

ABOUT THIS RECORDING

This is our second disc. The first, **Anthems from St Barnabas**, was a general compilation of our favourite service music, and was recorded in the church in 2003. Its success prompted us to make another recording, and we decided to concentrate on part of the Christian year starting with Advent, and continuing through Christmas to Epiphany.

We have chosen a programme of three distinct sections, separated by organ pieces. You may (if you wish!) play Christ's coming foretold at the end of November, **The birth of Jesus** on Christmas Eve, and **The shepherds and the Magi** on Christmas Day itself. This was our thinking when devising the triple-decker format. The concept owes much to our producer, Colin Gordon, who also generously agreed to play the two organ solos himself.

The continuing success of St Barnabas Choir owes a great debt to Michael Broadway, who has been our appointed Organist and Choirmaster for over 50 years. Our plan had been for Michael to play all the accompaniments on this disc, but a sudden bout of illness struck a couple of days before we were due to record. We were fortunate in securing, at short notice, the services of two very accomplished players, Keith Lambert and David Langdon, and the full recording programme went ahead without hitch. We are indebted also to our recording engineer, Ben Simmonds, whose patience and attention to detail went well beyond the call of duty.

The church website www.sbarnabas.org.uk carries more information, including the music list for our choral services.

Bob Lowrie, *conductor*

THE CHOIR OF ST BARNABAS, OXFORD

The Oxford (Tractarian) Movement of the 19th century reintroduced to Anglicanism many forms of worship from the Pre-Reformation church, including vestments, ceremonial and plainchant. Thomas Combe, who founded St Barnabas Church in 1869, was a keen Tractarian, so from the outset the services at Combe's church were of the High Church variety in which music played an important part. The music at the 11.00 am Choral Eucharist in those early days was a mixture of popular mission-type hymns, Gregorian chant and the 16th-century settings of John Merbecke.

One of the most successful periods of St Barnabas choir was in the 1930s, when a large choir of men and boys sang a wide repertoire of masses by Harold Darke and Charles Wood, and canticles by Stanford and Noble, under the direction of Leslie Betteridge, a very accomplished choir trainer who later became organist of Bermuda cathedral. Since the war, the choir's repertory has widened considerably to include masses by Haydn and Mozart, works from the Tudor period by Tallis, Byrd, Morley and Gibbons, and 20th-century settings by Britten, Poulenc and Messiaen.

The service music nowadays still retains its partly congregational character and traces of its plainsong past. The Creed, Gloria and Lord's Prayer are sung to congregational settings. Plainchant is used for the psalms, for occasional services of Vespers and Compline, and for large parts of the services in Holy Week. In recent years the composition of the choir has changed. In the search for boy choristers St Barnabas always faced competition from college choirs. By the 1990s this, and rival weekend attractions, made it difficult to maintain a boys-only choir and girls were admitted for the first time. By 2003 the choir had assumed its present make-up of volunteer adult singers. Under the direction of our conductor Bob Lowrie it has maintained the high standard of singing which can be enjoyed on this disc.

Michael Broadway, *organist*

CHRIST'S COMING IS FORETOLD

1 Wake, O wake!

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

from Cantata BWV 140 Wachet auf

Wake, O wake! With tidings thrilling
The watchmen all the air are filling.
Arise, Jerusalem, arise!
Midnight strikes! no more delaying,
"The hour has come!" we hear them saying,
Where are ye all, ye virgins wise?
The Bridegroom comes in sight.
Raise high your torches bright! Alleluya!
The wedding song swells loud and strong.
Go forth and join the festal throng!

words tr. Maurice F. Bell

2 People, look East

Traditional Besançon carol,

arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

People, look East, The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth, and set the table.
People, look East, and sing today:
Love the Guest is on the way.

Furrows be glad, though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Rose is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look East, and sing today:
Love the Star is on the way.

Angels, announce to man and beast
Him who cometh from the East.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the Word, the Lord is coming.
People, look East, and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

words: Eleanor Farjeon

3 Jesus Christ the apple tree

Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)

soprano solo: Megan Hooper

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly have I bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be,
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

words: Anon

4 The angel Gabriel

Traditional Basque carol,

arr. Edgar Pettman (1866-1943)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favour'd Lady",
Gloria!

