Gabriel Jackson
(b. 1962)
BEYOND THE STARS
Sacred Choral Works Volume II
Choir of
St Mary's Cathedral,
Edinburgh
Duncan Ferguson
Nicholas Weane organ
(tracks 2, 3, 5, 7–10, 12 & 13)

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Music Society

1 The Glory of the Lord
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[2:31]
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Emily Jarron treble
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4 Hymn to St Margaret of Scotland
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5 Jesu, Rex admirabilis
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6 Ah, mine heart
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7 Missa Sanctae Margaretae
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9 Gloria
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10 Sanctus & Benedictus
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16 Ecce venio cito
Neil Jeacock treble
[5:26]
Total playing time [68:38]

All premiere recordings except tracks 11 & 16
Recorded in the presence of the composer
Notes on the music

The medieval Scottish notion of the maker, the ‘maker’ of intricate, formally controlled poetry, is apt to describe Gabriel Jackson’s attitude to the making of music: to compose, he notes, means to put something together from a combination of parts. ‘I always think of composing as being about making rather than being purely an act of self-expression. A bit like a cabinet-maker who makes furniture, my job as a composer is to make pieces of music.’ Jackson’s affinity for the formal techniques, ritual drama and pellucid tonal splendour of early Tudor church music has informed his aesthetics for more than two decades. The composer has also drawn strands of influence from early medieval polyphony and the more recent examples of Stravinsky, Howells, Tippett and John Taverner. And yet the eloquence of his writing – in the slow triple-time melody at the heart of _The Land of Spaces_, for instance, or the sustained sentiment of _In all his works_ – is Jackson’s own, and increasingly recognised as such.

The Choir of St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral follows its first album of Jackson’s sacred compositions (Delphian DCD34027) with a companion volume comprising works of recent provenance, including eleven premiere recordings and two works written for St Mary’s. Each piece could – even should – be regarded as a miniature sculpture in sound, the transcendent outcome of art and craft blended. Jackson shares in common with the best of cabinet-makers and engineers the ability to visualise the ‘objects’ he is about to create, imagining their form and how they might fit within the space of a particular building. ‘I’m interested in what a piece looks like – in its shape, its structure, the way it appears,’ he notes. Repeated patterns and procrastic ground-plans provide Jackson, as they did Stravinsky, with restrictions that hold the key to creative freedom. ‘Formal decisions taken at the start of composition make it easier to write a piece,’ he suggests. ‘And I believe they give integrity to the work – it’s not just about improvising music and writing it down.’

This disc opens with an arresting demonstration of the freedom available within clear formal boundaries. _The Glory of the Lord_, a compact setting of the Invitatory for the Anglican Evening Prayer, the Word, effectively magnifies the text’s exhortation to rejoice and invites contemplation of the Trinity. Both the solo tenor’s opening verse – an ecstatic cantorial outburst – and the sonorous concluding alleluias are laced with the spirit of praise. Jackson engineers a moment of still reflection at the work’s heart by stalling the full choir’s expression of eternal worship and introducing a numinous three-part texture to bear the ‘Glory to the Father’ doxology.

Westminster Abbey, for all the magnificence and import of its ancient history, acquired a remarkable new distinction on the evening of 17 September 2010. The heir to St Peter, Pope Benedict XVI, arrived at the Collegiate Church of St Peter to attend the only ecumenical service of his state visit to the United Kingdom. The Abbey’s Service of Evening Prayer presented the first performance of _The Glory of the Lord_, commissioned for the occasion by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and sung by the Abbey’s choir under the direction of James O’Donnell.

_The Glory of the Lord_, as Jackson explains, was originally written to lead into a hymn in the key of A flat, and the _Fanfare for St Mary’s_, composed as an occasional piece with the current programme design specifically in mind, thus begins in that tonality. Shades of Widor dance joyfully over the surface of the work, drawn into the vital life of a piece that explores a rich portion of the tonal landscape of the Willis organ of St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral within its brief span. Virtuoso display gives way to a coda conditioned by austere reverence, whose deft harmonic sidesteps set up the key of the following piece.

