

## *Contents*

	<i>page</i>
Track List	4
<i>A Brief History of Choral Music</i> , by David Hansell	13
I.    Origins	14
II.   Early Polyphony	20
III.  The Baroque Period	39
IV.  The Classical Period	68
V.   The Nineteenth Century	76
VI.  The Twentieth Century and Beyond	99
Five Centuries of Choral Music: A Timeline (choral music, history, art and architecture, literature)	124
Glossary	170
Credits	176

## Track List

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### CD 1

#### **Anon (Gregorian Chant)**

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 1 | Crux fidelis                           | 0.50     |
|   | Nova Schola Gregoriana / Alberto Turco | 8.550952 |

#### **Josquin des Prez (c. 1440/55–c. 1521)**

- |   |                                   |          |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 2 | Ave Maria gratia plena            | 5.31     |
|   | Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly | 8.553428 |

#### **John Taverner (c. 1490–1545)**

##### Missa 'Gloria Tibi Trinitas'

- |   |                                  |          |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|
| 3 | Sanctus (extract)                | 5.28     |
|   | The Sixteen / Harry Christophers | CDH55052 |

#### **John Taverner**

- |   |                                 |          |
|---|---------------------------------|----------|
| 4 | Christe Jesu, pastor bone       | 3.35     |
|   | Cambridge Singers / John Rutter | COLCD113 |

- Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585)**  
 [5] In manus tuas, Domine 2.36  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.550576
- William Byrd (c. 1540–1623)**  
 [6] Laudibus in sanctis 5.47  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.550843
- Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525/6–1594)**  
 Missa 'Aeterna Christi Munera'  
 [7] Agnus Dei 4.58  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.550573
- Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)**  
 [8] O magnum mysterium 4.17  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.550575
- Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)**  
 Vespers of the Blessed Virgin  
 [9] Laudate pueri Dominum 6.05  
 The Scholars Baroque Ensemble 8.550662–63
- Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674)**  
 Jonas  
 [10] Recitative: 'Et crediderunt Ninevitae...'  
 [11] Chorus of Ninevites: 'Peccavimus, Domine...'  
 Consortium Carissimi / Vittorio Zanon 0.25  
 2.25  
 8.557390

- Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)**
- 12 Die mit Tränen säen 3.39  
 Alsfelder Vocal Ensemble / I Febiarmonici / Wolfgang Helbich 8.555705
- Heinrich Schütz**  
 Weihnachtshistorie (The Christmas Story)
- 13 Die Weisen (The Wise Men) 2.39  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.553514
- Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704)**
- 14 Salve Regina (H24) 6.29  
 Le Concert Spirituel / Hervé Niquet 8.553174
- Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)**
- 15 O God, the King of Glory 4.24  
 Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.553130
- Thomas Weelkes (?1576–1623)**
- 16 Hosanna to the Son of David 1.48  
 Oxford Camerata / Gary Cooper, organ / Jeremy Summerly 8.553209
- Henry Purcell (1659–1695)**
- 17 O God, thou hast cast us out 3.45  
 Oxford Camerata / Laurence Cummings, organ / Jeremy Summerly 8.553129

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)**

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott (Cantata No. 80)

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 18 | Chorus: 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott'      | 4.53 |
| 19 | Chorale: 'Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär' | 3.39 |
| 20 | Chorale: 'Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn'  | 1.35 |

Hungarian Radio Chorus / Failoni Chamber Orchestra, Budapest / Mátyás Antál 8.550642

**Johann Sebastian Bach**

Christmas Oratorio

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 21 | Evangelist: 'Da Jesus geboren war zu Bethlehem...' | 0.25 |
| 22 | Chorus: 'Wo ist der neugeborne König der Jüden?'   | 1.46 |
| 23 | Chorale: 'Dein Glanz all Finsternis verzehrt...'   | 1.10 |

