

English Visionaries

Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells

BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE CHAMBER CHOIR

NICHOLAS MORRIS *organ*

PAUL SPICER *director*

SOMMCD 0159

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

1 A Vision of Aeroplanes 10:07
solo: Victoria Adams

2 Prayer to the Father of Heaven 4:30

Mass in G minor

*soli: Elizabeth Adams, Nicola Starkie,
David Emerson, William Gee*

3 Kyrie 3:40

4 Gloria 3:48

5 Credo 5:56

6 Sanctus – Osanna I 2:21

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HOLST

9 The Evening Watch Op. 43 No. 1 4:14
soli: Richard James, Eloise Waterhouse

10 Sing me the Men 5:23

HOWELLS

11 The House of the Mind 8:03

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

12 Lord, Thou hast been our refuge 8:41
*soli: Elizabeth Adams, Lucy Morton,
Richard James, Andrew Randall,
Jonathan Sheppard (trumpet)*

Total duration 63:00

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Assumptions about the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), Gustav Holst (1874-1934), and Herbert Howells (1894-1983) are, too often, that it is 'English' in a restricted, earth-bound sense of the word – recalling more Elizabeth Lutyen's derisive 'cowpat school' label than that of 'visionary' or 'revolutionary'. The works presented here are sacred, but any visionary feeling was certainly not to be found in these composers' religious leanings. Vaughan Williams's wife Ursula wrote blithely that her husband "drifted into a cheerful agnosticism" after a youth of resolute atheism. Howells, on religion, once said "there is nothing", but was possibly nearer Holst or Vaughan Williams in the underlying sensibilities regarding his faith. Holst's own theological tastes looked omnivorously eastward, never resolving themselves into anything concrete.

It was this very agnosticism, however, that afforded all three composers moments of transcendent vision. A broad but intense spirituality, fomented by powerful texts and nurtured by a rich musical heritage, resulted in the creation of a uniquely English musical revolution.

Vaughan Williams's status as a revolutionary, often forgotten today (but which was a great inspiration to his younger friend Howells, among others), is strongly evident in his **Mass in G Minor** (1922), a sublimation of ancient music into something powerfully new, and a watershed moment in English musical history. Premiered at the Birmingham Town Hall, the Mass was inspired by R. R. Terry's revival of English Tudor composers at Westminster Cathedral.

The voluminous spaces that inspired the work can be heard in the slowly interweaving chant-like lines of the Kyrie, soloists and double choir (a configuration similar to that of the *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*), and in the spacious harmonies that open the Gloria. The Tudor influence reasserts itself in the rollickingly madrigalian setting of '*laudamus te*'. This sense of vivacity becomes more driven still in the first and last sections of the Credo, which are movingly interrupted by a quiescent musical meditation on Christ's birth and death. The pastoral and the visionary are united in the Sanctus, which, for scholars Hugh Ottaway and Alain Frogley, recalls the composer's *Pastoral Symphony*. Sharing the same vibrant 'Osanna' at its end as the Sanctus, the Benedictus restores a tranquil dialogue between soloists and chorus. The Agnus Dei brings the Mass to a settled close, revisiting themes from the Kyrie: the music that underscored a supplication for mercy comes full circle for the Christ who has finally taken away the world's sins.

Scholar Julian Onderdonk observed that Vaughan Williams's output of sacred choral music began upon his return from service with the Field Ambulance Service in the First World War. For Onderdonk, and other commentators, the war compelled an 'emotional crisis'; notably, he writes that "the immediate post-war works", including the Mass and ***Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge*** (1922), "communicate a sense of spiritual urgency that is conveyed by texts that emphasize human weakness". There is a palpable vulnerability in the solos which open the latter, pleading for refuge on behalf of a chorus engaged in a gentle, communal hymn, the tune 'St Anne' always subtly present. The chorus intermittently assumes dominance, its greater emotional heft threatening to burst through the piece's solemn reserve. After an organ interlude, a solo

trumpet initiates a shift to a major tonality: the choir together sings 'St Anne', a forceful moment of shared emotion which is then fractured prismatically into a luminous climax.