Our secular age harbours few more significant platforms for the creation of new choral music than the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King’s College, Cambridge. The rituals of the annual service have evolved since Stephen Cleobury’s arrival at King’s in 1992 as Director of Music, broadening to include works commissioned for the occasion from composers of the first rank. The Christ-child, a rapt setting for unaccompanied voices of words by G.K. Chesterton, was first performed by the Choir of King’s College on Christmas Eve 2009. The expressive nuance of Jackson’s choral invention, its textural chiaroscuro and harmonic richness, grow out of a gentle, lilting lullaby, presented in sonorous thirds by divided trebles and directed towards the composer’s coruscating setting for solo treble and choir of ‘And all the stars looked down’. Isovirth and hooket, terms familiar to students of medieval music, respectively underpin the structure and etch the surface of the first half of the Hymn to St Margaret of Scotland. These devices belong to a creative armoury sketched to suit the choral strengths and warm acoustics of St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral. The work, commissioned by Duncan Ferguson and his choir and first performed by them on 16 November 2011, the week before it was recorded for this disc, reveals in virtuosity and the dramatic possibilities of textural contrast. Its text couples the delicious rhymes and expressive language of a medieval Latin hymn (resurrected by the Revd Edward Samuel Dewick, who first published it in 1914) with the Collect for St Margaret of Scotland, ‘O God, who didst call thy servant’, from the _1928 Scottish Book of Common Prayer_.

Notes on the music

"I don’t think the Hymn sounds particularly “Scottish”, but it does tap into the national tradition of highly ornamented melody," observes Jackson. "I wanted to write a piece to reflect the choir’s personality, its essence as a group of singers, and [one] that would sound magnificent in St Mary’s. "To complement the repetitive rhyme scheme of the medieval hymn’s anonymous author, the composer applies isorhythm to various permutations and divisions of soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts, momentarily breaking the procedure with a hocket (or ‘hiccups’) on the first ‘e’ of ‘venie’. The rhythmic pattern is also broken by the homophonic style employed for the fourth verse, ‘Salve sydus’, which prefigures the solo treble’s delivery of the Collect text above the choir’s insistente sotto voce recital of the plea ‘Sancta Margarita, ora pro nobis’.

Jouissance, the unbridled expression of sensual pleasure, governs the organ flourish and bright-voiced choral chant that set Jesu, Rex admirabilis in motion. The work’s initial state of being is a matter of ecstasy, fuelled by a declamatory setting for unison trebles, altos and tenors of the emphatic opening verse of a Latin hymn attributed to St Bernard of Clairvaux. The character of each verse informs its musical setting here: the departure of earthly vanities in the second verse, for instance, is underlined by the clear D major tonality that settles the end of each line; faith’s mystery, meanwhile, pervades the contemplative penultimate verse, with its shimmering blend of chorale-like chords and searching treble melody. Commissioned by the Master and Fellows of St John’s College, Cambridge, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of the institution’s founder, Lady Margaret Beaufort, the work reserves its strongest celebratory moments for the final verse.

Astringent harmonies and close-position chords inflect Jackson’s response to the fifteenth-century carol Ah, mine heart. The text is preserved in the Fayrfax Manuscript, the primary source of early Tudor secular music, where it appears in a setting for three voices by Richard Davy. Its anonymous author seeks God’s mercy and deliverance from eternal damnation, projecting fearful imagery of the pains of hell and the poignant supplicant’s sorrow. Jackson frames his setting with a chant-like cantus for unison first trebles voiced above the second trebles’ sustained pedal note. The refrain serves as a reflective preface, interlude and postlude to the poem’s two verses, marked espressivo in the score and intensified by the fluid tonality of Jackson’s part-writing for two altos, tenor and bass. By some way the earliest piece included on this disc, Ah, mine heart was completed in September 1987.

Traces of late medieval compositional practice surface again in the Missa Sanctae Margaretae, notably so in the bold appearance of a head motif to unify the work’s opening and final movements. It is the economy of Jackson’s melodic invention and the sheer confidence of his thematic ideas that distinguish the work. The composer’s setting, crafted without the long text of the Credo, was conceived to suit the specific abilities of the choir of St Margaret’s Church, Oxford. Mellifluous melodies, octave doublings, easily grasped harmonic progressions and natural rhythmic stresses serve two purposes here, one practical, the other aesthetic: they support singers in the process of learning the piece and they project the sense and spirit of the ancient Latin mass. The means of composition, while simple, are no barrier to Jackson’s invention; in fact the work, like Gabriel Fauré’s Requiem, is eloquent in its sophisticated articulation of the liturgical text’s drama, from the yearning pleas of the ‘Kyrie’ to the heightened ecstasy of the ‘Sanctus’ and sublime final prayer for peace.

