

LSC-2759 STEREO

THE ROBERT SHAW CHORALE

*Benjamin Britten
A Ceremony of Carols
Rejoice in the Lamb
Festival Te Deum*



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"...the greatest English composer since Purcell..."

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Benjamin Britten has frequently stated that he admires that period in history when "music served things greater than itself." As examples, the British composer cited "the glory of God, the greatest of all. Or the glory of the state. Or the composer's social environment."

Britten has proven his point in his own music. The selections in this album most assuredly celebrate the glory of God, and his opera about the Tudor period, *Gloriana*, is centered on the state. But Britten's concern for man and the forces which beset him is perhaps the overriding reason why this shy but extremely gifted musician has been called the greatest English composer since Purcell, as well as a significant international influence of the highest order. Compassion for the lonely man, the solitary figure of suffering, dominates such important Britten works as *Peter Grimes*, *Albert Herring* and *Billy Budd*, and most certainly pervades the *War Requiem*.

A rewarding measure of recognition for Britten's compassionate understanding of his fellow man came when, at the age of fifty, he was selected as "the individual anywhere in the world judged to have made the greatest contribution to the advancement of the humanities," thus becoming the first winner of the \$30,000 Robert O. Anderson Aspen Award in the Humanities. Britten's fiftieth-birthday year brought other honors, too, among them a rare "double" from the New York Music Critics Circle—two citations in the same year for his opera *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and for his *War Requiem*.

Honors, prizes and critical citations are not likely to go to Britten's head. "People sometimes seem to think that, with a number of works now lying behind, one must be bursting with confidence," he says. "It is not so at all. I haven't achieved the simplicity I should like in my music, and I am enormously aware that I haven't yet come up to the technical standards Bridge set me." Frank Bridge was Britten's first teacher of composition, and he made it an early rule that his prodigy pupil (Britten began writing music at the age of five) maintain an "absolutely clear relationship of what was in my mind to what was on the paper."

Bridge's training developed a professional attitude about composing which has remained constant with Britten. A musical tribute to his teacher, in fact, turned out to be the young composer's first important work—*Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* for string orchestra, which was given its première in Salzburg in 1937. The composition was an immediate success, but the same cannot be said for the music which came immediately after. ("Clever" was the usual critical word for Britten in those days.)

By 1939 Britten was disgusted with England in particular and the decadence of Europe in general and so came to the United States, where a three-year stay only convinced him that he belonged back home after all. While in this country, however, he was given a grant from the Koussevitzky Foundation to write an opera. The fruit of this commission was *Peter Grimes*, and after its première in 1945, Benjamin Britten became a figure of international renown.

The three works in this album were composed just before, and along with, the brooding and somber *Peter Grimes* and vividly illustrate Britten's extraordinary versatility and eclecticism. The *Ceremony of Carols*, for instance, was composed in 1942, on the ship carrying Britten back to England. It was



winter, and the war was more than a grim reality. Yet the carols, set to poems by Southwell, Cornish, the Wedderburns and authors unknown, are gloriously medieval in spirit—joyous, mysterious and deceptively simple.

The *Festival Te Deum* and the festival cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* were both composed for specific church anniversaries: the *Te Deum* for the centenary festival of St. Mark's in Swindon (first performed on April 24, 1945), and *Rejoice in the Lamb* for the 50th anniversary of the consecration of St. Matthew's Church in Northampton, September 21, 1943.

Like the *Ceremony of Carols*, *Rejoice in the Lamb* is a superb example of Britten's characteristic affinity for words. Who but Britten could catch the special flavor of Christopher Smart's half-mad, but wholly religious, poetry? Here, in this utterly delightful, yet deeply moving, work Britten is at his most British—figurations in the accompaniment, runs and trills, accelerated rhythms, and melodic intervals which the young British writer John Fowles has described so aptly as "that characteristic lark-jump of joy."

"Hallelujah from the heart of God," wrote Smart in the eighteenth century. And Britten, in the twentieth, matches word to music triumphantly:

And from the hand of the artist inimitable,
And from the echo of the heavenly harp
In sweetness magnificent and mighty.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Notes by EMILY COLEMAN
Longtime critic of the performing arts
and former Music Editor of Newsweek.

Britten
A CEREMONY OF CAROLS
REJOICE IN THE LAMB
FESTIVAL TE DEUM

The Robert Shaw Chorale,
Robert Shaw, *Conductor*

Saramae Endich • Florence Kopleff
Jon Humphrey • Raymond Murcell

Laura Newell, *Harpist*
Rodney Hansen, *Organist*

Produced by Joseph Habig
Recording Engineer: Anthony Salvatore

Allen Organ, Model TC-4, was used
in this recording.

Cover: The Procession to the Garden—Woodcut from
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a CEREMONY OF CAROLS, op. 28

The Robert Shaw Chorale of Women's Voices

Saramae Endich, *Soprano* • Florence Kopleff, *Contralto* • Laura Newell, *Harpist*

The Ceremony commences with the choir coming up the church aisle, singing the unaccompanied Latin plain chant that tells of the birth of Christ. Later, as the choir retires from the church at the end of the Ceremony, we hear the same words and melody, now used as a recessional. The poetic solo Interlude evokes the cold, starry setting of the first Christmas.