Hungarian Radio Chorus /

Budapest Failoni Chamber Orchestra / Géza Oberfrank

8.550428–30

**TT 78:23**

## CD 2

**George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)****'Dettingen' Te Deum**

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 1 | O Lord, in thee have I trusted                                 | 3.56     |
|   | Alsfelder Vocal Ensemble / Concerto Polacco / Wolfgang Helbich | 8.554753 |

**George Frideric Handel****Samson**

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 2 | Aria and Chorus: 'Let the bright seraphim...'                        | 6.24     |
|   | The Sixteen / Symphony of Harmony and Invention / Harry Christophers | COR16008 |

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)****Mass in C minor, K. 427 ('Great' Mass)**

- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| 3 | Gloria in excelsis  | 2.33     |
|   | Hungarian Radio Chorus / Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Michael Halász | 8.554421 |

**Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)****Missa in angustiis ('Nelson' Mass)**

- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| 4 | Benedictus: Benedictus qui venit          | 5:33     |
| 5 | Benedictus: Hosanna in excelsis           | 0:44     |
|   | Hungarian Radio and Television Chorus     |          |
|   | Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia / Béla Drahos | 8.554416 |

**Franz Joseph Haydn****Die Schöpfung (The Creation)**

- [6] **Aria and Chorus: 'Nun schwanden vor dem heiligen Strahle'** 3.43  
Cologne Vocal Ensemble / Capella Augustina / Andreas Spering 8.557380–81

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)****Psalm 42**

- [7] **Finale: 'Warum betrübst du dich'** 4:43  
Stuttgart Gachinger Kantorei / Stuttgart Bach Collegium / Helmuth Rilling CD98.307

**Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)**

- [8] **Os justi** 5.07  
Choir of St Bride's Church, Fleet Street / Robert Jones 8.550956

**Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)****Requiem, Op. 48**

- [9] **In Paradisum** 3.23  
Oxford Schola Cantorum Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly 8.550765

**Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)****Ein deutsches Requiem (A German Requiem)**

- [10] **IV. 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen'** 4.47  
Slovak Philharmonic Chorus /  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Alexander Rahbari 8.550213

**Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)**

## Roméo et Juliette

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 11 | Prologue: Latent Ancient Hatreds                                     | 2.54     |
|    | San Diego Master Chorale / San Diego Symphony Orchestra / Yoav Talmi | 8.553195 |

**Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)**

## Symphony No. 8 ('Symphony of a Thousand')

## Part One: Hymnus: Veni, Creator Spiritus

- |    |                          |      |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 12 | 'Veni, Creator Spiritus' | 1.23 |
| 13 | 'Imple superna gratia'   | 4.09 |

Barbara Kubiak, soprano I (Magna Peccatrix) /

Timothy Bentch, tenor (Doctor Marianus) /

Jadwiga Rappé, alto I (Mulier Samaritana) /

Ewa Marciniak, alto II (Maria Aegyptica) /

Wojciech Drabowicz, baritone (Pater Ecstaticus) /

Piotr Nowacki, bass (Pater Profundis) /

Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir / Polish Radio Choir in Kraków /

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University Choir / The Warsaw Boys Choir /

Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra / Antoni Wit 8.550533–34**Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)**

- |    |                                   |          |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 14 | The Blue Bird                     | 3.47     |
|    | Oxford Camerata / Jeremy Summerly | 8.553088 |

**Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)****Gloria**

- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 15 | Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris  | 5.42     |
|    | Chœur Régional Vittoria d'Ile-de-France /<br>Orchestre de la Cité / Michel Piquemal | 8.553176 |

**Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)****Mass in G minor**

- |    |                                      |          |
|----|--------------------------------------|----------|
| 16 | Sanctus – Osanna I                   | 2.38     |
|    | Elora Festival Singers / Noel Edison | 8.554826 |

**Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)****St Nicolas**

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 17 | He Journeys to Palestine   | 7.33     |
|    | Tallis Chamber Choir / English Chamber Orchestra / Steuart Bedford | 8.557203 |

**Benjamin Britten**

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 18 | Antiphon   | 5.11     |
|    | St Johns College Choir, Cambridge / Christopher Robinson | 8.554791 |

**Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)**

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 19 | Cantate Domino canticum novum (Psalm 95) | 3.25     |
|    | Elora Festival Singers / Noel Edison     | 8.557299 |

**TT 77:45**



# **A Brief History of Choral Music**

by

**David Hansell**

# I. Origins

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## What is 'choral'?

