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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

AN EXAMINATION OF SELECTED CHORAL MUSIC  
OF JUDITH BINGHAM

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Arts

Marjorie Monroe-Fischer

College of Performing and Visual Arts  
School of Music  
PVA/Music

May 2012

This Dissertation by: Marjorie Monroe-Fischer

Entitled: *An Examination of Selected Choral Music of Judith Bingham*

has been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Arts  
in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Music, Program of PVA/Music

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

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## ABSTRACT

Monroe-Fischer, Marjorie. *An Examination of Selected Choral Music of Judith Bingham*. Published Doctor of Arts dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2012.

Judith Bingham (1952- ) is the most acclaimed female British composer of our time. Her work encompasses most genres; however, a quarter of her compositions are choral. In spite of her fame in Britain, outside of that country she is not well known.

This paper is a study of five of Judith Bingham's choral works analyzed in depth. These pieces cover the main types of her choral compositions: *Water Lilies* (1999), *The Drowned Lovers* (2000, revised in 2009), *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"* (2003), *Ghost Towns of the American West* (2006), and *First Light* (2001).

The first chapter deals with the background information including purpose, need, scope and organization of the study, methodology and review of the literature. The second chapter is a brief biography of Judith Bingham. The third chapter analyzes the selected works. The analysis includes a study of form, texture, harmony, melody, rhythm, text, and accompaniment if accompanied. The fourth chapter offers a summary and conclusions.

The appendices include a complete catalog of Bingham's choral literature to

date, and interviews with Ms. Bingham; Stephen Farr, a well respected organist and choral director largely involved in Ms. Bingham's works; and Tom Winpenny, a cathedral organist involved with Ms. Bingham's work. The final interview was broadcast on the BBC radio during a choral concert celebrating Ms. Bingham's fiftieth birthday.

Stephen Farr has called Judith Bingham's compositional output a "very significant body of work in every way." Her expert craftsmanship deserves a close examination.

Judith

Glenn

Bill and Mary

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This author wishes to thank the following people: Judith Bingham for her invaluable generosity of time, materials and support; Dr. Galen Darrough for his expert guidance and support; Dr. Jill Burleson, Dr. Robert Ehle and Dr. Diane Gaede for their guidance and support; Dr. Lee Ann Peck without whom this study would not have existed; to Ms. Bingham's colleagues who allowed interviews: Stephen Farr and Tom Winpenny; and to those who lent their generosity, knowledge and expertise: Dr. Laura Rhoades, Stephen Connock, Socrates Garcia, Luci Disano, Georgia Angelopoulous, Maximos Farmakidis, Marianna Anastasiou, Stuart Cooper and Andrew Kemp.

The author also wishes to thank Peters Edition Limited London for their kind permission to use examples from the published works of Judith Bingham, and Stainer & Bell Ltd. for their kind permission to use excerpts from Charles Stanford's *The Blue Bird*.

A special thanks to Jonquil and Martin, and Bethan.

Above all, I am indebted to my husband Glenn and to my parents Mary and Bill for their unconditional love and support.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose of the Study**

It is the purpose of this study to introduce and discuss the choral style of Judith Bingham (1952 - ), looking at five works specifically: *Water Lilies* (1999), *The Drowned Lovers* (1998, revised 2009), *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"* (2003), *Ghost Towns of the American West* (2005) and *First Light* (2001). The thorough examination of this selected repertoire will serve to bring a deeper understanding and heightened awareness of her musical style.

Ms. Bingham's output includes over three hundred compositions in nearly all genres, with choral music being of most interest to her. This paper seeks to demonstrate the exceptional quality of her work, and as a result encourage programming of her music. It is this author's intent, through detailed analysis of the selected choral works and interviews with Ms. Bingham as well as musicians with experience in her music, to provide information that will benefit choral directors, and, in part, music students, especially those interested in living female composers. Although the primary intent of

this study is not specifically focused on the composer's gender, it is hoped that this study will encourage further research of other contemporary female composers.

### **Need for the Study**

The choral music of Judith Bingham demonstrates the ongoing tradition of the genre in Great Britain and throughout the world. With a multitude of commissions from various organizations in Great Britain along with a few from the United States, Ms. Bingham's work stands out as highly intellectual and yet accessible to both musicians and the average listener.

...marked by the number and variety of [her] choral works, [Judith Bingham] has always been seen as an all-rounder, and the scope of her activities has included pieces for brass band, symphonic wind ensemble and various chamber groups and solo instruments, concertos for trumpet and bassoon, and several impressive works for large orchestra including Chartres (1988)... and The Temple at Karnak (1996).<sup>1</sup>

Her organ works, including organ accompaniment of choral works, also demonstrate great understanding of the instrument's abilities and style. One British musician described her organ writing as "extraordinarily idiomatic and ergonomic"<sup>2</sup> in spite of her complete lack of organ playing experience.

Ms. Bingham has been described as an excellent craftsman

... fantastic at tailoring her language to the level of difficulty that she can aim at for an individual ensemble, but it still sounds like her music. . . . She has something that she wants to say and she has a language in which she knows she wants to say it . . . She has a complete command of that language.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Burton, "Judith Bingham," [http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/ingham\\_judith](http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/ingham_judith) (accessed March, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Farr, interview by author, July 31, 2011, 219.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 221.

Of Bingham's approximately three hundred compositions to date, roughly one quarter are choral, suggesting a significant body of choral composition. Regarding choral writing, Bingham says "when you hear people singing beautifully, it's almost a primal experience. A group of people listening to another group of people just singing, with nothing between them but the music, is very, very powerful."<sup>4</sup>

While not the focus of this study, there is great need to look at the music of women composers in general.

A consensus remains, though, that the acceptance of women into professional music-making is so recent that the prospects of performance for a woman composer are still comparatively poor; and the statistics bear it out. In the past twenty years the BBC has commissioned seventy new works for the Proms. Only six have gone to women.<sup>5</sup>

Bingham herself comments that:

This is a critical time for women composers and the issues need to be resolved. We've been isolated, and now we have to think of ourselves as part of the tradition, not as a fringe, not as a ghetto group; it's as important for women to realize that as anyone else. It's time to step into the mainstream.<sup>6</sup>

Having received several awards for her compositions, Judith Bingham has been a sought-after composer in the UK for more than ten years. Rejecting the serial style of composition, her music is "often chromatic with a strictly controlled use of dissonance where it serves the music, [it] does so within a framework that always exhibits structural

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<sup>4</sup> Lottie Fenby, "Interview for BBC Singers website, by Lottie Fenby," [http://www.judithbingham.co.uk.section398878\\_137686.html](http://www.judithbingham.co.uk.section398878_137686.html).

<sup>5</sup> Michael John White, "Classical music/A battle fought but still to be won; There are many professional women composers but prospects for performance of their work are still poor," *The Independent* (London) (October 14, 1990): 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

unity through a strong sense of melodic, harmonic and often rhythmic direction.”<sup>7</sup> In describing her particular style, Anthony Burton says her “compositional voice is a distinctive one: her singers’ feeling for expressive melodic lines is complemented by a strong rhythmic and harmonic sense.”<sup>8</sup> Ms. Bingham does not use abstract concepts, instead choosing inspiration from non-musical sources. Her style has been compared to composers like Walton and Britten.

Although frequently performed in the UK, Bingham’s work is relatively unknown in the US. Even with the multitude of contemporary American choral composers, the American audience could find significant interest in the quality of Bingham’s composing and the accessibility of her style.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study will discuss five choral works of Judith Bingham that represent variety in her choral style. The pieces to be analyzed are *Water Lilies*, an example of her complex unaccompanied works; *The Drowned Lovers*, which demonstrates a favorite concept of the composer to take a well-loved unaccompanied choral piece by another composer, in this case Charles V. Stanford’s *The Blue Bird*, dissect it and use the harmony to create her own piece; *Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus”* which is accompanied by organ; *Ghost Towns of the American West*, a slightly less complicated unaccompanied work; and *First Light*, accompanied by a brass ensemble.

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<sup>7</sup> Christopher Thomas, “A Fiftieth Birthday interview with Christopher Thomas.” [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham\\_interview.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham_interview.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Burton. “Judith Bingham.” [http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/bingham\\_judith](http://www.classical-composers.org/comp/bingham_judith)

## Organization of the Study

### Chapter One: Introduction

- Purpose of the Study
- Need for the Study
- Scope of the Study
- Organization of the Study
- Methodology
- Literature Review

Chapter Two: A brief biography of Judith Bingham

Chapter Three: In-depth analyses of five selected choral works

- *Water Lilies*
- *The Drowned Lovers* with Stanford's *The Blue Bird*
- *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"*
- *Ghost Towns of the American West*
- *First Light*

Chapter Four: Summary and Conclusions

### Bibliography

Appendix A: A complete list of Judith Bingham's choral literature

Appendix B: An interview with Judith Bingham

Appendix C: An interview with Stephen Farr

Appendix D: An interview with Tom Winpenny

Appendix E: An interview with Judith Bingham from a BBC Radio broadcast of a choral concert celebrating her fiftieth birthday

## Methodology

The musical scores to be examined have been obtained either as gifts from Judith Bingham, from Stephen Connock, or purchased from the publishers. *Water Lilies* was published by Chester Music and was a gift from Stephen Connock. It is now published by Edition Peters. The vocal score of *First Light* was published by Maecenas Music and was a gift from Judith Bingham; the full score is published by and was obtained from Edition Peters. *The Drowned Lovers*, *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus,"* and *Ghost Towns of the American West* are published by Edition Peters, and were gifts from Ms. Bingham or purchased directly. Charles V. Stanford's *The Blue Bird* is published by Galaxy Music Corporation. Written permission has been obtained from the publishers to reproduce portions of the scores in this study. Permission for the interviews was granted and this study has been accepted by the IRB Committee.

Thorough analyses of these works will be conducted and will include structure, texture, harmony, melody, rhythm, and text/music relationship. The structural analyses will include voice setting, length and form. The texture will look at polyphonic and homophonic techniques, and the setting of the vocal parts. The harmony will be analyzed using chord structure, focusing on the composer's harmonic language. The melody will include range, tessitura and lengths of phrases. The rhythmic analysis will include tempo, meter, and rhythmic devices. This will be followed by an examination of the relationship between the text and the music. Finally, consideration will be given to the accompaniments and the accessibility of the works.

All analysis will be based on the terminology and classifications outlined in the following books: *Guidelines for Style Analyses* by Jan La Rue<sup>9</sup>, *The Structure of Atonal Music* by Allen Forte<sup>10</sup>, *Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition* by Leon Dallin,<sup>11</sup> *Harmony: Baroque to Contemporary, Part 2*, by Dr. Evan Copley,<sup>12</sup> and “Basic Jazz Chords,” a comprehensive article in *Keyboard* by Jim Aikin.<sup>13</sup>

The purpose of the analyses is to discover the compositional style and language of Judith Bingham and possibly place her compositions within the overall context of the repertoire of contemporary choral music, and possibly the repertoire of female composers.

### Literature Review

The primary source materials will be the author’s interview with Judith Bingham and the choral scores of Ms. Bingham, with special emphasis on *Water Lilies*, *The Drowned Lovers*, *Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus,”* *Ghost Towns of the American West* and *First Light*.

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<sup>9</sup> Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analyses*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1970).

<sup>10</sup> Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).

<sup>11</sup> Leon Dallin, *Techniques of Twentieth Century Composition*, 3d ed. (Iowa: WM. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1974).

<sup>12</sup> Evan Copley, *Harmony: Baroque to Contemporary, Part 2* (Illinois: Stipes Publishing Co., 1991).

<sup>13</sup> Jim Aikin, “Basic Jazz Chords: Ninth, Eleventh, & Thirteenth Chords.” *Keyboard* 9, no. 3 (March 1983): 18-19. “Basic Jazz Chords: Using Altered Chord Voicings.” *Keyboard* 9, no. 5 (May 1983): 20-21, 82.



The secondary source materials include interviews, websites, journal and newspaper articles.

### Books and Dissertations

No books were found that include information on Judith Bingham. The books used will be theoretical volumes for analysis. There are no dissertations written on Bingham's works, although one is currently being written about her organ compositions.

### Articles and Interviews

Over eighty articles including journals, websites and newspapers have been compiled for this study. Most articles are either biographical, written by Bingham, or reviews of performances and recordings. The most comprehensive article is Mark Doran's "Composer in Interview: Judith Bingham."<sup>14</sup> This article begins with an in-depth description of her history. Doran then asks about her composing practices, especially covering the use of her choral experiences and how those experiences affect not only her choral compositions but also her instrumental writing. Doran's interview includes little musical analysis. Other especially informative articles include the "Interview for BBC Singers website, by Lottie Fenby,"<sup>15</sup> which covers Ms. Bingham's history with the BBC Singers, both as a singer and as a composer, including her thoughts

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Doran, "Composer in Interview: Judith Bingham," *Tempo* 58 (2004): 20-36.

<sup>15</sup> Lottie Fenby, "Interview for BBC Singers website, by Lottie Fenby," [http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878\\_137686.html](http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878_137686.html).

for future compositions for the Singers. Ms. Fenby also questions Bingham about her compositional process, specifically with regard to choral writing. “Judith Bingham. A Fiftieth Birthday Interview with Christopher Thomas”<sup>16</sup> speaks of her writing history, both choral and instrumental while briefly describing the concepts of her musical use of harmony and structure as well as her method of inviting the audience into her pieces. “Interview of Judith Bingham by Maxine Thévenot for the International Organists’ Review”<sup>17</sup> covers similar material but also includes the literary and dramatic aspect of Bingham’s compositions. Ms. Bingham’s autobiography<sup>18</sup> includes more biographical material, her ideas of composition and some of the unusual topics for her pieces. Ms. Bingham’s article “Sing for your supper”<sup>19</sup> comments on the value of the choral experience for composers in grasping compositional concepts that apply to both choral and instrumental writing.

The author’s interviews with St. Alban’s organist Tom Winpenny<sup>20</sup> and especially with organist and choir director Stephen Farr<sup>21</sup> will be very helpful in understanding Bingham’s musicality and Britain’s view of Bingham and her organ composing skills. Ms. Bingham’s catalog of her works will also be useful.<sup>22</sup> From a review of the available

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<sup>16</sup> Christopher Thomas, “Judith Bingham. A Fiftieth Birthday Interview with Christopher Thomas,” [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham\\_interview.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham_interview.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Maxine Thévenot, Interview of Judith Bingham by Maxine Thévenot for the International Organists’ Review,” [http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878\\_137683.html](http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878_137683.html).

<sup>18</sup> Judith Bingham, “Biography,” <http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section399306.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Judith Bingham, “Sing for you supper,” *Choir & Organ* 17, no. 6 (November/December 2009): 27.

<sup>20</sup> Tom Winpenny, Interview by author, August 3, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Farr, Interview by author, July 31, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Judith Bingham, Catalog of Choral Works.

literature, it is possible that the most informative source to this point will be the author's interview with Ms. Bingham.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Judith Bingham, Interview by author, July 21, 2011.

## CHAPTER II

### A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JUDITH BINGHAM

The ultimate aim in any art is truthfulness. There isn't a piece of great art that isn't truthful, and it's that truthfulness which is the risk-taking thing.

Judith Bingham

There are no women composers, never have been, and possibly never will be.

Sir Thomas Beecham

In spite of Sir Thomas Beecham's attitude, there have been and will continue to be women composers. Though few and far between as compared to male composers, their numbers are rising, and their music is being more accepted. Judith Bingham is one of these women composers whose works continue to grow in popularity.

Judith Bingham was born June 21, 1952 in Nottingham, in the county of Nottinghamshire, England. She grew up in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire and Sheffield, South Yorkshire. Her father was a piano salesman turned Inspector of Taxes at the Inland Revenue and a very good amateur pianist. Her mother, amazed at Judith's ability to sing a tune in a clear voice at the age of eighteen months, wrote to a magazine called

Family Doctor to find out if that was unusual which they confirmed.<sup>24</sup> Bingham was exposed to the classics by her father, but as he liked nothing more contemporary than Sibelius she did not hear more contemporary composers as a child. Her mother preferred musicals, and wanted Judith to become a nurse or an English teacher. As a child she enjoyed recordings of popular Romantic music as well as Britten's *Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra*.<sup>25</sup> She started playing the piano at an early age with encouragement from her father and private lessons as well, but mostly she was self-taught. At the age of four she began composing, although she did not begin writing anything down until she was about eleven.<sup>26</sup> At school she played the oboe, which she hated due to the instrument's nature to build up pressure in her head. She taught herself the flute, and briefly tried the violin, but her mother, pained by the sound, made her stop.<sup>27</sup>

At sixteen Bingham joined the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, a large amateur group, which performed with the professional Hallé Orchestra under such conductors as Barenboim, Giulini and Dorati.<sup>28</sup> She was very stage struck to be singing such large choral works under these famous conductors. "When I sight-read my first *Messiah* at a concert with Barbirolli I was terrified. I had only sung about one note in ten."<sup>29</sup> It was during this time that she acted in many plays, starting her love of drama, and began writing poetry as well.

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<sup>24</sup> Mark Doran, "Composer in Interview: Judith Bingham," *Tempo* 58, no 230 (2004): 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Lottie Fenby, "Interview for BBC Singers website, by Lottie Fenby," [http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878\\_137686.html](http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section398878_137686.html).

<sup>27</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, digital recording, London, England, 21 July 2011, 188.

<sup>28</sup> Doran, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 195.

In her youth Bingham's musical world was like a fantasy. She had no idea that women could be composers, yet that was what she wanted to be. She received no support from her family or teachers and consequently began in secret to develop her highly imaginative compositional style.<sup>30</sup>

Once through the English educational system of O-levels and A-levels Bingham went to the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London where she studied composition and voice, and sang with the Monteverdi Choir and the BBC Symphony Chorus. She was trained as a soprano but later moved down to the more comfortable mezzo soprano/alto part.

At the Royal Academy of Music Judith studied composition with Malcolm MacDonald, Eric Fenby, Alan Bush and John Hall, one of whom said she was "unteachable."<sup>31</sup> She felt the lessons were "disastrous." "I was very difficult to deal with and would not accept criticism at all."<sup>32</sup> During her studies with Alan Bush she composed the chamber work *Maelstrom* which won the Principal's Prize and was debuted at the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Hall in London. After it had been performed, Bush, who did not like Bingham, claimed it was un-performable.<sup>33</sup> Such was her experience at the Royal Academy of Music.

During this time she felt isolated from the musical world. She was never . . . part of any music group. When I was in my twenties it was still very unusual for a woman to be a composer. I didn't feel I was part of any new music circle then because I didn't relate to the whole Boulez/Stockhausen thing. . . . there was

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<sup>30</sup> Doran, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Doran, 26.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Thomas, "Judith Bingham. A Fiftieth Birthday interview with Christopher Thomas," [http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham\\_interview.htm](http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/July02/Bingham_interview.htm).

<sup>33</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 178.

really music police here . . . that was the new music scene, it wasn't diverse like it is now. I can remember at the Academy you would never say "I really love Chopin." . . . It was an extraordinary time, it was quite fascistic in its own way, I think. But it was very non-u [unacceptable] to like all the English composers like Vaughan Williams, or Finzi, or anybody like that.<sup>34</sup>

The accepted compositional style at RAM during those years was more along the lines of the serial tradition. Bingham's writing at the time used a wide range of harmonies, even using consonant chords, which was considered quite shocking.