"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
Most highly favour'd Lady,"
Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify His Holy
Name."
Most highly favour'd Lady,
Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world
will ever say,
"Most highly favour'd lady".
Gloria!

words: Sabine Baring-Gould

5 The cherry tree carol

Traditional, *arr.* Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary
In the land of Galilee.

Joseph and Mary
Walked through an orchard good
Where was cherries and berries
So red as any blood.

O then bespoke Mary
With words so meek and mild:
"Pluck me one cherry, Joseph,
For I am with child!"

O then bespoke Joseph
With answer most unkind:
"Let him pluck thee a cherry
That brought thee now with child!"

Then bowed down the highest tree
Unto his mother's hand.
Then she cried: "See Joseph,
I have cherries at command!"

O eat your cherries, Mary,
O eat your cherries now;
O eat your cherries Mary,
That grow upon the bough.

Then Mary plucked a cherry
As red as any blood,
Then Mary she went homewards
All with her heavy load.

Oxford Book of Carols, 1928

6 Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary

Italian, *arr.* Charles Wood (1866-1926)

Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!
For so when he did meet thee,
Spake mighty Gabriel,
And thus we greet thee.
Come weal, come woe,
Our hymn shall never vary.
Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary!

Ave, ave Maria!
To gladden priest and people,
The angelus shall ring
From every steeple,
To sound his Virgin birth, Alleluia!
Ave, ave Maria!

Archangels chant Osanna,
And "Holy, Holy, Holy",
Before the infant born
Of thee thou lowly;
Aye maiden child of Joachim and Anna;
Archangels chant Osanna.

English words: G.R. Woodward

7 A tender shoot

Otto Goldschmidt (1829-1907)

A tender shoot hath started up
From a root of grace,
As ancient seers imparted
From Jesse's holy race.
It blooms without a blight,
Blooms in the cold bleak winter,
Turning our darkness into light.

This shoot, Isaiah taught us,
From Jesse's root should spring.
The Virgin Mary brought us
The branch of which we sing.
Our God of endless might,
Gave her this child to save us,
Thus turning darkness into light.

*English words: W. Bartholomew,
from "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen"*

8 The noble stem of Jesse

German, *harm.* Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

The noble stem of Jesse
Hath flowered at this tide:
Rejoice, good Christian people,
Rejoice ye far and wide:
In Mary see the stem;
And who the flower but Jesus,
The Babe of Bethlehem?

This flower the Prophet Esay
Foresaw and did foretell,
Born of the Virgin-Mother;
And man should love her well.
Yet, stem, to flower give place,
For from the same both angels
And men derive solace.

This flower with fragrant odour
Doth woo the passer-by,
And fill his very being
With love right wondrously;
Sweet Flower, for thee I sigh;
Thy grace my fainting spirit
Alone can satisfy.

words tr. J.M. Neale

9 Organ: Prelude on 'Stuttgart'

('Bethlehem of noblest cities...')

Flor Peeters (1903-1986)

organ solo: Colin Gordon

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

10 O little town of Bethlehem

Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941)

soprano solo: Jill Bentley

Unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this
shall be a sign to you; ye shall find the Babe,
wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a
manger.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

words: Bishop Phillips Brooks

11 Silent night

Franz Gruber (1787-1863)

arr. Hugh Keyte and Andrew Parrott

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child;
Holy infant so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar.
Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!"
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light.
Radiant, beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

words tr. John F. Young

12 Rocking

Czech, *arr.* David Willcocks (b. 1919)

Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;
We will lend a coat of fur.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you.
See the fur to keep you warm,
Snugly round your tiny form.

Mary's little baby, sleep, sweetly sleep,
Sleep in comfort, slumber deep.
We will rock you, rock you, rock you.
We will serve you all we can,
Darling, darling little man.

words tr. Percy Dearmer

13 O magnum mysterium

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

O magnum mysterium
Et admirabile sacramentum,

Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
Jacentem in praesepe.

Beata Virgo cujus viscera meruerunt
Portare Dominum Christum.