The G Minor Mass and *Lord Thou Hast Been Our Refuge* predate, and seem to set the stage, for the other works on this disc; another, quite different Vaughan Williams work postdates them. The *Vision of Aeroplanes* (1956) is in the same intense, restlessly chromatic style as many of Vaughan Williams's other post-war works, especially the fourth symphony. But it is a distinctly spiritual reflection of his shifted attitude: *Vision*, a setting from the book of Ezekiel (the aeroplanes of the title are an interpretive liberty taken by the composer) also recalls the rapturous awe of the Revelations setting *Sancta Civitas*. Onderdonk, again, notes that the near-Christian quest for faith embodied in the choral works appearing soon after the war 'resurface' in both *Vision* and *Prayer to the Father of Heaven* (1947), a heady work for choir *a cappella* that is, in its way, as harmonically inventive as *Vision*.

Holst's opus 43 motets were written when the popularity of *The Planets* freed him from much of his teaching work (except St Paul's School), but mark the beginning of a period when the composer focused on less significant works. *The Evening Watch* (1924) reinterprets the Song of Simeon as a dialogue between the body (a mezzo solo) and the soul (the chorus). The soul bids the body to come to its final rest, rendered by Holst as a fleeting, epiphanic climax. Taking up this momentum, Holst matches the rhapsodising Victorian strangeness of Digby Mackworth Dolben's poem 'A Song of the New Jerusalem' with a colourful musical analogue in *Sing Me the Men* (1925).

Unison tenors and basses herald an otherworldly harmonic and contrapuntal landscape to match the new Jerusalem envisioned by Dolben.

Howells is perhaps better known as a visionary than Holst or Vaughan Williams. The rarefied ecstasy of his well-known *Hymnus Paradisi* can be heard in soaring lines of *The House of the Mind* (1954), written while rehearsing for another major work, the *Missa Sabrinensis*, or 'Mass of the Severn' river. Interestingly, Howells referred to the cathedrals that host the Three Choirs Festival as 'houses of the mind': as with the Vaughan Williams Mass, a sense of place marks this work. But the text does not look outward to its surroundings, or upward to heaven. God comes to dwell in the 'clean and sober mind', a sentiment reflected in Howells's characteristically sensual introspection.

It is in this strait between the earthbound and the heavenly, the inward-looking and the supernal, that Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Howells navigate according to their own vision. And it is a discernibly personal, human vision: a notable thread through all of these works is the use of choral and ensemble unisons, a humble, sometimes almost folkish expressiveness transformed into the divine through expansion into counterpoint. Commentators are not wrong to reflect on these composers' pastoral earthiness. But from that, they achieve a transcendence grown from the soil of English musical tradition, and from deeply personal connections to places and ideas.

Daniel Galbreath

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TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

1 A Vision of Aeroplanes

I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures.

And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.

And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

Their wings were joined one to another;

they turned not when they went;

they went every one straight forward.

Whither the spirit was to go, they went;

and they turned not when they went.

Their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and of lamps;

and living creatures;

and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

And the living creatures ran and returned

as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

Their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

When they went, they went upon their four sides:

and they turned not when they went.

As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful;

and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them:

and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth,

the wheels were lifted up.

When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood;

and when those were lifted up from the earth,

the wheels were lifted up over against them:

for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings,

like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty.

When they stood, they let down their wings.

And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads,

when they stood, and had let down their wings.

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne,

as the appearance of a sapphire stone:

and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

And when I saw it, I fell upon my face.

from Ezekiel, chapter 1

2 Prayer to the Father of Heaven

O radiant Luminary of light interminable,
Celestial Father, potential God of might,
Of heaven and earth O Lord incomparable,
Of all perfections the essential most perfite!
O Maker of mankind, that formed day and night,
Whose power imperial comprehendeth every place!
Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight
Is, after this life, to see thy glorious face:

Whose magnificence is incomprehensible,
All arguments of reason which far doth exceed,
Whose Deity doubtless is indivisible,
From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed;
Of thy support all creatures have need:
Assist me, good Lord, and grant me of thy grace,
To live to thy pleasure in word, thought, and deed,
And, after this life, to see thy glorious Face.