People would say "you can't have that chord." Like you were in the nineteenth century and you'd put some mad dissonance in the middle of something. It was like a consonant chord suddenly became an affront. "You need to take that out. It's not right" and it was an affront to use it. "But people would say 'it's regressive to use sounds like that.' . . . I remember in my twenties that Boulez was saying that by the year 2000 all music would be atonal and electro-acoustical. . . What part could I have in a future that was atonal and electro-acoustical? It's not that I want to write totally tonal music, I don't, but at the same time I want to have the whole box of oil paints - all the colors to pick from. I don't want to think you can't use that yellow, it's regressive using yellow. I didn't fit in at all."<sup>35</sup>

After her studies at RAM Judith spent some time at home with her parents. She continued to compose, but had no idea how to proceed. A friend suggested that she send some scores to Hans Keller at the BBC New Music Panel, a group of outside readers who reviewed compositions submitted to the BBC. Keller, an influential musicologist and music critic, wrote back saying that she had "an interesting mind." Managing to take complete offense at his comments she confronted him. Keller then compared her to early Beethoven; very flatteringly, he said she had too many ideas, but her lack of control was "an auspicious sign," like in op. 18.<sup>36</sup> After about a year of exchanging scores and suggestions Bingham returned to London and asked him to give her lessons. He

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>36</sup> Doran, 26.

responded by agreeing but with the qualification that she would not like his lessons.<sup>37</sup> They met in the BBC Club, him drinking vodka and chain-smoking, her drinking dry martinis to appear mature, while pouring over her scores. His suggestions made a world of difference for her. “Less is more,” he said, citing Beethoven’s fifth symphony, and to always work towards spontaneity.<sup>38</sup> Keller’s lessons were more like psycho-analysis, helping Bingham to grow without the RAM mentality of “you can’t do this.”<sup>39</sup> These lessons have remained with her always. Bingham did not realize just who she was studying with, never paying for his time. After several years he told her that she was the only person he had never charged.<sup>40</sup>

In 1974 Bingham composed the choral work *Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, which would later be her first work to be published. It was revised in 1976, again in 1982, and published by Novello in 1988. The early scores that survive, including *Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, “show a quixotic imagination, a fondness for pungent harmonies, prickly rhythms and pithy state, and, an ear for unusual instrumental combinations.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Maxine Thévenot, “Interview of Judith Bingham by Maxine Thévenot for the International Organists’ Review,” [http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section298878\\_137683.html](http://www.judithbingham.co.uk/section298878_137683.html).

<sup>39</sup> Doran, 26, 27.

<sup>40</sup> Doran, 26.

<sup>41</sup> Giles Easterbrook, “Judith Bingham,” *Grove Music Online*, [http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.source.unco.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/46005?q=%22Judith+Bingham%22&hbutton\\_search.x=22&hbutton\\_search.y+13&hbutton\\_search=search&source=omo+t237&source+omo\\_gmo&source=omo\\_t114&search=quick&pos=2&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.source.unco.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/46005?q=%22Judith+Bingham%22&hbutton_search.x=22&hbutton_search.y+13&hbutton_search=search&source=omo+t237&source+omo_gmo&source=omo_t114&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit)



With the lack of interest in her two-year effort in the opera *Flynn* (1978) based on the autobiography of Errol Flynn, Bingham went into a depression. She continued to compose; however, extremely little from that period has been published.

By the end of her twenties Bingham felt that her music had become “turgid and muddy,” citing as an example the organ composition *Into the Wilderness* (1982), recorded by Tom Winpenny on his CD of Bingham’s organ music,<sup>42</sup> which the composer described as disjointed, with heavy “muddy” harmonies.<sup>43</sup>

Early in her thirties Bingham found a new style.

[She discovered] . . . a whole new set of harmonies and chords. Things had altered in my life, and I think I had a big discovery of something more truthful about myself. The ultimate aim of anything is truthfulness in art. There isn’t a piece of great art that isn’t truthful, and it’s that truthfulness which is the risk-taking thing in all of that. And I think that the style I arrived at in my thirties was somehow more quintessentially me. I don’t think the harmonies were in any way innovatory, they were just new for me. I felt I’d discovered a whole new harmonic way of writing.<sup>44</sup>

Only one choral work from this period has been published, *Cradle Song of the Blessed Virgin*, which is now out of print.

Judith joined the BBC Singers in 1983, a professional chorus capable of the most difficult unaccompanied music. With the Singers she intensified her knowledge of what did and did not work for choral composing. About composing in general Judith states “I’m always saying to students, [to] join a choir. If you haven’t got much of a voice join an amateur choir because you really learn so much about part writing, balance; you just pick things up that can’t be taught in the same way.”<sup>45</sup> She feels this is vital for

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<sup>42</sup> Tom Winpenny, *Judith Bingham Organ Music*, (Naxos, St. Albans, 2011).

<sup>43</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 181.

<sup>44</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 180.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 160.

instrumental writing as well, as singers sit behind orchestras in larger choral works, able to observe what may or may not work.

As part of the upswing in her life Bingham was married in 1985 to Andrew John Petrow, but then separated in 1993 and divorced in 2011. Consequently, her output in the early nineteen-nineties was a little less prolific, but no less excellent. Included in this period are the choral works *The Past is a Strange Land*, mentioned later in this chapter, and *The Darkness is No Darkness*, a reworking of S. S. Wesley's anthem *Thou Wilt Keep Him In Perfect Peace*. This was the first of Bingham's interesting and successful reworkings of famous choral pieces including *The Drowned Lovers*, also to be examined later.

In 1986 Ms. Bingham was on a trip to France, arriving unplanned at Chartres Cathedral at closing time. She convinced the verger to allow her into the cathedral, but she was only to walk directly from the north to the south side without stopping.

It had been a very bright but rainy day. All of the lights were off and there were just these huge stained glass windows suspended like tremendous jewels in this black interior. I was just completely astonished by it. I thought I must write a piece about this. It was one of those eureka moments.<sup>46</sup>

The resulting piece for orchestra, *Chartres*, is composed of a prologue and seven movements, acting as a guidebook around the cathedral. As this was not a commission Judith allowed herself to orchestrate it as she liked, including seven percussionists playing instruments like a cimbalom (an Hungarian hammered dulcimer), chamber organ, piano, glockenspiel, xylophone, vibraphone, tubular bells, hand bells, and more. A review of the premier mentions that it “abounds in ear-catching ideas, many of them

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<sup>46</sup> Judith Bingham, interviewed by BBC Radio Three prior to the second performance of *Chartres*.

having considerable rhythmic gusto, all well heard in a rich harmonic idiom and attractively scored.”<sup>47</sup> In the review the influence of Messiaen was noted. The 1993 premier turned Bingham’s image around and she began to be taken more seriously.<sup>48</sup> She was finally seen as more than a choral singer who wrote a bit of music. Immediately after the premier she received a commission for another large orchestral work, and since then she composes almost exclusively by commission.

Bingham left the BBC Singers in 1995 to compose full time. She was made the Singer’s Composer in Association from 2004 – 2009. In 2004 she won a British Composer Award for her second *Missa Brevis*, written for Westminster Cathedral, and then won again in 2006 for *My Heart Strangely Warm’d*. In that same year she also won for *The Christmas Truce*, a choral piece about the Christmas truce of World War I, and in 2008 she won a British Composer Award for *Fantasia*, a violin piece. She won Bingham Young University’s Barlow Prize in 2004, *Ghost Towns of the American West* being the resulting commission. Bingham has had commissions from America starting in 2002, from Philip Barnes in St. Louis, Missouri, and from Philip Brunelle in Minneapolis, Minnesota as well as others.

Her catalog contains over three hundred works of a variety of forces, choral, orchestral, brass band and chamber music, with anything from small ensembles to solos, utilizing both modern and ancient instruments, with over sixty being choral compositions. Of the three hundred, Bingham counts two hundred as usable and publishable, with a

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<sup>47</sup> David Fanning, “Colours to catch the ear; David Fanning on Stravinsky at the Halle and the BBC Philharmonic’s Judith Bingham Premier,” *Independent (London)*, 13 November 1993.

<sup>48</sup> Doran, 28.

quarter of that number being choral works.<sup>49</sup> The pieces that I have chosen represent her various styles of choral writing, from unaccompanied to full orchestral accompaniment.

Judith lives in London and travels frequently to observe the performers for which she has commissions. Each commission is tailored to the performers involved. With her love for drama she does extensive reading and research for each commission, piecing together ideas and texts to engage her performers and audience. Once she has decided on an idea she surrounds her writing desk with artwork reflecting the nature of the piece. It is this time spent in reading, research and design which she enjoys most about her composing. For example, she was commissioned to compose a work for the Chester Festival which was to be about the county of Cheshire. While visiting Chester she visited the bookshops and found *Cheshire Ghosts and Legends*, a guidebook for tourists. As the church destined for the performance had a ghost of its own, she settled on five movements describing five different ghosts in Cheshire. The result was *The Past is a Strange Land*, using authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Edward Thomas, Hillaire Belloc, Christina Rossetti, anonymous, and Bingham herself.

Having had this great idea and selected my five ghosts that I was going to write about, then, of course, where were the texts going to come from? I had to cobble together the texts from various sources and then pad it out very much with my own words, and some of the movements are just almost entirely me because there was no way I could find any poems about this. So the first song is about a ghost of a black dog in a village called Barthomley, and I used some words from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, that's where the Arthur Conan Doyle thing comes in, and then I added words of my own. The second ghost is of a child in a place called Combermere Abbey, who was always seen running round and round a bed. I used words from the clock in Chester Cathedral about time, about time running on. And then the third one is about these monks at a place called Vale Royal who were only ever seen floating above the ground because, of course, the ground levels have sunk since the Abbey was built. I wrote those words for that. And then the fourth one is really quite gross, and I think the men of the BBC Singers

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<sup>49</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 159.

got into this one, quite, with great abandon, which is the Gatley Groaner, a man who used to adulterate milk, and then when he died used to go up and down the lanes groaning until he was exorcised. The final one was the ghost in Nantwich Parish Church which you only see out of the corner of your eye. That I sort of did my own words for, and left a little space for the ghost to appear if he wanted to, which was quite a scary moment on the day. And then it finishes with these words by Christina Rossetti, these quite famous words “I shall not see the shadows, I shall not fear the rain,” about what life would be like after death. And in a way it’s really about laying the ghosts to rest, I think.<sup>50</sup>

Judith stated in the interview that thankfully the ghost chose not to show up on the day.

Once the topic and text have been chosen Bingham composes from beginning to end, preferably without stopping for another commission in the meantime.

I’m quite a mercurial person, and I find it very difficult to spur myself into doing anything like reworking or revising, anything like that. So I try very hard to get it absolutely right when I’m writing it. And I’m quite painstaking, I write absolutely in chronological order. I start at the beginning, and if I get stuck, I don’t go on until I’ve unstuck myself. I wouldn’t think I’ll go on and do the second movement because I can’t think of how to go on. I can’t do that. . . every bar has to be right before I move on. . . I would never do anything out of order.<sup>51</sup>

The result of this through-composing is, intentionally, a journey from beginning to end.

Therein lies the drama. The *Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus”* analyzed later in this study is a prime example. Using the traditional Latin mass text minus the “Credo” and adding the Biblical story from Luke 24: 13 - 31, she journeys from the organ preamble, through the communion motet of verse 30 to the recognition of Christ in the final organ voluntary.<sup>52</sup>

Bingham’s fascination with creating drama has resulted in some interesting pieces. Listed here are a few examples from the multitude of her choral repertoire. Just

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<sup>50</sup> Judith Bingham, interview for the BBC Radio Three fiftieth birthday concert, 245-246.

<sup>51</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 168.

<sup>52</sup> Judith Bingham, *Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus,”* (London: Edition Peters, 2003).

after 9/11 she felt the need to express her feelings in music which resulted in *Beneath these Alien Stars*, completed on the fifteenth of September, 2001. The text is by Vesta Pierce Crawford, whose poetry she would later use in *Ghost Towns of the American West*. It expresses the alien feel of the desert, which was also Bingham's impression of New York City following the collapse of the World Trade Towers. *Beneath these Alien Stars* is written for two upper voice parts and organ, and is stark in contrast to the thick textures of many of her works.

In 2003 she compiled and poeticized accounts of the Christmas truce during World War I, or the Great War as it is known in Britain. On that Christmas Day in 1914 the troops on both sides spontaneously ceased hostilities, sang carols to each other, and even joined one another in no mans land to play soccer. *The Christmas Truce* text is in English and German and Bingham uses hymns and carols including *Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus*, *O Tannenbaum (O Christmas Tree)*, and *Silent Night*. This twenty-five minute work is scored for SATTB, two trumpets, percussion (including a policeman's whistle), organ and strings.

Bingham composed an unusual work for the completion of the Millennium Tower of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St. Edmonds in 2004. Subtitled *A Tapestry of 12<sup>th</sup> Century England*, *The Ivory Tree* could be called a liturgical drama or a mystery play for counter-tenor, baritone and bass soli, SATB chorus, dancers, organ and orchestra. The four choral motets can be purchased and performed separately. The hour and fifteen minute work is to be performed in a cathedral, utilizing various parts of the building for the drama. The inspiration for the story was a twelfth century carved ivory cross now housed in New York. The tale is a "mystical blurring of local legend, New Testament

theology and pagan folklore.”<sup>53</sup> It includes England’s mythical Green Man, St. Edmund’s death at the hands of Vikings and the account of a friendly wolf returning the head of St. Edmund. The music is based on plainsong yet is not austere.

*An Ancient Music*, from 2006, juxtaposes letters from World War I soldier poet Wilfred Owen and the French poet of the same era, Guillaume Apollinaire. Owen’s poetry is well known from Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*. Owen hated the war, the violence and senseless death, while Apollinaire gloried in it:

*The night is so beautiful where the bullet coos,  
A huge river of shells flows over our heads  
At times a flare illuminates the night  
It’s a flower that opens and disappears*<sup>54</sup>

*An Ancient Music* is scored for an actor to read Owen’s letters, a choir to join the orchestra in wordless accompaniment to the letters and also to sing Apollinaire’s poetry in the original French, as well as a string trio. The music is based on a popular World War I song called *Ma Normandi*.

Also in 2006 Bingham composed *Hidden City* about Hiroshima prior to the bombing in World War II. The text is a combination of thousand-year-old Japanese haiku written by high-born women, and descriptions from a 1898 guidebook to Japan. Set for SATB choir, harp and percussion, it is sung in both Japanese and English, and is a poignant view of pre-devastation Hiroshima. Bingham used the traditional harmonies of a Japanese bamboo reed instrument throughout.

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<sup>53</sup> Neil Fischer, “The Ivory Tree,” *London Times*, 1 January 2005.

<sup>54</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire, “Chant de l’Honneur,”  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=7FviP1Cl3jcC&pg=PA322&dq=%22Chant+de+L%27Honneur%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=1EQcT8HtFMmDtgfLpcmKCw&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Chant%20de%20L%27Honneur%22&f=false>

Going back to Ms. Bingham's reworking of popular British choral works, she has composed *The Darkness is No Darkness* with the harmonies of S. S. Wesley's *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*, and *The Drowned Lovers* from the harmonies of C. V. Stanford's *The Blue Bird*, both mentioned earlier. Also in this idiom she has composed *The Spirit of Truth* using the music of Thomas Tallis' *If Ye Love Me* and *Distant Thunder* with the harmonies of H. H. H. Parry's *My Soul There Is a Country*. Although it would change her formula of using the music of a British anthem or part song, she hopes to utilize harmonies from Camille Saint-Saëns' *The Dying Swan* in a piece for cello and piano.

With regards to the quality and lasting nature of Judith Bingham's music, her colleague Stephen Farr said:

The really fundamental thing which to me makes Judith's music very worthwhile is that she means every note of it. . . . Vaughan Williams' [said] about the ninth symphony: "I don't know if I like it, but it's what I meant." You just get the feeling that there isn't a lazy or careless or thoughtless note in any of it. It's all exactly how it's supposed to be.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Stephen Farr, interview by author, 31 July 2011 228.



## CHAPTER III

### IN-DEPTH ANALYSES OF FIVE CONTEMPORARY CHORAL WORKS

#### Introduction

The choral music of Judith Bingham is as varied as her overall catalog of compositions. It is comprised of unaccompanied and accompanied works, secular and sacred works, using dramatic and traditional texts; however, all of her music, regardless of size, gives the dramatic sense of taking a journey. This chapter will analyze in depth three unaccompanied secular pieces: *Water Lilies*; *The Drowned Lovers*; and *Ghost Towns of the American West*; the semi-traditional, organ accompanied *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus;"* and *First Light*, accompanied by brass ensemble.

#### *Water Lilies*

At the end of the twentieth century, after a bout with cancer, a miraculous recovery, attributed to listening to music, specifically the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, prompted Stephen Connock<sup>56</sup> to ask various British choral composers to write

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<sup>56</sup> The former president of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society.

a piece about the healing power of music. These pieces were to be compiled, published, recorded and performed, with the proceeds designated to cancer funds.<sup>57</sup> Judith Bingham was amongst the composers who agreed to participate in this project. Prior to completion of the project, Sir Paul McCartney was brought in because of the death of his wife, Linda, of breast cancer. The focus of the project shifted direction to being a commemoration to Linda McCartney's life, while proceeds would go to the study and treatment of breast cancer, colorectal and liver cancers. The end product was *a Garland for Linda*, a collection of music by John Tavener, Judith Bingham, John Rutter, David Matthews, Paul McCartney, Roxanna Panufnik, Michael Berkeley, Giles Swayne and Richard Rodney Bennett.<sup>58</sup> Concert performances and the compact disc open with a piece by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Bingham, having gotten tangled in water lilies while swimming in a lake in the Bavarian Alps, wondered what happened to the water lilies during the harsh Alpine winters. Consulting a botanical guide, she discovered that the flowers form under the water and then freeze solid over the winter, rising to the surface to flower once the lake has melted. She found this to be an excellent metaphor for the healing power of music, but knew that she could find no poetry to adequately express her idea. For this piece she wrote what she considers her best effort at poetry.<sup>59</sup> As visual stimulus, Bingham used John William Waterhouse's 1896 painting of *Hylas and the Nymphs*, not Monet's *Water Lilies* as might have been expected.

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<sup>57</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 201-202.

<sup>58</sup> *a Garland for Linda* (London: Chester Music, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 162.

*Water Lilies* (1999) is a seven minute piece originally published by Chester Music in *a Garland for Linda* and now published separately by Edition Peters. It is composed for SSAATTBB unaccompanied chorus with occasional soli from each section. As with all of Bingham's music, *Water Lilies* is through-composed in form, yielding a sense of a journey by way of compositional technique as well as harmonic progression. Her inclusion of drama in every composition adds to the experience of a journey rather than a return to the beginning as one would find in the recapitulation of sonata-allegro form. The structure is in an oscillating wave form with troughs and peaks (appropriate for a water scenario), beginning quietly, with peaks in measures 24, 55, 73, 82, and the highest point on the word "stars" in measure 95. It then tapers off to a quiet end in measure 104. The performance instructions of "Dreamlike, very mysterious," along with the rocking rhythms, pulsing chords, set the moody, dark atmosphere.

The range is broad, with most of the music within comfortable tessitura except for the bass part which is very low (table 1).

Table 1. *Water Lilies* Range

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Water Lilies', detailing the vocal ranges for various parts. The score is organized into five systems, each representing a different vocal part. The first system is for Soprano, with parts for Soprano Solo, Soprano 1, and Soprano 2. The second system is for Alto, with parts for Alto Solo, Alto 1, and Alto 2. The third system is for Tenor, with parts for Tenor Solo, Tenor 1, and Tenor 2. The fourth system is for Baritone, with parts for Baritone Solo and Baritone. The fifth system is for Bass, with parts for Bass Solo and Bass. The notes are written on a grand staff with five staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano Solo part starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note A4. Soprano 1 starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4. Soprano 2 starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4. Alto Solo starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3, then a quarter note B3, and a quarter note C4. A note below the staff indicates that the B3 note can be raised one octave. Alto 1 starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3. Alto 2 starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3. Tenor Solo starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3. Tenor 1 starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3. Tenor 2 starts with a quarter note G3, followed by a quarter note A3. Baritone Solo starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2. Baritone starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2. Bass Solo starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2. Bass starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note A2.

Bingham uses vocal effects such as humming, trilling and open vowels to keep chords going and to aid in finding the next pitch. Also, the directions for the soprano soloist are clearly detailed (example 1).

Example 1. *Water Lilies* measures 56-59

Very Slightly slower, suddenly very cold  
*mf no vib.*

56 one or a few voices  
 S. Solo *mf no vib.*  
 Wrapped - in a gown of pale\_ green mist, the lake lies

S. 1 *pp*  
 ah ah ah ah ah *sim.*

S. 2 *pp*  
 ah ah ah ah ah *sim.*

A. Solo *pp no vib.*  
 nn\_ nn\_

A. 1 *pp no vib.*  
 ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ *sim.*

A. 2 *pp*  
 ah ah ah ah ah *sim.*

T. Solo

T. 1 *tr*

T. 2 *tr*

Bar./  
 B. Solos

Bar.

B.

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Another effect used is the vacillating between two chord pitches to keep forward momentum in long chords, and, according to the composer, to aid in keeping the pitch steady (see the soprano 2, alto 1 and alto 2 parts in measures 1-2 of example 2).