*O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord
lying in their manger.*

*Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was
worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.*

14 Sing lullaby

"The infant king"; Traditional Basque carol
arr. Edgar Pettman (1866-1943)

Sing lullaby!
Lullaby baby, now reclining, sing lullaby!
Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
Angels are watching, stars are shining
Over the place where he is lying.
Sing lullaby!

Sing lullaby!
Lullaby baby, now a-sleeping, sing lullaby!
Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
Soon will come sorrow with the morning,
Soon will come bitter grief and weeping.
Sing lullaby!

Sing lullaby!
Lullaby baby, now a-dozing, sing lullaby!
Hush, do not wake the Infant King.
Soon comes the cross, the nails, the piercing,
Then in the grave at last reposing.
Sing lullaby!

Sing lullaby!
Lullaby, is the babe a-waking? Sing lullaby!
Hush, do not stir the Infant King
Dreaming of Easter, gladsome morning.
Conquering death, its bondage breaking.
Sing lullaby!

words: Sabine Baring-Gould

15 In dulci jubilo

Old German carol
arr. R. L. Pearsall (1795-1856), ed. R. Jacques
soloists: Megan Hooper,
Julie Anne Lambert, Diarmaid MacCulloch

In dulci jubilo, let us our homage show;
Our heart's joy reclineth in praesepio,
And like a bright star shineth
Matris in gremio. Alpha es et O.

O Jesu parvule, I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee, O puer optime!
My prayer let it reach thee,
O princeps gloriae! Trahe me post te!

O Patris caritas, O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained per nostra crimina;
But thou hast for us gained coelorum gaudia.
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, where
If that they be not there?
There are angels singing nova cantica;
There the bells are ringing in regis curia.
O that we were there!

words tr. R.L. Pearsall

16 A child is born in Bethlehem

Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654)
ed. David Willcocks; adapted by L. H. Davies

A child is born in Bethlehem,
And joy is in Jerusalem. *Alleluia!*

Rejoice, rejoice, sing high, sing low,
Benedicamus Domino. *Alleluia!*

To thee, O Lord, be glory paid,
Thou son of Mary, mother-maid. *Alleluia!*

To Holy Trinity give praise
With Deo gracias always. *Alleluia!*

17 Organ: Noël X

Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)
organ solo: Colin Gordon

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE MAGI

18 See amid the winter's snow

John Goss (1800-1880), arr. Willcocks

See amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below;
See the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years:
Hail, thou ever-blessed morn!
Hail, redemption's happy dawn!
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim.

Say, ye holy shepherds, say
What your joyful news today;
Wherefore have you left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?

As we watched at dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light:
Angels singing "Peace on earth"
Told us of the Saviour's birth.

Sacred infant, all divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this.

Teach, O teach us, Holy Child,
By thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble thee,
In thy sweet humility.

words: Edward Caswell

19 The shepherds' cradle song

Karl Leuner (*Wiegenlied*, 1814)
arr. Charles Macpherson (1870-1927)

O sleep, thou heaven-born treasure, thou,
Sleep sound, thou dearest child;
White angel wings shall fan thy brow
With breezes soft and mild.
We shepherds poor are here to sing
A simple lullay to our King.
Lullaby, lullaby,
Sleep, sleep softly, lullaby.

See Mary has with mother's love
A bed for thee outspread,
While Joseph stoops him from above,
And watches at thy head.
The lambkins in the stall so nigh,
That thou may sleep,
Have hushed their cry.

And when thou'rt big and art a man
Full woe's in store for thee;
For cruel men thy death will plan
And hang thee on a tree.
So sleep, my baby, whilst thou may,
'Twill give thee rest against that day.

words tr. A. Foxton Ferguson

20 Personent hodie

German, 1360, arr. G. Holst (1874-1931)

Personent hodie voces puerulae,
Laudantes jucunde qui nobis est natus,
Summo Deo datus,
Et de virgineo ventre procreatus.

In mundo nascitur; pannis involvitur,
Praesepi ponitur tabulo brutorum,
Rector supernorum.
Perdidit spolia princeps infernorum.

