA, and Russia. In July 2017 he was elected President of the Royal College of Organists in the UK for a two-year term. The winner of the St Albans Improvisation competition in 1997, improvisation features regularly in his recital programs.

Born in Manchester in 1967, Martin Baker studied at the Royal Northern College of Music Junior School, Chetham's School of Music and Downing College, Cambridge.

Baker is regarded as one of Britain's finest choral conductors and organists having held distinguished posts at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in London.

The Choir of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge

Organ Scholars

Jim Cooper (Track 11)
Hugh Rowlands (Track 13)

Sopranos

Cosima Ballance
Alice Chilcott
Sofia Clini
Saskia Frisby
Emma Grainger
Isla Stevens
Rachel Haworth
Alexandra LaGuardia
Caroline Woods

Altos

Charlotte Bailey
Hannah Bostock
Octavia Henderson-Cleland
Annika Maus
Miriam Yeo

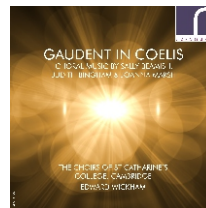
Tenors

Jacob Henstridge
Ryan Nevill
Wilf Jones
Jack Yates

Basses

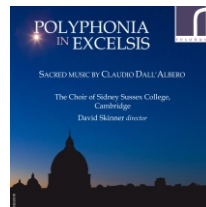
Tim Fairbairn
Mark Thornton
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