Distant echoes of songs sounded by ancient choirs pervade the opening of Justorum animae. Commissioned by Wells Cathedral to mark the 1100th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Bath and Wells and of the choral foundation at Wells, this motet for unaccompanied four-part choir grows out of the contemplative sound–world inhabited by two famous settings from the past, those by Byrd and Stanford. Jackson’s treatment of the Offertory for the Feast of All Saints, based on words from the Book of Wisdom, unfolds with subtle harmonies and textural shadings, bell-like in their reverberation. The composer’s tender meditation on the ‘souls of the righteous’ is built upon a rich pattern of shifting rhythms and gentle syncopations in the lower voices, above which the treble part voices a melody of time–arresting purity. The ‘sight of the unwise’ triggers a brief contrast of mood in the work’s central section, more animated and emphatic than what has gone before and is to come.

Vidi aquam sets the antiphon at Mass during Paschal Time, a text associated with the act of sprinkling the congregation with holy water. The imagery of flowing water and its soul-saving properties are matched by the liquefication of Jackson’s melodic writing, expressed not least through his use of the organ as an untexted voice part in elaborate dialogue with one or more choral companions.

Choral compositions that do battle with their performers rarely earn more than grudging acceptance from choristers, whether amateur or professional. The memorable part–writing and bold thematic ideas of Let us all rejoice in the Lord, as so often in Jackson’s output, were created with the abilities of its first performers clearly in mind. DeChorum, founded by Jonathan Manners in 2003, has commissioned
Notes on the music

and premiered new works from, among others, Richard Rodney Bennett, John Taverner and Malcolm Archer. Let us all rejoice in the Lord was the group’s 2008 addition to this roll-call. The piece contrasts long-breathed settings of the second and first syllables of ‘rejoice’ and ‘honour’ — respectively presented as sonorous choral landmarks at its beginning and end — with a lyrical treble tune accompanied by a sparky rhythmic riff and subsequently echoed by unison basses. In all his works is the composer’s tribute to a figure at the centre of his early musical development. The unaccompanied anthem, for alto, two tenors and two basses, was written in memory of Allan Wicks, who served Canterbury Cathedral as organist and master of the choristers for almost three decades, and was first performed at a Service of Thanksgiving for his life held in the Cathedral on 21 May 2010. A chorister there himself in the 1970s, Jackson — like so many who sang for the charismatic choir trainer — was inspired by the breadth, depth and richness of the repertoire that Wicks set before his choir (an adventurousness that continued to the very end of his career: Ah, mine heart in fact received its premiere in Wicks’ last service in charge at Canterbury). ‘Singing great music in an incredible building day after day left an indelible impression,’ Jackson recalled in an interview given in March 2011, a year after Wicks’ death. In all his works, to words from Ecclesiasticus 47: 8–10, connects with these formative memories of noble Canterbury rituals and the unique capacity of unaccompanied choral music to grace the cathedral’s acoustics. Above all, it bears witness to an abiding personal affection for a musician who ‘beautified … feasts, and set in order the solemn times until the end’. Public ceremony and formal occasion give way to the intimacy of private prayer in The Land of Spices. The ear may be drawn to and held by the simple beauty of Jackson’s sustained melody for trebles. But the work’s hypnotic power grows out of the harmonic arabesques of its organ part and their alchemical reactions and interactions with the vocal line. Even when spoken, the sound of George Herbert’s poem conveys the ineffable mystery of prayer, fashioned here with what T.S. Eliot described as ‘the cunning use of both the learned and the common word, to give the sudden shock of surprise and delight’. In The Land of Spices, Jackson wisely rations shocks of surprise, reserving the most delightful of them to despatch the final lines of Herbert’s text with gentleness into a void of silence.

Ecce venio cito was commissioned by Elaine and Mark Farrant, members of the congregation at Lichfield Cathedral, to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary and was first performed by the cathedral’s choir on Advent Sunday in 2005. The piece sets words from the Book of Revelation, related to the reassurance that Christ’s coming is at hand. Jackson’s enriched harmonic language, imaginative use of unaccompanied choral textures and dynamic contrasts, and heightened sense of sound and silence in a sacred space here coalesce in sustained contemplation of a redeemed world.

