



# BRISTOL BACH CHOIR

## NOW COMES BEAUTY

### CD Notes with Texts & Translations

#### 1. **IF YE LOVE ME - Thomas Tallis (c.1505-1585)**

A verse from a memorial tablet to Thomas Tallis, formerly in the church of St Alfege in Greenwich, reads as follows:

He serv'd long tyme in chappel with grete prayse  
Fower sovereyngnes reygnes (a thing not often seen);  
I meane Kyng Henry and Prynce Edward's dayes,  
Quene Mary, and Elizabeth oure Quene.

The second of the four sovereigns served by Tallis - 'Prynce Edward' - was Edward VI, who came to the throne at the age of nine in 1547 and reigned until his early death in 1553. The Regency Council, who effectively ran the country, put in place decrees stating that all church music should conform to strict Protestant ideals: in English, and syllabic (all parts having the same rhythms and words) so that the words could be clearly heard. Tallis's response to this was music such as *If ye love me*. It's not completely syllabic - after the first line each new section of the text is treated in imitation - but the words should be clear to the listener. The Protestant aesthetic is also shown by the simple and dignified harmonies and the open 4-part texture.

Tallis sets Christ's words from St John chapter 14, part of the gospel for Whit Sunday.

Note that the music is in ABB form - the last section from *that he.....*being repeated.

*If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may bide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth.*

#### 2. **CRUCIFIXUS A 8 - Antonio Lotti (c.1667-1740)**

In the catalogue of the Dresden university library music department is a card for the manuscript of a setting of the Credo by Lotti, which helpfully is marked with a note: 'Contains the famous 8-voice *Crucifixus*'. The setting would probably have been written during Lotti's short time as a composer at the Dresden court, between 1717 and 1719. We know from the library card that there were only four separate vocal part-books, so for this 8-voice movement the singers would have had to share.

The opening of the piece is quite extraordinary. The voices are introduced in turn from lowest to highest, each one driving the harmony forward with a new dissonance or resolution. The whole setting reaches an anguished climax on the word *passus* (suffered), before concluding gently at the grave.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato; passus et sepultus est.

*He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; suffered and was buried.*

#### 3. **LAUDA JERUSALEM - Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)**

This setting of the psalm *Lauda Jerusalem* is taken from Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610, and is a great exhortation to the city of Jerusalem to praise the power of God.

The thread running through each of Monteverdi's psalm settings is the plainchant melody commonly associated with the psalm. In this case, the chant melody is taken - often heroically - by all the tenors, while the rest of the singers divide into two choirs, and weave great patterns of polyphony around it. The vigorous drive of the music is suddenly halted at the doxology, the *Gloria Patri*, where, in traditional fashion, the pace broadens for a stately and sonorous *Amen*.

Lauda Jerusalem Dominum: lauda Deum tuum Sion;  
quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum: benedixit filiis tuis in te,  
qui posuit fines tuos pacem:  
et adipe frumenti satiat te.  
Qui emittit eloquium suum terrae: velociter currit sermo eius.  
Qui dat nivem sicut lanam: nebulam sicut cinerem spargit.

Mittit cristallum suum sicut buccellas: ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit?  
Emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea: flabit spiritus eius et fluent aquae.  
Qui annuntiat verbum suum Jacob justitias et judicia sua Israel.  
Non fecit taliter omni nationi: et judicia sua non manifestavit eis. Alleluia.  
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto;  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion;  
because he hath strengthened the bolts of thy gates: he hath blessed thy children within thee, who hath placed peace in thy  
borders: and filleth thee with the fat of corn.  
Who sendeth forth his speech to the earth: his word runneth swiftly.  
Who giveth snow like wool: scattereth mists like ashes.  
He sendeth his ice like morsels: who shall stand before the face of his cold?  
He shall send out his word, and shall melt them: his wind shall blow, and the waters shall run.  
Who declareth his word to Jacob: his justices and his judgments to Israel.  
He hath not done in like manner to every nation: and his judgments he hath not made manifest to them. Alleluia.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, for ever and ever. Amen.*

#### 4. **VERSA EST IN LUCTUM - Alonso Lobo (1555-1617)**

There are two easily confused Renaissance composers named Lobo. The more famous of the two, Duarte (c.1565-1646), was perhaps the best-known Portuguese composer of his time; his fine *Requiem* has been performed by Bristol Bach Choir. His contemporary Alonso Lobo was Spanish; he worked in the south of the country at Osuna, Toledo and Seville. He corresponded with and was highly regarded by two of the greatest composers of his time, Victoria and Palestrina.