The repertoire of choral music is almost certainly wider than we can ever hope to know. It seems a reasonable guess that singing in some shape or form may well have been mankind's earliest form of corporate music-making, developing relentlessly over the ensuing millennia into the varied and sophisticated activity for both amateur and professional ensembles that it has now become. Certainly, sacred vocal music in the form of plainchant was the first type of western European music to be formally notated, a necessary move if the repertoire was to be preserved and promulgated in a fixed form and if the performance of a large repertoire by a group of singers – a choir, in fact – was to achieve unanimity.

But what exactly is a choir, and by extension choral music? For 'choir', like sonata, symphony, motet\* and concerto, is one of those musical terms that have meant different things to different people at different times and in different places over the course of musical history. The modern definition of 'choir' as a group of singers singing in parts, with several singers to each part, might well have been recognised by musicians of the past, but for many of

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\*Terms explained in the Glossary are marked with an asterisk the first time they occur.

them it would have been one of a range of available definitions of the term and perhaps not always the most common one.

In late-Renaissance Italy, for example, *coro* could as readily be applied to a group of instrumentalists as to a group of singers, and in neither of these ensembles would there have been more than one performer to each line of music. Archival research over the last few decades now suggests that a great deal of early sacred vocal music, for example by Palestrina and Bach, was normally performed by just one singer for each part, even though we nowadays still refer to it as 'choral'. For earlier composers such as the Parisian Léonin (late twelfth century) and the Franco-Flemish Guillaume Dufay and Johannes Ockeghem (both fifteenth century) this was even more certainly the case. Thomas Hardy's Wessex church 'quire' was a group of singers and instrumentalists. Even today 'choir'/'choral' in some circumstances will vary in meaning as in many Anglican cathedrals the office\* of Evensong sung by the 'choir' might feature an ensemble of young boys, or girls, or adult men, or any combination of these often separately rehearsed groups.

Setting the parameters for this project has therefore not been easy. It would, however, have been perverse to fly in the face of the strong set of modern expectations that the term 'choral music' will naturally arouse. Modern choral singers and conductors will therefore find here the kind of music that they would consider to be their domain. Those genuinely on a voyage of discovery will find the main areas of repertoire at least outlined or at worst signposted and will be encouraged to continue their journey by exploring the music and composers mentioned in the text even if they are not represented on the

companion recordings. All readers and listeners are urged, however, to ponder the music's original socio-historical and performance context and to consider whether or not this should have some bearing on its presentation and appreciation in our times. Inserting the short passages of plainchant appropriate to a specific liturgical occasion (a set of Propers\*) between the movements of a Renaissance mass\*, for example, provides a welcome variety of texture\* and sonority in a concert or recording, and introduces the singers to a new and demanding challenge, especially if traditional chant notation is used. It also reminds both performers and listeners that the movements of a mass (including those by Classical composers such as Haydn and Mozart) were not intended to be heard in succession.

Above all it should not be forgotten that communal singing has for centuries provided a means of self-expression, encouragement and inspiration on a number of occasions: work, drinking, going to war, courting, worship, pilgrimage processions, celebration, dancing and mourning, to name but a few. Most of the earliest vocal music handed down to us is in monophonic\* form, but it is likely that some form of instrumental accompaniment was added. Harmony, where it existed, was usually in the form of a drone (sustained pedal note\*) or parallel chord progressions, too rudimentary to need notating. Later, accompaniments would be formed by simple chord patterns or built up by melodic interchanges between two or more voices. For example in the English medieval round known as the Reading Rota, *Sumer is icumen in*, various pairs of voices exchange material over the simplest possible harmonic pattern: two alternating chords. Similar 'folk harmony' traditions involving melodies

accompanied by two or three alternating chords have evolved in various parts of the world, particularly in Africa. Other folk traditions are more sophisticated: Georgian three-voice music, which has become popular recently, is strikingly dissonant and chromatic\*, but represents something of an exception.