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Andrew Stewart is an independent music journalist based in London. He has written for, among others, the Independent and Independent on Sunday, the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, the Sunday Express and The Times. He has also worked as a choir trainer and was co-founder and Artistic Director of the Southwark Festival.
1 The Glory of the Lord

Versicle: The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.
Response: Let us rejoice and sing God’s praise for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.
Alleluia.


2 The Christ-child

The Christ-child lay on Mary’s lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all right.)
The Christ-child lay on Mary’s breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)
The Christ-child lay on Mary’s heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world’s desire.)
The Christ-child stood at Mary’s knee,
His hair was like a crown.
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.

G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936)

3 Hymn to St Margaret of Scotland

Salve salus infirmorum
Margareta laus scotorum
Et deusca albanie.

Salve fida spes reorum
Relevaren oppressorum
Lassio perto venie.

Salve per quam muti fantur
Ceci vident, egi dantur
Sospitati preistine.

Salve sydyus quo lustrantur
Peccatores et vocantur
Ab erroris tramite.

Salve byssus de tellure
Collecta contrita pure
Cedens in miliciern.

Ergo mater in virtute
Deum nostra pro salute
Pis placab prescibus.

Ut cum cunctos judicare
Venerit nos aggregare
Velt cum fidibus.

Hail, health of the sick,
Margaret, praise of Scots
And ornament of Alba.

Hail, sure hope of the accused,
Relief of the oppressed,
Gate of mercy to the weak.

Hail, thou through whom the mute speak,
The blind see, the sick are given
Health as good as new.

Hail, star by which
Sinners are illumined and called
From the path of error.

Hail, flux collected from the earth,
Smoothed down to purity,
Yielding into softness.

Therefore, mother in virtue,
Placate God with kindly prayers
For our salvation.

That when He comes to judge us all,
He may wish to gather us together
With the faithful.

Medieval Scottish found in E.S. Dewick, On a Ms. Book of Hours written in France for the use of a Scottish Lady)
O God, who didst call thy servant Queen Margaret
to an earthly throne that she might advance
thy heavenly kingdom, and didst endue her with
zeal for thy Church and charity towards thy people:
Mercifully grant that we who commemorate
her example may be fruitful in good works,
and attain to the glorious fellowship of thy Saints;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect for St Margaret of Scotland (from the Scottish Book of Common Prayer, 1928)

Sancta Margarita, ora pro nobis.
Saint Margaret, pray for us.

Jesu, Rex admirabilis
Jesus, King of Kings

Jesu, Rex admirabilis
O Jesus, King most wonderful!
et triumphant nobilis,
Thou Conqueror renowned!
dulcedo ineffabilis,
totus desiderabilis.

Jesu dulcedo cordium,
fons vivus, lumen mentium,
excedens omne gaudium
et omne desiderium.

Jesum omnes agnoscite,
amorem eius poscite;
Jesum ardenter quaerite,
quarere inaudescit.

Te nostra, Jesu, vox sonet,
nostri te mores exprimant;
te corda nostra diligent

Jesu, Rex admirabilis
O Jesus, King most wonderful!
et triumphant nobilis,
Thou Conqueror renowned!
dulcedo ineffabilis,
totus desiderabilis.

Jesu dulcedo cordium,
fons vivus, lumen mentium,
excedens omne gaudium
et omne desiderium.

May every heart confess Thy name,
and ever Thee adore;
and seeking Thee, itself inflame
to seek Thee more and more.

Thee may our tongues for ever bless;
Thee may we love alone;
and ever in our lives express
the image of Thine own. Amen.

Hymn at Matins on the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. Attrib. St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)
Translation by Fr Edward Caswell (1814–1878)

Ah, mine heart

Ah, mine heart, remember thee well,
And think on the paines that bin in hell.

Ah, mine heart, remember thee well,
how greatly thou art bound indeed,
Thou thinkest of him never a deed
That helps thee ever at thy most need.
Alas for sorrow mine heart doth bleed
To think how grievously I offended.

Ah, mine heart, remember thee well,
And think on the paines that bin in hell.

