

**CONVIVIUM SINGERS** 

# MALCOLM ARCHER

## AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS



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I started to compose at the age of 11, and this has been an important musical force in my life ever since. Since I have spent most of my life working with choirs, the main part of my output has been choral music, however, I have also written music for the theatre, including three musicals, as well as choral and orchestral music and other instrumental works.

My composition teachers were Humbert Sumsion at the Royal College of Music and Alan Ridout at Cambridge. Both taught me the importance of musical economy and never using more notes than are necessary to convey a desired musical effect. My style is essentially lyrical and approachable, but with a distinctly individual harmonic character, and some of the greatest influences on my music have been the English composers Vaughan Williams, Finzi and Howells, with a leaning at times toward the French composers Ravel and Debussy.

My love of poetry was inspired by my mother, who taught speech and drama, and from an early age I was acting in plays and going in for speech and drama classes in the Lytham St. Annes Music Festival as well as many other classes in piano and violin. Those early years taught me to love words, and this has certainly shaped both my compositions and also my approach to choir training, where the importance of expressive diction and conveying the mood of the words is my constant creed.

At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners was commissioned by Stephen Parsons for the opening of Bristol Cathedral Choir School as the first new choir school Academy in 2010. The work received its first performance in February of that year in Bristol Cathedral, sung by the School Choir and Cathedral Choir under Eiron Bailey, with Mark Lee at the organ. It sets a text by John Donne, the priest and poet who was the Dean at St. Paul's Cathedral in London at the time of the Great Fire.

There are two carol settings on this disc and both set my own words. *The Carol of the Stable* is a simple strophic setting with a memorable melody, sung at the start by sopranos. Its simple and understated mood develops in the final verse, where with a rich and full organ part and upper voices harmonic descant it reaches a powerful peak, before relaxing into the opening mood at the end. The other carol *Sing of a Stable by an Inn*, is rather more illusive and atmospheric with sustained writing and the melodic interest shared between the voices.

Suo Gân is an arrangement for upper voices of the beautiful and haunting Welsh tune by Alaw Werin. It is essentially a lullaby, sung here by a solo soprano in Welsh, with a distant descant at the end. The work may also be sung in English to a translation of my own with a Christmas flavour, which makes it effective as a carol.

An Irish Blessing sets a traditional Irish text, which I first heard some years ago in Wells Cathedral used by our Dean, the Very Reverend Richard Lewis as blessing at the end of Evensong. I was very taken with it, and determined to set it to music when the occasion arose. There are very few musical settings of these words, and this version is dedicated to my mother-inlaw, Gwenneth Robinson.

In War, Resolution was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral for the dedication of the new Winston Churchill memorial gates, designed and built by James Horrobin for the crypt of St. Paul's in 2004. The first performance was given by the Cathedral choir in the presence of three former British Prime Ministers and Churchill's daughter, Lady Soames. It sets a text by Winston Churchill, and the solo trumpet quotes from 'The Last Post' during this reflective motet, which is particularly suitable for use on Remembrance Sunday.

Missa Montis Regalis was composed in 2010 and was commissioned by the Montreal Boys' Choir Course, and received its first performance in August of that year by the course participants, conducted by the composer in Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal with Patrick Wedd at the organ. It sets the traditional Latin Mass text, but with no *Credo*. It has a colourful organ part and the harmonic language has its astrigent moments, with dramatic mood changes; from the triumphant opening of the *Gloria* to the brooding and poignant soprano duet for the words 'Domine Deus, Filius Patris'.

*Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester* was commissioned by The Royal School of Church Music publications for a tour of the Icon of Richard of Chichester around Sussex in 2003.

A Harvest Anthem (God in such love for us) sets a text by Fred Pratt Green, and was commissioned by Paul Hale for the choir of Southwell Minster, in memory of Kenneth Beard, a former Rector Chori (Organist and Choirmaster) at Southwell.

Anthem for Seafarers (Eternal Father, strong to save) was commissioned by Michael Drayton at the time of his retirement from The Baltic Exchange as their Chairman. It received its first performance in Vancouver, marking the International Year of the Seafarer and has since received several performances at seafaring centres around the world, including The Royal Naval Chapel in Greenwich and St. Paul's Cathedral at the annual service for Seafarers. Another seafaring work on this disc is the arrangement of *Nearer, my God, to Thee,* which uses the American tune by Lowell Mason (1792-1872) with words by Sarah Flower Adams. This tune is said—perhaps apocryphally—to have been played on board the *RMS Titanic* in its final moments. This arrangement, which includes solos for soprano and tenor, is dedicated to Michael and Gail Drayton, who have given much valuable support for this disc and other Convivium projects.

