



Clive Dsgood

English Folksongs

Polyphony & Britten Sinfonia
conducted by Stephen Layton

TRACKLIST

Clive Osgood

English Folksongs

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Total running time 39.23

INTRODUCTION

English

Folksongs hold a vital place in our cultural heritage, connecting us to the lives of past generations. They are a testament to an oral tradition that might otherwise be lost, and they remain relevant as a source of artistic inspiration. By revisiting and celebrating these melodies, we not only honour the creativity of our ancestors but also find new ways to connect with the evolving narrative of identity in a globalized world.

This album contains three sets of English folksong arrangements, beginning with a set for unaccompanied choir, using three nautical songs from the collection *One Hundred English Folksongs*, published in 1916. This is followed by three choral arrangements of hymns that make use of English folksong melodies. The final set, for choir and full orchestra, uses five songs collected from the south of England.

Folksongs

PROGRAMME NOTE

THREE FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS (2024)

These three songs for unaccompanied choir reflect themes of love and the inherent dangers affecting sailors. They follow a loose narrative beginning with a sailor's courtship before joining the sailors on their journey back from Spain. The final song brings a tragic end to the earlier courtship.

1 The Crystal Spring

This beautiful song appeared originally in the collection *Folk Songs From Somerset*, compiled by Cecil Sharp in 1908, and later included in *One Hundred English Folksongs*. A farmer called William King, who lived in the village of East Harptree between Bristol and Wells, sang it to Sharp, alongside five other songs. It describes a captain courting his true love and promising to be constant to her. Narrated from the woman's perspective, it is arranged here for sopranos, with

a rich harmonic accompaniment in the lower voices.

2 Spanish Ladies

This is another song collected by Cecil Sharp in the early twentieth century. In his notes for the song, Sharp considered it 'one of the grandest of our folk-tunes and one of which a seafaring nation may well be proud'. The song has its origins from the eighteenth (or possibly seventeenth) century, predating even the sea shanty work songs of merchant sailors, and may have emerged when the Royal Navy carried supplies to Spain to aid its resistance to revolutionary France. It describes the British naval seamen sailing north from Spain along the English Channel, but unable to determine their location. The melody, in the aeolian mode (using the natural minor scale), is the same for both verse and chorus. For the verses, in this arrangement, the melody is given to the lower voices.

PROGRAMME NOTE

3 The Drowned Lover

The final song describes a woman finding the body of her drowned sailor on the beach. In despair, she lies beside him and dies. The two lovers are buried together in the churchyard, in their 'new married bed'. Over four verses, the melody of the song (in the dorian mode) is arranged with varied textures and harmonies to highlight the tragic narrative.

THREE FOLK SONG HYMN ARRANGEMENTS (2024)

The melodies from several traditional English folk songs are now more commonly associated with the religious texts of hymns and carols. A famous example of such is the carol *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*, which (in England) is sung to the tune 'Forest Green'. This was the name of the village in which the composer Vaughan Williams adapted the folk ballad *The Ploughboy's Dream* for the carol in the 1906 publication of *The*

English Hymnal. This set of three hymn arrangements outline important parts of the Christian story, beginning with the birth of Jesus, followed by his teaching, and the last supper.

4 What Child Is This

What Child Is This? is a Christmas carol set to the melody of the 16th-century folk song *Greensleeves*, a ballad originally associated with themes of romantic longing. In 1865, William Chatterton Dix provided sacred lyrics that celebrate the nativity of Christ, focusing on the mystery of his birth and salvation. This union of *Greensleeves'* haunting melody with reverent imagery has made the carol a timeless favourite during the Christmas season.

This arrangement, for eight-part a cappella choir, gives the tune to the altos and basses with the other parts providing a tapestry of interweaving suspensions. A modulation is provided into the final verse.

PROGRAMME NOTE

5 I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say

Like *O Little Town Of Bethlehem*, the hymn *I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say* uses a folksong, collected and arranged by Vaughan Williams for the 1906 publication of *The English Hymnal*. The tune, named 'Kingsfold', after the village he heard a version sung to him, was initially associated with a ballad called *Dives and Lazarus*. It was this version of the tune Vaughan Williams used for the hymn, pairing it with Horatius Bonar's text. Its modal character and timeless beauty have made it a beloved hymn tune. Vaughan Williams would later use the melody in his orchestral work *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*.