Magi tres venerunt, parvulum inquirunt,
Munera offerunt, stellulam sequendo.
Ipsam adorando,
Aurum, thus, et myrrham ei offerendo.

Omnes clericuli, pariter pueri,
Contenti ut angeli: advenisti mundo,
Laudes tibi fundo.
Ideo Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*Let children's voices resound today, merrily praising
him who has been born, sent by almighty God and
brought forth from a virgin's womb.*

*He was born into the world, wrapped in swaddling
clothes, and placed in the manger in a cattle shed,
the Lord of the heavens, the Prince who destroyed
the spoils of hell.*

*Three wise men appeared; they offered gifts and
asked for a boy-child, following a star; they
worship-ped him, offering him gold, frankincense
and myrrh.*

*Let all the clerics, and likewise the boys, sing like
the angels: "You have come to the world; therefore
I pour out praise to you: Glory to God in the
highest!"*

words from *Piae Cantiones*, 1582
Translation from The New Oxford Book of Carols

21 Ding dong! Merrily on high

16th-century French tune, arr. Charles Wood

Ding dong! Merrily on high
In heaven the bells are ringing:
Ding dong, verily the sky
is riven with angels singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And io, io, io,
By priest and people sungen.

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.

words: G.R. Woodward

22 Of the Father's heart begotten

Piae Cantiones 1582, arr. David Willcocks

Of the Father's heart begotten,
Ere the world from chaos rose,
He is Alpha: from that fountain
All that is and hath been flows;
He is Omega, of all things
Yet to come the mystic close,
Evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
He commanded and 'twas done;
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,
Universe of three in one,
All that sees the moon's soft radiance,
In her loving arms received,
Evermore and evermore.

He assumed this mortal body,
Frail and feeble, doomed to die,
That the race from dust created
Might not perish utterly,
Which the dreadful Law had sentenced
In the depths of hell to lie,
Evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven,
Angels and archangels sing!
Wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
Let your joyous anthems ring.
Every tongue his name confessing,
Countless voices answering,
Evermore and evermore.

words: *Prudentius* (b.348), tr. R.F. Davis

THE CHOIR OF ST BARNABAS CHURCH, OXFORD

- Soprano:** Jill Bentley (10); Michelle Codrington; Teresa Finlay; Ann Hawes;
Isabel Holowaty; Megan Hooper (3, 15); Pam Simmonds; Julia Stutfield
- Alto:** Julie Anne Lambert (15); Alun Regan; Patrick Tan; Joy Wilson
- Tenor:** Diarmaid MacCulloch (15); Phillip Purves; Roger Simmonds; Ricky Whitlock
- Bass:** Tom Anstey; Mark Bale; Mike Geary; Keith Lambert; Ian Maclean
- Organ:** Solos: Colin Gordon (9, 17)
Accompaniments: Keith Lambert (1, 2, 5); David Langdon (10, 18, 20, 22)
- Conductor:** Bob Lowrie
- Organist:** Michael Broadway

Numerals denote soloists

Recorded in St Barnabas Church, Oxford, May 20th 2006

Producer: Colin Gordon • Recording engineer: Ben Simmonds

Digital mastering: Third Degree Studios • Duplication: SRT

Cover photo of Altarpiece in St Barnabas Lady Chapel: Bob Lowrie

Watercolour of St Barnabas Church, Oxford: Valerie Petts

A Christmas Journey

The Choir of St Barnabas Church, Oxford

directed by Bob Lowrie

CHRIST'S COMING IS FORETOLD

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Wake, O wake! | 3:58 |
| | J. S. Bach (1685-1750) | |
| 2 | People look East | 1:35 |
| | Traditional Besançon carol | |
| 3 | Jesus Christ the apple tree | 2:49 |
| | Elizabeth Poston (1905-1986) | |
| 4 | The angel Gabriel | 2:34 |
| | Traditional Basque carol | |
| 5 | The cherry tree carol | 1:51 |
| | Tradition English carol | |
| 6 | Hail! Blessed Virgin Mary | 2:35 |
| | Italian, arr. Charles Wood | |
| 7 | A tender shoot | 1:58 |
| | Otto Goldschmidt (1829-1907) | |
| 8 | The noble stem of Jesse | 2:30 |
| | Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) | |
| 9 | Organ: Prelude on 'Stuttgart' | 3:47 |
| | Flor Peeters (1903-1986) | |