Recently his music has undergone a revival, the most popular of his motets being the present work *Versa est in luctum*. This has an interesting history: it was written for the funeral of King Philip II of Spain in 1598. Philip, incidentally, had been king of England when married to Queen Mary (1555-58), launched the Spanish Armada in 1588 and was the person after whom the Philippines are named.

Unusually for a Spanish composer the words are not taken from the service, but are appropriate for the occasion. The music is written in six parts (in our performance SSATTB). The rich counterpoint, stately progress of the harmonies and minor mode create a dark and mournful piece.

*Versa est* falls into four sections, one for each line of the words. The first and most striking of these uses a motif of six notes of the minor scale both ascending and descending, and creates intensity by the repetition of these themes, echoes of which can be heard throughout the piece. Listen out for this, and also for the subtle changes to the interwoven melodies when a new line of words succeeds the previous one.

Versa est in luctum cithara mea  
Et organum meum in voce flentium.  
Parce mihi Domine  
Nihil enim sunt dies mei.

*My harp is turned to mourning  
and my organ to the voice of wailing.  
Spare me, O Lord,  
for my days are nothing.*

#### 5. **NISI DOMINUS - Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745)**

We are thrilled to have discovered the music of Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745). If ever a composer did not deserve to be lost in dusty library archives, then it is surely Zelenka, and we are delighted to be sharing his work with you this evening.

The Bohemian born Zelenka began his employment at the Dresden court in 1711 as a double bass player. By the 1720s, he had achieved the title of court composer, and often acted as *Kapellmeister* J.D. Heinichen's deputy, especially as the latter often suffered from ill health. He might therefore reasonably have expected to succeed to the post of *Kapellmeister* when Heinichen died in 1729. But his hopes were thwarted. The court did not find his sometimes dark and intense compositional style to its liking, and he was passed over for the post. Although he tried hard during the 1730s to amend his style to be more in line with the *galant* idiom that the court had come to expect, his talents were never fully recognised. He died in 1745, in all probability a bitter and disappointed man.

During the 1720s, Zelenka began assembling great collections of all the music required for the office of Vespers: psalm settings, Magnificats, hymns and Marian antiphons. From these collections a *Kapellmeister* could then select whichever items were required for any given day or feast. This setting of Psalm 126 *Nisi Dominus* is part of one of these collections, and was composed around 1726. It well illustrates Zelenka's bold and imaginative use of harmony and chromaticism, with its pungent dissonances and also moments of great lyricism.

The whole setting is based on an *ostinato*, a repeated pattern of notes, played in unison, which is unremitting until virtually the final bars of the piece. By this means, the Dresden congregation was perhaps encouraged to reflect on the necessity of the unchanging support of God in all things.

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam: nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.

Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere: surgite postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem doloris. Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum.

Ecce haereditas Domini, filii: merces fructus ventris.

Sicut sagittae in manu potentis: ita filii excussorum.

Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum ex ipsis; non confundetur cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.

Gloria Patri, etc.

*Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:*

*unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.*

*It is vain for you to rise before dawn:*

*rise ye after you have rested, you that eat the bread of sorrow. For he shall give sleep to his beloved.*

*Behold, the inheritance of the Lord are children: the reward, the fruit of the womb.*

*As arrows in the hand of the mighty, so are the children of the vigorous.*

*Blessed is the man that hath fulfilled his desire with them; he shall not be confounded when he shall speak to his enemies in the gate.*

*Glory be to the Father, etc.*

## 6. DONA NOBIS PACEM - Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Naturally, we wanted to include music by J.S. Bach in our recording, and what better choice than this, the valedictory final movement of the great Mass in B Minor, BWV 232.

The Mass, assembled in the final years of Bach's life, took as its starting point the setting of the Kyrie and the Gloria (together known as the *Missa*) that Bach presented to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden in 1733.