### **Early Christianity**

Of all the different activities mentioned above, the one for which by far the most music survives is worship, specifically Christian worship. From 313 AD, after three centuries of persecution, Christians in the Roman Empire were at last free to assemble publicly when the Christian Church was officially recognised. In 328 Emperor Constantine founded a new city, Constantinople (now Istanbul), which became the new capital of the empire – which we now usually call Byzantium. Constantinople became an important centre for Christian worship and arts, including music and icon painting. For three centuries the liturgy\* gradually evolved until it reached its definitive form in the sixth century. In the early Middle Ages the Christian Church was one, but after the Great Schism of 1012 the eastern or Orthodox churches and the western or Roman Catholic Church, which had the Bishop of Rome or Pope as its head, were no longer in communion.

### **Byzantine chant**

Today visitors to Greek Orthodox churches can still experience a type of worship that has remained essentially the same since the sixth century in

terms of both music and liturgy. Byzantine chant consists of one line of music, often accompanied by an *ison*\*. The melodies are classified according to eight modes, depending on the scale and the melodic formulae used. Some of these modes consist of scale patterns and intervals also found in Arabic or other eastern music, and can sound exotic to the western ear. Instruments are used rarely, if at all, and the services are sung by alternating groups of male singers, consisting of soloists, small vocal groups and members of the congregation.

### **The spread of Christianity**

The texts used in Byzantine chant are in Greek but, as Christianity spread, so too did the variety of the languages used: Slavonic countries such as Bulgaria and Russia used a Slavonic language similar to modern Russian known as Church Slavonic; in western Europe, Latin was used. After Christianity spread north-east through Bulgaria to what is now Russia, the character of the music started to change. Whereas the Greek melodies often sound dynamic, with melodic leaps and contrasts of register, Russia evolved a style of chant in which the melodic contours were gentler, with stepwise motion within a narrow range and less obvious contrasts, and generous use of melisma\*. The best-known of the Russian chant repertoires is called *znamenny*. In Russia the eight-mode system metamorphosed into an eight-tone system, in which each chant was assigned to one of eight tones depending on its melodic pattern.

## Gregorian chant

In western Europe in the early Middle Ages the church fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, later called the Pope. In this region various Latin chant (or plainchant) repertoires evolved, of which the most important came to be called Gregorian chant. This repertoire is named after Pope Gregory I (Gregory the Great; reigned 589–604), under whose aegis much of the existing chant repertoire was compiled, edited and promulgated through western Europe. The result was a much greater conformity than had existed before, with the differing Latin liturgies then in use throughout Europe becoming absorbed into the Roman one.

Gregorian chant consists of unaccompanied, monophonic melodies in undulating melodic patterns. It often has a floating, other-worldly quality that makes it fitting for both prayer and meditation. Like Byzantine chant, Gregorian chant was organised into eight modes\* or tones, classed – again – according to the scale and melodic formulae used. There is an immense variety of styles contained within Gregorian chant, from the simple monotone formulae used for reciting psalms to the more complex antiphons\*. Some chants suitable for soloists are highly ornate and melismatic, while others, such as hymns, are syllabic and in a strophic\* style suitable for less expert singers. *Crux fidelis* (CD 1, track 1) is a short text in praise of the 'faithful Cross'. It forms part of the hymn *Pange lingua* by Venantius Fortunatus (530/40–c. 600) and is sung during Holy Week and on Good Friday.

This is the introductory chapter of Discover Choral Music.  
The full booklet, illustrated with photographs and accompanied by two CDs,  
is available to buy from [www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com).