

OLIVER TARNEY
MAGNIFICAT

M A N V I N D E R R A T T A N
SERAFINE CHAMBER CHOIR & SINFONIA



Commissioned by Manvinder Rattan and
Sing for Pleasure to celebrate its Golden Jubilee.

MMXIV

TARNEY
MAGNIFICAT

I MAGNIFICAT
04:19



II ET EXULTAVIT
03:46



III QUIA RESPEXIT
04:04



IV ECCE ENIM
04:22



V QUIA FECIT
04:39



VI ET MISERICORDIA
06:51



VII FECIT POTENTIAM
04:23



VIII DEPOSUIT
04:13



IX ESURIENTES
04:45



X SUSCEPIT ISRAEL
04:18



XI SICUT LOCUTUS EST
05:04



XII GLORIA PATRI
03:35



A choral and
orchestral setting of
the *Magnificat* based on
the Book of Samuel, the
Gospels of Luke and
James, and *Maryām*, the
Qur'anic book of Mary.

Recorded at the Church
of the Holy Spirit,
Clapham, London, in
24-bit audio on 23/24
May 2015, by Serafine
Chamber Choir and
Sinfonia. Directed by
Manvinder Rattan.





COMPOSER'S PREFACE

Mary was about 16. As many traditional images show, she may have been working at her spinning wheel, minding her own business, when the Angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her the news that she was with child. Not only that, but her son was God, and would grow up to be the saviour of mankind. I can't help but feel that ecstatic jubilation was probably not her first response. Many settings of the *Magnificat* present the text as though Mary is saying it there and then, as an outpouring of joy and wonder, which it doubtless is, with jubilant brass and clattering timpani. I, however, have opted for a different direction to this story: one in which we hear the words of the *Magnificat* as a considered, personal reflection, rather than a spontaneous outpouring, as Mary replays that moment in her mind, but now in the light of the events that followed—many of them full of uncertainty, and pain.

To tell the nativity story, I have drawn from various sources, including lines from the book of Mary (*Maryam*) in the Qur'an. This book describes in some detail the conception and birth of Jesus (or '*Isā*'), who is considered one of the most major prophets in Islam. Though much of the account seems rather familiar, it does, however, contain some surprises. For instance the line, '*and the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree, and she said, "I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten"*' (Qur'an 19:23). This seems to display a very human response to the situation. Perhaps the fact that she wishes to be in 'oblivion, forgotten' is a reaction to the pain of childbirth, or maybe an indication that she already has a sense that celebrity (and all it entails) awaits her. As Luke the Evangelist has it: 'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'



Apart from the very familiar lines from St Luke's gospel, the main source of the narrative is the Infancy Gospel (or *Protevangelium*) of James—a non-canonical gospel of around the mid-second century. This gospel offers a plethora of fascinating (if anecdotal) details, and alludes to many of the Old Testament's headline barren-but-now-miraculously-with-child characters: Sarah (and Abraham), and Hannah (and Elkanah). God granted Hannah a son to Elkanah after many years barren. Hannah thanks God with her own *Magnificat*, a song of Joy, which she offers in gratefulness and

praise for her son, which biblical scholars understand to be the model for Mary's *Magnificat*. Luke has Mary's words resonate with Hannah's as if they were ringing in her ears as she said them, drawing a parallel with her present situation.

When it comes to Mary and Joseph, the *Protevangelium* paints a pretty grim picture of life, full of worry, fear, anger, and persecution. It is difficult to see how this wouldn't impact on Mary's memory of her *Magnificat*, her song of praise to God, who at times must have seemed very much at arm's length.

One small but poignant detail from this gospel is that the fabric she was spinning as the angel Gabriel appeared to her became part of the veil of the temple in Jerusalem, which would later be torn from the top to the bottom at the moment of her own son's death on the cross.

The icon of the Virgin Mary (*Santa Maria di Sisto / del Rosario*) used within this booklet has become very important to me and to this piece. It is a rare image of Mary without Jesus from the sixth century, which now resides in Rome. The Virgin's sorrowful, plaintive expression seems to say

something of how difficult a young, unsuspecting, ordinary girl found the acceptance of God's will into her life in these circumstances. Tradition holds that it is the first in a series of icons written by Luke the Evangelist, from whose gospel the account of Mary's *Magnificat* comes.