It was common at this time for the final movement of a Mass setting to reuse some of the music from earlier in the work, and Bach chose for this purpose the *Gratias agimus tibi* movement, from the Gloria of the 1733 *Missa* setting. In fact, the trail of re-use extends even further back than this, because the *Gratias agimus tibi* movement was itself a reworking of a movement called *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir* (We thank you God, we thank you) from an earlier cantata celebrating the inauguration of the Leipzig town council.

The congregation in Leipzig would have recognised this movement as being in a purposely old fashioned style, reminiscent of Renaissance polyphony. The accompaniment is mostly what is known as *colla parte* – that is, the instruments (or in the case of this recording, the organ) follow exactly the vocal lines. However, as the movement treads a dignified yet inexorable path towards its conclusion, Bach adds something new. The accompaniment, which up till then had kept itself in check, dutifully following the soprano and alto lines, suddenly breaks away from the vocal parts and soars above them, adding a thrilling extra dimension to the final bars of this movement. The writer Donald Tovey once referred to the way the conclusion of a Bach movement 'rolls around with astronomic precision'. Nowhere is this more true than here.

Dona nobis pacem.

*Grant us peace.*

## 7. Excerpt from 'CHRISTUS' - Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Mendelssohn worked on the oratorio *Christus* fitfully in 1846 and 1847. At his death, however, only fragments had been completed – even the title was given later (by his brother Paul). The present extract comes from the Christmas section of the piece. It consists of the following:

**Recitative (soprano):** *When Jesus our Lord was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judaea, behold, from the East to the city of Jerusalem there came wise men, and said:*

**Trio (tenor and two basses):** *Say, where is he born, the king of Judaea? For we have seen his star, and are come to adore him.*

**Chorus:** *There shall a star from Jacob come forth, and a sceptre from Israel rise up, and dash in pieces princes and nations.*

**Chorale (chorus):** *How brightly beams the morning star!*

*With sudden radiance from afar*

*With light and comfort glowing!*

*Thy word, Jesus, inly feeds us, rightly leads us, life bestowing.*

*Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing!*

The music is characterised by the subtlety with which Mendelssohn is able to create memorable music from comparatively simple resources, and the craft with which he shapes each section. Listen for the wonderful theme on *There shall a star from Jacob come forth* whose serenity is interrupted by *and dash in pieces*; the music then gradually returns to its former calm. Mendelssohn's setting of the chorale contrasts with Bach's setting of the same tune – Mendelssohn's is simpler and gentler. The piece ends with a piano reminiscence of the *There shall a star* theme.

## 8. **ABENDLIED (op 69, no 3) - Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)**

Rheinberger is best known for his organ music (20 sonatas and other pieces) but he was a prolific composer in many genres, including choral music. He has a reputation for embodying the virtues and flaws of the nineteenth-century German musical establishment – solid technique but rather dull. The present piece disproves the dull part of this reputation. *Abendlied* (evening song) is a short setting of Luke 24 verse 29, written in 1873 for a Berlin choral society. It is scored for six-part choir, with a carefully controlled balance between homophonic and contrapuntal textures. Listen for the second chord of the piece, which is minor and unexpected, and sets the tone for the piece – rich but solemn; and for the final phrase whose diminuendo seems to symbolise the fading of the evening light.

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden, und der Tag hat sich geneiget.

*Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent*

## 9. **BOGORODITSYE DYEVO - Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)**

This is the sixth movement of Rachmaninov's *Vespers* (All-night Vigil op 37) and was written in 1915. After the revolution of 1917, however, the Orthodox Church was suppressed, and Rachmaninov's music did not become generally known until the 1960s. According to church requirements, all settings of the Vesper texts should be based on the appropriate pre-existing melody or chant, but in this movement Rachmaninov invented his own chant-like melody.

As is appropriate for the words, the music is serene, concise but unhurried. It falls into two sections. The first is largely syllabic in style. The second starts with one of the simplest and most imaginative textures in all choral music. The altos, divided, quietly sing a variation of the chant theme in parallel thirds, while the sopranos and tenors, in octaves, surround them with a countermelody even more quietly. The control of the composition from this point to the subsequent climax, and its fall back to the quiet ending, with a reminiscence of the opening, is masterful. A short piece, but a masterpiece.

Bogoroditsye Dyevo, raduissya,  
Blagodatnaya Mariye, Gospod Toboyu.  
Blagoslovyenna Tyi vzhenakh, I blagoslovyen Plod chryeva Tvoyego,  
Yako spassa rodila yessi dush nashikh.