After a short introduction, this arrangement introduces the first verse in the basses before moving to the altos in the second verse with a richer harmonic accompaniment. The final verse provides a more climactic effect, with the tune now sung by the sopranos, to the words 'I am the dark world's light'.

6 An Upper Room

This is an arrangement of a more contemporary hymn, with words from 1973 by the Methodist minister Rev Fred Pratt Green. It is a reflective hymn recalling the Last Supper, where Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples, and conveys themes of love, sacrifice, and humility. It uses the melody of an eighteenth century folk ballad, *O Waly, Waly*. This arrangement begins, after a brief introduction, with the tenors singing the first verse. The music then unfolds with a richer texture in the second verse, with the sopranos providing the melody. The third verse provides a change of key and hints of imitation between the vocal parts before ending in the final verse in a similar manner to the opening.

PROGRAMME NOTE

SONGS FROM THREE COUNTIES (2015)

This cycle of five folksongs for choir and orchestra was commissioned by Haslemere Musical Society in 2015. The town of Haslemere, in the south of England, lies within the three counties of Hampshire, West Sussex and Surrey. To provide a local flavour, the song cycle uses only folksongs that were 'collected' within these three counties. They are arranged with only minor changes but presented as dramatically as possible, with respect to the harmony, orchestration and the structure of the songs, as well as considering the journey through the complete cycle. Although the songs themselves are cast in a simple strophic form (i.e. the melody repeats for each verse, like a hymn), various compositional structures are explored, including a passacaglia (or ground bass) in the third song, with its own separate theme.

The five songs form a narrative with a maritime theme, starting with *All Things Are Quite Silent* (collected in Lower Beeding, Sussex, 1904) in which a woman laments the loss of her lover who has been press-ganged into the navy. This is then followed by a description of the sailors' departure on the ship, the bold *Privateer* (Broadwood collection, Sussex, 1843).

The centrepiece of the cycle, collected in 1912 in Haslemere, is the song *The Royal Oak*. In this song, the ship encounters the enemy, but is victorious in battle. The victory is short-lived, however, upon sighting *The Mermaid*, (Twyford, Hampshire, 1906) which was considered by sailors as an omen of impending doom. In the last song, *The Ship in Distress* (Watersfield, Sussex, 1907), the sailors start drifting far out at sea.

TEXTS

THREE FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS

1 The Crystal Spring

Down by a crystal spring,
where the nightingales sing,
Most pleasant it is, in season,
to hear the groves ring.
Down by the riverside,
a young captain I espied,
Entreating of his true love,
for to be his bride.

Dear Phyllis, says he,
can you fancy me?
All in your soft bowers
a crown it shall be;
And you shall take no pain,
I will you maintain,
My ship she's a-loaded
just come in from Spain.

There are young men I know,
great kindness will show,
They will offer and proffer
much more than they'll do,
And whenever they can
find a maiden that's kind,
With laughing and chaffing
they'll change like the wind.

But if e'er I prove false
to my soft little dove,
May the ocean turn desert;
and the elements move:
For whereever I shall be,
I'll be constant to thee,
Like a rover I will wander
and swim through the sea.

2 Spanish Ladies

Farewell and adieu to you, Spanish Ladies
Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain;
For we've received orders for
to sail for old England

TEXTS

But we hope in a short time
to see you again.
We will rant and we'll roar
like true British sailors
We'll rant and we'll roar all on the salt seas
Until we strike soundings
in the channel of old England;
From Ushant to Scilly is thirty-five leagues.

We hove our ship to with
the wind from sou'west, boys
We hove our ship to,
deep soundings to take;
'Twas forty-five fathoms,
with a white sandy bottom
So we squared our main yard
and up channel did make.

The first land we sighted
was calléd the Dodman
Next Rame Head off Plymouth,
off Portsmouth the Wight;
We sailed by Beachy,
by Fairlight and Dover

And then we bore up
for the South Foreland light.

Now let ev'ry man drink off his full bumper
And let ev'ry man drink off his full glass;
We'll drink and be jolly
and drown melancholy
And here's to the health
of each true-hearted lass.

3 The Drowned Lover

As I was a walking down in Stokes Bay
I met a drowned sailor
on the beach as he lay
And as I drew nigh him,
it put me to a stand,
When I knew it was my own true Love
By the marks on his hand.