Example 2. *Water Lilies* measures 1-3

*1* Dreamlike, very mysterious  $\text{♩} = 50$

S. Solo

S. 1  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

S. 2  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

A. Solo  
Nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - - - -

A. 1  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

A. 2  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

T. Solo  
Nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, s

T. 1  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

T. 2  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

Bar./B. Solos  
Nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, nym - phae - a, s

Bar.  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

B.  
Nym - - - - phae - - - a, - - - -

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Also note the contrast between the static soprano 1, tenors, baritones and basses and the rhythmic chord undulations in soprano 2 and altos. Often she juxtaposes men's voices with women's voices (see examples 3, p. 31, and 4, p. 34).

Texturally, Bingham has most voices singing simultaneously, in varying phrase lengths, often with phrase endings and beginnings overlapping. There is only one

measure where a word is sung simultaneously in all choral voices, measure 95 on “stars” (example 7, p. 46). The structure is mostly chordal with movement only within the chord (example 2, p. 29). This movement, both melodic and undulating, is usually scored against static vocal lines. In measures 47-53 of example 3 (p. 31) the men’s voices move melodically, alternating between tenor 1 and the lower voices, while the women’s voices maintain the chords again using the surging chordal rhythm against the static held notes. The alto soloist enters in measure 51 with an arpeggiated chord continuing the forward movement (example 3).

Example 3. *Water Lilies* measures 47-55

47

S. Solo

S. 1 *p* *mf* *f*  
Sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing,

S. 2 *p*  
Sway - - ing, sway - - ing, sway - - ing,

A. Solo

A. 1 *p*  
Sway - - ing, sway - - ing, sway - - ing,

A. 2 *p* *mf* *f*  
Sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing,

T. Solo

T. 1 *f*  
Clutch - ing, deep - er

T. 2 *mf*  
clutch - ing, pull - ing, clutch - ing,

Bar./  
B. Solos

Bar. *mf*  
clutch - ing, pull - ing, clutch - ing,

B. *mf*  
clutch - ing, pull - ing, clutch - ing,



50

*mp*  
be - lieve

*pp*  
sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*pp*  
sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*mf* 3 3 3 3  
Sway - ing

*pp*  
sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*pp*  
sway - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*mp*  
Hard

*mf*  
pull - ing deep - er - er... deep - er

*pp*  
pull - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*mp* *mf*  
In to the murk - ier depths...  
deep - er deep - er depths

*pp*  
pull - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

*pp*  
pull - ing, sway - ing, sway - ing, nn

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The dynamics range from pianissimo to fortissimo with crescendi and decrescendi; phrase endings are often marked decrescendo. Bingham also makes effective use of crescendi into subito piano or pianissimo. The overall dynamic, meticulously controlled, tends toward soft with the text slightly louder. Note the continuous text of “clutching, pulling, deeper into the murkier depths” is marked forte

and mezzo forte while the voices maintaining the chord on “swaying” are piano and pianissimo, maintaining the intelligibility of the text (example 3, p. 31). Interestingly, the highest point has the soprano soloist and first sopranos singing at the top of their ranges on a pianissimo which, though difficult, is very effective (see example 7, p. 46, measure 95).

Harmony is used for both color and tension. There are many altered and diminished chords with tritones prominent throughout, both harmonically and melodically. Example 4 (p. 34), measures 16-19, is full of tritones. The vertical tritone of B-flat in the women’s voices against the E in the men’s voices is audibly evident. Melodically, tritones are numerous: in the bass part in measure 16; tenor 1 in measures 16-17; baritone in measures 17-18; alto 1, alto 2 and tenor 1 in measures 18-19. There are also tritones made slightly less obvious by the use of an extra note inserted between the notes of the tritone: see the soprano solo’s E – C – B-flat in measure 17; soprano 2, alto 1 and alto 2 in measures 16-17 of example 4. Melodic tritones are marked ^ (example 4).

Example 4. *Water Lilies* measures 16-23

16

S. Solo *p legg*  
Ah

S. 1 *poco*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_ *2*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_

S. 2 *poco*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_ *2*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_

A. Solo *p legg*  
Ah

A. 1 *poco*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_ *2*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_

A. 2 *poco*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_ *2*  
uh \_\_\_\_\_

T. Solo *p legg*  
a \_\_\_\_\_ Ah

T. 1 *mf*  
Hard to be - lieve, \_\_\_\_\_

T. 2 *mf*  
Hard to be - lieve, \_\_\_\_\_

Bar./  
B. Solo Baritone solo *mf*  
Hard to be - lieve, \_\_\_\_\_

Bar. *mp*  
a \_\_\_\_\_ ah \_\_\_\_\_ ah \_\_\_\_\_

B. *mp*  
a \_\_\_\_\_ ah \_\_\_\_\_ ah \_\_\_\_\_

19

ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ ah\_

mm uh last sum - mer, *p no cresc.*

mm uh last sum - mer, *p*

ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ ah\_ mm

mm *mp* the lake where we swam - mm sum - mer, <sup>2</sup>

mm swam - mm sum - mer,

ah mm

Hard to be - lieve the lake swam - mm/uh

mm this was the lake mm/uh

mm

Hard to be - lieve mm/uh

ah mm/uh

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Chords are seldom in root position, propelling the movement forward. In example 4 (p. 34) the chords are all seventh and ninth chords, none of which is in root position. As seen in the following chord table, favored harmonies include diminished chords and chords with unexpected notes in them, chords that do not quite “ring true,” an

influence from Prokofiev.<sup>60</sup> The following table highlights the frequency with which altered chords are utilized; for example, there are two G<sup>7(#9b5)</sup> chords and six Bb<sup>7(#9)</sup> chords, and so forth. While there are chords built on every note of the chromatic scale, only seventeen are triads.

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<sup>60</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 182.

Table 2. *Water Lilies* Chord Analysis

Chord	used	Chord	used	Chord	used	Chord	used
A7(b5)	1	Bb7m(b5)	1	C+	2	Dm	1
Am	1	Bb7(#5)	1	C+maj11	2	Dm(#11)	2
Am7	1	Bb7(#9)	1	Cdim7	1	Dm7	2
Ahalfdim7(#11)	1	Bb7(b9)	1	Cdim9	2	Dm9	4
A#halfdim7	1	Bb7(#11)	1	Chalfdim7	2	Dhalfdim7	4
Ab7(#5)	1	Bb7(b13)	2	Cm	1	Ddim(maj7)	1
Ab7(b9)	1	Bb9	3	Cm7	3	D#dim	1
Ab7(b13)	1	Bb9(#11)	1	C#	1	Db(omit3#11)	1
Abmaj7(#5sus4)	1	Bb13(#11#9)	2	C#9	2	Db(#11)	2
Ab13(omit5)	1	Bbm7	5	C#m	3	Db9	2
Abm6	1	Bbm7(#11)	9	C#m7	1	Db9(omit5)	1
Bmaj7	1	Bbhalfdim13	2	C#m9	1	Dbm11	5
Bdim	1	Bbdim	1	C#m11	2	E(b5)	1
Bdim7	1	C7	12	D7	5	E13	1
Bb6/9	1	C7(#5)	1	D7(b9)	3	E7	5
Bb7	1	C9(b13)	3	D11(b9)	1	E9(b5)	1
Bb(#11)	1	Cmaj13(#5)	1	Dmaj7	5	Em(#11)	1

*Continued on next page*

Table 2 *cont.*

Chord	used	Chord	used	Chord	used	Chord	used
Em7	2	Ebm7	2	F#13	1	Ghalfdim7	3
Em9	2	Ebm9	6	Fmmaj7	1	Ghalfdim9	1
Edim7	2	Ebm11	3	G7	8	Gb9	1
Eb	1	F	1	G7(#9b5)	2	G#(maj7)	1
Eb(#5)	2	F7	1	G7(#9b9)	1	G#m6	2
Eb7	1	F9	1	G7(#11#9)	1	G#m7	7
Eb7(b5)	1	F#7	1	G11	1	G#m11	1
Eb9	1	F#9	1	G13	2		
Ebm	5	F#11	1	Gm(maj7)	1		

A prime example of the aforementioned “unexpected note” is in measure 26 of example 5 when the upper voices are singing a C-sharp and the baritones and basses enter with a G – C fourth, suggesting a polytonal sonority (example 5).

Example 5. *Water Lilies* measures 25-33

25

S. Solo

S. 1

S. 2

A. Solo

A. 1

A. 2

T. Solo

T. 1

T. 2

Bar./  
B. Solo

Bar.

B.

of li-quad

Some-times I dream of that night, swim-ming blind-ly through sil-ky, warm wa-ter, of li-quad

Some-times I dream of that night, swim-ming blind-ly through sil-ky, warm wa-ter

of

Some-times I dream of that night, swim-ming blind-ly through sil-ky, warm wa-ter

some - times I dream of that night, \_\_\_\_\_

some - times I dream of that night, \_\_\_\_\_

mm some - times I dream of that night, \_\_\_\_\_

mm some - times I dream of that night, \_\_\_\_\_



29

2 Solos *mp* *poco*

Sway - - - ing

*sub. pp* *mp* *p dolce*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ a pool of wa - - - ter li lies

*sub. pp* *mp* *p dolce*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ a pool of wa - - - ter li lies

*pp* *mp* *p dolce*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ a pool of wa - - - ter li lies

*sub. pp* *mp* *mf* *mf*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ in - to a pool of nn \_\_\_\_\_ some-times I dream of that

*mf*

some-times I dream of that

*sub. pp* *pp*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ sway - ing sway - ing \_\_\_\_\_ (trill on 'ng')

*sub. pp* *mp* *pp*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ in - to a pool sway - ing sway ing \_\_\_\_\_ (trill on 'ng')

Bass

*p*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ uh \_\_\_\_\_

*sub. pp* *pp*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ a pool of sway - ing sway - ing \_\_\_\_\_

*sub. pp*

moon - light \_\_\_\_\_ a pool of sway - ing sway - ing \_\_\_\_\_

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The harmonic rhythm begins very slowly, with chords of two-measure duration, but then, with occasional exceptions, speeds up with multiple chord changes per measure beginning in measure 26. This can be more easily seen in the chordal reduction in

example 6. Note, the chords are listed above the staff, and the sets from Allen Forte's set theory are below (example 6).

Example 6. *Water Lilies* chordal reduction of measures 25-34

25 C# C°9/G Dmaj7/A Eb7/Bb C°9/G B°7 Bb7(b9)/D Bmaj7/F#

26

3-5 3-4 3-7 3-5 3-8 4-13 5-31 4-19

29 Ebm11 Ebm11 Ebm11 D#°/A Cm/G Cm7 Cm7

4-18 4-18 4-18 4-18 3-11 4-19 4-26

32 C#m7 C#m Bb7(#9)/Ab Bbm7(#11)

4-26 3-11 5-32 5-32

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In both the beginning and end of the piece Bingham oscillates between two chords for multiple measures.

As seen in example 6 (p. 41), the harmonic structure has had to be analyzed by the use of jazz chord notation as no traditional progressions are used. Bingham chooses to compose without key signatures, preferring the use of accidentals. Chords utilize the chromatic scale with constructs on every note of that scale. Frequently, individual chords are spelled enharmonically, utilizing both sharps and flats to aid the singers in finding notes. Composing with her penchant for creating a journey, the piece begins with D based chords and ends in C-sharp and F-sharp based chords rather than returning to a “tonic.” Initial chords are spelled mostly with flats and move into sharp chords by the end, a favorite tendency of Bingham.

Allen Forte’s set theory<sup>61</sup> was used in the analysis of this piece to aid in understanding the chord frequency and tendencies. Forte’s set theory was designed to analyze atonal and serial music. The first number of each set is the number of different notes in the chord. Although Bingham’s music is not atonal, the use of set theory can aid in harmonic understanding. Table 3 (p. 43) shows the sets used in numerical order, while table 4 (p. 44) lists the sets in order of frequency of use. Notice a predilection for the 4-27 chord (half diminished or major/minor seventh chords) employed 62 times, and the continuous use of chords with more than four pitches. The number of different sets show the multitude of variety in chords employed.

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<sup>61</sup> Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

Table 3. *Water Lilies* Chord sets

Set #	used	Set #	used	Set #	used	Set #	used	Set #	used
3-2	1	4-13	3	5-16	2	6-15	1	7-19	2
3-4	1	4-14	4	5-22	1	6-27	2	7-27	1
3-5	2	4-17	3	5-24	1	6-30	1	7-31	1
3-7	5	4-18	16	5-25	8	6-33	2		
3-8	4	4-19	6	5-26	3	6-34	2		
3-10	1	4-20	5	5-28	3	6-z25	1		
3-11	10	4-21	1	5-29	3	6-z28	2		
3-12	4	4-22	1	5-30	2	6-129	1		
		4-24	5	5-31	5	6-z49	3		
		4-25	3	5-32	15				
		4-26	19	5-33	2				
		4-27	62	5-34	11				
		4-28	2	5-35	1				
		4-z15	1						
		4-z29	7						

Table 4. *Water Lilies* Chord set frequency

Set #	used	Set #	used	Set #	used	Set #	used
4-27	62	3-8	4	3-5	2	3-2	1
4-26	19	3-12	4	4-28	2	3-4	1
4-18	16	4-14	4	5-16	2	3-10	1
5-32	15	4-17	3	5-30	2	4-21	1
5-34	11	4-25	3	5-33	2	4-22	1
3-11	10	5-26	3	6-27	2	4-z15	1
5-25	8	5-28	3	6-33	2	5-22	1
4-z29	7	5-29	3	6-34	2	5-24	1
4-19	6	6-z49	3	6-z28	2	5-35	1
4-20	5			7-19	2	6-15	1
3-7	5					6-30	1
5-31	5					6-z25	1
						6-129	1
						7-27	1
						7-31	1

The melodic structure is composed of brief phrases within the chordal atmosphere. The melodic fragments begin in measure 17 in the tenors and baritone solo, jumping up to alto 1 in measure 20 and soprano 1 in measure 22. Each phrase of melody and text is divided between voices. See example 4 (p. 34) where the melody jumps from the men to alto 1 in measure 20 and to the sopranos in measure 22. As previously

mentioned, the entire choir comes together only one time to state the text at the climax of the piece (see “stars” in example 7, p. 46, measure 95). In between and often accompanying these phrases, other voices move to the words “nymphaea,” or “swaying,” suggesting the lapping water in the lake. (See men’s voices in example 5, p. 39, measure 32.) Melodic segments employ repeated notes, stepwise motion and leaps, frequently including leaps of a tritone. Often the tritone has one note in the middle of the leap (i.e. F-sharp – B-flat – C), but the tritone itself is still evident. As previously mentioned, the interval of the tritone, both harmonically and melodically, is prevalent throughout.

The rhythmic texture is based on triplets, either occurring in compound time or notated as triplets in simple time. The opening quarter of the piece alternates between 12/8 and 9/8. The remainder of the piece is in 4/4 or 3/4, often using either eighth note triplets or quarter note triplets, sometimes including three against two rhythms. There are only eight measures of the 104 total that do not have moving parts.

The text is set in breath-length phrases, with emphasis on the flow of the language. Bingham’s experience as a singer instilled the necessity for opportunities to breathe. Words and phrases are set according to syllabic and textural emphasis, as in the text “throw their scent in the air” in example 7 (p. 46). Text painting is frequently employed; observe the setting of the often repeated word “swaying” with its stress on the first syllable, representing lapping water (see the women’s parts in example 3), and the phrase “Into the murkier depths” in the baritone solo part (example 3, p. 31, in measures 53-54). “Moonlight” is represented with a rising phrase and a subito piano suggesting the quietness of the night (example 5, p. 39, measures 28-29). The phrase “turn their faces to

the stars” represents perhaps the most obvious use of text painting in the melody, with “stars” as the highest note in the piece (example 7).

Example 7. *Water Lilies* measures 92-95

The musical score for measures 92-95 of 'Water Lilies' is presented in a standard orchestral layout. It includes parts for Soprano Solo, Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto Solo, Alto 1, Alto 2, Tenor Solo, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, Bass Solo, Bass, and Bass. The score is in 3/4 time and features a variety of dynamics and articulations. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'air', 'Ah', 'throw their scent in the air', 'their fa - ces to the stars', and 'nn. stars'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and crescendos. The score is marked with dynamics such as *mp*, *poco*, *mp poco cresc.*, and *pp*. The lyrics are: 'air', 'Ah', 'throw their scent in the air', 'their fa - ces to the stars', 'throw their scent in the air, and turn their fa - ces to the stars', 'throw their scent in the air, nn. stars', 'throw their scent in the air, nn. stars', 'throw their scent in the air, nn. stars', and 'throw their scent in the air, nn. stars'.

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### *The Drowned Lovers*

While preparing to perform S. S. Wesley's anthem *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*, a frequently programmed piece in Britain, Bingham took it to the piano and played it through very slowly. To her surprise, she discovered that it included quite a number of unusual harmonies for its time. An idea occurred to take these harmonies and create a piece of her own as a commentary on the Wesley. The result was *The Darkness is no Darkness*, which is always to be immediately followed in performance by the Wesley. The text of the Wesley, Psalm 139, is about spiritual love, so she wrote a poem about human love. She enjoyed this so much that she decided to take another popular English piece and set its unusual harmonies. The result was *The Drowned Lovers*, taken from the harmonies in Charles Villiers Stanford's *The Blue Bird*.

The setting and poem for *The Drowned Lovers* comes from the same lake experience in Austria as *Water Lilies*. Unlike the *Water Lilies* poem, this poem was written immediately after Bingham's swimming experience.<sup>62</sup> It is about a woman who feels that her lover no longer loves her, so she pulls him down while swimming and drowns them both. From the depths, the surface of the lake looks like the blue sky. As *The Blue Bird* poem is about the bird flying over a blue lake and *The Drowned Lovers* poem, with its lake theme, seemed an appropriate match; however, one listener commented that Ms. Bingham had made *The Blue Bird* seem "sinister."<sup>63</sup>

*The Drowned Lovers* (1998) is a four to five minute piece published by Edition Peters. It is composed for alto solo and SSAATTBB unaccompanied chorus. The use of

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<sup>62</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 164.

<sup>63</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 201.



an alto soloist for the melody and story complements Stanford's use of the soprano section in a similar way. Utilizing the drama of the poem, the piece is a journey as well, through a landscape of mostly secondary dominant chords which progress straight into the Stanford. Unlike *Water Lilies*, the structure here seldom swings from high point to low point. There are crescendi and decrescendi in the alto melody, and a large crescendo in all voices into measure 49 where it remains forte until measure 56 and quickly moves to a quiet end in measure 59 whereupon the Stanford begins. The performance instructions, "Fluid and vague," would appear to speak mostly to the chorus.

The range is broad and the high notes are all within comfortable reach with the exception of the altos and basses who have very low bottom notes (table 5).

Table 5. *The Drowned Lovers* Range

The image shows a musical score for five vocal parts: Alto Solo, Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Baritones/Basses. The score is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The Alto Solo part is in the soprano clef (treble clef). The Sopranos, Altos, and Tenors parts are also in the soprano clef. The Baritones and Basses parts are in the bass clef. The notes are as follows:

Voice Part	Staff	Notes (from left to right)
Alto Solo	1	G4, A4, B4, C5
Sopranos	2	F4, G4, A4, B4
Altos	3	E4, F4, G4, A4
Tenors	4	D4, E4, F4, G4
Baritones	5	C3, D3, E3, F3
Basses	5	B2, C3, D3, E3

Again, Bingham employs the vocal effects of humming and trilling to keep pitches accurate and aid in finding the next pitches. As in *Water Lilies*, the sopranos are

instructed to sing without vibrato on the word “cold.” The chorus, used as harmonic accompaniment throughout, moves between notes of the chords, alternating between eighth-quarter note and quarter-eighth note rhythm, again suggesting the lapping water of the lake. Notice the choral parts using different vocal sounds simultaneously: uh, mm and nn (example 8).