Good Christians all, Rejoice and Sing is an extrovert piece with a lively organ part and crisp rhythmic vitality within the framework of alternating time signatures of 7/8 and 6/8. It was commissioned in loving memory of Lillian Roberts, by her husband, children and grandchildren.

All Creatures of our God and King was commissioned in 2011 by Magdalen College School, Oxford, the school where I held my first teaching appointment as Assistant Director of Music from 1976 to 1978. The work sets words by W.H. Draper based on the 'Cantico di frate sole' of St. Francis of Assisi. It received its first performance at the Magdalen College School Commemoration service in the University Church in Oxford in 2011, sung by the school choir under the direction of Peter Smith.

Malcolm Archer, 2012

#### 01 At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners Text by John Donne

At the round earth's imagined corners, blow Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise From death, you numberless infinities Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go; All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow, All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies, Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you whose eyes Shall behold God and never taste death's woe. But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space, For if above all these my sins abound, 'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace When we are there; here on this lowly ground Teach me how to repent; for that's as good As if thou hadst sealed my pardon with thy blood.

02 The Carol of the Stable Text by Malcolm Archer

O light a candle as a sign that he is born our King divine, And in a stable bare you'll find this babe who comes to save mankind. His mother Mary meek and mild, she sits and rocks the Holy Child, The Lord of space and time is He, our Saviour now and in infancy.

Upon this freezing winter's night, the shepherds see a wondrous sight, A host of angels throng around, telling the news in glorious sound. The shepherds rush to find this boy, whose radiance fills the world with joy, Amidst the creatures of the stall, before the child in homage fall.

And in the wonder of this night is born a babe of blessed light, The joy of all the world is he, sent now to set all Christians free. So praise with us this King of grace, whose love for all shines in his face, And join with angel hosts above to hail the birth of the Lord of love. 03 Suo Gân (Soloist: Georgina Stalbow) Text attributed to Robert Bryan Translation by Malcolm Archer

Huna blentyn yn fy mynwes Clyd a chynnes ydyw hon; Breichiau mam sy'n dynn amdanat, Cariad mam sy dan fy mron; Ni chaiff dim amharu'th gyntun, Ni wna undyn â thi gam; Huna'n dawel, annwyl blentyn, Huna'n fwyn ar fron dy fam.

> Huna'n dawel, heno, huna, Huna'n fwyn, y tlws ei lun; Pam yr wyt yn awr yn gwenu, Gwenu'n dirion yn dy hun? Ai angylion fry sy'n gwenu, Arnat ti yn gwenu'n llon, Tithau'n gwenu'n ôl dan huno, Huno'n dawel ar fy mron?

Paid ag ofni, dim ond deilen Gura, gura ar y ddôr; Paid ag ofni, ton fach unig Sua, sua ar lan y môr; Huna blentyn, nid oes yma Ddim i roddi iti fraw; Gwena'n dawel yn fy mynwes Ar yr engyl gwynion draw. Sleep my baby, little Jesus, Warm and cosy now you lie. Mary's arms are wrapped around you, She'll protect you, do not cry. Nothing will disturb your sleeping, You are safe from worldly harm. Sleep in peace, my dearest Saviour, Mary holds you on her arm.

Sleep, sweet baby, through the darkness, Sleep in peace, O dearest child. In your dreaming you are smiling, Pleasant dreams, serene and mild. Are the angels smiling with you, Happy smiles that bring you rest? They will guard you in your sleeping As you sleep on mother's breast.

Do not fear, O dearest baby As a leaf falls by your head, Do not fear the gentle breezes As they rock your stable bed. There is nothing here to frighten, Nothing here to cause distress. Sleep, my baby, little Jesus, While the angels thee caress.

#### 04 An Irish Blessing Traditional (Irish)

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind always be at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; The rain fall soft upon your fields, And until we meet again, May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

05 In War, Resolution (Trumpet: Samuel Moffitt) Quotation by Winston Churchill

In war: resolution. In defeat: defiance. In victory: magnanimity. In peace: goodwill.

#### 06 Missa Montis Regalis Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy upon us. Christ have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.

#### 07 Gloria (Soloists: Louise Laprun, Helena Gullan)

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, Benedicimus te, Adoramus te. Glorificamus te, Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, 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. Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen. Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, We bless thee, We worship thee, we glorify thee, We give thanks to thee for thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ: O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ art the Most High With the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.









#### 08 Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Hosanna in the highest.

#### 09 Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

10 Agnus Dei *(Soloist: Louise Laprun)* 

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

#### 14 Anthem for Seafarers (Eternal Father, Strong to Save) Text by William Whiting

Eternal Father, strong to save, Whose arm doth bind the restless wave, Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep Its own appointed limits keep: O hear us when we cry to Thee For those in peril on the sea.