John Skelton (c.1463-1529)

Mass in G minor

3 Kyrie

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

Lord, have mercy upon us
Christ, have mercy upon us
Lord, have mercy upon us

4 Gloria

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

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 caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

Glory be to God on high,
And on earth peace to men
of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we worship you, we glorify you.
We give thanks to you
for your great glory.
Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

*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 Iesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.*

Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.
Who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Who takes away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Who sits at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For you alone are holy,
you alone are the Lord,
you only are the most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

5 Credo

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

*Credo in unum Deum
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum, Iesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum,
et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui, propter nos homines,
et propter nostram salutem,
descendit de caelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato;
passus et sepultus est.
Et resurrexit tertia die,
secundum scripturas;*

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)

I believe in one God
the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds.
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made.
Who for us men,
and for our salvation,
came down from heaven.
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary and was made man.
And was crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again
according to the scriptures;

*et ascendit in caelum,
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria
iudicare vivos et mortuos,
cuius regni non erit finis.
Et in Spiritum Sanctum
Dominum et vivificantem,
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit;
qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur;
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
Et unam sanctam catholicam
et apostolicam ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptismam
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.*

and ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the quick and the dead;
Whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost
the Lord and giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
Who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
Who spake by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy, Catholic
and Apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one Baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

6 Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

7 Benedictus

(Solo voices SATB)
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

(Chorus SATB)
Osanna in excelsis.

(Solo voices SATB)
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord.
(Chorus SATB)
Hosanna in the highest.

8 Agnus Dei

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)
*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.*

(Solo voices SATB and Chorus)
O Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world, have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world, have mercy on us.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

9 The Evening Watch

BODY

Farewell! I go to sleep; but when
The day-star springs, I'll wake again.

SOUL

Go, sleep in peace; and when thou liest
Unnumber'd in thy dust, when all this frame
Is but one dram, and what thou now descriest
In sev'ral parts shall want a name,
Then may his peace be with thee, and each dust
Writ in his book, who ne'er betray'd man's trust!

BODY

Amen! but hark, ere we two stray
How many hours dost think 'till day?

SOUL

Ah go; th'art weak, and sleepy. Heav'n
Is a plain watch, and without figures winds
All ages up; who drew this circle, even
He fills it; days and hours are blinds.
Yet this take with thee. The last gasp of time
Is thy first breath, and man's eternal prime.

Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

10 Sing me the Men

Sing me the men ere this
Who, to the gate that is
A cloven pearl, uprapt,
The big white bars between
With dying eyes have seen
The sea of jasper, lapt
About with crystal sheen.

And all the far pleasure
Where linkèd angels dance,
With scarlet wings that fall
Magnifical, or spread
Most sweetly overhead,
In fashion musical
Of cadenced lutes instead.

Sing me the town they saw,
Withouten fleck or flaw;
A flame, more fine than glass
Of fair Abbayes the boast, –
More glad than wax of cost
Doth make at Candlemas
The Lifting of the Host.

Where many Knights and Dames,
With new and wondrous names,
One great Laudate psalm
Go singing down the street.
'Tis peace upon their feet,
In hand 'tis pilgrim palm
Of Holy Land so sweet.

Where Mother Mary walks
'Mid silver lily stalks,
Star-tirèd, moon-bedight:
Where Cecily is seen,
With Dorothy in green,
And Magdalen all white,
The maidens of the Queen.

Sing on – the steps untrod,
The temple that is God –
Where incense doth ascend,
Where mount the cries and tears
Of all the dolorous years,
With moan that ladies send
Of durance and sore fears.

And him who sitteth there,
The Christ of purple hair,
And great eyes, deep with ruth,
Who is, of all things fair,
That shall be, or that were,
The sum and very Truth.
Then add a little prayer,

11 The House of the Mind

As earth's pageant passes by,
Let reflection turn thine eye
Inward, and observe thy breast;
There alone dwells solid rest.