Example 8. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 1-5

Fluid and vague  
♩ = 43

A. Solo *mp* *mf*  
Blue,

S. *pp*  
uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh

S. *pp*  
mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm

A. *pp* *t* no trill *t*  
mm

A. *pp*  
mm uh uh uh mm

T. *pp*  
nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

T. *pp*  
uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh uh

B. *pp*  
mm uh blue mm uh

B. *pp*  
nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn nn

The musical score consists of eight staves, each representing a different vocal part. The parts are labeled as follows:

- A. Solo:** A single vocal line starting with the word "blue".
- S. (Soprano):** Two staves. The first staff has lyrics "uh uh uh uh" and a dynamic marking *p*. The second staff has lyrics "mm mm mm uh".
- A. (Alto):** Two staves. The first staff has lyrics "nn nn nn nn" and dynamic markings *p* and *pp*. The second staff has lyrics "uh uh uh uh nn" and a dynamic marking *p*.
- T. (Tenor):** Two staves. The first staff has lyrics "blue" and "uh uh uh uh" with a dynamic marking *p*. The second staff has lyrics "mm mm nn nn" with a dynamic marking *p*.
- B. (Baritone):** Two staves. The first staff has lyrics "nn" and a dynamic marking *p tr* (no trill). The second staff has lyrics "uh uh uh uh uh uh" with dynamic markings *p* and *sim.*

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The chorus sings chordal harmony throughout, sometimes in segments separated by a rest, sometimes continuously. At times the phrase endings and entrances overlap. In example 9 (p. 52) the sopranos end a phrase in measure 18 while the altos and basses begin a phrase in the same measure. Meanwhile, the tenor 1 and baritone parts continue

their phrases straight through this section. The alto soloist begins her phrase at the end of bar 18, a completely different place than any of the chorus (example 9).

Example 9. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 14-19

14

A. Solo *mf* I clung to him and pulled him

S. *pp* uh uh nn

S. *pp* uh uh uh uh uh

A. *pp* mm mm mm

A. *mp* cold and still, *pp* clung to him mm

T. *pp* nn nn nn <sup>2</sup> nn nn nn

T. *pp* nn nn nn nn *p* <sup>2</sup> be - neath,

B. *pp* mm mm *pp* mm

B. *pp* nn nn blue,

17 *mf*  
 A. Solo down, and so we

S. *p*  
 mm mm blue be-low,

S. *p*  
 mm mm blue be-low,

A. *pp*  
 mm mm oo nn nn

A. *p* *pp*  
 blue oo nn nn

T. mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm

T. nn

B. *sim.* *tr*  
 nn nn mm mm

B. *mp* *pp*  
 blue be - low, uh uh uh uh

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Only occasionally does the chorus have text, usually only the word “blue;” however, beginning in measure 13 one voice part at a time has a fragment of text that the soloist does not sing. The altos begin with “blue below,” alto 1 continues with “cold and still,”

then a measure later tenor 2 sings “beneath” and two measures later the sopranos and bass 2 sing “blue below;” these phrases of text comment on the simultaneous solo text. “Cold and still” is occasionally repeated, as is the word “blue.” As the piece continues the chorus has more text, but never whole phrases.

The dynamics in the chorus are pianissimo to piano, with the occasional small crescendo followed by a subito piano. There is a large crescendo to the high point in measure 49 where forte is reached for the first time. The soloist’s dynamics are mostly mezzo forte with shaped phrases. Throughout the dynamics are carefully marked.

The harmonies Bingham uses in this type of composition are based on those of Stanford’s older part song. She frequently uses the chords in the same inversion to match the Stanford; chords are seldom in root position in either work. Functional harmonic analysis reveals that *The Drowned Lovers* is set indicating the key of A-flat minor. As previously mentioned it contains mostly secondary dominant chords. In measure 51 the harmony pivots into G-flat major to take the work straight into the Stanford which is in G-flat major. The harmonic rhythm in *The Drowned Lovers* moves slowly (example 10, p. 55); the opening chord lasts for 5 measures, while *The Blue Bird* tends to change the harmony with every chord (example 11, p. 56).

Example 10. *The Drowned Lovers* chordal reduction, measures 1-17

The musical score is divided into four systems, each representing a set of measures. The chordal reduction is as follows:

- Measures 1-7:**
  - Measure 1:  $Abm: i^7$
  - Measure 2:  $i^7$
  - Measure 3:  $i^7$
  - Measure 4:  $i^7$
  - Measure 5:  $i^7$
  - Measure 6:  $v$
  - Measure 7:  $i^7$
- Measures 8-11:**
  - Measure 8:  $vii^{\circ 4}_{vii}$
  - Measure 9: cluster
  - Measure 10:  $III^{(\#7)}$
  - Measure 11:  $i^{\#3}$
- Measures 12-15:**
  - Measure 12:  $vii^{\circ 4}_{vii}$
  - Measure 13:  $vii^{\circ 4}_{vii}$
  - Measure 14:  $vii^{\circ 5}_{vii}$
  - Measure 15:  $vii^{\circ 4}_{vii}$
- Measures 16-17:**
  - Measure 16: cluster
  - Measure 17:  $i^{\#4}_3$

Additional chord symbols and annotations are present throughout the score, including  $III^{\#7}$ ,  $V^7$ ,  $III^{\#7}$ ,  $vii^{\circ 4}_3$ ,  $vii^{\circ 4}_2$ ,  $vii^{\circ 4}_5$ ,  $vii^{\circ 4}_3$ ,  $vii^{\circ 4}_2$ ,  $III^{\#7}$ ,  $IV^7$ , and  $i^{\#4}_3$ .

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Example 11. *The Blue Bird* chordal reduction, measures 1-9

Chordal reduction for measures 1-9:

- Measure 1: Gb I
- Measure 2: I ii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub>
- Measure 3: I ii<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub>
- Measure 4: vi<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub> ii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub> vi<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub> ii<sup>7</sup>
- Measure 5: vi<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub> vii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub> vi<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub>
- Measure 6: vii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub>
- Measure 7: vi<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> vii<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub> vi<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> vii<sup>7</sup>
- Measure 8: IV vii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub> ii vii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub> / vi
- Measure 9: vii<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub> / vi

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The melody, almost exclusively in the alto solo part, is based on the phrases in the poem, each phrase being separated by at least a short rest. It is largely made of leaps, including many sixths, tritones, an augmented fifth, a minor seventh and a major ninth. Bingham has set the stresses of the language so that they fall comfortably in the rhythm (example 12). The obvious text painting will be discussed later.

Example 12. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 8-48

With great longing and melancholy, the rhythms very fluid

A. Solo

8 *mf legato*

In the deep - est *pp* reach - es of the lake, — *mf*

11 I — and my love — do lie, *mf*

15 clung — to him and pulled — him down, and *mf*

19 so — we both — did — die,

26 *mp leggiero* th'un - car - ing, clear blue wa - ters, o - ver our heads did close, and *mf*

29 shoals of — fish - es, sight - less - ly, sight - less - ly, in clouds — a - round us *f dolce*

32 rose, *mf con rubato* In the deep - est reach - es

36 — of — the lake, *mf* His pale green eyes — were cold in

40 death, his — love had been a lie, — a lie, but *mp*

44 *dolcissimo* now we share a wa - tery, wa - tery grave, for - e - ver in - ter - twined, *mf*

In one short section located at the structurally highest point of the piece, Bingham allows the soprano 1 part to have original melodic fragments from the Stanford alternating with the alto solo response (example 13).

Example 13. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 48-52

48

A. Solo

twined,

S. *p* For - - e - - - *f*

S. *p* For e - - - *f*

A. *f* nn For - e - - -

A. *f* nn For - e - - - ver!

T. *f* mm mm\_ uh\_ uh For - e - - -

T. *f* mm mm\_ uh\_ uh For - e - - -

B. *f* uh For - e - - -

B. *f* uh For - e - - -

B. *f* nn nn uh uh uh uh E - - -

B. *f* nn nn uh uh uh uh E - - -



50 Intensely *f*

A. Solo For-e- ver! For - e- ver!

S. ver! For - e - - ver!

S. ver! For - e - - ver!

A. ver! - - - For - e - ver!

A. For - e - - ver!

T. ver! For - e - - ver!

T. ver! For - e - ver!

B. ver! For - e - - ver!

B. ver! For - e - - ver!

B. ver! For - e - - ver!

B. ver! For - e - - ver!

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A few times, Bingham teases the listener with quotes from *The Blue Bird*. There is a direct quote in the chorus in measures 22-24 (example 14), which matches *The Blue Bird* in measures 26-28 (example 15, p. 62).

Example 14. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 22-24

The musical score for Example 14, measures 22-24 of "The Drowned Lovers", is presented below. It features a vocal solo and several vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a Bass line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and articulation like slurs and accents. The lyrics are "blue in blue," and "blue,".

22

A.Solo

S. *p* blue in blue,

S. *p* blue in blue,

A. oo blue in blue,

A. oo blue in blue,

T. *p* blue in blue,

T. *p* blue in blue,

B.

B. *p* blue,

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Example 15. *The Blue Bird* measures 26-28

26

S.   
 blue.

A.   
 neath me blue in blue, blue. was

T.   
 8   
 neath me blue in blue, blue. was

B.   
 neath me blue in blue, blue. was

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There are also occasional melodic quotes: the alto in measures 46-48 (example 13, p. 59) matches the melody in measures 26-28 (example 15); the soprano 1 in measures 48-49 (example 13, p. 59) is reminiscent of the soprano on the word “image” in measures 35-36 of *The Blue Bird* (example 16).

Example 16. *The Blue Bird* measures 35-36



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The rhythm is based on the triplet feel of compound time; the entire piece is in 12/8 and 9/8 time with duples interspersed for contrast, primarily in the melody. In measure 31 the duple is passed down the voices beginning with the soprano, then alto and alto solo, then tenors and baritone last. This is contrasted in the following measure with the triplet feel in the chorus against duples in the solo (example 17).



Example 17. *The Drowned Lovers* measures 31-32

31 *dolce*

A. Solo clouds a-round us rose,

S. uh mm

S. uh mm

A. uh mm

A. *pp* uh mm

T. uh mm

T. *pp* uh mm

B. uh nn sim mm

B. nn nn

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In the fifty-nine measure piece there are only three measures without moving parts; the forward motion is maintained with the constant movement of the choral parts (see examples 8, p. 50, 9, p. 52, 13, p. 59, and 17, p. 64). One or more parts move, usually in a rocking pattern (see the alto parts in measure 32 of example 17, p. 64) while others maintain pitch with forward pulsing rhythm on vowels and humming or with trills.

Bingham's sensitivity to text is obvious in the melodic setting of the poem (example 12, p. 57). The forward movement is based on the stresses of the language, both rhythmically and melodically. As previously noted, there are many large leaps, often for text painting as in the leap up of a major ninth on the text "in clouds" from

measure 30 to measure 31. At the end of the phrase “his love had been a lie” (measures 40-42 in example 12, p. 57) descends implying sadness, until the leap up to the word “lie” that is evocative of intense emotion. Another example of text painting is the subtle stepwise movement wrapping itself around the E-flat at “forever intertwined” in measures 46-48 (example 12, p. 57).

The author found one incorrect note: the soprano 1 part, measure 44 beat one should be D-flat.

### ***Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus”***

London’s Catholic Westminster Cathedral commissioned Ms. Bingham to compose a mass setting for Ascension Day. With her predilection for drama, she thought about the Caravaggio painting, *Supper at Emmaeus*, which pictures the moment of astonished recognition of Christ after his death and resurrection. Bingham felt that the story of Christ joining some men on the road to Emmaeus, their meal during which they recognized him, and his ascension into heaven, which comes from Luke’s gospel, chapter 24, would be the perfect story for the mass setting. The mass, bookended with organ voluntaries, the final of which would represent the Ascension, would have a communion motet placed between the *Gloria* and *Sanctus* portraying the breaking of the bread and the recognition of Christ. Upon presenting the concept to the clergy and music department at Westminster Cathedral, the music department absolutely did not like it; but one of the more progressive clergy felt that it would help the congregation understand the story.

The clergy won the day and the commission was composed as presented.<sup>64</sup> The result is Bingham's second *Missa Brevis*.

*Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"* (2003), a twenty-four minute composition when performed in its entirety, is published by Edition Peters; it is composed for SSATTB chorus and organ. Running through it is the story of the Ascension of Christ from the Gospel of Luke, 24: 30-31. The mass, meant for use in a church service, is in seven movements, the *Preamble: "The Road to Emmaeus"* for organ solo; *Kyrie; Gloria; Motet: Et Aperti Sunt Oculi; Sanctus and Benedictus; Agnus Dei*; all for choir and organ; and *Voluntary: et cognaverunt eum*, for organ solo. All of the text is sung in Latin.

The range is comfortable, less expansive than some of Bingham's other works (table 6).

Table 6. *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"* Range

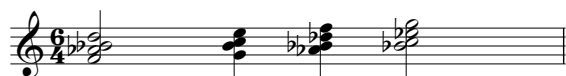
The image displays four musical staves representing the vocal ranges for Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Basses. Each staff contains two notes: a half note and a quarter note. The Soprano staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat), showing notes G4 and A4. The Alto staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat, showing notes F4 and E4. The Tenor staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat, showing notes F4 and G4. The Bass staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat, showing notes F3 and G3.

<sup>64</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 205.

Bingham uses the humming effect to add to the timbre of the organ and to aid in finding pitches. The soprano and tenor are divisi in the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*. Overall, this *Missa Brevis* is easier than *Water Lilies* and *The Drowned Lovers*.

The organ *Preamble* opens with the four rising notes, B – C – D – E-flat, suggesting the Ascension, upon which much of the mass is based. These notes are the first four notes of the octatonic scale, half step, whole step, half step. This pattern becomes four rising seventh chords in measure 51; the top note of these constructs are the first four notes of the octatonic scale beginning with a whole step (example 18).

Example 18. *Missa Brevis* “*The Road to Emmaeus*,” *Preamble* measure 51



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In measure 5, we are first introduced to the pattern of a rest followed by a chord, appearing later as a single note followed by a chord. After the first four pedal notes ending on E-flat the harmony begins somewhat ambiguously with C major/Cminor first inversion polychords, ending the phrase in an E<sup>o7</sup>/Eb<sup>7</sup> over Db polychord. This sets the stage for the use of polychords and altered chords throughout, Bingham’s favorite chords with “unexpected notes.”

The next pattern of eighth note chords, separated by eighth rests and is marked in the score “a light footfall,” is introduced in measure 27. It also contains elements of the octatonic scale. Unlike the opening rising themes, this configuration alternates between

three descending chords that are connected by upward jumps. As is typical for Bingham, all harmonies are in second or third inversions (example 19). Presumably the “light footfall” indicates the state of mind of the men heading towards Emmaeus. Bingham has stated that she uses a lot of symbolism and text painting in her compositions.<sup>65</sup>

Example 19. *Missa Brevis “The Road to Emmaeus” Preamble* measure 27



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In the third measure of this pattern she reintroduces the initial rising four-note theme in the pedal. After seven measures of “footfall,” the organ stops on a diminished chord with a dramatic crescendo into a passage marked in the score “stunned recognition,” where large chords and a leaping pedal part change the texture dramatically. The “footfall” returns in measure 41, this time accompanied by a rising and descending mostly stepwise left hand part and an octatonic scalar pedal line. The movement closes unresolved with an F<sup>11</sup> chord in second inversion.

Stephen Farr, organist and choirmaster, states that although Bingham is not an organist, her organ composing is

. . . extraordinarily idiomatic and ergonomic. Which isn’t the same thing as saying that it’s always easy . . . But I think she has a fantastic command of texture. Although she doesn’t specify sound beyond pitch, eight and four, or four

---

<sup>65</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 187, and discussions with the composer.

foot, or plus sixteen, whatever. I think she has a way of kind of encouraging me to think about color which is very creative.<sup>66</sup>

When speaking about Bingham's writing for the organ in choral works Farr says that

. . . in the choral music the accompaniments have a way simultaneously of supporting the voices, and adding independent detail in the texture, . . . the word I keep coming back to . . . is craftsman-like. I think she's a fantastic craftsman composer, craftsperson if you prefer. . . . although the music isn't always easy, there's no reason why it should be, things don't have to be easy, but you never get the feeling that the difficulties are there as an obstacle. Things are difficult in her music because they need to be difficult. . . . I've never encountered a passage that, with a little bit of thought and contemplation, wasn't perfectly feasible.<sup>67</sup>

The *Kyrie* begins as all the choral movements do, with a single pitch sustained in the pedal; this movement begins in the key of F minor. In 3/4 time, the initial choral statements of "Kyrie" sound as if they are in 6/8 time, but the third repetition of the word "Kyrie" follows the organ rhythm in 3/4. This movement is based on scales, opening with the melodic minor scale. Notice the ascending organ, followed by similar choral lines that are found throughout the mass (example 20).

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<sup>66</sup> Stephen Farr, interview by author, 31 July 2011, 219.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Farr, interview by author, 31 July 2011, 220.

Example 20. *Missa Brevis* “*The Road to Emmaeus*” Kyrie measures 1-5

The musical score consists of five systems. The first system contains the vocal parts and the organ. The vocal parts are Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The organ part is labeled 'Org.' and includes a right-hand part and a left-hand part. The lyrics are 'Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e/e lei - son,'. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *cresc.*, and *f*. The organ part includes a rising major scale in the right hand and a static pedal line in the left hand.

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The “light footfall” pattern introduced in the *Preamble* precedes the “Christe eleison” text, the first of two statements of which are entirely chordal. The organ part of the “Christe eleison” contains rising major scales. “Kyrie eleison” returns with a similar choral passage over a static organ part. The movement ends with the “footfall” pattern on top of the rising pedal line based on the melodic minor scale up to a very ambiguous C# half diminished<sup>11(omit 3)</sup> over F.

Harmonically, although the *Kyrie* begins in F minor, the opening statement of “Kyrie eleison” is largely composed of D-based chords; D half diminished<sup>7</sup> is the most frequent chord in the entire movement. A rising scale in the pedal ending on a C indicates moving into the key of C; the “Christe eleison” section begins in F minor, moves to C minor, then through F minor and D half diminished<sup>7</sup> to C major. The

harmony returns to F minor but quickly moves away, finally ending on the vague C-sharp half diminished<sup>11(omit3)</sup> over F chord.

The *Gloria*, in 3/4 time, begins with a single B followed by a G<sup>7</sup>/G<sup>7(b5)</sup> polychord in first inversion on beat two. Continuing with the same harmony, the sopranos enter on beat three with triplets followed with imitation on each beat, first basses, then altos and finally tenors with a slightly altered rhythm, resolving on a B-flat<sup>7(#11)</sup> chord in second inversion. The second entrance of “Gloria” in measure 5 begins with the sopranos followed by the altos at the tritone, basses at the seventh below the altos and then tenors a tritone above the basses, the harmony being E seventh and ninth chords with flat 5, moving on through B diminished chords to G-sharp half diminished<sup>7</sup> in second inversion. The chorus becomes homophonic briefly until measure 16 where a canon begins. Prior to the canon, the altos slowly introduce its theme in measure 13. The altos then begin the canon in shorter note lengths, followed by the tenors and basses at octaves. The canon is in the Dorian mode based on B over B minor<sup>7</sup> harmony. In measure 19 the sopranos enter with a descant, also in the Dorian mode, soaring over the canon. Example 21 illustrates the introduction, canon and descant. The canonic theme is also used in later movements.



Example 21. *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus" Gloria* measures 13-22

13 **poco rit.** - Tempo primo

S. *mm* very light and airy, ATB accompanying S

A. *mf* Lau - da - mus Te, *p* Lau - da

T. *mm*

B. *nn*

Org. **poco rit.** -

17 *f*

S. Lau - da - mus

A. *p* Lau da

T. *p* Lau da

B. *p* Lau - da

Org.

20

S.  
Te, be - ne - di - ci - mus

A.  
T.  
B.

Org.

21

S.  
Te, glo - ri - fi - ca - mus Te

A.  
T.  
B.

Org.

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The choir returns to homophonic texture with slower melodic rhythm in measure 31 with eight measures of F-sharp<sup>7</sup>, and F-sharp minor<sup>7</sup> over F-sharp<sup>7</sup> chords. The harmony moves through mostly C-sharp minor chords to measure 43, after which the

organ takes up the canon with the tenors in a solo line of slower melodic rhythm. The sopranos take over the theme in measure 55 followed by the basses and organ imitating the earlier “footfall” pattern with a return to the octatonic scale, this time marked *pesante* to underscore the text “Qui tollis peccata mundi” (“who takes away the sins of the world”). This section contains mostly altered and polychords until measure 70 which sees the return of the opening material from the *Gloria*, this time with the text “Quoniam.” The canon returns in measure 80 with stretto entrances, in altered and polychords, ending with a strong “Amen” followed by a D<sup>7</sup>/Dm<sup>7</sup> polychord to close the movement.