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard And hushed their raging at thy word, Who walkest on the foaming deep, And calm amid the storm did'st sleep: O hear us when we cry to Thee For those in peril on the sea.

O Holy Spirit, who did'st brood Upon the waters dark and rude, And bid their angry tumult cease, And give, for wild confusion, peace: O hear us when we cry to Thee, For those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power Our brethren shield in danger's hour; From rock and tempest, fire and foe, Protect them wheresoe'er they go: Thus evermore shall rise to Thee Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

#### 13 Sing of a Stable by an Inn Text by Malcolm Archer

Sing of a stable by an inn, Sing of a maiden free from sin, Sing of a baby in a stall, Sing of the Lord of all.

Sing of the angels in the sky, Bringing the news that Christ is nigh, Sing of the shepherds who this morn Hurry to see their saviour born.

Sing of the wise men from afar, Travelling on, led by a star, Bearing their gifts so rich and rare, To pay their homage to the King so fair.

> Sing of a babe by heav'n adored, Sing of an everlasting Lord, Sing of peace upon the earth, Sing of the wondrous holy birth.

#### 11 Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester Text by St. Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to thee, our Lord Jesus Christ, For all the benefits which thou hast given us, For all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for us. O Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, May we know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, And follow thee more nearly. Amen.

#### 12 A Harvest Anthem Text by Malcolm Archer

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty, Life that sustains us in body and mind: Plenty for all if we learn how to share it, Riches undreamed of to fathom and find.

Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it, Ours as God's stewards to farm and defend. From its pollution, misuse and destruction, Good Lord deliver us, world without end!

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty, Life that sustains us in body and mind: Plenty for all if we learn how to share it, Riches undreamed of to fathom and find.

God in such love for us lent us this planet, Gave it a purpose in time and in space: Small as a spark from the fire of creation, Cradle of life and the home of our race.

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty, Life that sustains us in body and mind: Plenty for all if we learn how to share it, Riches undreamed of to fathom and find.

Long have our human wars ruined its harvest; Long has earth bowed to the terror of force Long have we wasted what others have need of, Poisoned the fountain of life at its source.

#### 15 Good Christians all, Rejoice & Sing Traditional (German)

Good Christian all, rejoice and sing, Now is the triumph of our King! To all the world glad news we bring, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord of life is ris'n for aye; Bring flow'rs of Song to strew his way; Let all the earth rejoice and say, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Praise we in songs of victory, That love, that life which cannot die, And sing with hearts uplifted high, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thy name we bless, O risen Lord, And sing today with one accord The life laid down, the life restored, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

#### 16

Nearer, my God, to Thee (Soloists: Penelope Appleyard, Adrian Green) Text by Sarah Adams

Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to Thee, E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me: Still all my song shall be 'Nearer, my God, to Thee', Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.

There let the way appear, steps unto heav'n; All that Thou sendest me in mercy giv'n; Angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.

Or if on joyful wing cleaving the sky, Sun, moon and stars forgot, upwards I fly, Still all my song shall be, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee',

Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.

#### 17 All Creatures of our God and King Text by Francis of Assisi

All creatures of our God and King; Lift up your voice and with us sing Alleluia! Alleluia! Thou burning sun with golden beam, Thou silver moon with softer gleam! O praise Him! Alleluia! O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong, Ye clouds that sail in Heaven along, Alleluia! Alleluia! Thou rising morn in praise rejoice, Ye lights of evening, find a voice. O praise Him! Alleluia! O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou flowing water, pure and clear, Make music for thy Lord to hear, O praise Him! Alleluia! Thou fire so masterful and bright, That givest man both warmth and light, O praise Him! Alleluia! O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia! And all ye men of tender heart, Forgiving others, take your part, O sing ye! Alleluia! Ye who long pain and sorrow bear, Praise God and on Him cast your care! O praise Him! Alleluia! O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless, And worship Him in humbleness, O praise Him! Alleluia! Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, And praise the Spirit, Three in One. O praise Him! Alleluia! O praise Him! Alleluia! Alleluia!