As he was a sailing from
his own dear shore
Where the waves and
the billows so loudly do roar,

TEXTS

I said to my true Love,
I shall see you no more
So farewell, my dearest,
you're the lad I adore.

She put her arms around him,
saying O! My dear!
She wept and she kiss'd him
ten thousand times o'er.
O I am contented to lie by thy side.
And in a few moments,
this lover she died.

And all in the churchyard
these two were laid,
And a stone for remembrance
was laid on her grave,
My joys are all ended,
my pleasures are fled,
This grave that I lie in
is my new married bed.

THREE FOLKSONG HYMN ARRANGEMENTS

4 What Child Is This

What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ, the King,
whom shepherds worship
and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him praise,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!
Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Come, have no fear, God's son is here,
His love all loves exceeding.

Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail, hail, the saviour comes, the Babe,
the Son of Mary!

TEXTS

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
all tongues and people own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let every heart enthrone Him.

Raise, raise your song on high,
while Mary sings a lullaby,
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe,
the Son of Mary!

5 I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.”
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
stoop down, and drink, and live.”

I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched,
my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, your morn shall rise,
and all your day be bright.”
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk,
till travelling days are done.

6 An Upper Room

An upper room did our Lord
prepare for those he loved until the end:
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate their risen friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own:
to share his bread, his loving cup.
Whatever burdens may bow us down,
he by his cross shall lift us up.

TEXTS

And after supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament.
In Christ our joy shall be made complete:
sent out to serve, as he was sent.

No end there is! We depart in peace,
he loves beyond the uttermost:
in every room in our Father's house,
Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.

SONGS FROM THREE COUNTIES

7 All Things Are Quite Silent

All things are quite silent,
each mortal at rest,
When me and my true love
got snug in one nest,
When a bold set of ruffians
they entered our cave,
And they forced my dear jewel
to plough the salt wave.
I begged hard for my sailor
as though I begged for life.
They'd not listen to me
although a fond wife,
Saying, "The king he wants sailors,
to the seas he must go."
And they've left me lamenting
in sorrow and woe.

Through green fields and meadows
we oft times did walk,
And sweet conversation of love
we have talked,

TEXTS

With the birds in the woodland
so sweetly did sing,
And the lovely thrushes' voices
made the valleys to ring.

Although my love's gone
I will not be cast down.
Who knows but my sailor
may once more return
And will make me amends
for all trouble and strife,
And my true love and I
might live happy for life.

8 The Privateer

Our boat, she's on a drift
and our ship, she's under weigh
Farewell my dearest jewel
for no longer I can stay
Our ship, she lies awaiting
so fare you well, my dear
For I must go on board
of this bold privateer.

There's no-one that can tell
you what great hazards you will run
So many have been slain
since first the wars begun;
Such bloody engagements
and dangers that draw near
With the loss of their sweet lives
in this bold privateer.

Grieve not, my dearest jewel
when I'm out of thy sight,
For I must go on board
and so boldly will I fight,
We'll beat down the pride
of the lofty 'Monsieur'
And soon we'll let them know
she's a bold privateer.

Then, since you are a-going,
may heaven gracious be,
May heaven kind protect you
by land or by sea;
May heaven kind protect you,
wherever you steer,



TEXTS

And send you safe home
back from this bold privateer.

9 The Royal Oak

As we were a-sailing
all on the salt sea,
We hadn't sailed months past
but two or three.
Not before we saw ten sail of Turks,
All men-o'-war full as big as we.
"Pull down your colours,
you English dogs!
Pull down your colours, do not refuse.
Oh, pull down your colours,
you English dogs,
Or else your precious life you'll lose!"

Our captain being a valiant man,
And a well-bespoken young man was he:
"Oh, it never shall be said
that we died like dogs,
But we will fight them most manfully!"
The fight begun about six in the morn
And onto the setting of the sun.

And the rising of the very next morning,
Out of ten ships we couldn't see but one.

Oh, three we sank and three we burned,
And three we caused to run away,
And the one we brought
into Portsmouth harbour
For to let them know we had won the day.

If anyone then should enquire
Or want to know our captain's name,
O! Captain Wellfounder
is our chief commander,
But the Royal Oak is our ship by name.