*Virgin, rejoice, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have borne the Saviour of our souls.*

## 10. **BOGORODITSYE DYEVO - Arvo Pärt (b.1935)**

Another setting of the same text, but a very different one. The contemporary Estonian composer Arvo Pärt is known for his minimalist style – which he calls 'tintinnabuli', inspired by bell-like triad-based sounds. His music is also heavily influenced by Gregorian Chant.

*Bogoroditsye Dyevo* is minimalist in its syllabic textures and resolutely traditional in its use of harmony. Irregular rhythms, sudden changes of dynamic and speed and lightness of sound counterbalance this to give a more modern feel. The melodic material – more fragments than tunes—does have a simplicity reminiscent of chant. The piece is very brief – just 43 mostly very rapid bars with a short loud section in the middle.

## 11. **THE CHERUBIC HYMN - Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857)**

Glinka is known as the founding father of the nineteenth century Russian musical tradition, and is best remembered for his two operas: *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmila*. His brief interest in Russian church music arose out of the success of the former of these, as the Tsar, impressed by the opera, appointed its composer to the post of *Kapellmeister* to the imperial chapel. The benefits of this included a generous salary and the use of a state apartment, but Glinka didn't find the work congenial, and resigned two years later. This setting of the Cherubic Hymn was written in 1837, the year of the appointment.

The text is one of the best-known in the Orthodox liturgy - the Cherubic Hymn was sung every day of the year except for Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. The music is written for unaccompanied choir - no instruments were allowed by the Orthodox Church. It is scored for SATB, with each part dividing to create thicker textures where required. The three verses of the hymn have more or less the same music. They are followed by a brief *Amen*, and a final verse with *Alleluia* which starts out as though it's going to be an extended fugue, but soon subsides to a calmer ending.

Izhe kheruvimi, taino obrazuyushchye,  
i zhivotvoryashchei Troitsye trissvyatuyu pyessn pripyevayuschchye,  
vsyakoye ninye zhityeiskoye otlozhim popyechyeniye. Amin.  
Yako da Tsarya vsyekh podyimymem, angyelskiminyevidimo dorinossima chinmi, Alleluya.

*We that in a mystery figure forth the Cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity,*

*now let us lay aside all cares of this life. Amen*  
*To receive the king of all who comes invisibly upborne by ranks of angels. Alleluia.*

## 12. **LAY A GARLAND - Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856)**

The Bristol Madrigal Society was founded in 1837. Among the original members was the Bristolian Robert Pearsall (who sang tenor), then on a visit to this country from Germany where, having inherited wealth, he lived for the sake of his health. Although in its early years the society was mostly dedicated to performing madrigals from 'the golden age' both English and Italian, they did sing several which Pearsall wrote especially for them, among them *Lay a garland*. Like several of the pieces in this concert, it is stylistically influenced by music from the past, in this case Elizabethan madrigalists, particularly Thomas Morley, while at the same time being of its time – contemporary influences on Pearsall included Spohr and Mendelssohn.

*Lay a garland* is written for eight-part unaccompanied choir (SSAATTBB) and uses rich textures in which syllabic writing and polyphony are neatly balanced. Note the 'scrunches' on the words *Maidens, willow branches bear*, and the sure sense of direction of the harmonies as the piece approaches its final gentle cadence.

The words are a song from the play *The Maid's Tragedy* (c.1609) by Beaumont and Fletcher. However Pearsall changed them to suit his purpose: the original (sung by the heroine Aspasia) begins:

*Lay a garland on my hearse*  
*Of the dismal yew.*

Devotees of Steeleye Span will recall that wearing willow was a traditional sign of mourning.

*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.*

## 13. **SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT - Samuel Barber (1910-1981)**

Barber wrote this in 1938 as a solo song with piano accompaniment, and it was published as the last of the *Four Songs opus 13*. In 1941 he arranged it for choir with piano. In its original version it is probably Barber's best-known song, and a good example of his 'neo-Romantic' style. As with all his music it is concise, well expressed and beautifully crafted.