# CONVIVIUMSINGERS

Established in 2009 by Adrian Green and Alexander Norman, Convivium Singers is a prizewinning, critically acclaimed ensemble noted for its recordings and performances of British choral music

Convivium Singers aims to provide opportunities for young singers at the early stages of performing careers, as well as for talented musicians who have chosen not to pursue careers in music. They currently comprise singers from many established choirs, including Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir, Ex Cathedra, Armonico Consort, Portsmouth Cathedral, the Choir of Royal Holloway, Genesis Sixteen, and York Minster. Convivium Singers often works with established conductors such as Malcolm Archer and Neil Ferris, and collaborates with living composers to introduce their music to wider audiences In October 2011, Convivium Singers were prize-winners at the Tolosa International Choral Contest in Spain, receiving trophies for their sacred and secular ensemble performances and also giving concerts in churches and concert halls in the surrounding Basque region. In June 2012, Convivium Singers performed at the 'Fabbrica del Canto' International Choral Festival, Italy. For more information about current projects and performances in the UK and abroad, please visit our website.

www.conviviumsingers.co.uk

# DAVIDPRICE

David Price is Organist and Master of the Choristers at Portsmouth Cathedral Before he came to Portsmouth he was Assistant Organist of Elv Cathedral having previously held Organ Scholarships at Rochester Cathedral and Crovdon Minster. During his time at Ely he toured Germany, Belgium, Holland, Poland and the Czech Republic with the Cathedral Choir The choir's John Amner recording for Hyperion was critically acclaimed and Editor's Choice in 'The Gramophone' music magazine. Since he has been at Portsmouth the profile of the cathedral's music has been raised to new heights through twelve international tours, recordings and regular work for BBC and ITV. In 2007 Portsmouth University conferred upon David Price an Honorary Doctorate of Music in recognition of the significant contribution he has made to the development of music at the cathedral and for his contribution to the cultural life of the city. In the same year he was made an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of St Cecilia In 2009 his St John Passion for Good Friday was published by Encore Publications in a series of the gospel passions alongside John Scott, Philip Moore and Richard Llovd.









MALCOLMARCHER

music from St. Paul's was voted Malcolm Archer is Director of Chapel Music at Winchester College, where he trains and conducts the Ouiristers and Chapel Choir and teaches organ in the College. He has enjoyed a distinguished career in cathedral music, which has taken him to posts at Norwich, Bristol, Wells Cathedrals and then Director of Music at St. Paul's Cathedral in

During his time there he directed the choir for several State services, including the Tsunami Memorial Service, the London Bombings Service and the 80th Birthday Service for HM The Oueen. for which he was invited by Buckingham Palace to compose a special anthem. performed live on BBC1. His many broadcasts and recordings from Wells and St Paul's have received critical

London.

Editor's number one choice in The Daily Telegraph. Malcolm is much in demand as a choir trainer and choral and orchestral conductor, and he has directed concerts, workshops and courses in various parts of the globe, as well as working with several leading orchestras. He is also the Musical Director of the lean Langlais Festival in France. As an organ recitalist he has played in nine European countries, the USA and Canada, and his CDs include repertoire as diverse as J.S. Bach and Olivier Messiaen as well as his own music.

acclaim, and his CD of Christmas

As a composer, Malcolm receives regular commissions from both sides of the Atlantic. and he has many published works. Recently he has composed works for the Southern Cathedrals Festival, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Festival of the Sons of the Clergy and an anthem for the enthronement service of the Bishop of Winchester. He has

also jointly edited two books for Oxford University Press: Advent for Choirs and Epiphany to All Saints for Choirs. He has been an adjudicator for the BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the year competition, and for four years was a judge for the BBC Songs of Praise School Choirs competition, including chairing the judging panel for two of those competitions. He is also a frequent contributor to that programme as both interviewee and musical arranger. He has recently been a judge for the British Composer Awards.

Malcolm has served as council member of the Royal College of Organists, and he is a member of the council of the Guild of Church Musicians, from whom he was recently awarded the Fellowship for his services to church music over many years. In 2009, he was awarded the FRSCM (Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music) for his work in three cathedrals, and as a composer of church music.

### AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS

#### **CONVIVIUM SINGERS**

Soprano: Julia Alsop, Penelope Appleyard, Katherine Arnott, Esther Drabkin-Reiter, Natalie Hyde, Joanna Loxton, Charlotte Milligan, Emma Ralph, Georgina Stalbow

Alto: Alasdair Forbes, Helena Gullan, Laura Gullan, Thomas Jordan Louise Laprun, Joe Waggott

Tenor: Neil Collins, Christopher Fitzgerald-Lombard, Adrian Green, James Hall, Matthew Spillett, Ewan Stockwell

Bass: Harry Bennett, Tim Burtt, William Drakett, John Holland-Avery, Lewis Jones, Johnny Kilhams, Richard Parker, Ciaran Walshe, **Richard West, James Wilder** 

Trumpet: (In War, Resolution) Samuel Moffitt

#### WITH THANKS

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The Royal School of Church Music for their support of this recording All pieces on this disc are published by the RSCM DIRECTED MALCOLM ARCHER

ORGAN DAVID PRICE

CONVIVIUM SINGERS AND THE CHOIRS OF PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL (\*TRACK 14)

ENGINEERING & MASTERING ADAQ KHAN & KEVIN HODGSON

**ARTIST PHOTOGRAPHY** 

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