That's a close immured tower
Which can mock all hostile power:
To thyself a tenant be,
And inhabit safe and free.

That since all these be so,
Our Liege, who doth us know,
Would 'fend from Sathanas,
And bring us, of His grace
To that His joyous place,
So we the doom may pass
And see Him in the Face.

Digby Mackworth-Dolben (1848-1867)

Say not that this house is small,
Girt up in a narrow wall;
In a cleanly sober mind
Heaven itself full room doth find.

Th' infinite Creator can
Dwell in it, and may not man?
Here content make thy abode
With thyself and with thy God.

Joseph Beaumont (1616-1699)

12 Lord, Thou hast been our refuge

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever the earth and the world were made,
Thou art God from everlasting and world without end.

Thou turnest man to destruction;
again Thou sayest Come again ye children of men
For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday,
seeing that is past as a watch in the night.

As soon as Thou scatterest them They are even as a sleep
and fade away suddenly like the grass.
In the morning it is green and groweth up,
but in the evening it is cut down, dried up and withered.

For we consume away in Thy displeasure,
and are afraid at Thy wrathful indignation.
For when Thou art angry all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told.

The years of our age are three score years and ten,
and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years,
yet is their strength but labour and sorrow;
so passeth it away and we are gone.

Turn Thee again, O Lord, at the last.
Be gracious unto Thy servants.
O satisfy us with Thy mercy and that soon.
So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever the earth and the world were made,
Thou art God from everlasting and world without end.

And the glorious Majesty of the Lord be upon us.
Prosper Thou, O prosper Thou the work of our hands,
O prosper Thou our handywork.

Psalm 90, paraphrased Isaac Watts (1674-1748)



Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir

SOPRANOS

Bethany Cox
Alison Gormley
Victoria Adams
Elizabeth Adams
Myfanwy Hollywell
Jessica Wise
Eleanor Moore

ALTOS

Eloise Waterhouse
Nicola Starkie
Lucy Morton
Darrel Chan
Ania Szpula

BASS

Timothy Emberson
Daniel Galbreath
Andrew Randall
William Gee
Philip Mizen
Alistair Donaghue

TENORS

Richard James
Charles St John
David Emerson
Luke English
Edward Harrison

ORGAN

Nicholas Morris

SOLOS

Vision of Aeroplanes

Victoria Adams

The Evening Watch

Richard James, Eloise Waterhouse

Mass in G minor

Elizabeth Adams, Nicola Starkie,
David Emerso, William Gee

Lord, though hast been our Refuge

Elizabeth Adams, Lucy Morton,
Richard James, Andrew Randall
Jonathan Sheppard *trumpet*

Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir

Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir is conducted by Paul Spicer and is a group of twenty-four auditioned student singers who form an expert and flexible group. They perform with sensitivity, energy and panache and are gathering an enviable reputation for their musicianship partly through their increasing recording presence which reflects their conductor's specialist interest in 20th and 21st century British music. Their first CD called *To Music* was an Anthology of English 20th century choral music and was released on the Regent label. It was CD Review recording of the month (MusicWeb International) and the review commented: "...*this is one of the finest discs to have come my way in some time*". Their disc of music by Kenneth Leighton and James MacMillan had five star reviews and MacMillan (who attended the sessions) wrote: *'I am delighted to be the focus of this new disc by this exceptional young choir from the Birmingham Conservatoire. I was present at some of the recording sessions and was astounded at how high the performance standards were.'*

Their disc of music by Ireland and Delius part songs on the Somm label was also awarded 5 star reviews and their recording of the first ever disc to be devoted to Stanford's part songs (also on Somm) was chosen as 13th out of 24 discs considered the best releases of 2013 on Classic FM and *The Observer* commented that the music was 'dressed in the richly jewelled sound of the Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir' and that 'many a choir could learn from these singers.' Their disc of rare repertoire by Herbert Howells was regarded by MusicWeb International as 'the most impressive of all'. It was chosen as Editor's Choice in the *Gramophone* magazine in December 2014 and received 5 stars again in *Choir and Organ*. The choir's recording of the complete choral music of Samuel Barber was released in July 2015 to yet further acclaim and they made their debut broadcast concert on BBC Radio 3 in 2015.