The next movement in the order of the mass should be the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, which, along with the *Agnus Dei*, is sung prior to communion, but here Bingham inserts her communion motet: *Et Aperti Sunt Oculi*, with the text of Luke 24: 30-31a. Rather than beginning with a single pitch as the other choral movements begin, she returns to the octatonic scale starting with the rising four chord figure introduced in the *Preamble*. Harmonically the motet is composed almost exclusively of altered chords. The most prevalent chords amongst the harmonic language are twelve polychords, four clustered chords, six C-sharp minor<sup>7</sup> chords. The melody, moving from voice to voice, is also octatonic. The story is told by one voice part at a time beginning similarly to the canonic theme in the *Gloria*. Text painting is very evident with the abrupt treatment of the text “Ac fregit.” (“He broke it.”) in the tenors and organ. The organ breaks into an arpeggiated triplet pattern with the choir in homophony above it singing the text “Et aperti sunt oculi eorum” (“And their eyes were opened”) with large swells from mezzo piano and back down. After a rapid ascending passage in the organ the choir enters forte

with “Et cognaverunt eum,” (“And they knew him,”), building up to the high point in measure 31. The organ closes the movement at fortissimo with four descending chords, ending with a very tense E<sup>(b5)</sup>/E minor<sup>(b5)</sup> chord. Example 22 illustrates the closing “Et cognaverunt eum” passage and her use of descending polychords to the end of the motet.

Example 22. *Missa Brevis* "The Road to Emmaeus" Motet measures 27-34

27

*f*

S. *Et cog - - na - ve - runt*

A. *Et cog - - na - ve - runt*

T. *Et cog - - na - ve - runt*

B. *Et cog - - na - ve - runt*

Org.

29

S. e - - um, et

A. e - - um, et

T. e - - um, et

B. e - - um, et

Org.

30

S. cog - na - ve - runt e - - - um.

A. cog - na - ve - runt e - - - um.

T. cog - na - ve - runt e - - - um.

B. cog - na - ve - runt e - - - um.

Org.

32 **poco rall.**

S.

A.

T.

B.

Org. **poco rall.**

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The *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* open with the usual single organ note which this time accompanies the entire movement, changing pitch once from D-flat to C-flat. The choir sings the octatonic canonic pattern from the *Gloria* in D-flat Dorian mode in the two soprano and one alto parts, possibly suggesting the Trinity. Their section ends with

“Hosanna in excelsis.” The altos continue singing the C-flat to the close of the movement. The two tenor and one bass parts enter in measure 12 with their canonic statement of “Sanctus,” still in D-flat Dorian, and the two soprano parts begin the “Benedictus” above the men in measure 14, beginning in the key of C-sharp minor and ending in C-sharp major. As seen in example 23 (p. 79), the traditional return of the “Hosanna” material is not used; instead the soprano’s “Hosanna in excelsis” bears no resemblance to the first “Hosanna.” The movement ends unsettled yet again, with a C-sharp major chord moving to a C-sharp alone over a held A-flat minor chord in first inversion. Example 23 also demonstrates her use of pedal point, canon, and descant-like writing above the entire texture.

Example 23. *Missa Brevis* "The Road to Emmaus" *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* measures

10-18

10



S. Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

S. a, Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

A. Glo-ri-a tu a, Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

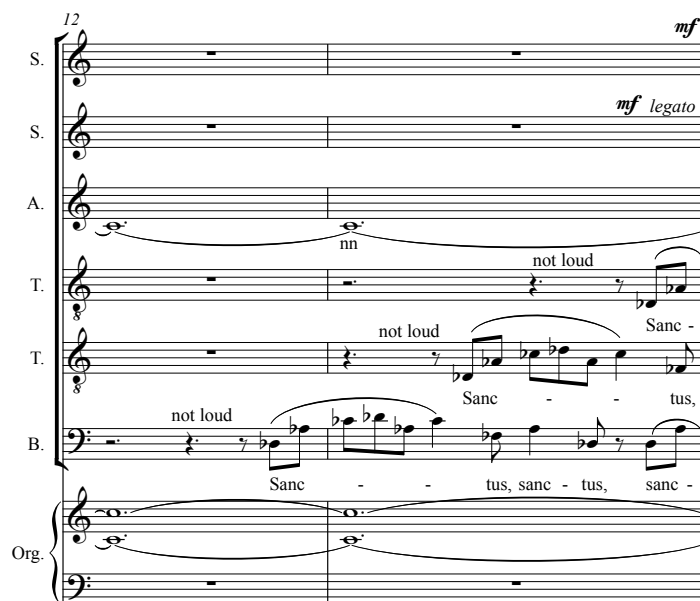
T.

T.

B.

Org.

12 *mf*



S. *mf*

S. *mf legato*

A. nn

T. not loud Sanc -

T. not loud Sanc - tus,

B. not loud Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc -

Org.



10

S. Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

S. a, Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

A. Glo-ri-a tu a, Ho-sann-a in ex-cel-sis.

T.

T.

B.

Org.

12 *mf*

S.

S. *mf legato*

A.

T. *not loud*

T. *not loud* Sanc -

B. *not loud* Sanc - tus,

Org. Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc -

as long a pause as possible

17

S. sa - nna in ex - cel - sis.

S. sa - nna in ex - cel - sis.

A. oth.

T. oth.

B. oth.

Org.

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The *Agnus Dei* begins once again with a single organ pitch of E-flat, opening with an E-flat minor chord in an inversion of the first three notes of the canonic theme of the *Gloria*. The melody is based on two tetrachords of two whole steps followed by a half step. As is typical of her style, the text is handed from voice to voice, here over held organ notes until the first line of text is completed, the voices humming their final notes; then the organ plays the canonic theme in E-flat Dorian. The repeat of the opening line of text occurs in the same manner. The third repetition of the text opens with the altos and tenors stating part of the theme, followed by the organ with the theme in canon. The E-flat Dorian harmony remains unchanged until measure 30 where an organ pedal point arpeggio below the chorus moves down to C minor. “Dona nobis” is introduced in the sopranos with a return to the octatonic scale and four rising chord pattern, introduced in

the *Preamble*, followed by a very quiet singing of “Pacem” in the altos, tenors and basses. The movement ends with humming over the organ playing the rising four seventh chord pattern accompanied by triplets of a Cm/C° polychord, a very ambiguous ending for the choral part of the mass. In example 24 notice the organ repetition of the four rising seventh chord octatonic theme followed by the extended ending of the Cm/C° polychord with the choir humming above the organ, all typical traits of her style in the *Missa Brevis* (example 24).

Example 24. *Missa Brevis* "The Road to Emmaeus" *Agnus Dei* measures 49-55

49

S. Pa - - - - -

A. Pa - - - - -

T. Pa - - - - -

B. Pa - - - - -

Org.

51

S. - cem

A. - cem

T. - cem

B. - cem

Org.

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for measures 49-55. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and an Organ. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The organ part consists of two staves: the right hand plays chords and the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in groups of three (trios). The vocal parts have long notes with lyrics 'Pa' and '- cem'. The organ part has a double bar line between measures 49 and 51.

53

S. *mm*

A. *mm*

T. *mm*

B. *mm*

Org. *mm*

54 **molto rall.**

S.

A.

T.

B.

Org. **molto rall.**

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The closing *Voluntary: et cognaverunt eum* is in the form of a toccata, using many different meters. Marked in the score “A moment of realization,” it opens with a

burst of fast pitches outlining a D-flat<sup>maj7(#11#13)</sup> chord followed by a single pedal f and four rising seventh chords, again with the octatonic scale on top (example 25).

Example 25. *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus" Voluntary* measures 1-5

A moment of realization

Org.

3

5

Org.

f

f

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The pattern continues similarly until measure 15 when a new theme is introduced (example 26).

Example 26. *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus" Voluntary* measure 15

15

Org.

less strong but still loud

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This theme continues in imitative polyphony until the opening theme returns in measure 31. The second theme, mostly octatonic, reappears in measure 45, continuing until measure 59 when the opening theme returns rising rather than falling. The middle section (measures 69-99) is a dance-like “Trio” in canonic imitation, perhaps also suggesting the Trinity. The second theme returns in measure 100, soon marked “starting to grow.” It builds in intensity and volume to a fortissimo (full organ) return of the opening theme followed by the four ascending chords marked in the score “ASCENDIT DEUS.” Continuing to the end utilizing the opening theme, the movement closes with a G# half-diminished<sup>7</sup>/E<sup>7(#9)</sup> polychord over the four rising notes in the pedal B – C# - D – E followed in the last measure by D and B in the pedal, as seen in example 27, leaving the harmony and the mass completely unresolved, well representing the astonishment and lack of understanding of those at the supper at Emmaeus (example 27).

Example 27. *Missa Brevis* "The Road to Emmaeus" Voluntary measures 139-144

139

Org.

Musical score for measure 139, Organ part. The score is in 3/4 time and D major. The right hand plays a sustained chord of D major (D, F#, A) with a fermata. The left hand plays a melodic line: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter).

140

Org.

Musical score for measure 140, Organ part. The right hand plays a sustained chord of D major (D, F#, A) with a fermata. The left hand plays a melodic line: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter).

141

Org.

Musical score for measure 141, Organ part. The right hand plays a series of chords: D major (D, F#, A), E major (E, G#, B), F# major (F#, A, C#), G major (G, B, D), and D major (D, F#, A). The left hand plays a series of notes: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). A "rall - - -" marking is placed above the right hand part.

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As described, the harmony throughout tends towards altered chords and polychords with many seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth chords. The harmonic rhythm is fast-paced, often changing on every beat. In the *Preamble* there are sections with chord changes on every eighth note. The choral movements are mostly in 3/4 or compound time with its triplet feel. Even the 3/4 sections have triplets, all of these groupings of three possibly suggesting the Trinity. The organ movements change meter almost constantly. The choral rhythm fits the stresses of the text.

### ***Ghost Towns of the American West***

The Barlow Endowment at Brigham Young University gives a commission for a new unaccompanied work to the composer of the best submission of a 10-12 minute unaccompanied piece. Judith Bingham submitted and won the prize with *Aquileia*, an eight-part choral work, which had been commissioned by the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. The prize would be a commission for the choir at the University of Utah at Salt Lake City. Thinking about the Utah connection, Bingham explored on the internet, discovering that there was a ghost town society in Utah. She was interested in the evocative town names, even finding one named “Bingham,” and thought the idea of ghost towns fascinating. Finding a text would be a problem until she remembered the poet she used in 2001 after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, Vesta Pierce Crawford. Crawford was a Mormon pioneer born in 1899 in Gunnison, Utah. Bingham found a first edition of Crawford’s poetry online for one dollar; in that volume she found some poems called *Pioneer Woman* which perfectly suited her idea of someone

struggling in the hostile landscape of the American West. Even though the piece is about America, Bingham was initially disturbed by the American pronunciation when it was premiered, but soon realized that it was entirely appropriate.<sup>68</sup>

*Ghost Towns of the American West* (2005) is a fourteen minute piece for SATB unaccompanied chorus with divisi and a whistling solo, published by Edition Peters. It is set in three movements, taking the listener on a musical journey by way of the text, the harmony and the emotional tension, as is typical for Bingham. The first movement, about man's brief hold on the desert, begins quietly with the whispering of ghost town names, building to the high point four measures from the end when all four parts sing the same text and rhythm simultaneously. The second movement, about loneliness of the miners, moves moodily through the "folksy" (as marked in the text) solo of a miner, to his whistling "Home Sweet Home" on his way back to his lonely cabin. The chorus acts as accompaniment; there is no distinct high point in this movement. The third movement opens with a fortissimo chorus pleading "Where are the voices of the multitude?" beginning very strongly, restating the opening text in a mezzo piano plaintiveness, then building to the highest point of the work in measure 46 with the text "Forever from silence from sound," at a fortissimo tritone, maintaining the sense of despair through the use of of tritones and minor seconds to the end in measure 54.

The range is expansive, with divisi in all parts, including an optional low C for the low basses (table 7).

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<sup>68</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 210.

Table 7. *Ghost Towns of the American West Range*

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Basses. Each part is written on a five-line staff. The Soprano staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Alto staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The Tenor staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Bass staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Soprano part has a half note G4. The Alto part has a half note Bb3. The Tenor part has a half note D4. The Bass part has a half note F3. Below the Bass staff, there is a note G3 with a bracket and the word "Optional" next to it.

As in all works analyzed above, Bingham utilizes humming, trilling and harmonizing on open vowels. The parts also alternate between notes of the chord, as well as pairs of chords. Again, she uses these effects to maintain pitch and forward movement during long-held chords.

As in previously studied works, Bingham uses harmony for both color and tension. This piece exhibits free tonality, utilizing tonal centers rather than keys, harmonies built on all twelve tones, and a lack of traditional diatonic functionality. Many chords are not in root position, increasing the sense of uneasiness. While the second movement has chords built on only seven steps of the chromatic scale, the first movement has chords on eleven steps and the third movement on all twelve. Most sonorities include sevenths and ninths, but elevenths and thirteenthths can be found. Both half and fully diminished chords are frequently used, along with polychords.

## 1

Texturally, in movement 1, Bingham sets the altos and basses in four-part harmony with the sopranos and tenors loudly whispering the names of ghost towns, effectively producing the effect of long gone voices, snakes and tumbleweed (example 28).<sup>69</sup>

Example 28. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 1, measures 1-6

S. *f* I speak out of the

A. *f* I speak out of the

T. *f* I speak out of the

B. *f* I speak, out of the

4

S. loud whisper, **air, no pitch** Cisco

A. de - sert, *f* I speak out

T. loud whisper **air, no pitch** To - paz,

B. de - sert, *f* out of the

*f* I speak,

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<sup>69</sup> Judith Bingham, interview by author, 21 July 2011, 209.

The tenors and sopranos begin in measures 40 and 41 respectively, singing the text as single parts or pairs until all four parts come together in measure 55 as mentioned above.

Tonally, movement 1 is centered in G-sharp minor. As previously stated, there is no traditional diatonic functionality, and no dominant/tonic cadences. There are non-traditional cadences at measure 28, measure 39, and at the end of the movement. Both the Lydian mode and the octatonic scale are used in this movement, as seen in example 29.

Example 29. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 1, measures 41-46

41 Lydian -----

S. *mf* And wide shall be the la - ti - tude of days, with seed for - got - ten,  
with seed for - got - ten

A. *mf* with seed for - got - ten,  
with seed for - got - ten

T. *mf* The fields re - turn - ing to pri - me - val ways,

B. *nn*

44 Octatonic -----

S. -----

A. *mf* and thereap - ing done, the fields re - tur - ning to pri - me - val ways,  
The fields re - turn - ing to pri - me - val ways,

T. *mf* The fields re - turn - ing to pri - me - val ways,

B. *nn*

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Dynamically, the first movement opens at forte, maintaining strength until the subito piano last measure. The whispering parts have crescendi and decrescendi meticulously notated. Melodies are in short segments which move from voice to voice. The rhythmic texture is based on the rhythm of the text and any extra emphasis desired, with triplets predominating. The meter changes as required by the text, with 3/2 and 4/2

predominating. Text painting is found throughout this work; the following example illustrates the movement of the winds followed by the echo of the ghost town named Echo (example 30).

Example 30. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 1, measures 22-27

22

S. *ss* O - si - ris - *ss*,

A. *mf* com-pan- ioned by the gus - ty winds, and

T. *f* O - si - - - ri -

B. *f* winds, and

25

S. *ff* Joy, E - cho, E - cho, E - cho, E - cho,

A. *sfp* bran - ded by the sun, nn

T. *ff* *ss*, Joy, E - cho, E - cho, E - cho, E - cho,

B. *sfp* bran - ded by the sun, nn

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## 2

Movement 2 opens chordally, with sopranos and basses three octaves apart, hinting at C major, but in the second measure adding a G-sharp major chord on top of the C major chord. Both the opening and closing are polytonal, while the solo accompaniment undulates around the tonal center of each melodic phrase. The movement ends starkly with a G-sharp chord with the third omitted over a C major chord with E in the bass. In measure 16, the chorus begins a humming accompaniment for a tenor (or a few voices) solo. The first phrase of the solo is in G-sharp minor, the second begins in C-sharp minor and moves to A-sharp minor. The solo then moves into the alto part in E-minor at measure 35, and on into an offstage whistle in measure 54. The whistle solo, set in E major and utilizing a key signature, is the nineteenth century tune “Home, Sweet Home,” composed by Englishman Sir Henry Bishop, which was popular during the American Civil War. The movement ends as it began, quietly with the soprano and bass parts nearly at the outsides of their ranges.

The movement is unusually marked “Con Sordini,” and begins pianissimo. Bingham includes the uncommon “Con Sordini” expression for the chorus to sing not only pianissimo, but with muted, covered sound.<sup>70</sup> With the exception of the tenor and alto solos, the choral dynamic does not raise above mezzo forte, and ends piano.

Melodically, the second movement is an exception to Bingham’s fragmented melodic style, with its extended solo melody in the tenor part handed off to the alto, followed by the quoted whistling solo. The melody is more like a folk song in style,

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<sup>70</sup> Judith Bingham, email, February 17, 2012.

using mostly intervals of seconds and thirds, with occasional larger leaps as seen in example 31.

Example 31. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 2 solo, measures 18-33

18  
T. solo

And there at night the bent sha-dows climbed Up from the holes of the

22  
claims they mined, On the tunn - elled ridge of the moun - tain;

27  
*f* Up they came with their picks\_ that clangd Up from the holes of the

30  
claims they mined,\_\_\_\_\_ To the gray\_ mask high in the moun - tain.

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Bingham sets the mood of the second movement with the full chorus in vague rhythmic movement in measures 1 through 12, and with the pickup to measure 13 utilizes meter changes and rhythm to set the text with its linguistic stresses, visible in example 32.

Example 32. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 2, measures 1-15

Con Sordini *pp*

S. *pp*

A. *pp* uh

T. *pp* Moon man - tled,

B. *pp* Moon man - tled, moon

4

S.

A.

T. mist hung,

B. man - tled, mist hung, gray mask

7

S. gray

A. gray

T. uh The gray

B. ca - bin, The gray mask

10

S. mask in the moun - tains, \_\_\_\_\_

A. mask in the moun - tains, \_\_\_\_\_

T. mask in the moun - tains, \_\_\_\_\_

B. high in the moun - tains, \_\_\_\_\_ And

13

S. \_\_\_\_\_

A. *mm* \_\_\_\_\_

T. \_\_\_\_\_

B. thereatnight the strong winds came *mf* Call - ing for those who had dug *mf* in vain Onthe

15

S. \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

T. *mf* slopes of the moun - tain

B. dump - dot - ted slopes of the moun - tain

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**3**

Movement 3 begins with the women's voices joined by the men's, with stark open fifths and tritones. All parts come together to sing chordally at measure 32, which they continue for the most part to the conclusion of the piece. It begins dynamically at fortissimo and includes dramatic changes from fortissimo to piano and pianissimo. The following example illustrates the strong, stark opening of the movement (example 33).

Example 33. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 3, measures 1-7

S. *ff* Where? where are the voices of the mul - ti - tude?

A. *ff* Where? where are the voices of the mul - ti - tude?

T. *ff* of the mul - ti - tude?

B. *ff* of the mul - ti - tude?



S. <sup>3</sup> the an - ces - tral voice?

A. <sup>3</sup> the an - ces - tral voice? Where?

T. <sup>3</sup> the an - ces - tral voice? Where?

B. <sup>3</sup> the an - ces - tral voice? Where? *pp* Where?

1sts only      bottom C optional

6 *rit.*

S. *ff* *p*

A. *ff* *p*  
Where? where?

T. *ff* *p*  
Where? where?

B. *pp*  
where?

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The central section is quieter, with cadences at measures 22, 25 and 39, followed by a large crescendo into the fortissimo ending. A tonal center is difficult to pinpoint; the harmony shifts continually, utilizing many polychords. C-sharp and E chords are most prevalent. At the highpoint of the work (in example 34, p. 103) notice again the use of tritones high in the range and at a fortissimo level. The movement ends with Bingham's favorite dual modality, a major/minor sonority (example 34).