The transcendent words are by the author, poet and screenwriter James Agee; Barber also used Agee's words in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* for Soprano and orchestra (1948). The choral arrangement has been criticised, but only for not being quite as perfect as the original. It is still one of Barber's best melodies, a lyrical little gem which deserves to be heard more often. Just enjoy the flow of the melody.

## 14. **I'M SEVENTEEN COME SUNDAY - Percy Grainger (1882-1961)**

Among his many other musical activities - composer, performer, scholar and innovator - the Australian Percy Grainger was a collector of folksongs. In September 1905 he wrote down the song *I'm seventeen come Sunday* from the singing of one Fred Atkinson in Redbourne, Lincolnshire. Later that year he arranged it for choir with brass band or piano accompaniment.

Grainger's attitude to folksong was typical of its time:

*"...in the folk-song there is to be found the complete history of a people, recorded by the race itself, through the heartoutbursts of its healthiest output. It is a history compiled with deeper feeling and more understanding than can be found among the dates and data of the greatest historian..."*

*I'm seventeen come Sunday* was rather despised by folksong collectors not so much because it was well known (having been published as a ballad in the 1830s and 40s) but because the words were regarded as unsuitable for publication (Grainger's setting omits the verse in which the lovers spend the night together). Similar versions of both words and tune were found across the country. In 1923 Vaughan Williams used a Somerset version collected by Cecil Sharp in the first movement of his *Folk Song Suite*.

Grainger's setting doesn't sound much like a 'heartoutburst', but it is typically exuberant. It starts with just the tune, for tenors and basses, and in each successive verse the influence of the arranger becomes more apparent, ending with some very Warlock-like harmonies. Grainger marks the music *To be sung with a Lincolnshire (Lindsay) accent, if possible*. Alas, for us this is not possible, so we're giving our performance a more local twist.

*As I rose up one May morning, one May morning so early*  
*I overtook a pretty fair maid, just as the sun was dawnin'*  
*With me rue rum ray, fother diddle ay, wok fol air diddle i-do.*

*Her stockin's white, and her boots were bright, and her buckling shone like silver;*

*She had a dark and a rolling eye, and her hair hung round her shoulder,  
With me rue rum ray.....*

*'Where are you going my pretty fair maid, where are you going me luvver?'*  
*She answered me right cheerfully; 'I'm an errand for me muvver'*  
*With me rue rum ray.....*

*'How old are you my pretty fair maid, how old are you me luvver?'*  
*She answered me right cheerfully; 'I am seventeen come Sunday'*  
*With me rue rum ray.....*

*'Will you take a man, my sweet pretty maid, will you take a man, me luvver?'*  
*She answered me right cheerfully; 'I darst not for me muvver'*  
*With me rue rum ray.....*

*'Will you come down to me muvver's house, when the moon shone bright and clearly?  
You'll come down, I'll let you in, and me muvver shall not hear me.'*  
*With me rue rum ray.....*

*'O it's now I'm with me soldier lad, his ways they are so winnin'.  
It's drum and fife is my delight, and a pint o' rum in the morning,  
With me rue rum ray.....*

## 15. **SLEEP- Eric Whitacre (b.1970)**

Whitacre comes from Nevada. He studied in Las Vegas and New York, and now lives in Los Angeles. He is best known as a composer of choral, wind band and electronic music, and as an inspiring conductor of his own music and that of others.

Whitacre's style is generally recognisable by his signature "Whitacre chords", chords with sevenths and/or ninths, and sometimes with suspended seconds and/or fourths. A good example in *Sleep* is the chord on *moon* at the end of the first phrase – it's used again as the final chord of the piece. If this seems too technical, just enjoy the sound of his music, with chords that are unusual but not normally too dissonant or harsh. Whitacre's music is often compared to that of Morten Lauridsen: the harmonies they use are often similar, but Whitacre uses more avant-garde techniques, and a greater variety of texture.

*Sleep* has an interesting history. In 2000 Whitacre set to music Robert Frost's famous poem 'Stopping by Woods', only to discover that he had not secured permission to use the poem. Rather than waste the music, he commissioned Charles Anthony Silvestri to write new words, and *Sleep* is the result. The most striking part of the setting is the final word, *sleep* which repeats and fades to nothing. Note that the original also ended on the same word.