With weeping tears most lamentable
To God above I call and cry
I will ask God while I am able,
I have offended so grievously,
Me to amend I will me his,
For all my lives I have misspent,
I cry God mercy I have offended.

Ah, mine heart, remember thee well,
And think on the paines that bin in hell.

Anonymous (15th century)
Texts and translations

Missa Sanctae Margaretae

7 Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. 
Christe eleison. 
Kyrie eleison. 

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

8 Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo 
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. 
Laudamus te, Benedictimus te. 
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. 
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam 
gloriam tuam. 
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, 
Deus Pater omnipotens. 
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe; 
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. 
Qui tollis peccata mundi, 
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, Jesu Christe. 
Cuncto Sancto Spiritu in gloria 
Dei Patris. Amen. 

Glory to God in the highest, 
and on earth peace to men of good will. 
We praise you. We bless you. 
We adore you. We glorify you. 
We give you thanks for 
your great glory. 
Lord God, heavenly King, 
God the Father Almighty. 
Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; 
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, 
who takes away the sins of the world, 
have mercy upon us. 
Who takes away the sins of the world, 
receive our prayer. 
Who sits at the right hand of the Father, 
have mercy upon us. 
For only you are Holy, only you are Lord, 
only you are Most High, Jesus Christ. 
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of 
God the Father. Amen. 

9 Sanctus & Benedictus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. 
Dominus Deus Sabaoth: 
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. 
Hosanna in excelsis. 
Benedictus qui venit 
in nomine Domini; 
Hosanna in excelsis. 

Holy, Holy, Holy, 
Lord God of Sabaoth. 
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. 
Hosanna in the highest. 
Blessed is he that comes 
in the name of the Lord: 
Hosanna in the highest. 

10 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. 

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins 
of the world, have mercy upon us. 
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins 
of the world, have mercy upon us. 
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins 
of the world, grant us peace. 

11 Justorum animae

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt, et non 
tanget illos tormentum mortis. Visi sunt 
ociulis insipientium mori; illi autem sunt in pace. 

The souls of the righteous are in the hand 
of God, and the torment of death shall not 
touch them. In the sight of the unwise they 
seemed to die: but they are in peace. 

Offertory at the Feast of All Saints
12 Vidi aquam

Vidi aquam egredientem de templo
a latere dextrum, alleluia:
et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista
salvi facti sunt, et dicent, alleluia, alleluia.

Confitemini Domino quoniam bonus:
Quoniam in saeculum misericordia eius.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto;
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Antiphon at Mass, Easter to Trinity

I saw water coming forth from the temple
on the right side, alleluia:
and all to whom that water came
were saved, and shall say, alleluia, alleluia.

I shall confess unto the Lord for he is good:
For his mercy endures 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.

13 Let us all rejoice in the Lord

Let us all rejoice in the Lord and keep
a festival in honour of all the saints.
Let us join with the angels in joyful praise
to the Son of God.

Antiphon at the Feast of All Saints

In all his works

In all his works he praised the Holy One most
high with words of glory; with his whole heart
he sung songs, and loved him that made him.
He set singers also before the altar, that by
their voices they might make sweet melody,
and daily sing praises in their songs.
He beautified their feasts, and set in order
the solemn times until the end, that they
might praise his holy name, and that the
temple might sound from morning.

Ecclesiasticus 47: 8–10

14 In all his works

15 The Land of Spices

Prayer the Churches banquet, Angels age,
Gods breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummets sounding heav n and earth;

Engine against th’ Almighty, sinners towre,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six daies world-transposing in an hour,
A kinde of tune, which all things heare and fear;

Softnesse, and peace, and joy, and love, and blisse,
Exalted Manna, gladnesse of the best,
Heaven in ordinarie, man well drest,
The milkie way, the bird of Paradise,

Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the souls bloud,
The land of spices, something understood.

George Herbert (1593–1633)

16 Ecce venio cito

Ecce venio cito et merces mea mecum est
reddere unicum secundum opera sua.
Ego Alpha et Omega, primus et novissimus,
principium et finis.
Et Spiritus et sponso dicunt veni, et qui audit
dicat veni, et qui sitit veniat; qui vult accipiat
aquam vitae gratis.

Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me,
to render to every man according to his deeds.
I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.
And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.
And let him that hears say, Come. And let him
that is thirsty come. And whoever is willing,
let him take the water of life freely.

Revelation 22: 12–13, 17
Biographies

The Choir of St Mary’s Cathedral, Edinburgh is unique in Scotland in maintaining daily choral services in the Anglican tradition. The Choir was the first in the United Kingdom to allow girls to join boys as trebles in 1976. The choristers (aged 9 to 14) are educated at St Mary’s Music School, Scotland’s only choir school. In 2008 the thirtieth anniversary of the successful admission of girl choristers into the choir was marked by an article and editorial in *The Times*. In 2006 St Mary’s also became the first choir with a daily tradition to appoint a female alto.

The choir has an extensive discography. In January 2010 a disc of works by the sixteenth-century composer John Taverner was released to great critical acclaim, earning an ‘Outstanding’ accolade from *International Record Review* and five stars from *Classic FM Magazine*. The CD held seventh position in the specialist classical charts. The choir’s most recent CD, *Bruckner: Motets* (Delphian DCD34071), earned the accolade of Editor’s Choice in *Gramophone* magazine, while *The Times* acclaimed ‘a choir of humans who sing like angels’. The choir has for many years been a leading exponent of contemporary choral music; composers who have written for them include Kenneth Leighton, Francis Grier, James MacMillan, Arvo Pärt and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. *Beyond the Stars* is the second recording to emerge from a longstanding association with Gabriel Jackson.

The choir broadcasts regularly on radio and television, with recent broadcasts including a Classic FM Christmas Concert (2008) and BBC *Songs of Praise* (Christmas 2009), together with regular services on BBC Radio 2, 3 and 4. During the Edinburgh Festival the Choir is in residence, singing in a number of concerts and broadcasts in addition to the daily services, while each year the BBC broadcasts a live Choral Evensong from the Cathedral during the Festival period. In May 2011 the choir was invited to sing at the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy at St Paul’s Cathedral, London. Later that summer the choir travelled to the Far East at the invitation of the Taipei International Choral Festival and the Little Singers of Tokyo, performing to sell-out audiences at venues including St John’s Cathedral, Hong Kong, the National Concert Hall, Taipei, and Suntory Hall, Tokyo.

Treble
Antonia Smart (Head Chorister)
Aidan Biggs
Katie Bradshaw
Max Carsley
Anna Cooper
Susanna Davis
George Dehaney
Elena Grant
Malachy Harris
Naima Heath
Amy-Felicity Horsey
Emily Jarron
Neil Jeacock
Hugh Mackay
Catherine Marple
Lucas Watson

Alto
Judy Brown
Martin Hurst
Rory McCleery
Michael Wood

Tenor
Andrew Bennett
Olive Brewer
Samuel Clarke
Benjamin Tambling
James Wood

Bass
Dominic Barberi
Matthew Davies
Johnny McGhee Doyle
Giles Reid
Alex Roberts
James Skuse
Andrew Tipple

Duncan Ferguson was appointed Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral in 2007 at the age of 26, making him at the time the UK’s youngest cathedral music director. In this role he has responsibility for the extensive musical life of St Mary’s. He recruits, auditions, and trains the choristers and lay clerks, and directs the Cathedral Choir. Duncan’s debut recording with St Mary’s was received with great critical acclaim in the national and international press. During the Edinburgh Festival, Duncan maintains a busy programme of conducting, solo playing, and accompanying, as well as organising a month-long series of concerts and other musical activities.

Duncan was Organ Scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, between 1999 and 2002, and in 2003 was awarded a Distinction for his Master of Studies degree in Musicology. He accompanied the College Choir and played solo organ pieces on various CDs and broadcasts. Special events included accompanying the premiere of an oratorio written for the choir by Sir Paul McCartney, and tours, which included solo performances in Antigua, Trinidad, and Barbados. On leaving Oxford Duncan became Organ Scholar at St Paul’s Cathedral, London. He played the organ at a number of diocesan...
Biographies

and national services, and gave regular recitals at St Paul’s and throughout London. He also held the post of Assistant Director of Music at St Michael’s Church, Cornhill, and was a Tutor at King’s College, London.