Example 34. *Ghost Towns of the American West* Movement 3, measures 46-54

46 *ff*

S. For - ev - er \_\_\_\_\_ from si - lence \_\_\_\_\_ from

A. for - ev - er, for - ev - er \_\_\_\_\_ from

T. *ff* For - ev - er \_\_\_\_\_ from si - lence for - ev - er \_\_\_\_\_ from

B. for - ev - er, si - lence \_\_\_\_\_ from



48

S. sound, from morn - ing and night, the ter - ri - ble, ter - ri - ble

A. sound from \_\_\_\_\_ night the ter - ri - ble, ter - ri - ble

T. sound, from \_\_\_\_\_ night, the ter - ri - ble, ter - ri - ble

B. sound \_\_\_\_\_ from night, the ter - ri - ble, ter - ri - ble



50

S. dark - ness and the shout - ing, shout - ing

A. dark - ness, and the shout - ing, shout - ing

T. dark - ness, and the shout - ing, shout - ing

B. dark - ness, and the shout - ing, shout - ing



52

rall. . . . .

S. light, the light, the light!

A. light, the light, the light!

T. light, light, the shout - ing light!

B. light, shout - ing light, the light!

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The descending octatonic scale is used again in this movement. The harmonic rhythm moves regularly; chords are seldom held for more than a measure, and often change multiple times during a measure.

Text painting is everywhere, from the whispering voices in the first movement to the pleading of the closing of the work. Example 34 (p. 103), measure 49 depicts the repeated word “terrible” with a tritone in the basses, a minor second between the alto and tenor and a major seventh between the soprano and the alto. Two measures later the word “shouting” is set in high registers at fortissimo.

### *First Light*

For a commission, Ms. Bingham asked friend, canon precentor of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral and poet Martin Shaw to write a poem about the Incarnation of Christ. Sharing the same mystical philosophies, she knew that his ideas would challenge her. Shaw’s poem, *First Light*, explores the Christ child’s birth across “unreachable reaches.” Between each verse he included a quatrain suggesting that dreams, music and suffering are God-given gifts. Bingham chose to set the poem with Greek Byzantine influence inspired by a twelfth-century fresco of the Virgin and Child at the monastery of St. John at Patmos. Continuing the Greek subject she used the carillon theme from the Athens Cathedral as her compositional material.<sup>71</sup>

*First Light* (2001) is an eleven minute piece published by Edition Peters, composed for SATB, with divisi in all parts, and brass ensemble including four trumpets in C, two tenor trombones, one bass trombone and one tuba. It is through-composed, journeying through the birth of Christ, and as noted above, based on the tritone-oriented bell peal from Athens Cathedral (example 35).

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<sup>71</sup> Judith Bingham. *The Secret Garden*. Liner notes. Naxos 8.570346. CD

Example 35. *First Light*, Athens Cathedral Carillon



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The structure, like that of *Water Lilies*, is an oscillating wave form with troughs and peaks, beginning quietly, as from a dream, with peaks in measures 16, 42, 62, 103, with the highest notes in the piece, 153, 172 and 186 then tapering off to the end in measure 213. The performance instruction is “The dream begins,” which builds as the poem unfolds.

The range is broad, but Bingham lets the bass trombone and tuba cover the lowest notes rather than the bass voices (table 8).

Table 8. *First Light* Range

Again, she uses vocal effects such as humming, singing on open vowels, and, in this piece, adding a bell-like tone with a chord marked *smf* with the text “ong,” holding the

“ng” sound. Rather than vacillating between notes of the chord, as in some of her other works, the voices sustain their pitches for measures at a time, supported by the movement in the brass (example 36).

Example 36. *First Light* measures 3-10

3  
*misterioso pp*  
 S. Does the dis-clo-sure of dream mm  
 A. *pp* Bridge the dis-tance be-tween nn  
 T. *pp* That which we do see—  
 B. *pp*  
 And  
 Tpt  
 Tpt  
 Tpt  
 Tpt  
 Tbn  
 Tbn  
 B. Tbn  
 Tbu

6  
 that which we can-not can-not  
 senza sord.  
 mp senza sord. molto pp  
 mp senza sord. molto pp  
 mp senza sord. molto pp  
 mp senza sord. molto pp

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Texturally, Bingham has no extended unaccompanied singing; the closest she comes in this piece is having the homophonic chorus accompanied by only a tenor trombone (example 37).

Example 37. *First Light* measures 133-145

133  
 S.  
 A.  
 T.  
 B.  
 Tbn.  
 Tbn.  
 mp  
 mm  
 mp  
 mm  
 solo  
 mp

136 *mp*  
Out from the si-lence you sing - ing

*mp*  
Out from the si-lence you sing - ing

*mp*  
Out from the si-lence you sing - ing

*mp*  
Out from the si-lence you sing - ing

141 *mp* *mf*  
Your voice, am-ber-toned and still - ing.

*mp* *mf*  
Your voice, am-ber-toned and still - ing, a - ri - ses from the core of you new-born,

*mp* *mf*  
Your voice, am-ber-toned and still - ing, a - ri - ses from the core of you new-born,

*mp* *mf*  
Your voice, am-ber-toned and still - ing, a - ri - ses from the core of you new-born, - -

*mp* *poco* *dolce*

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The chorus alternates between introducing the text one part at a time (example 36) to chordal statements accompanied by the brass (example 38). Notice the use of the tritone theme from the carillon in the brass in measure 19.

Example 38. *First Light* measures 16-19

16 **A** *f* *div.* *sf* *unis.* *4*  
 S. Out from the dark. You come from the unreach-able reach-es of u-ni-ver-sal scope You cross  
 A. *f* *div.* *sf* *unis.* *4*  
 T. *f* *div.* *sf* *unis.* *4*  
 B. *f* *div.* *sf* *unis.* *4*  
**A** Out from the dark. You come from the unreach-able reach-es of u-ni-ver-sal scope You cross  
 Tpt. *sf* *mf*  
 Tpt. *sf* *mf*  
 Tpt. *sf* *mf*  
 Tpt. *sf* *mf*  
 Tbn. *sf* *mf*  
 Tbn. *sf* *mf*  
 B. Tbn. *sf* *mf*  
 Tba. *sf* *mf*

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Sometimes she utilizes two voice parts together, the women's or the men's parts, or alto and tenor. The brass ensemble also alternates between trumpets only, trombones and tuba only, and full ensemble. The carillon theme is initially broken between instruments with some of the notes being held throughout the arpeggio as in example 36 (p. 107). Later she states the arpeggio in one instrument or divides it between two. In example 39 notice the inversion of the thematic material in measures 70 and 71.

Example 39. *First Light* measures 66-71

66

S.

A.

T. *f broadly*  
out from wom - an's folds you

B. *f broadly*  
out from wom - an's folds you

Tpt. *f*

Tpt. *f*

Tpt. *f*

Tpt. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

Tbn. *mf*

B. Tbn. *mf*

Tba. *f*

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The dynamics are carefully marked as always; they range from pianissimo to fortissimo, and include sforzandi in both chorus and brass. Accents are frequently used as are crescendi and decrescendi. There are dramatic crescendi into the seven high points or peaks followed by decrescendi. At the soft passages the brass parts are reduced in number, while full brass is used for louder sections.

The harmony is based on the Athens Cathedral carillon with its tritone in the lower bells and B-flat eleventh chord outlined in the arpeggio (see example 35, p. 106). Although she sometimes changes the intervals in the arpeggio, it itself incorporates the tritone throughout. Of the chords identified by the author, half are polychords. The vast



majority are altered chords, on all steps of the chromatic scale, with multiple enharmonic spellings. Unlike *Ghost Towns of the American West*, there are only a few sections that have a clear tonal center, each center lasts for a short time after which it is replaced by an unrelated tonality. There are sections of dual modality as well as polytonality.

Unusually, the work both begins and ends on a B-flat chord. The harmonic rhythm is slower than in the previously examined works, often chords will be several measures long, the penultimate chord lasting twenty-one and a half measures; there are also measures when the harmony changes every beat, or even more frequently. The following chordal reduction demonstrates this sudden change of harmonic rhythm. Prior to measure 141 an A-flat chord is held for six measures, first as A-flat eleven and then A-flat seven (example 40).

Example 40. *First Light* chordal reduction, measures 141-145

141

144

E<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup> Dm<sup>9</sup> D<sup>0</sup>/<sub>Dm</sub> B<sup>b7</sup>/<sub>B<sup>b</sup>7</sub> Em

A<sup>9</sup> B<sup>b</sup>11(omit3) A<sup>#m</sup>9 C<sup>#7</sup> Bm Bm<sup>9</sup>

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The melodic structure is composed of brief phrases of text, often intoned on one note and then passed to a different voice part (example 36, p. 107), or, as in example 37

(p. 108), where the melody is incorporated into the changing chords. In example 41 observe a typical melodic fragment in which the melody passes from the soprano to the tenor. The brass accompanies the first three measures with the bass tritone bell theme, and then supports the rhythm. All melodic fragments contain both repeated notes and leaps (example 41).

Example 41. *First Light* measures 20-26

The musical score for Example 41, measures 20-26 of *First Light*, is presented in a standard orchestral format. It includes vocal parts for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), and Tenor (T.), and a brass section consisting of Trumpets (Tpt.), Trombones (Tbn.), Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.), and Tuba (Tba.).

The vocal parts feature the following lyrics:

S.: From the poin-ted bound-less source you vault, you vault, Hell's ne - ga - ting mar - gins.

A.: From the poin-ted bound-less source you vault, you vault, Hell's ne - ga - ting mar - gins.

T.: From the poin-ted bound-less source Hell's ne - ga - ting mar - gins.

The brass section provides accompaniment, with the Bass Trombone (B. Tbn.) and Tuba (Tba.) parts featuring a bass tritone bell theme in the first three measures. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f marc.* (forte marcato), and articulation like *div.* (divisi). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8.

2  
23

Heaven's ex-tra-va gance, unis  
Heaven's ex - tra-va gance, unis  
Heaven's ex - tra-va gance, unis  
Heaven's ex - tra-va gance, You sta-tion here, pur-ple born and damp, Primed for first light's pierc ing  
waiv - ing waiv - ing You sta-tion here, pur-ple born and damp, Primed for first light's pierc ing

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The rhythm is based on note groupings of three, a favorite of Bingham's. The work opens in compound time, utilizing some duples and quadruples, and in measure 64 changes format to 4/8 time with triplets occasionally interspersed in the melodic lines. The meter then alternates between simple and compound time. The carillon arpeggio appears above the lower bell theme in compound meter as a quarter note followed by an eighth, while in simple time it is written as continuous sixteenth notes.

Bingham's singing experience, manifested in her composing, aids both singers and brass players by leading her to compose in breath-lengths. The singers are occasionally obliged to hold notes longer than a breath-length, requiring singers to

stagger breathing as needed. The text is mostly set according to syllabic stresses, hence the changes from two to three to four notes per beat. Word painting occurs frequently, especially at the dynamic and structural high points. The first example is the word “You” at the first high point, being the first mention of Christ (see example 38, p. 110). In measure 20 the words “you vault” are written as an upward leap of a minor seventh. “Shock,” marked *sf*, “severed,” in accented fortissimo eighth notes, and “suffering,” again in short, accented notes, are all strong examples of the setting of the meaning of the word and emotion. Example 42 shows the growth to the word “bloom” to the highest point in the piece.

Example 42. *First Light* choral parts, measures 98-103

98 *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

S. a - stride her knee your hands bloom

A. *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

A. a - stride her knee your hands bloom

T. *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

T. a - stride her knee your hands bloom

B. *mf* *cresc.* *ff*

B. a - stride her knee your hands bloom

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During the process of analyzing this piece the author found many transcription errors in the full score, including the omission of the choral parts in the last twenty measures of the work.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

English composer Judith Bingham, well known in Britain, is gradually becoming recognized in the United States. Born in 1952, she grew up composing in her own secret world, and singing in a variety of choral organizations. Following a difficult time as a non-conformist student at the Royal College of Music in London, she studied privately with renowned musicologist and music critic Hans Keller who compared her compositions to early Beethoven. Her desire to work as a professional composer propelled her forward, especially once she became a singer with the elite professional BBC Singers. However, because of this association, she was mistakenly thought of as only a choral composer, when in reality choral music is only a quarter of her compositional output. She has regular commissions from the British Broadcasting Corporation, from many other British organizations, and a growing number of organizations in the United States. Bingham is frequently commissioned to write works for the leading British concert series, the Promenade Concerts. She has composed more than three hundred works to date: orchestral, chamber, solo and choral. Her compositional language has been considered a growth from the English choral tradition

and has been compared to that of two towers of twentieth century British composition, William Walton and Benjamin Britten.<sup>72</sup>

Bingham's music can be difficult to categorize, with influences ranging from the French Baroque period to Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, and Prokofiev. Each composition brings new and different sounds, and Bingham is a master craftsman in many styles. Much like Britten, each of the works analyzed in this study sounds different; *Water Lilies* is reminiscent of Debussy while *The Drowned Lovers* sounds very much more late Romantic. The *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"* has strains of Vaughan Williams and Britten, and *Ghost Towns of the American West* and *First Light* bring new sounds to the ear. Other choral works such as the *Shakespeare Requiem* utilizes parts of the traditional requiem text with speeches from several of Shakespeare's historical plays, and creates the story of the death of a prince as mourned by his parents. *Hidden City* memorializes Hiroshima with ancient texts, and *An Ancient Music* juxtaposes World War I writings from Wilfred Owen's letters with Guillaume Apollinaire's poetry. All of these compositions introduce differing musical styles. Her one published early choral work, *Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni* (1974), demonstrates her use of more dissonant harmonies, out of which has grown a contemporary style of exciting and unexpected yet non-atonal harmonies, technical variety and dramatic content.

Drama plays a huge part in Bingham's work. All pieces, even those using traditional texts such as the ordinary and proper mass settings, have added storylines. Bingham begins a work by choosing an idea, finding, compiling or writing texts about

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<sup>72</sup> Phillip Scott. "Bingham Salt in the Blood. The Darkness is no Darkness. First Light. The Snows Descend. The Secret Garden." *Fanfare* 33, 1 (September-October 2007): 67.

that idea, surrounding herself with visual images which augment the drama, and then begins composing, always from start to finish. Every piece is through-composed, forming a journey for the listener. Commissions are carefully crafted; Bingham observes and takes into account the abilities of the forces involved. Each piece, whether for the professional BBC Singers or a smaller church choir, is written to suit the commissioning ensemble.

Harmonically, Bingham favors triadic constructs, altered chords, especially diminished and half diminished chords, and polychords, most frequently in inversions. Dual modality chords with both major and minor thirds are commonly used. Major sonorities are much less frequent within her harmonic language. Tritones, however, abound, harmonically and melodically. She uses no key signatures, choosing to write in accidentals instead, frequently beginning in flat keys moving through to sharp keys. She often undulates between two chords, and has voice parts undulating between chord tones in long, held chords. Rhythmically, she prefers units of three, in meter or rhythmic groupings, and juxtaposing units of two or four against three. Texts are set expressing the rhythm of the spoken language. There is also alternation between static chordal sections and rhythmic moving segments. Leaving lines, whole movements, or even whole pieces harmonically unresolved is a common trait.

Bingham's melodies and texts are usually fragmented and passed from part to part, men and women being often grouped together. There are very few long melodic passages. All phrases, whether vocal or instrumental, are written taking breath-length into account, a very popular method for singers and wind players. Melodies include repeated notes and large leaps, and again, tritones are a favorite interval. Utilizing a solo



part with choral accompaniment is also a frequently used. Divisi is often found, usually written out in multiple lines. The range is usually expansive. Bingham commonly uses vocal techniques such as humming, trilling and singing on vowels to maintain long chords. Dynamics are carefully notated, and text painting is found throughout. All details seem to be worked out, leaving little to chance. Even the use of the English accent makes a difference in how performances of these works come together. The difference in English and American pronunciation can alter the desired technique.

Accompanied works utilize tonal color, often adding voices to instruments to change the effect. Instrumental parts are sometimes *colla voce* and other times have their own distinct lines according to the needs of the music. Instrumental accompaniments are varied, from organ in church music, orchestra and organ in the *Shakespeare Requiem*, brass ensemble in *First Light*, harp and percussion in *Hidden City*, string trio in *An Ancient Music*, four French horns in *Actaeon*, and so forth. As previously noted, Bingham's organ writing especially is very idiomatic for the instrument and is highly regarded. She takes special care to write according to the nature of each instrument.

Bingham's music is challenging yet accessible for the performer as well as the listener. Her literary knowledge and musical craftsmanship radiate in every composition. It is hoped that more of Bingham's music will be commissioned, and that this fascinating and enjoyable repertoire will be programmed more and more in the future.

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**APPENDIX A**

**A COMPLETE LIST OF JUDITH BINGHAM'S  
CHORAL LITERATURE TO DATE**



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1972	<b>Title</b>	<i>Hawking for the Partridge</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SSA, Children
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Thomas Ravencroft
	<b>Commission</b>	Finchley Children's Music Group
	<b>First Performance</b>	1972
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	private

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1973	<b>Title</b>	<i>Riddles</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	AATTBB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Anglo Saxon anonymous
	<b>Commission</b>	King's Lynn Festival for the King's Singers
	<b>First Performance</b>	not performed
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	none

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1973	<b>Title</b>	<i>Why so pale and wan fond lover?</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	12 voices SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Sir John Suckling
	<b>Commission</b>	none
	<b>First Performance</b>	unknown
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	none

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1974	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Kraken</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Alfred, Lord Tennyson
	<b>Commission</b>	unknown
	<b>First Performance</b>	unperformed
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	none

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1974           **Title**           *Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*  
                 **Voicing**          SSAATTBB, with soli  
                 **Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                 **Duration**           10 minutes  
                 **Text**                 Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Percy Bysshe Shelley  
                 **Commission**       none  
**First Performance**   1982, BBC Singers, Simon Joly (conductor), St. Alban's,  
                                  Holborn  
                 **Published**          Novello 07 0485  
                 **Recording**          private  
                 **Revised**             1976 and again in 1982 for the BBC

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1974           **Title**           *Wessex Heights*  
                 **Voicing**          SATB, soprano solo, speaker  
                 **Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                 **Duration**           unknown  
                 **Text**                 Thomas Hardy  
                 **Commission**       Cunningham Singers  
**First Performance**   Cunningham Singers, Bernard Palmer (speaker)  
                                  Wimborne Minster  
                 **Published**          no  
                 **Recording**          private  
                 **Revised**             1977

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1975           **Title**           *The Burning Babe*  
                 **Voicing**          SSATB  
                 **Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                 **Duration**           unknown  
                 **Text**                 Robert Southwell  
                 **Commission**       none  
**First Performance**   Christmas, St. Giles, Cripplegate  
                 **Published**          no  
                 **Recording**          none  
                 **Revised**             1978

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1978           **Title**           *Make we mery*  
                 **Voicing**          SATB  
                 **Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                 **Duration**           unknown  
                 **Text**                 Anonymous  
                 **Commission**       none  
**First Performance**   unknown  
                 **Published**          no

	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
1984	<b>Title</b>	<i>Cradle Song of the Blessed Virgin</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SSATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	4 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Medieval anonymous
	<b>Commission</b>	Gesualdo Consort
	<b>First Performance</b>	Gesualdo Consort
	<b>Published</b>	Novello – out of print
	<b>Recording</b>	Libra cassette
<hr/>		
1984	<b>Title</b>	<i>Missa Sterna Paradisaea</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	choir
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Traditional mass and Gerard Manley Hopkins
	<b>Commission</b>	none
	<b>First Performance</b>	unknown
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
1984	<b>Title</b>	<i>Marion Dodd's leaving piece</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	voices
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	none
	<b>First Performance</b>	BBC Singers, privately
	<b>Published</b>	no
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
1985	<b>Title</b>	<i>A Winter Walk at Noon</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	27 solo voices
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	25 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Edward Thomas, Emily Brontë, William Cowper, William Wordsworth
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC
	<b>First Performance</b>	1987, BBC Singers, Simon Joly (conductor), St. John's, Smith Square
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71187