1. Procession

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli:
Laetantur archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2. Wolcum Yole!

Wolcum, wolcum,
Wolcum be thou hevenè king,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum, born in one morning,
Wolcum for whom we sall sing!
Wolcum be ye, Stevene and Jon,
Wolcum, Innocentes everyone,
Wolcum, Thomas marter one,
Wolcum be ye, good Newe Yere,
Wolcum, Twelfth the Day both in fere,
Wolcum, seintes lefe and dere,
Wolcum Yole, Wolcum Yole, Wolcum!
Candelmesse,
Queene of bliss,
Wolcum bothe to more and lesse.
Wolcum, wolcum,
Wolcum be ye that are here,
Wolcum Yole!
Wolcum alle and make good cheer.
Wolcum alle another yere.
Wolcum Yole! Wolcum!
Anonymous

3. There Is No Rose

There is no rose of such vertu
As is the rose that bare Jesu.
Alleluia, alleluia.
For in this rose containèd was
Heaven and earth in litel space,
Res miranda, res miranda.
By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three,
Pares forma, pares forma.
The aungels sungen the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gaudeamus, gaudeamus.
Leave we all this werldly mirth,
And follow we this joyful birth.
Transeamus, transeamus, transeamus.
Alleluia, res miranda,
Pares forma, gaudeamus,
Transeamus, transeamus, transeamus.
Anonymous

4a. That Yongë Child

That yongë child when it gan weep
With song she lulled him asleep:
That was so sweet a melody
It passèd alle minstrelsy.
The nightingalë sang also:
Her song is hoarse and nought thereto:
Whoso attendeth to her song
And leaveth the first then doth he wrong.
Anonymous

4b. Balulalow

O my deare hert, young Jesu sweat,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee to my hert,
And never mair from thee depart.
But I sall praise thee evermoir
With sanges sweet unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow,
And sing that richt Balulalow.
James, John and Robert Wedderburn

5. As Dew in Aprille

I sing of a maiden
That is makèles:
King of all kings
To her son she ches.
He came al so stille
There his moder was,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the grass.
He came al so stille
To his moder's bour,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flour.
He came al so stille
There his moder lay,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the spray.
Moder and mayden
Was never none but she:
Well may such a lady
Goddess moder be.
Anonymous

6. This Little Babe

This little Babe so few days old,
Is come to rife Satan's fold;
All hell doth at his presence quake,
Though he himself for cold do shake;
For in this weak unarmèd wise
The gates of hell he will surprise.
With tears he fights and wins the field,
His naked breast stands for a shield;
His battering shot are babish cries,
His arrows looks of weeping eyes,
His martial ensigns Cold and Need,
And feeble Flesh his warrior's steed.
His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
His bulwark but a broken wall;
The crib his trench, haystalks his stakes;
Of shepherds he his muster makes;
And thus, as sure his foe to wound,
The angels' trumps alarum sound.
My soul, with Christ join thou in fight,
Stick to the tents that he hath pight.
Within his crib is surest ward;
This little Babe will be thy guard.
If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
Then flit not from this heavenly Boy.
Robert Southwell

7. Interlude (Harp solo)

8. In Freezing Winter Night

Behold, a silly tender babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies;
Alas, a piteous sight!
The inns are full; no man will yield
This little pilgrim bed.
But forced he is with silly beasts
In crib to shroud his head.
This stable is a Prince's court,
This crib his chair of State;
The beasts are parcel of his pomp,
This wooden dish his plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
The Prince himself is come from Heav'n;
This pomp is prizèd there.

With joy approach, O Christian wight,
Do homage to thy King;
And highly praise his humble pomp,
Wich he from Heav'n doth bring.
Robert Southwell

9. Spring Carol

Pleasure it is
To hear iwis,
The Birdès sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing.
God's purvayance
For sustenance,
It is for man, it is for man.
Then we always
To give him praise
And thank him than.
William Cornish

10. Deo Gracias

Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Adam lay ibounden,
Bounden in a bond;
For thousand winter
Thought he not too long.
Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
And all was for an appil,
An appil that he tok,
As clerkès finden
Written in their book.
Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Ne had the appil takè ben,
The appil takè ben,
Ne haddè never our lady
A ben hevenè quene.
Blessèd be the time
That appil takè was.
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias! Deo gracias!
Anonymous

11. Recession

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt angeli:
Laetantur archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

REJOICE in the LAMB, op. 30

(Words by Christopher Smart)

Saramae Endich, *Soprano* • Florence Kopleff, *Contralto*

Jon Humphrey, *Tenor* • Raymond Murcell, *Baritone* • Rodney Hansen, *Organist*

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues;
Give the glory to the Lord,
And the Lamb.
Nations, and languages,
And every Creature
In which is the breath of Life.
Let man and beast appear before him,
And magnify his name together.

Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter,
Bind a leopard to the altar
And consecrate his spear to the Lord.

Let Ishmail dedicate a tyger,
And give praise for the liberty
In which the Lord has let him at large.

