



CHANDOS COLLECT

# The Voice of Wales

*including*

All through the Night

The Ash Grove

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

God Bless the Prince of Wales

Tredeggar Orpheus Male Voice Choir

Rhos Orpheus Male Voice Choir

CHAN 6540

<b>The Voice of Wales</b>		
1	<b>God Bless the Prince of Wales</b> G. Linley/B. Richards, arr. G. Langford	3:04
2	<b>David of the White Rock</b> Words by J. Oxenford Trad., arr. I. Humphris	3:40
3	<b>The Rising of the Lark</b> Words by Maria X. Hayes Trad., arr. I. Humphris	1:36
4	<b>All through the Night</b> (Ar hyd y nos) Trad., arr. I. Humphris	3:09
5	<b>Hunting the Hare</b> Trad., arr. M. Thomas	1:39
6	<b>Fantasia on Famous Welsh Airs</b> Trad., arr. G. Langford	6:23
7	<b>The Lost Chord*</b> Proctor/Sullivan, arr. G. Langford	5:07
8	<b>See the Conquering Hero Comes*</b> from <i>Judas Maccabaeus</i> G.F. Handel, arr. I. Humphris	2:46
9	<b>The Ash Grove</b> Trad., arr. G. Langford	3:16

10	<b>Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*</b> Trad., arr. I. Humphris	2:58
11	<b>Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah</b> to <i>Cwm Rhondda</i> Hughes/Williams	3:00
12	<b>The Lord's My Shepherd*</b> to <i>Crimond</i> Trad., arr. H. Roberton	3:50
13	<b>Praise Ye the Lord</b> Psalm 150 M. Thomas	11:23
14	<b>Nobody Knows the Trouble I See*</b> Trad., arr. I. Humphris	2:51
15	<b>And the Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed*</b> from <i>Messiah</i> G.F. Handel, arr. I. Humphris	3:26

TT 59:08

**Tredegear Orpheus Male Voice Choir**  
**Ieuan Davies**  
**Rhos Orpheus Male Voice Choir\***  
**J. Glyn Williams\***

## The Voice of Wales

The male voice choir, with its rich blend of tenors, baritones and basses, produces a homogeneity and power of sound which give it an appeal all its own. Nowhere has this been better realised than in Wales, where male voice choirs have long flourished in communities small and large.

Choral music in Wales has its roots in the spread of Methodism at the hands of Welsh-speaking preachers from about 1740. In the early days singing and dancing were suppressed. But John Wesley, Methodism's founder, set great store by psalm-singing, in metrical versions rather than chanted as in the Anglican church. Congregational singing led naturally to the formation of choirs throughout Wales during the 1800s. Reading music and harmonising were attributes to which all aspired. The many nonconformist chapels became the focal point of Welsh music-making, with hymns holding a special place. Hymn-singing festivals became common.

This recording features two of our best-loved hymns. The most famous of all Welsh hymns is *Cwm Rhondda*, here sung to words well known to Christian communities worldwide, *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*. Another hymn identified more often by its tune

than by its words is *The Lord's My Shepherd*, first published in the Scottish Psalter of 1650, now inextricably coupled to the tune *Crimond*, written by Jessie Irvine in about 1860.

As choral singing developed, repertoire was extended with the adoption of choruses from the great oratorios of the European culture, *And the Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed* from Handel's *Messiah* being a typical example. Another famous chorus, *See the Conquering Hero Comes* from *Judas Maccabaeus*, is here most effectively elaborated in true Handelian style by Ian Humphris.

Welsh hymns were often adaptations of folksongs. There was cross fertilisation too, bringing a hymn-like quality to such traditional songs as *All through the Night* (*Ar hyd y nos*) and *David of the White Rock*. Nothing hymn-like, though, about the lively and descriptive *Hunting the Hare* and *The Rising of the Lark*.

The colourful variety of Welsh traditional songs is further exemplified in the lilt of *The Ash Grove*, one of several songs accompanied by harp, and in Gordon Langford's *Fantasia on Famous Welsh Airs*. The fantasia begins with the evocative *The*

*Bells of Aberdovey* and ends with the stirring *Men of Harlech*, conjuring up visions of the march against the English in 1468. That was long ago, and the unity of the two nations is emphasised in the fervour of *God Bless the Prince of Wales*, first published in 1862.

As the twentieth century unfolded, Welsh composers made an increasing impact on the international music scene. The climax of this recording is reached in Mansel Thomas's powerful setting of Psalm 150, *Praise Ye the Lord*, featuring a dynamic organ accompaniment.

The organ is the particularly appropriate accompanying instrument for the choral version of Sir Arthur Sullivan's ever popular song *The Lost Chord*, where the 'idly wandering fingers' stumble on what the choir gloriously sums up as 'the sound of that grand Amen'.

Over in the New World, hymns in the Methodist and Baptist tradition during the early 1800s took on a more passionate, personal tone. The spirit and harmonies of these 'spirituals' were latched onto by the African slave communities of the American deep South. Hitherto purely unison

congregational singing became harmonised, evolving a new art form, the Negro Spiritual, fully recognised by the end of the century for its distinctive contribution to music's universal culture. The two Negro Spirituals represented here are *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *Nobody Knows the Trouble I See*.

The development of music in Wales owes much to its *Eisteddfodau* (Festivals). From being purely local affairs they became national in 1789 and competitive in nature. Choral music was first introduced in 1825. The National *Eisteddfod* was officially established in 1880 and the International *Eisteddfod* in 1947.

It was in order to contribute to the latter, at Llangollen, that the Rhos Orpheus Male Voice Choir was founded in 1957, based in the North Wales town of Rhosllanerchrugog. Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir, on the other hand, is one of the country's oldest established male voice choirs, founded in 1908. Thus North and South Wales combine to produce a memorable programme representative of the best in Welsh choral singing.

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THE VOICE OF WALES - Tredegar Orpheus / Rhos Orpheus Male Voice Choirs

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