	<b>Recording</b>	1985 studio recording, broadcast
1985	<b>Title</b>	<i>Just Before Dawn</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SSAA girls' voices
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	12 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	St. Matthew, Corinthians, Henry Kingsley
	<b>Commission</b>	Danish Radio
	<b>First Performance</b>	1987, Danish Girls' Radio Choir, Tage Mortensen (conductor), Copenhagen Cathedral
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters London EP 71125
	<b>Recording</b>	broadcast on Danish radio
	<b>Revised</b>	1990
1987	<b>Title</b>	<i>A Cold Spell – 5 Carols for Winter</i> includes: <i>A Winter Scene</i> <i>Poor Thing</i> <i>Moonless Darkness</i> <i>O Weary World</i> <i>Weathervane</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SSAATTBB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	John Clare, anonymous, Gerard Manley Hopkins, G. K. Chesterton, John Masefield
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC
	<b>First Performance</b>	1987, BBC Northern Singers, Stephen Wilkinson, (conductor), BBC Studio, Manchester
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71089
	<b>Recording</b>	BBC broadcast 1988
1989	<b>Title</b>	<i>Where light and shade repose, AKA Like Love</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	5 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	John Betjemann, W. H. Auden, William Wordsworth
	<b>Commission</b>	unknown
	<b>First Performance</b>	1990, BBC Singers, St. John's, Smith Square
	<b>Publisher</b>	Edition Peters EP 71200
	<b>Recording</b>	BBC broadcast

1989	<b>Title</b>	<i>Tu Creasti Domine</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	3 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Hillaire Belloc
	<b>Commission</b>	Valerie Nunns
	<b>First Performance</b>	1989, Lymington Choral Society
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters London EP 71165
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
1990	<b>Title</b>	<i>Irish Tenebrae</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	TTBB, Soprano solo
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ, violin, percussion
	<b>Duration</b>	25 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	W. B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney, M.J. Craig, Cormac Ó Comáin, Mary Lavin, Fanny Parnell
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC
	<b>First Performance</b>	BBC Singers, Alison Wells, Perry Montague Mason, Simon Joly (conductor)
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71120A
	<b>Recording</b>	1991, commercially on Signum in 2008
	<b>Revised</b>	1992
<hr/>		
1990	<b>Title</b>	<i>I Have a Secret to Tell</i> (arr. of the 5 <sup>th</sup> mvmt of <i>Irish Tenebrae</i> )
	<b>Voicing</b>	TTBB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	bell
	<b>Duration</b>	3 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	none
	<b>First Performance</b>	
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters London EP 71110
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
1990	<b>Title</b>	<i>Unpredictable but Providential</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	3 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	W. H. Auden
	<b>Commission</b>	none
	<b>First Performance</b>	1991, Britten Singers, Stephen Wilkinson (conductor), York Minster
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters London EP 71185

**Recording** commercially, on Signum in 2008, BBC Singers,  
David Hill (conductor)

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1992           **Title**       *The Uttermost*  
                   **Voicing**   chorus, Tenor solo  
**Accompaniment** orchestra  
                   **Duration**   20 minutes  
                   **Text**        Christopher Marlowe  
**Commission**   Lawyers' Music  
**First Performance** 1993, Lawyers' Music, Andrew Murgatroyd (conductor),  
Methodist Central Hall  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters London EP 71147A  
**Recording**     none

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1993           **Title**       *The Past is a Strange Land*  
                   **Voicing**   SATB  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
                   **Duration**   18 minutes  
                   **Text**        Arthur Conan Doyle, Edward Thomas, Hilaire Belloc,  
Christina Rosetti, anonymous, the composer  
**Commission**   Finzi Singers  
**First Performance** 1993, Finzi Singers, Paul Spicer (conductor), Nantwich  
Parish Church  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters EP 71137  
**Recording**     broadcast  
                   **Revised**     1996

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1993           **Title**       *The Ghost of Combermere Abbey* (arrangement of a  
movement from *The Past is a Strange Land*)  
                   **Voicing**   SSAA  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
                   **Duration**   3 minutes and 6 minutes  
                   **Text**        Lady Elgar  
**Commission**   New London Children's Choir  
**First Performance** 1993, New London Children's Choir, Ronald Corp  
(conductor), St. James, Piccadilly;  
Revised version: 1995, Oxford Girls' Choir, Richard  
Vendome (conductor), Mansfield College Chapel, Oxford  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters London EP 71134  
**Recording**     unknown  
                   **Revised**     1995

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1993           **Title**       *The Darkness is No Darkness to be followed by Wesley's  
Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*

**Voicing**     SATB with divisi

**Accompaniment**   organ ad lib

**Duration**     4 minutes

**Text**         Psalm, the composer

**Commission**    none

**First Performance** 1994, BBC Symphony Chorus, Stephen Jackson (conductor),  
Norwich Cathedral

**Published**     Edition Peters EP 71097

**Recording**     broadcast, commercially recorded by BBC Symphony  
Chorus, John Scott (conductor), on Naxos

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1995           **Title**       *Epiphany*

**Voicing**     SATB with divisi

**Accompaniment**   organ

**Duration**     4 minutes

**Text**         the composer

**Commission**    Winchester Cathedral

**First Performance** 1996, Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill (conductor),  
Winchester Cathedral

**Published**     Edition Peters EP 71070

**Recording**     commercially recorded by St. Paul's Cathedral, John Scott  
(conductor), on Hyperion

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1995           **Title**       *Evening Canticles – Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis*

**Voicing**     SATB

**Accompaniment**   organ

**Duration**     8 minutes

**Text**         traditional

**Commission**    King's College Cambridge, with funds from  
Gerald Peacocke

**First Performance** 1996, King's College Cambridge Choir, Stephen Cleobury  
(conductor), King's College Cambridge

**Published**     Edition Peters London EP 71103

**Recording**     broadcast

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1995           **Title**       *Salt in the Blood*

**Voicing**     SATB with divisi

**Accompaniment**   brass dectet

**Duration**     20 minutes

**Text**         Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, Charles A. Abbey, The log of

the East Indiaman “Buckinghamshire”, Bram Stoker, Allan Villiers, traditional, anonymous, the composer  
**Commission** BBC Proms  
**First Performance** 1995, BBC Symphony Chorus, Gabrieli Brass, Stephen Jackson (conductor), BBC Proms  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 71143A  
**Recording** commercially recorded, BBC Symphony Chorus, Gabrieli Brass, Stephen Jackson (conductor), on Naxos

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1995      **Title**      *O Magnum Mysterium*  
**Voicing**      SATB/SATB  
**Accompaniment**      unaccompanied  
**Duration**      6 minutes  
**Text**      traditional  
**Commission**      Lichfield Cathedral  
**First Performance**      1995, Lichfield Cathedral Choir, Andrew Lumsden (conductor), Lichfield Cathedral  
**Published**      Edition Peters EP 71101  
**Recording**      broadcast  
**Revised**      1996

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1996      **Title**      *At the Mid Hour of Night*  
**Voicing**      SAT  
**Accompaniment**      organ  
**Duration**      5 minutes  
**Text**      unknown  
**Commission**      none  
**First Performance**      1997, Plymouth Congregational Church Choir, Philip Brunelle (conductor), Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
**Published**      Edition Peters London EP 71173  
**Recording**      none

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1996      **Title**      *Lace-making*  
**Voicing**      SSAA girls voices  
**Accompaniment**      unaccompanied  
**Duration**      6 minutes  
**Text**      unknown  
**Commission**      Sainsbury’s Choir of the Year  
**First Performance**      Cantamus, Pamela Cook (conductor)  
**Published**      Edition Peters EP 71073  
**Recording**      commercially recorded on Ongaku No Tomu KJCD-0041  
**Revised**      2004, arranged for SAT, bar sax, EP 71072

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1997           **Title**       *Below the Surface Stream*  
                  **Voicing**     choir  
                  **Accompaniment**   orchestra  
                  **Duration**     22 minutes  
                  **Text**         unknown  
                  **Commission**    Three Choirs Festival  
**First Performance**   1997, Three Choirs Festival, Bournemouth Symphony  
                                  Orchestra, Roy Massey (conductor), Hereford Cathedral  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters London EP 71179A  
                  **Recording**     none

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1997           **Title**       *Gleams of a Remoter World*  
                  **Voicing**     SATB, 5 solo voices  
                  **Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                  **Duration**     6 – 7 minutes  
                  **Text**         Percy Bysshe Shelley  
                  **Commission**    Lea Singers  
**First Performance**   1999, Lea Singers, Geoffrey Davidson (conductor), Our  
                                  Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters London EP71126  
                  **Recording**     commercially recorded by the BBC Singers, David Hill  
                                  (conductor), on Signum

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1997           **Title**       *The Waning Moon*  
                  **Voicing**     TB  
                  **Accompaniment**   piano  
                  **Duration**     4 minutes  
                  **Text**         Percy Bysshe Shelley  
                  **Commission**    Tamworth Male Voice Choir with funds from the  
                                  National Lottery  
**First Performance**   unperformed  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters London EP 71149  
                  **Recording**     none  
                  **Revised**       as *The Moon Over Westminster Cathedral* for piano solo

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1997           **Title**       *Consider Saint Cecilia*  
                  **Voicing**     SSAATTBB (with further divisi)  
                  **Accompaniment**   organ  
                  **Duration**     7 minutes  
                  **Text**         W. Bruce Benson  
                  **Commission**    Musician's Benevolent Fund

**First Performance** 1997, Choirs of St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral, John Scott (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral  
**Published Edition** Peters EP 71091  
**Recording** none  
**Revised** 2004

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1998            **Title**            *The Clouded Heaven*  
**Voicing**            SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment**    organ  
**Duration**            3 – 4 minutes  
**Text**                    Lancelot Andrewes and William Wordsworth  
**Commission**        Winchester Cathedral and St. John's College Cambridge  
**First Performance** 1998, Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill (conductor), and St. John's College Cambridge Choir, Christopher Robinson (conductor), simultaneously  
**Published Edition**    Peters EP 71087  
**Recording**            broadcast and commercially recorded by St. John's College Cambridge Choir, David Hill (conductor), on Hyperion; also by Pegasus on Lir Classics and by The Rodolphus Choir, Ralph Allwood (conductor), on Herald

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1998            **Title**            *Missa Brevis I* with *The Clouded Heaven* included as the motet  
**Voicing**            SSATTB  
**Accompaniment**    organ  
**Duration**            12 minutes  
**Text**                    Traditional mass  
**Commission**        Westminster Abbey  
**First Performance** 1998, Westminster Abbey Choir, Martin Baker (conductor), Westminster Abbey  
**Published Edition**    Peters EP 71079  
**Recording**            broadcast

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1998            **Title**            *The Drowned Lovers* to be followed by Stanford's *The Blue Bird*  
**Voicing**            SSAATTBB with divisi, Alto solo  
**Accompaniment**    unaccompanied  
**Duration**            5 minutes  
**Text**                    Mary E. Coleridge and the composer  
**Commission**        none  
**First Performance** 2000, The Joyful Company of Singers, Peter Broadbent (conductor), Hereford Cathedral

**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71066  
broadcast, commercially recorded by VocalEssence  
Philip Brunelle (conductor), on an anniversary giveaway

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1999           **Title**           *If Music Be*  
                  **Voicing**       SSAA  
                  **Accompaniment** 2 clarinets  
                  **Duration**       1 – 2 minutes  
                  **Text**           William Shakespeare  
                  **Commission**   Richard Frostick for the opening of the new Sadler’s Wells  
**First Performance** unperformed  
                  **Published**       Edition Peters London EP 71111  
                  **Recording**       none

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1999           **Title**           *Water Lilies*  
                  **Voicing**       SSAATTBB with SSATBB soli  
                  **Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
                  **Duration**       7 minutes  
                  **Text**           the composer  
                  **Commission**   The Garland for Linda Appeal  
**First Performance** 1999, The Joyful Company of Singers, Richard Hickox  
                          (conductor), Charterhouse School Chapel  
                  **Published**       Edition Peters EP 71152  
                  **Recording**       broadcast, commercially recorded by BBC Singers,  
                          David Hill (conductor), on Signum

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2000           **Title**           *Otherworld*  
                  **Voicing**       choir  
                  **Accompaniment** organ, orchestra  
                  **Duration**       35 minutes  
                  **Text**           Rumi, the composer, Ancient Egyptian, Emperor Hadrian,  
                          Passamaquoddy Indian  
                  **Commission**   Three Choirs Festival with funds from West Midlands Arts  
                          and Plymouth Music Series as part of their Odyssey Program  
**First Performance** 2000, Three Choirs Festival Chorus, Bournemouth  
                          Symphony Orchestra, Roy Massey (conductor); 2001, US  
                          premier by St. Olaf Choir and Symphony Orchestra, Phillip  
                          Brunelle (conductor), Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis,  
                          Minnesota  
                  **Published**       Edition Peters London EP 71085A  
                  **Recording**       US performance recorded

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2000           **Title**       *The Shepherd's Gift*  
                   **Voicing**     SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment**   organ  
                   **Duration**   3 – 4 minutes  
                   **Text**        Anonymous  
**Commission**     BBC  
**First Performance** BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), for recording; 2004, Church of the Holy Spirit, Julia Daniels (conductor), first public performance  
  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters EP 71130  
                   **Recording**   commercially recorded by the BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury and Robert Quinney (conductors), on BBC label

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2000           **Title**       *The Necklace of Light*  
                   **Voicing**     ATTBB (male voices) and reader  
**Accompaniment**   unaccompanied  
                   **Duration**   22 minutes  
                   **Text**        The Venerable Bede  
**Commission**     Opus Anglicanum with funds from Caroline Miles and Yorkshire Arts  
**First Performance** 2000, Opus Anglicanum, York Minster  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters London EP 71160  
                   **Recording**   commercially recorded by Opus Anglicanum on their own label

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2001           **Title**       *God Be in My Head I*  
                   **Voicing**     SATB  
**Accompaniment**   organ or piano  
                   **Duration**   2 minutes  
                   **Text**        Sarum Primer, 1558  
**Commission**     Holy Communion Episcopal Church  
**First Performance** 2001, Holy Communion Episcopal Church, Philip Barnes (conductor), Holy Communion Episcopal Church, St. Louis, Missouri  
  
                   **Published**   Edition Peters London EP 71138  
                   **Recording**   none

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2001           **Title**       *First Light*  
                   **Voicing**     SATB  
**Accompaniment**   brass dectet  
                   **Duration**   11 minutes  
                   **Text**        A. Martin Shaw

**Commission** Waynflete Singers  
**First Performance** 2001, Waynflete Singers, David Hill (conductor)  
**Published** Edition Peters London EP 71081A  
**Recording** commercially recorded by the BBC Singers, Fine Arts Brass, Stephen Jackson (conductor), on Naxos

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2001           **Title**       *Beneath These Alien Stars*  
                  **Voicing**     SSA  
                  **Accompaniment** organ  
                  **Duration**     3 – 4 minutes  
                  **Text**         Vesta Pierce Crawford  
                  **Commission** requested by David Hill  
**First Performance** 2002, Girls of Winchester and Salisbury Cathedrals, David Hill (conductor)  
                  **Published** Edition Peters London EP 71163  
                  **Recording** commercially recorded by the BBC Singers, David Hill (conductor), on Signum

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2002           **Title**       *Ave Verum Corpus*  
                  **Voicing**     SATB  
                  **Accompaniment** organ/piano  
                  **Duration**     3 – 4 minutes  
                  **Text**         Pope Innocent VI  
                  **Commission** Philip Barnes  
**First Performance** 2002, Holy Communion Episcopal Church Choir, Philip Barnes (conductor), Holy Communion Episcopal Church, St. Louis, Missouri  
                  **Published** Edition Peters EP 71167  
                  **Recording** commercially recorded by The Cathedral Choir of St. John Albuquerque, Maxine Threvenot (organ), Iain Quinn (conductor), on Raven

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2002           **Title**       *Aquileia*  
                  **Voicing**     SSAATTBB  
                  **Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
                  **Duration**     7 minutes  
                  **Text**         St. Mark, anon, the composer  
                  **Commission** St. Louis Chamber Choir  
**First Performance** 2003, St. Louis Chamber Choir, Philip Barnes (conductor), St. Louis Cathedral-Basilica, St. Louis, Missouri  
                  **Published** Edition Peters EP 71177  
                  **Recording** none

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2003 - 2004	<b>Title</b> <b>Voicing</b> <b>Accompaniment</b>  <b>Duration</b> <b>Text</b> <b>Commission</b> <b>First Performance</b>   <b>Published</b> <b>Recording</b>	<i>The Ivory Tree</i> SATB, counter-tenor, baritone and bass soli 2 fl, cl, bsn, recorders, sop. sax, alto sax, horn, 3 tr, 2 trb, perc, harp, organ, strings 11110 1 hour 10 minutes 12 <sup>th</sup> century texts arranged by the composer St. Edmundsbury Cathedral 2005, Choir of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, Tim Garrard (counter-tenor), Richard Strivens (baritone), Robert Rice (bass), James Thomas (conductor), with local dancers and actors, St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St. Edmunds Edition Peters EP 71124A privately videoed
<hr/>		
2003	<b>Title</b> <b>Voicing</b> <b>Accompaniment</b> <b>Duration</b> <b>Text</b> <b>Commission</b> <b>First Performance</b> <b>Published</b> <b>Recording</b>	<i>God Be In My Head II</i> SSA unaccompanied 2 minutes Sarum Primer, 1558 none unknown Edition Peters EP 71139 none
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2003	<b>Title</b> <b>Voicing</b> <b>Accompaniment</b> <b>Duration</b> <b>Text</b> <b>Commission</b> <b>First Performance</b>  <b>Published</b> <b>Recording</b>	<i>Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus"</i> SATB organ 25 minutes with motet, 16 minutes without traditional, St. Luke Westminster Cathedral 2003, Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker (conductor), Westminster Cathedral Edition Peters EP 71161 commercially recorded by Westminster Cathedral, Robert Quinney and Martin Baker (conductors), on Hyperion; organ soli by Tom Winpenny, on Naxos
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2003	<b>Title</b> <b>Voicing</b> <b>Accompaniment</b> <b>Duration</b> <b>Text</b>	<i>The Christmas Truce</i> SATB strings, 2 trumpets, percussion, organ 25 minutes eye witness and press accounts collated, adapted and

**Commission** poeticized by the composer  
**First Performance** BBC  
 2003, BBC Singers, Britten Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury  
 (conductor), St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich  
**Published** Edition Peters London EP 71191A  
**Recording** privately

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2003           **Title**       *Bach's Tomb, AKA Die Nachwelt*  
                  **Voicing**     SSAATTBB  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
                  **Duration**     5 minutes  
                  **Text**            Johann Christoff Gottshed  
**Commission**     BBC Singers  
**First Performance** 2004, BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), in  
 Estonia  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters EP 71201  
**Recording**        none

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2003           **Title**       *O Clap Your Hands*  
                  **Voicing**     SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment** organ  
                  **Duration**     4 minutes  
                  **Text**            Psalm 47  
**Commission**     Philip Brunelle  
**First Performance** 2004, Plymouth Congregational Church Choir, Philip  
 Brunelle (conductor), Plymouth Congregational Church,  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters EP 71099  
**Recording**        none

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2004           **Title**       *The Secret Garden*  
                  **Voicing**     SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment** organ  
                  **Duration**     20 minutes  
                  **Text**            Genesis, St. Matthew, the composer  
**Commission**     BBC  
**First Performance** 2004, BBC Symphony Chorus, Thomas Trotter (organ),  
 Stephen Jackson (conductor), BBC Proms  
                  **Published**     Edition Peters EP71188  
**Recording**        commercially recorded by BBC Symphony Chorus, Thomas  
 Trotter (organ), Stephen Jackson (conductor), on Naxos

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2004	<b>Title</b>	<i>God Would Be Born in Thee</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB with divisi
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	4 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Silesius Angelus
	<b>Commission</b>	King's College Cambridge
	<b>First Performance</b>	2004, King's College Cambridge, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), King's College Cambridge
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP71142
	<b>Recording</b>	commercially recorded by King's College Cambridge choir, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), on EMI Classics
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2004	<b>Title</b>	<i>Our Faith is a Light</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	6 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Dame Julian of Norwich, Regina Caeli
	<b>Commission</b>	Wells Cathedral
	<b>First Performance</b>	2004, Girl Choristers and Wells Cathedral Choir, Rupert Gough (organ), Robert Houssart (conductor), Wells Cathedral
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71078
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
2004	<b>Title</b>	<i>Margaret, Forsaken</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SS
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	5 – 6 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	A. Martin Shaw
	<b>Commission</b>	Winchester Cathedral
	<b>First Performance</b>	2005, Winchester Cathedral Choir, Sara Baldock, Andrew Lumsden (conductor), Winchester Cathedral
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71164
	<b>Recording</b>	commercially recorded by Winchester Cathedral Choir, Sara Baldock, Andrew Lumsden (conductor), on Griffin
<hr/>		
2005	<b>Title</b>	<i>Touch'd By Heavenly Fire</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	3 – 4 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Robert Bridges
	<b>Commission</b>	Church Music Society