Let Balaam appear with an ass,
And bless the Lord his people
And his creatures for a reward eternal.

Let Daniel come forth with a lion,
And praise God with all his might
Through faith in Christ Jesus.

Let Ithamar minister with a chamois,
And bless the name of Him
That cloatheth the naked.

Let Jakim with the satyr
Bless God in the dance,
Dance, dance, dance.

Let David bless with the bear
The beginning of victory to the Lord,
To the Lord the perfection of excellence.

Hallelujah, hallelujah,
Hallelujah from the heart of God,
And from the hand of the artist inimitable,
And from the echo of the heavenly harp
In sweetness magnifical and mighty.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

For I will consider my cat Jeoffry,
For he is the servant of the living God,
Duly and daily serving him.

For at the first glance
Of the glory of God in the East
He worships in his way.
For this is done by wreathing his body
Seven times round with elegant quickness.
For he knows that God is his saviour.
For God has bless'd him
In the variety of his movements.
For there is nothing sweeter
Than his peace when at rest.

For I am possessed of a cat,
Surpassing in beauty,
From whom I take occasion
To bless Almighty God.

For the Mouse is a creature
Of great personal valour.
For this is a true case—
Cat takes female mouse,
Male mouse will not depart,
But stands threat'ning and daring.
If you will let her go,
I will engage you,
As prodigious a creature as you are.

For the Mouse is a creature
Of great personal valour.
For the Mouse is of
An hospitable disposition.

For the flowers are great blessings.
For the flowers are great blessings.
For the flowers have their angels,
Even the words of God's creation.
For the flower glorifies God
And the root parries the adversary.
For there is a language of flowers.
For flowers are peculiarly
The poetry of Christ.

For I am under the same accusation
With my Saviour,
For they said,
He is besides himself.
For the officers of the peace
Are at variance with me,
And the watchman smites me
With his staff.
For the silly fellow, silly fellow,
Is against me,
And belongeth neither to me
Nor to my family.
For I am in twelve hardships,
But he that was born of a virgin
Shall deliver me out of all,
Shall deliver me out of all.

For H is a spirit
And therefore he is God.
For K is king
And therefore he is God.
For L is love
And therefore he is God.
For M is musick
And therefore he is God.
And therefore he is God.

For the instruments are by their rhimes,
For the shawm rhimes are lawn fawn and the like.
For the shawm rhimes are moon boon and the like.
For the harp rhimes are sing ring and the like.
For the harp rhimes are ring string and the like.
For the cymbal rhimes are bell well and the like.
For the cymbal rhimes are toll soul and the like.
For the flute rhimes are tooth youth and the like.
For the flute rhimes are suit mute and the like.
For the bassoon rhimes are pass class and the like.
For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place, beat heat and the like.
For the clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like.
For the trumpet rhimes are sound bound and the like.

For the trumpet of God is a blessed intelligence
And so are all the instruments in Heav'n.
For God the Father Almighty plays upon the harp
Of stupendous magnitude and melody.
For at that time malignity ceases
And the devils themselves are at peace.
For this time is perceptible to man
By a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.

Hallelujah, hallelujah,
Hallelujah from the heart of God,
And from the hand of the artist inimitable,
And from the echo of the heavenly harp
In sweetness magnifical and mighty.
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

About the Robert Shaw Chorale

In 1948 Robert Shaw organized a group of thirty professional singers as the Robert Shaw Chorale, which was quickly recognized as America's foremost vocal ensemble of its type. The group tours the United States annually, and under State Department auspices has toured in Europe, the Middle East, Russia and, most recently, South America. In Russia, according to the New York Times, "the bravos, cadenced clapping and cheers could only be compared with those heard in past years for Van Cliburn. . . ." In Chile, 3,000 local choir people cheered the Shaw group upon its arrival in Santiago. In Argentina the Buenos Aires Herald called the Chorale's visit "easily the most pleasant and highly polished example of musical culture from the United States since the concerts of the New York Philharmonic."

festival te deum, op. 32

Saramae Endich, *Soprano*
Rodney Hansen, *Organist*

We praise Thee, O God,
We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee,
The Father everlasting.
To Thee all Angels cry aloud,
The Heav'ns and all the Pow'rs therein.
To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry,
Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Sabaoth!
Heav'n and earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise Thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise Thee.
The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee.
The Holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.
The Father of an infinite majesty
Thine honourable, true and only Son;
Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man,
Thou did'st not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When Thou had'st overcome the sharpness of death,
Thou did'st open the Kingdom of Heav'n to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge.
We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants
Whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them and lift them up forever.
Day by day we magnify Thee and we worship Thy name,
Ever world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin,
O Lord, have mercy upon us,
O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us,
As our trust is in Thee.
O Lord, in Thee have I trusted.
Let me never be confounded.

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THIS MASTER'S COPY
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A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

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THE ROBERT SHAW CHORALE
OF WOMEN'S VOICES
ROBERT SHAW, CONDUCTOR

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REJOICE IN THE LAMB

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SIDE 2
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FESTIVAL TE DEUM

THE ROBERT SHAW CHORALE
ROBERT SHAW, CONDUCTOR

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