10 The Mermaid

One night as I lay on my bed,
I lay so fast asleep,
When the thought of
my true love come running to my head,
And poor sailors that sail on the deep.
As I sailed out one day one day,
and being not far from land,
There I spied a mermaid

TEXTS

a-sitting on a rock,
A comb and a glass in her hand.

The song she sang, she sang so sweet,
but no answer at all could she make,
Till at length our gallant ship
she looked round about,
Which made our poor hearts to ache.

Then up stepped the helmsman of our
ship, in his hand a lead and line.
All for to sound the seas my boys,
that is so wide and so deep,
But no hard rock or sand could he find.

Call a boat, call a boat, my fair boys,
don't you hear how the trumpets sound?
For the want of a long-boat
in the ocean we were lost,
And the most of our merry men drowned.

11 The Ship In Distress

You seamen bold who plough the ocean
see dangers landsmen never know.

'Tis not for honour or promotion;
No tongue can tell what they undergo.
In the blustering wind and the great dark
water our ship went drifting on the sea,
Her headgear gone, and her rudder
broken, which brought us to extremity.
For fourteen days, heartsore and hungry,
seeing but wild water and bitter sky,
Poor fellows they stood in a totter,
a-casting lots as to who should die.
The lot it fell on Robert Jackson,
whose family was so great.
"I'm free to die, but oh, me comrades,
let me keep look-out till the break of day."

A full dressed ship like the sun a-glittering
came bearing down to their relief.
As soon as this glad news was shouted,
it banished all their care and grief.
The ship brought to, no longer drifting,
safe in Saint Vincent, Cape Verde,
she gained.
You seamen all, who hear my story,
pray you'll ne'er suffer the like again.

PERFORMERS

POLYPHONY

Soprano

Rachel Ambrose Evans
Ana Beard Fernández ‡
Lucy Cox ‡
Susie Hill *
Leah Jackson ‡
Victoria Meteyard ‡
Danni O'Neill
Laura Oldfield *
Daisy Walford *
Clover Willis *

Alto

Cathy Bell ‡
Luthien Brackett *
Nancy Cole *
Jessica Gillingwater ‡
Lucy Goddard
Ruth Kiang
Amy Lyddon *
Eleanor Minney ‡
Natalie Manning

* *January sessions only*

‡ *October sessions only*

Tenor

Michael Bell *
James Botcher ‡
Gareth Edmunds ‡
Jacob Ewens *
James Geer ‡
Jonathan Hanley *
Matthew Howard
Harry Jacques *
James Robinson ‡
Tom Robson *
Simon Wall ‡

Bass

Greg Bannan ‡
Michael Craddock *
Gavin Cranmer-Moralee
Eoghan Desmond *
Malachy Frame *
Jimmy Holliday ‡
Jack Lawrence-Jones ‡
Philip Tebb
Christopher Webb ‡
Laurence Williams *

PERFORMERS

BRITTEN SINFONIA

First Violin

Alexandra Wood
Fiona McCapra
Michael Jones
Ricky Gore
Hannah Bell
Jaga Klimaszewska

Second Violin

Nicola Goldscheider
Alexandra Caldon
Suzanne Loze
Anna Bradley
Judith Stowe
Marcus Broome

Viola

Clare Finnimore
Sascha Bota
Bridget Carey

Cello

Caroline Dearnley
Ben Chappell
Joy Hawley

Double Bass

Markus Van Horn
Clare Larkman

Flute

Thomas Hancox
Sarah O'Flynn

Piccolo

Sarah O'Flynn

Oboe

Emma Feilding
Alison Alty

Cor Anglais

Emma Feilding

Clarinet

Joy Farrall
Oliver Pashley

Bassoon

Sarah Burnett
Simon Couzens

French Horn

Andrew Littlemore
Tom Rumsby
Phillippa Koushk-Jalali
Richard Stroud

Trumpet

Aaron Akugbo
Louis Barclay

Trombone

Byron Fulcher
Merin Rhyd

Bass Trombone

Daniel West

Tuba

Sasha Koushk-Jalali

Timpani

William Lockhart

January sessions only



BIOGRAPHIES

Clive Osgood studied Music at Bangor University before completing a Master's degree in Musicology at Cardiff University. After teacher training in London, he spent a year as an organ scholar at Salisbury Cathedral. More recently he completed a second Master's degree in Composition at the University of Surrey.

His written output includes a variety of music for choirs, orchestras and chamber groups. Choral music constitutes the largest part of his work and he has a particular interest in church music.

