

Herbert Howells is known chiefly for his church music, arguably the finest by any English composer of the twentieth century. *Sir Patrick Spens*, Howells' first attempt at writing a large-scale choral work, has received only one known performance until this recording. *Hymnus paradisi* was composed under heart-breaking circumstances following the death of the composer's son, Michael, aged nine. As Howells later wrote: 'The sudden loss of an only son ... might impel a composer ... to seek release and consolation in a language and terms most personal to him. Music may well have power ... to offer that release and comfort. It did so in my case.' Throughout this deeply moving work, in which the human tragedy of a boy's death and a father's grief are enshrined, Howells' command of choral and orchestral polyphony is masterly.

Herbert
HOWELLS
(1892–1983)

WORLD PREMIERE
RECORDING

1	Sir Patrick Spens Op. 23 ^{2 3 *}	19:49
	<i>Hymnus paradisi</i> ^{1 2}	45:01
2	I Preludio: Lento, molto espressivo	3:52
3	II Requiem aeternam: Lento, teneramente	9:21
4	III The Lord is my shepherd (Psalm 23): Quasi lento: non troppo rubato	7:22
5	IV Sanctus – I will lift up mine eyes: Allegro volante	9:46
6	V I heard a voice from heaven: Lento, assai tranquillo	4:40
7	VI Holy is the true Light: Con moto, ma assai sostenuto	9:38

Claire Rutter, Soprano ¹ • James Gilchrist, Tenor ²
Roderick Williams, Baritone ³ The Bach Choir
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra[†] • David Hill

* denotes world première recording † Leader: Duncan Riddell

This recording was made with generous support from the Herbert Howells Trust, the Bach Choir,
the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust and the Finzi Trust

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16th and 17th September, 2006 • Publisher: Novello & Co. • Booklet Notes: Andrew Burn
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(Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library, London)



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Playing Time
65:12



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