## 16. **NOW COMES BEAUTY - Paul Carr (b.1961)**

Paul Carr has written:

"*Now Comes Beauty* was originally composed in the Summer of 2009 as a song for solo voice and piano, commissioned by my brother for his wife, Heather, as a birthday present. At Gavin's suggestion, I then made this arrangement for unaccompanied mixed voice choir and also an instrumental version for string orchestra, all three versions of which are now published and the string version recorded for CD by the Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

The words to the song are my own and while they might not be great poetry they are an honest expression of my thoughts and feelings about the place in which I lived and the new world I was about to walk out into. It is essentially a 'song of farewell' to an idyllic, though sometimes solitary life on the beautiful island of Mallorca where I lived from 2004 to 2009 - the ending of a long relationship and the need to move on in a new direction. Death and re-birth if you like; painful, lost, but accepting and open at the same time.

This choral version is dedicated to my brother and Bristol Bach Choir, whose concert in 2009 of Lauridsen, Barber and Whitacre greatly impressed, as did their beautiful rendition of my Christmas carol."

*Now comes beauty, now my life  
holds my soul through love, through strife.  
Gifts of birds sing, winds from south,  
stars like light bulbs stop my mouth.  
Blue seas beckon, soft lands lie,  
one more dream or I fear I die.  
Two steps forward, three steps back,  
empty canvas and I lost in track.*

*Moonbeams send me left to right,  
must I say farewell this night?  
New worlds hold new sounds for me,  
time to go, to love, to be.*

## 17. O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM - Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)

Morten Lauridsen was born in Colfax, Washington State in 1943. He studied at the University of Southern California, where he has been for many years professor and Chair of the Department of Composition. His works are primarily vocal, and include *Lux Aeterna* (1997), *Nocturnes* (2005) and *Les Chansons des Roses* (1993), which we performed in St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol in 2009. *O magnum mysterium* is his best-known work, a setting of Christmas words from 1994.

The composer has written:

"For centuries, composers have been inspired by the beautiful *O magnum mysterium* text depicting the birth of the new-born King amongst the lowly animals and shepherds. This affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated in my setting through a quiet song of profound inner joy."

*O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, jacentem in praesepio!  
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Christum. Alleluia*

*O great mystery and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in their manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

## 18. WITH A LILY IN YOUR HAND - Eric Whitacre

*With a lily in your hand* is the second of Whitacre's *Three Flower Songs*, and was written in 2001. The words are a translation by the great Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) of an oblique love poem by the well-known American Jerome Rothenberg (b.1931). Rothenberg's version manages to be as vivid as the original while retaining its meaning and structure. One difference: Lorca's original title is *Curva* (curve or curved line). *With a lily in your hand* (the first line of the poem) is no doubt a better title for the song, but may miss a layer of meaning.

The piece is a virtuoso composition, in which an extraordinary choral version of Flamenco weaves in and out of richly-chorded slower music and more wistful melodic fragments. Interestingly, Whitacre's performance suggestions divide the music into 'water' – a fluid texture in the middle of the piece at the words *Tamer of dark butterflies* – and 'fire' - the rest of the music. Neither water nor fire is referred to in the poem.

Booklet notes by Tim Warren & Margaret Williams © Bristol Bach Choir 2011

### Bristol Bach Choir Performers:

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses
Polly Beck	Andrea Argent	Keith Bennett	Simon Caldwell
Pam Bennett	Ruth Bolgar	Stephen Carter	Marcus Evans
Julie Borowski	Alison Dawson	Gareth Dodds	Rob Ferguson
Fiona Bowden	Althea Hamlyn	Mike Garnier	Angus Gregson
Anna Brooke	Chris Hanmer	Barrie Green	Chris Hall
Jill Caporn	Pat Harrad	Richard Griffith	Rupert Handley
Gill Cato	Helen Hill	Nigel Nash	Chris Hill
Cynthia Dobson	Jenny Jillich	Phil Neville	Vincent Hobbs
Alison Grant	Lisa Lewis	David Parfrey	Dave Lewis
Caroline Mayes	Carolyn Morgan	James Tucker	Charles Pestell
Eve Nash	Astrid Pestell	Tim Warren	Rod Thouless
Sarah O'Grady	Bridget Simpson		Andrew Watson
Clare Rangeley	Helen Thouless		
Jeanne Simpson	Judith Vorley		
Rebecca Thurgur	Margaret Williams		