Duncan moved to Edinburgh in 2005 to take up the post of Assistant Organist at St Mary’s before being appointed as Organist and Master of the Music three years later. In addition to his work there, he is the organ tutor at St Mary’s Music School and is Vice-President of the Edinburgh Society of Organists. Recent work as a guest tutor has included on behalf of the Royal College of Organists, the Royal Schools of Church Music and the University of St Andrew’s.

Nicholas Wearne is Assistant Organist at St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh and Organist at Fettes College. Before arriving in Edinburgh he spent five years at New College, Oxford, where he took BA (Hons) in Music and MPhil in Musicology and Performance. During this time he worked as Organ Scholar and later Assistant Organist with Prof Edward Higginbottom.

Nicholas has given solo performances in Suntory Hall, Tokyo; St John’s College, Cambridge; St Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York and cathedrals in Washington, Riga, Bourges and Berlin. As winner of the Poul Ruders Prize at the 2011 Odense International Organ Competition, he was invited to record Ruders’ Trio Transcendentale, and the subsequent release received an "Outstanding" recommendation in International Record Review and an Editor’s Choice in Gramophone. He is the dedicatee of a number of contemporary solo works and has benefited from funding from the Scottish Arts Council, the Royal Philharmonic Society and ACE Cultural Tours.

As accompanist, Nicholas has broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and 4, and on Classic FM, the BBC World Service and BBC television. He has performed extensively in Asia, Canada, Europe and the US, and has contributed to many recordings. He has also worked widely as a continuo player and has performed with the Academy of Ancient Music, the European Union Baroque Orchestra and the Dunedin Consort in such venues as the Barbican and the Concertgebouw.
Bruckner: Motets
Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh/Duncan Ferguson
RSAMD Brass
DCD34071

Ferguson and his Edinburgh choir turn their attention to one of the nineteenth century's compositional giants. This sequence of motets - among them several little-known gems - is a testament to Bruckner's profound Catholic faith and these performances blaze with fire and fervour in the vast cathedral's icy acoustic.

"Under its young director Duncan Ferguson, the choir is reaching new heights with its CDs for Edinburgh label Delphian. They always sounded fresh-voiced; now, following last year's Taverner disc, the atmospheric richness of this new recital of Bruckner motets has generated a CD potent enough to knock major-label competitors into the long grass" — The Times, April 2011

Taverner: Sacred Choral Music
Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh / Duncan Ferguson
DCD34223

John Taverner brought the English florid style to its culmination; his music is quite unlike anything written by his continental contemporaries. In his debut recording with the critically acclaimed Edinburgh choir, Duncan Ferguson presents this music with forces akin to those of the sixteenth century - a small group of children and a larger number of men. The singers respond with freshness, and an emotional authenticity born of the daily round of liturgical performance.

"Treble voices surf high on huge waves of polyphony in the extraordinary Missa Corona Spinea, while smaller items display the same freshness, purity and liturgical glow. Duncan Ferguson, the Master of Music, is plainly a wizard" — The Times, February 2010

Gabriel Jackson: Sacred Choral Works
Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh / Matthew Owens
Susan Hamilton soprano, Michael Bonaventure organ
DCD34027

The culmination of a four-year association between the choir of St Mary's Cathedral and British Composer Award winner Gabriel Jackson, this disc presents nine world premiere recordings. Whether gentle and meditative, brilliantly exuberant, or soaring in ecstatic contemplation, Jackson's vividly communicative music is brought thrillingly to life by a choir at the peak of its powers.

"Beautifully crafted music that allows this excellent choir full rein... the Edinburgh choristers respond with superlative performances, full of spirit but always secure and sensitive. Owens has trained this choir to an exceptionally high level and the sound can only be described as luxurious" — Gramophone, December 2005

Songs of the Baltic Sea
National Youth Choir of Great Britain / Mike Brewer
DCD34382

East meets West on this new recording as two great singing traditions are brought together, to thrilling effect. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the three Baltic states have emerged as powerhouses of choral innovation and imagination. Mike Brewer and his choir bring all their customary fervour and virtuosity to bear on this programme of masterworks from three of Europe's smallest, yet musically richest, countries.

"The virtuosic NYCGB and top choral trainer Mike Brewer revel in the rich cluster-harmonies and religious colours of native Baltic works alongside Cantus Maris Baltici by the UK's Gabriel Jackson. Essential for choral fans" — The Observer, December 2011