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------|
| 10 | O little town of Bethlehem | 4:49 |
| | Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941) | |
| 11 | Silent night | 2:57 |
| | Franz Gruber (1787-1863) | |
| 12 | Rocking | 2:02 |
| | Hungarian, arr. David Willcocks | |
| 13 | O magnum mysterium | 3:33 |
| | Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) | |
| 14 | Sing lullaby | 3:36 |
| | Basque, arr. Edgar Pettman | |
| 15 | In dulci jubilo | 3:58 |
| | German, arr. Robert Pearsall | |
| 16 | A child is born in Bethlehem | 2:46 |
| | Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) | |
| 17 | Organ: Noël X | 4:47 |
| | Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772) | |

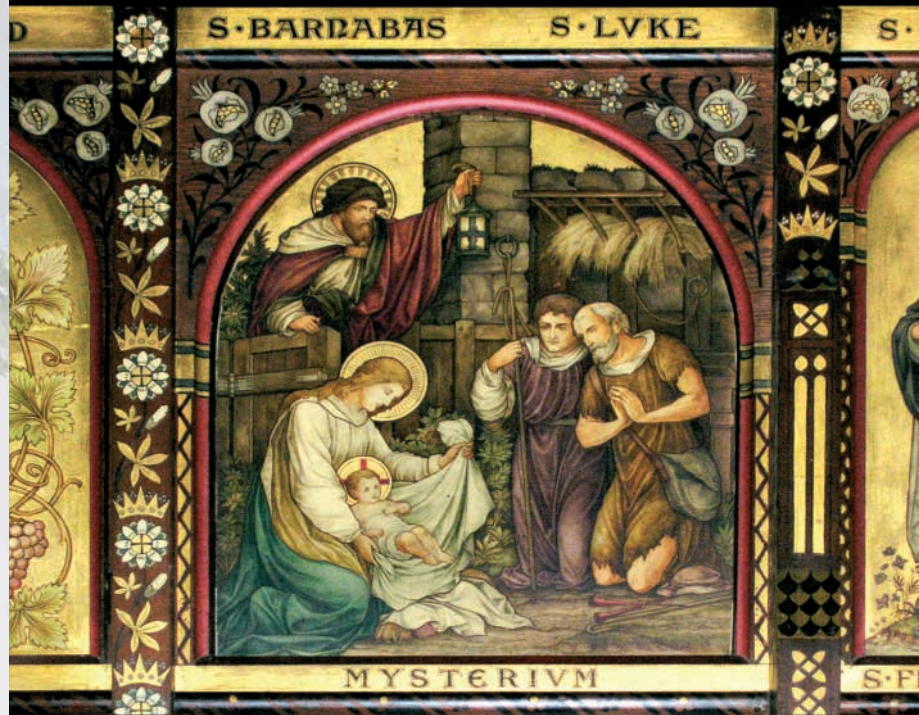
THE SHEPHERDS AND THE MAGI

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 18 | See amid the winter's snow | 5:30 |
| | John Goss (1801-1880) | |
| 19 | The shepherds' cradle song | 3:40 |
| | Karl Leuner, arr. C. Macpherson | |
| 20 | Personent hodie | 2:14 |
| | German, 1360, arr. Gustav Holst | |
| 21 | Ding dong! Merrily on high | 1:56 |
| | French, arr. Charles Wood | |
| 22 | Of the Father's heart begotten | 3:07 |
| | arr. David Willcocks | |
| | Total playing time: | 68:50 |

Recorded in St Barnabas Church, Oxford, May 20th 2006 • Producer: Colin Gordon
Recording engineer: Ben Simmonds • Digital mastering: Third Degree Studios • Duplication: SRT
Cover photo of Altarpiece in St Barnabas Lady Chapel: Bob Lowrie
Watercolour of St Barnabas Church, Oxford: Valerie Petts
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A Christmas Journey



The Choir of St Barnabas Church, Oxford