Paul Spicer

Paul Spicer was a chorister at New College, Oxford. He studied with Herbert Howells and Richard Popplewell (organ) at the Royal College of Music.

Paul is best known as a choral conductor, partly through the many CDs he made with the Finzi Singers for Chandos records. He conducted Bach Choirs in Chester and Leicester before moving to conduct the Bach Choir in Birmingham in 1992. He has conducted the Whitehall Choir in London since 2000. He taught at the Royal College of Music in London between 1995 and 2008. He now teaches choral conducting at the Birmingham Conservatoire, where he also directs the chamber choir which has an increasing reputation through its regular recordings of British music, and at Oxford and Durham Universities.

Until July 2001 Paul Spicer was Artistic Director of the Lichfield International Arts Festival and the Abbotsholme Arts Society, posts he relinquished in order to pursue a freelance musical career. He was Senior Producer for BBC Radio 3 in the Midlands until 1990 and today is in considerable demand as a composer. He has also been a much sought-after recording producer.

Paul Spicer's highly-acclaimed biography of his composition teacher, Herbert Howells, was published in August 1998 and has been reprinted twice. His large-scale biography of Sir George Dyson was published in 2014 and he is now writing a biography of Sir Arthur Bliss. His *English Pastoral Partsongs* volume for OUP is widely used. As a writer he has written countless articles for many periodicals and is a contributor to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He was commissioned by the Britten-Pears Foundation and Boosey & Hawkes to write the first practical guide to all Benjamin Britten's choral music for the Britten centenary in 2013, something he continues to do for all James MacMillan's growing choral output.

As a composer his *Easter Oratorio* was hailed as ‘the best of its kind to have appeared... since Howells’ *Hymnus Paradisi*’. It was also chosen as an Editor’s Choice in the same magazine. His new large-scale commission, a choral symphony *Unfinished Remembering* to a text by Euan Tait commemorating the centenary of the First World War was premiered in Symphony Hall, Birmingham in September 2014.

Paul Spicer is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Research Fellow of Birmingham University, an Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, an Honorary Fellow of University College, Durham, a Trustee of the Finzi Trust, Vice-President of the Herbert Howells Society, and Chairman of the Sir George Dyson Trust.



Nicholas Morris

Nicholas Morris spent his early musical years as a chorister at Westminster Abbey under the direction of James O’Donnell. He was subsequently a Music and Academic Scholar at Uppingham School. Between 2011 and 2014, Nicholas held the Organ Scholarship at Queens’ College, Cambridge, where he also read for a degree in music. After graduation, he moved to the West Midlands and took up the post of Assistant Organist at Birmingham Cathedral. In September 2016, he joined the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge as Assistant Organist, acting as principal accompanist.

Nicholas has performed extensively as a soloist both in the UK and abroad. International engagements have included performances in Norway, the United States, and in the opening concert of the 2012 City of Münster Orgelsommer. UK recital venues have included St Paul’s, Westminster, and Southwark Cathedrals in London, the Cathedrals in Wells, Ely and Truro, and Westminster Abbey. Nicholas has

a particular interest in new music, and gave a solo recital as part of the 2014 London Festival of Contemporary Church music. He regularly collaborates with composer Toby Young and has premiered several of his works.

Nicholas also enjoys performing with singers and instrumentalists. He has recently appeared as director and harpsichord soloist in Bach’s Fifth Brandenburg Concerto, and will perform as organ soloist in Poulenc’s Organ Concerto in Birmingham Town Hall in March 2017. As accompanist to the Cambridge University Musical Society (CUMS) Chorus during 2012 and 2013, Nicholas acted as an assistant to Stephen Cleobury, and was the organist for all concerts over the season. As the accompanist for the Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir in 2014 and 2015, he played for their busy schedule of concerts, CD recordings, and BBC radio broadcasts, under the direction of Paul Spicer.

While in Cambridge, Nicholas took organ lessons with William Whitehead. He continues his studies in Birmingham with Henry Fairs.



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