Whether this or other details are historically accurate or not seems in some ways immaterial as they contribute richly to our understanding of the truth of human experience: a story that is a testament to an incredible trust in God by keeping one's faith in the face of great hardship, which has inspired men and women to follow her example.

I have used texts from the three Abrahamic religions, (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) fully aware of the historical and present tensions that exist between them. And yet one thing is common to all: we live in difficult times to be a person of faith, sharing similar challenges, and requiring a similar fortitude. Perhaps we can understand the *Magnificat* not only as a proclamation of ecstatic joy, but also as a symbol of faith in the face of uncertainty and of strength in the face of adversity.

Oliver Tarney, Winchester
6th June 2014
Revised May 2015



TARNEY
MAGNIFICAT

The *Magnificat* from *The Gospel of Luke* (1, 2) with interpolations from:

The Book of Mary *Surat Maryām* (Qur'an Chapter 19)

The *Infancy Gospel of James* (XL—XIII)

The *Song of Hannah* (1 Samuel: 2)

Hail, thou who hast received grace; the Lord
is with thee; blessed art thou among women!

Infancy Gospel of James XI

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Gospel of Luke 1 (My soul doth magnify the Lord)

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord,
My strength is exalted in the Lord.

1 Samuel: 2

And she went away, trembling, to her house [...]

And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood
before her, saying: [...]

Thou shalt conceive, according to Thy word.

Infancy Gospel of James XL

**Et exultavit spiritus meus:
in Deo salutari meo**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (And my spirit hath
rejoiced in God my saviour)*

I rejoice in Thy salvation.

1 Samuel: 2

III And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He
shall save His people from their sins.

Infancy Gospel of James XI

**Quia respexit humilitatem
ancillae suae:**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (For He hath regarded the
lowliness of His handmaiden)*

...for there is none besides Thee.

1 Samuel: 2

IV Who am I that all generations [of the earth]
should bless me?

Infancy Gospel of James XII

**Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent
omnes generationes.**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (For behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed)*

Neither is there any rock like our God.

1 Samuel: 2

V Thou hast found grace before the
Lord of all.

Infancy Gospel of James XI

**Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et
sanctum nomen eius.**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (For He that is mighty hath
magnified me, and Holy is His name)*

There is none Holy as the Lord.

1 Samuel: 2

And Joseph smote his face, and threw
himself on the ground, and wept bitterly.

Infancy Gospel of James XIII

VI And Mary [was] afraid, [...] and hid herself
from [all] the sons of Israel

Infancy Gospel of James XIII

**Et misericordia eius in progenies et
progenies timentibus eum.**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (And His mercy is on them
that fear him throughout all generations)*

VII And the pains of childbirth drove her to the
trunk of a palm tree. She said, "Oh, I wish
I had died before this and was in oblivion,
forgotten."

Qur'an 19:23

**Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (He hath shewed strength
with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in
the imagination of their hearts)*

The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken
to pieces.

1 Samuel: 2

VIII Let it be unto me according to Thy word.

Infancy Gospel of James XII

**Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit
humiles.**

*Gospel of Luke 1 (He hath put down the
mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the
humble and meek)*

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust.

1 Samuel: 2



IX For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Gospel of Luke 2

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes

Gospel of Luke 1 (He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away)

They that were hungry have ceased.

1 Samuel: 2

X Then she brought him to her people, Then they said, "O Mary, Thou Hast done a thing unprecedented."

Qur'an 19:24

Suscepit Israel puerum suum: recordatus misericordiae suae.

Gospel of Luke 1 (He remembering his mercy hath holpen His servant Israel)

...the Lord is a God of knowledge.

1 Samuel: 2

XI And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Gospel of Luke 2

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros: Abraham, et semini eius in saecula saeculorum.

Gospel of Luke 1 (As He promised to our forefathers, Abraham, and His seed, for ever)

...and the wicked shall be silent in darkness.

1 Samuel: 2

XII Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto,
(Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost)

[And] Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Gospel of Luke 2

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.

(As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.)

...for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them.