Clive's music is in the classical tradition – injected with elements of jazz harmony and the rhythmic vitality of Latin American music. He is currently Director of Music and Organist at the Parish Church of St Bartholomew's in Haslemere, Surrey and teaches 'A' Level Music at Reed's School, Cobham.

www.cliveosgood.com

BIOGRAPHIES

Stephen Layton

Awarded with an MBE for services to classical music in October 2020, Stephen Layton is one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. Often described as the finest exponent of choral music in the world today, his ground-breaking approach has had a profound influence on choral music over the last 30 years. Having taken up the post of Principal Conductor of the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir from the start of the 2024/25 season, Layton is also Founder and Director of Polyphony, and Director of Holst Singers. Layton recently stepped down as Fellow and Director of Music at Trinity College Cambridge - a post he held for 17 years. His other former posts include Chief Conductor of Netherlands Chamber Choir, Chief Guest Conductor of Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of City of London Sinfonia, and Director of Music at the Temple Church, London.

Layton is regularly invited to work with the world's leading choirs, orchestras and composers, and his recordings have won or been nominated for every major international recording award. With Britten Sinfonia, his eight highly acclaimed recordings include Handel's *Messiah* ("Best Messiah recording" – *BBC Music Magazine*); and with Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, whom he collaborates widely, he has recorded Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *Mass in B Minor* and *St John Passion*.

Layton's interpretations of Bach and Handel have been heard across the globe with orchestras ranging from Academy of Ancient Music to the London Philharmonic and Philadelphia orchestras. Performances include *Messiah* in Sydney Opera House, the first staged *St John Passion* with English National Opera, and regular BBC broadcasts of his annual performances of *Messiah* and *St John Passion* with Polyphony at Smith Square Hall, London.



BIOGRAPHIES



Hailed as one of the world's leading choirs in a poll by Gramophone Magazine, Polyphony has become 'renowned for both their sound and versatility, whether in early music, or contemporary works such as those of Eric Whitacre, they embody the remarkable tradition of British choral excellence at its finest.' Polyphony has performed and broadcast regularly world-wide and has an extensive discography comprising numerous important recordings of works by Bach, Britten, Bruckner, Cornelius, Grainger, Grieg, Handel, Jackson, Jenkins, Lauridsen, Łukaszewski, MacMillan, Pärt, Poulenc, Rutter, Tavener, Walton, and Whitacre.

Recent highlights for the choir include appearances at the Oslo International Church Music Festival, at the Polish Sacred Music Festival in London 'Joy and Devotion', giving no less than seven

UK premieres; several appearances at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, as part of their ZaterdagMatinee series, including Fauré's *Requiem* with Britten Sinfonia; performances of Bach's *St John Passion*, with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, and the Theater an der Wien, Vienna; and a performance of Mozart's *Requiem*, with the City of London Sinfonia, at the BBC Proms.

Other notable appearances have included the Belfast Festival as part of their 50 year celebrations; Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh, to mark the start of their Britten celebrations; and the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

www.polyphony.co.uk



BIOGRAPHIES



Britten Sinfonia

Britten Sinfonia is a different kind of orchestra. It is defined not by the traditional figurehead of a principal conductor, but by the dynamic and democratic meeting of its outstanding individual players and the broad range of their collaborators – from Steve Reich, Thomas Adès and Alison Balsom to Pagrav Dance Company, Chris Thile and Anoushka Shankar.

Rooted in the East of England, where it is the only professional orchestra working throughout the region, Britten Sinfonia also has a national and international reputation as one of today's finest ensembles. It is renowned for its adventurous

programming and stunningly high-quality performances, and equally for its record of commissioning new music, nurturing new composing talent, and inspiring school children, hospital patients and communities across the East of England.

Britten Sinfonia's main touring locations are in London, Saffron Walden, Cambridge and Norwich. The orchestra also performs regularly at London's Wigmore Hall and appears at UK festivals including Aldeburgh, Brighton, Norfolk & Norwich and the BBC Proms. Its prolific discography features many award-winning recordings.

www.brittensinfonia.com



CREDITS

Clive Osgood

English Folksongs

Polyphony & Britten Sinfonia

conducted by **Stephen Layton**

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Producer & Editing

Adrian Peacock



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Executive Producer

Adrian Green

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