1 Samuel: 2

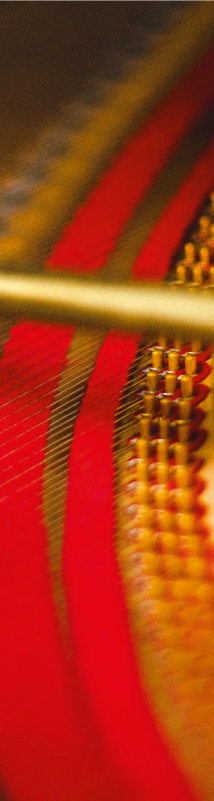
OLIVER
TARNEY



Oliver Tarney was born (1984) and educated in Lancaster, moving on to read music at Manchester university. After completing a Master's Degree in composition with Camden Reeves, he moved into teaching and is currently Head of Composition and Singing at Winchester College in Hampshire. He sings with the College Chapel Choir, Winchester Cathedral Choir, and with Serafine. He also keeps up a busy

schedule as a choral director and composer. Oliver now specialises in choral writing and has most recently written works for Sansara Chamber Choir (Prayer of St Richard of Chichester), Chichester Cathedral Choir (Men's voices responses) and for the St Endellion Easter Festival (Fair is the Heaven).





S E R A F I N E

CHAMBER CHOIR & SINFONIA



Serafine Chamber Choir is made up of some of the most talented young conductors in the country, all of whom have been taught by director, Manvinder Rattan. Serafine is made up of professional singers, teachers and students, all of whom share a passion for high quality music making as well as their own love of conducting.

The Sinfonia is made up of both seasoned and young professional

players, along with students from the London conservatoires.

Serafine enjoyed an illustrious debut performance in July 2012 at the Grosvenor Chapel, London, performing a programme of Bach and Handel in the company of Lucy Crowe, Tim Mead, Robert Murray and Matthew Rose and players from the OAE and the Academy of Ancient Music, raising over £2000 for the charity Songbound.

MANVINDER RATTAN



Manvinder is a choral and orchestral conductor and trainer of conductors.

He has been Musical Director of the *John Lewis Partnership Music Society* since 1995. Having inherited one choir, the society now has over eighteen. It also has an orchestra, rock band, and Music Tuition Service on two sites; they gave over twenty-five performances last year.

Manvinder is also Head of Conductor Training for *Sing for Pleasure*, leading a team of tutors which taught around 200 conductors a year on a

training scheme, which is nationally-accredited. Freelance engagements also keep Manvinder busy with guest conducting and teaching both here and abroad.

In 2012, Manvinder was invited to join Gareth Malone for "The Choir", this time focussing on singing in the workplace. Manvinder was a judge in the series which was broadcast in September 2012 on BBC2 and he continues to be a popular adjudicator both in the UK and abroad.



SOPRANO KATY
THOMPSON

Katy began singing as a chorister at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, at the age of eight. A graduate of Durham University (BA Hons, First Class) she currently lives in London, studying singing with Ann De Renais.



ALTO CLAIRE
TASKER

Claire Tasker began singing as a chorister at Ripon Cathedral. She continued her studies with Susan Waters at Uppingham School and Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Claire is currently studying with Michael Chance and James Baillieu at the Royal Academy of Music and has been generously supported by the Uppingham Foundation.



TENOR PAUL
BENTLEY-ANGELL

Australian tenor Paul Bentley-Angell is in increasing demand as a concert soloist and consort singer throughout Europe. A graduate of *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis*, Paul is a member of Grammy-Award winning ensemble *Ars Nova Copenhagen*, and can also be found singing with *Collegium Vocale Gent*, *Polyphony*, *Huelgas Ensemble* and *The Gabrieli Consort*.



BASS TOM
HERRING

Tom is an undergraduate musician and Choral Scholar at Merton College, Oxford, where he is a regular soloist in concerts and services. He is a member and former chairman of *Schola Cantorum of Oxford* and is the founder of *Sansara* chamber choir. Tom studies singing with Carys Lane and Alex Ashworth.



CROWDFUNDED BY

This recording was possible due to the extraordinary generosity of so many who recognised its potential musical worth and gave so willingly. Thank you.

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allowing the recording to
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TARNEY
MAGNIFICAT

DIRECTOR

Manvinder Rattan

SOLOISTS

Soprano Katy Thomson

Alto Claire Tasker

Tenor Paul Bentley-Angell

Bass Tom Herring

STRING QUARTET

Violin I Elizabeth Melville

Violin II Gillian Brightwell

Viola Helen Goatly

Cello Austen Scully

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Mark Jordan,

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Marcelina Ziezio,

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Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux

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