**First Performance** 2006, St. Paul's Cathedral Choir, Malcolm Archer (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71174  
 commercially recorded by Choir of Worcester College Oxford, George Castle (organ), Thomas Allery (conductor), on VIF

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2005           **Title**       *In Nomine* written to come after the *Benedictus* in Taverner's *Western Wind Mass*  
**Voicing**       SATB  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
**Duration**       4 minutes  
**Text**            Corinthians 15:52, in Latin  
**Commission**   BBC  
**First Performance** 2005, BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), Merton College Oxford  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71112  
 none

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2005           **Title**       *Cloath'd in Holy Robes*  
**Voicing**       SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment** organ  
**Duration**       4 minutes  
**Text**            Edward Taylor  
**Commission**   Eaton Choral Course with funds from Britten-Pears and Esme Fairbairn  
**First Performance** 2005, Eaton Choral Course, Ralph Allwood (conductor), Eaton Chapel  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71084  
 broadcast

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2005           **Title**       *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Edington Service*  
**Voicing**       SATB  
**Accompaniment** organ  
**Duration**       9 minutes  
**Text**            traditional  
**Commission**   Edington Festival  
**First Performance** Fiftieth Edington Festival, Robert Quinney (conductor)  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters London EP 71198  
 none

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2005	<b>Title</b>	<i>A Formal Order</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	4 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	W. H. Auden
	<b>Commission</b>	Dartington Summer School
	<b>First Performance</b>	2005, Exaudi, James Weeks (conductor), Dartington Summer School
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71104
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
2005	<b>Title</b>	<i>Ghost Towns of the American West</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	12 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Vesta Pierce Crawford
	<b>Commission</b>	The Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University, Utah
	<b>First Performance</b>	2006, The Ensemble Singers, Philip Brunelle (conductor), Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP71146
	<b>Recording</b>	commercially recorded by the BBC Singers, David Hill (conductor), on Signum
<hr/>		
2005	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Shepherdes Calendar</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	12 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Edmund Spenser, Psalm 23
	<b>Commission</b>	St. Louis Chamber Chorus
	<b>First Performance</b>	2006, St. Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes (conductor), Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis, Missouri
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters EP 71131
	<b>Recording</b>	St. Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes (conductor) on Regent; BBC Singers, David Hill (conductor), on Signum
<hr/>		
2005	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Lord to Me a Shepherd Is</i> (the middle movement of <i>The Shepherdes Calendar</i> )
	<b>Voicing</b>	SA
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Psalm 23
	<b>Commission</b>	St. Louis Chamber Chorus

**First Performance** 2006, St. Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes (conductor), Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis, Missouri  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71737  
 St. Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes (conductor), on Regent; BBC Singers, David Hill (conductor), on Signum

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2006 **Title** *Winter's Pilgrimage*  
**Voicing** SSAATTBB  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
**Duration** unknown  
**Text** A. Martin Shaw  
**Commission** St. Paul's Cathedral  
**First Performance** 2006, St. Paul's Cathedral, Malcolm Archer (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral  
**Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71189  
 none

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2006 **Title** *My Heart Strangely Warm'd* Scenes from an opera  
**Voicing** SATB, counter-tenor, baritone soli  
**Accompaniment** brass quintet, organ  
**Duration** 17 minutes  
**Text** William Blake, Martin Luther, John Wesley, anonymous, selected and arranged by the composer  
**Commission** John Armitage Memorial Trust and the BBC  
**First Performance** 2006, BBC Singers, Andrew Watts (counter-tenor), Giles Underwood (baritone), Onyx Brass, Daniel Cook (organ), Nicholas Cleobury (conductor), Chichester Cathedral  
**Published Also Published Recording** Edition Peters EP 71150A  
 with piano accompaniment EP 71150B  
 unknown  
**Award** 2006 British Composer Awards in choral category

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2006 **Title** *Hidden City*  
**Voicing** SATB  
**Accompaniment** harp, percussion  
**Duration** 20 minutes  
**Text** Murasaki Shikabu, Izumi Shikabu, Empress Yamatohime, Murray's Handbook to Japan, 1907  
**Commission** Nomura for the 2006 City of London Festival  
**First Performance** 2006, BBC Singers, Alison Martin (harp), Richard Benjafield (percussion), Andrew Carwood (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 71135A



**Recording** private

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2006      **Title**      *An Ancient Music*  
             **Voicing**      SSATB, actor  
**Accompaniment**      string trio  
             **Duration**      18 minutes  
             **Text**      letters by Wilfred Owen, poems by Guillaume Apollinaire  
**Commission**      BBC for the BBC Singers  
**First Performance**      2006, BBC Singers, members of Endymion, Simon Day  
                                (actor), Andrew Carwood (conductor), St. Paul's  
                                Knightsbridge, London  
**Published**      Edition Peters EP 71203A  
**Recording**      private

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2006      **Title**      *La Boîteuse*  
             **Voicing**      SATB  
**Accompaniment**      organ  
             **Duration**      4 minutes  
             **Text**      carol, unknown  
**Commission**      BBC  
**First Performance**      2006, BBC Singers, Bob Chilcott (conductor), St. Giles,  
                                Cripplegate, London  
**Published**      Edition Peters EP 71144  
**Recording**      unknown

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2006      **Title**      *The Morning Watch*  
             **Voicing**      SSAATTBB  
**Accompaniment**      organ  
             **Duration**      5 minutes  
             **Text**      Henry Vaughan  
**Commission**      Rev. Canon Gary Mead in loving memory of Edna Oxnard  
**First Performance**      2007, Cathedral Church of St. John Choir, Maxine Thévenot  
                                (organ), Iain Quinn (conductor), Albuquerque, New Mexico  
**Published**      Edition Peters EP 71159  
**Recording**      unknown

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2007      **Title**      *Missa Brevis III "Awake My Soul"*  
             **Voicing**      SATB  
**Accompaniment**      organ  
             **Duration**      10 minutes  
             **Text**      traditional  
**Commission**      Bromley Parish Church

<b>First Performance</b>		2007, Bromley Parish Church Choir, Thomas Corns (conductor), Bromley Parish Church
<b>Published Recording</b>		Edition Peters EP 7982 unknown
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2007	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Shepherd</i> (motet from <i>Missa Brevis "Awake My Soul"</i> )
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB with divisi
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	3 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	William Blake, Thomas Ken
	<b>Commission</b>	Bromley Parish Church
	<b>First Performance</b>	2007, Bromley Parish Church Choir, Thomas Corns (conductor), Bromley Parish Church
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 7986 unknown
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2007	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Hired Hand</i> (sing-song in a London east-end pub c.1888)
	<b>Voicing</b>	24 voices SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	15 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC Singers
	<b>First Performance</b>	2007, BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), Finland
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 7998 unknown
<hr/>		
2008	<b>Title</b>	<i>Shakespeare Requiem</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB, soprano, baritone soli
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	orchestra (2.2.2.ca.1.b-cl.2.cbn – 4.3.3.1. – 2 perc. – timpani - organ – strings)
	<b>Duration</b>	35 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	Latin Requiem, William Shakespeare
	<b>Commission</b>	Leeds Festival Chorus
	<b>First Performance</b>	2008, Leeds Festival Chorus, BBC Philharmonic, Mary Plazas (soprano), Giles Underwood (baritone), Simon Wright (conductor), Leeds
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 71742 private
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2008	<b>Title</b>	<i>Prayer</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SSATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ

**Duration** 4 minutes  
**Text** George Herbert  
**Commission** Salisbury Cathedral  
**First Performance** 2008, Girls and Men of Salisbury Cathedral, Daniel Cook (organ), David Halls (conductor), Salisbury Cathedral  
**Published** Edition Peters London EP 71758  
**Recording** none

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2008 **Title** *Harvest*  
**Voicing** SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment** organ  
**Duration** 4 ½ minutes  
**Text** Gerard Manley Hopkins  
**Commission** Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
**First Performance** 2008, Plymouth Congregational Church Choir, Philip Brunelle (organ and conductor), Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 71786  
**Recording** unknown

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2008 **Title** *The Spirit of Truth* to be followed by Tallis' *If Ye Love Me*  
**Voicing** 6A/3T/2Bar/B  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
**Duration** 4 minutes  
**Text** St. John, Thomas Cranmer  
**Commission** BBC  
**First Performance** 2009, BBC Singers, Stephen Cleobury (conductor), BBC Maida Vale Studios  
**Published** Edition Peters London EP 71788  
**Recording** none

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2008 **Title** *Shadow Aspect*  
**Voicing** SATB, youth choir, baritone solo  
**Accompaniment** organ, timpani  
**Duration** 25 minutes  
**Text** Robert Louis Stevenson and from Instructions to Bell Rock Light Keepers (1828)  
**Commission** Edinburgh Royal Choral Union  
**First Performance** 2009, Edinburgh Royal Choral Union, Michael Bawtree (conductor), Edinburgh  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 71815  
**Recording** unknown

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2009	<b>Title</b>	<i>See and Keep Silent</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB, tenor solo
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	cello
	<b>Duration</b>	18 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	William Tyndale translation of New Testament (1526) with interpolated words by Sir Francis Walsingham
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC Radio 3
	<b>First Performance</b>	2009, BBC Singers, Andrew Murgatroyd (tenor), Guy Johnston (cello), Stephen Cleobury (conductor), King's College Chapel, Cambridge
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 71922 unknown
<hr/>		
2009	<b>Title</b>	<i>Actaeon, His Strange New Face</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	4 French horns
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	BBC for the BBC Singers
	<b>First Performance</b>	2009, BBC Singers, Michael Thompson Horn Quartet, Paul Brough (conductor), St. Paul's Knightsbridge, London
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 71979 unknown
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2009	<b>Title</b>	<i>Distant Thunder</i> to be followed by Parry's <i>My Soul There Is a Country</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	7 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	The Joyful Company of Singers and Presteigne Festival of Music and Arts
	<b>First Performance</b>	2010, The Joyful Company of Singers, Peter Broadbent (conductor), Cadogen Hall, London
	<b>Published Recording</b>	Edition Peters EP 71990 unknown
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2010	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Wells Service Alternative Canticles: Cantate Domino and Deus Misereatur</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ

**Duration** c. 8 minutes  
**Text** Psalms  
**Commission** none  
**First Performance** 2010, Wells Cathedral Choir, Jonathan Vaughn (organ),  
 Matthew Owens (conductor), Wells Cathedral  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 72064  
**Recording** unknown

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2010 **Title** *A Bird is Singing*  
**Voicing** SATB with divisi  
**Accompaniment** unaccompanied  
**Duration** c. 6 ½ minutes  
**Text** poem by the composer taken from Belarus folk songs and  
*Un oiseau chante* by Guillaume Apollinaire  
**Commission** St. Louis Chamber Chorus  
**First Performance** 2010, St. Louis Chamber Chorus, Philip Barnes (conductor),  
 Temple Shaare Emeth, St. Louis, Missouri  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 72076  
**Recording** unknown

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2010 **Title** *The Pilgrimes Travels*  
**Voicing** SATB  
**Accompaniment** organ  
**Duration** 5 minutes  
**Text** Emelia Lanier  
**Commission** Lucy Winkett for Andrew Carwood and the Choir of  
 St. Paul's Cathedral  
**First Performance** 2010, St. Paul's Cathedral Consort, Simon Johnson (organ),  
 Andrew Carwood (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 72074  
**Recording** unknown

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2010 **Title** *Now the Magi Arrive*  
**Voicing** SATB  
**Accompaniment** organ  
**Duration** 5 minutes  
**Text** Kenneth Grahame  
**Commission** none  
**First Performance** 2010, St. Bride's Church Choir, Robert Jones (conductor),  
 London  
**Published** Edition Peters EP 72111  
**Recording** unknown

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2010	<b>Title</b>	<i>Holy of Holies</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	c. 10 minutes
	<b>Text</b>	unknown
	<b>Commission</b>	Cappella Nova, Creative Scotland and the Binks Trust
	<b>First Performance</b>	2011, Cappella Nova, Alan Tavener (conductor), St. Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters
	<b>Recording</b>	unknown
<hr/>		
2011	<b>Title</b>	<i>Corpus Christi Carol</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	anonymous
	<b>Commission</b>	unknown
	<b>First Performance</b>	(2012, Manchester Cathedral Choir, Christopher Stokes (conductor), Manchester Cathedral)
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
2011	<b>Title</b>	<i>Ave Virgo Sanctissima</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	unaccompanied
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	
	<b>Commission</b>	unknown
	<b>First Performance</b>	(2012, St. Thomas the Apostle, Los Angeles, California)
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters
	<b>Recording</b>	none
<hr/>		
2011	<b>Title</b>	<i>Eden</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SA, soprano solo
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Edward Taylor
	<b>Commission</b>	unknown
	<b>First Performance</b>	(2012, Plymouth Congregational Church Choir, Philip Brunelle (conductor), Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

**Published** Edition Peters  
**Recording** none

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2012	<b>Title</b>	<i>The Hidden Face of God</i>
	<b>Voicing</b>	SATB
	<b>Accompaniment</b>	organ
	<b>Duration</b>	unknown
	<b>Text</b>	Edwin Wilson and Job 38
	<b>Commission</b>	St. Paul's Cathedral
	<b>First Performance</b>	(2012, St. Paul's Cathedral Choir, Andrew Carwood (conductor), St. Paul's Cathedral
	<b>Published</b>	Edition Peters
	<b>Recording</b>	none

**APPENDIX B**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH JUDITH BINGHAM**

July 21, 2011 at the Guildhall School of

Music and Drama, London



Marjorie Monroe-Fischer: Thank you immensely for doing this. What do you think the percentage of your composition is choral?

Judith Bingham: Apparently it's a fifth. It's maybe a bit more than that, but I've written nearly three-hundred pieces now. And apparently I've written about sixty plus choral pieces. So that's a fifth, a lot of those pieces, early pieces you wouldn't really count as being part of the working catalog. There's probably about two-hundred actual, usable pieces that could be published and used. It's probably more like a quarter in that case. It's a lot.

MM-F: It does seem like a lot as I look through...

JB: The things that people often say: "are you mainly a choral composer?" But I didn't really start writing choral music properly until I was in my thirties. Before that I was really writing lots of chamber music and pieces for people's concerts and recitals and ensemble pieces and things like that. I really wrote hardly any choral music at all, probably two or three pieces. But people seem to think I started with choral music, and fanned out from there. Part of the reason for that is because I had a very good start. After I left the [Royal] Academy I did a lot of things. I had a lot of good commissions from decent people. But everything went a bit wrong at the end of my twenties, I went into a kind of a trough. Then when I emerged from that in the beginning of my thirties I joined the Singers, BBC Singers, and that is when I started really getting the choral music commissions because I started mixing with choirs all of the time. A lot of people at that time hadn't known me in my twenties. They didn't know that composer and what I'd done at all. They all tended to think that I was a choral singer who wrote a bit of music now and then; they didn't know that I had had all this success and that I had written so

much before that. A lot of people have kept that attitude that I'm a choral writer which I never was and it's just been a bit of a phase, really. Obviously, because I've done so much choral singing, it's something I know how to do. I don't really have to think about it too hard. Actually, all I really have to think about is trying to refresh the choral idea each time I come to a piece. But the actual technique of writing for choir, which a lot of composers find a bit difficult, non-singers find difficult, is just something I can do without thinking about it. When I joined the Singers; sitting in the Singers, which is a day job you do every single day of every week, apart from weekends, it's a nine-to-five job, then you start to get lots of ideas. You think if that happens and that; you hear things almost by mistake, just odd things that work. You pick up so many ideas. I'm always saying to students, "join a choir. If you haven't got much of a voice join an amateur choir" because you really learn so much about part writing, balance; you just pick things up that can't be taught in the same way. Do you find that, do you think?

MM-F: Yes, absolutely. In the same vein, if you wanted to write orchestral music, would you recommend that they learn an orchestral instrument, or observe?

JB: Well, the hardest thing, you still say, join a choir, because you're sitting behind an orchestra. I was in a big choir, an orchestral choir from when I was about sixteen, I joined the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, which was a big amateur choir. We always sang with the Hallé Orchestra. And at that time the Hallé was playing with people like Barbirolli, Giulini, Arvid Janssons, all of the people who were on the circuit at that time, doing all kind of big standard choral works, Verdi *Requiem* and that kind of thing. Just sitting behind an orchestra, and seeing how an orchestra works, how people interact with each other, that was an education as well. But the hardest thing when you're starting to write

orchestral music is getting the balance right. That's the thing. You sit there for ages thinking "will they hear that? If I write that like that will they hear that or will it be swamped by something else?" It's like you're cooking with a thousand ingredients, suddenly you haven't got an idea what will balance with what. And, of course, students want to fill every bar with music, so they're great big scores, massive great constructs, and those inevitably end up sounding like a great big pile up of sound. Because it's the skill. Somebody like Ravel, the real skill of that is balancing the sounds exactly so that you hear everything exactly as is meant to be heard. That's the hard thing. But a lot of people, a lot of composition students play an instrument, played in some sort of a band, an ensemble. It's a joke thing that composers tend to be viola players; which is very true. I've met a lot of composers who are viola players, and so they have a very good idea of string technique and things like that. But performance is so important, even if you give it up as you start being a student, to get a real feeling of what it's like to do something live in front of an audience, especially if it's a solo thing. If you're standing and singing a solo in front of an audience, getting that feeling of what is possible, and what it really feels like, as opposed to how you think it's going to feel when you're sitting in your front room imagining something. But actually, that real feeling of what's possible.

MM-F: When did you start writing poetry? Did you have any training for it?

JB: No, I'm like a lot of people, I wrote a mass of poetry when I was a teenager, a huge amount. I've got a great stack of poems from my teenage years. Writing poetry seriously, I've always done it. I've got poems that I've written in my twenties.

Generally I didn't write them to set, I just had an idea for a poem and wrote it. But I'm not very comfortable about my poetry. I think it's pretty bad.

MM-F: Do you?

JB: Yes!

MM-F: And yet you set it.

JB: Well, yes, but not very often. *Water Lilies* is probably my best effort, and maybe *Epiphany* as well is quite good, but I really worked on them. I think when you're writing something to set you write it in a way that you know you'll be able to set it. It's not challenging as a poem. It's quite interesting that you don't ever write anything that's going to give you any trouble. Whereas, if somebody writes something for me, I usually open it and read it and think "oh my God, how am I going to set this?" It's so many problems that you see. So if I'm writing something for myself, or if I'm choosing something to set, I know that I tend to immediately see what's going to fall under my musical style. I can spot it. You can see what's going to go well with your musical style. And obviously if you're writing something for yourself, then you just automatically do that, you're the same person. It's only when you work with poets. I've worked with poets a few times, and sometimes I have said "I can't do this." It's just too..." If a poet is writing something with you to set, they often really haven't got an idea of the problems with setting. They don't understand what's going to be problematic, like a very long sentence, where the sense comes right at the end. Something simple like that, and you can tell them those things in advance, but often they just ignore you anyway. I'm always a bit wary. But there are people that I've worked with a few times. Martin Shaw is one who writes very beautiful, very spiritual... He's a retired bishop. He writes very spiritual poems which are quite difficult to set, but they are interesting and you want to get to grips with them. But some people, I think "No, I can't do it. I can't think how to

do it.” It is hard. Generally the reasons that I’ve written a poem for myself is because I know what subject I’m going to be writing about, and I know I’m not going to find a poem. The *Garland for Linda* brief was to do something about the healing power of music. I’ve told this story a lot of times, but I remembered this lake in Austria, well it’s in Bavaria actually, it’s in the Bavarian Alps. I was staying in Austria and a friend took me to this lake where it was high up in the mountains, very beautiful, where we went swimming. I lost my bearings, swimming around, and I came up at the side of the lake, not quite sure where I was, in a great big strip of water lilies. And I thought it was quite scary because they twine around you, they have thick roots and they twine around your legs. If you move, they twine even more, they keep coming in as you move, and you find you’re more and more trapped in them. I found it quite scary, it’s almost like they were grabbing at you. I got this commission to do this piece about the healing power of music, and then that following winter Austria had a very, very harsh winter, and they had a lot of avalanches. I was thinking about it, and I thought that lake must be frozen. I thought “I wonder what happens to the water lilies when the lake freezes?” I looked up water lilies in this botanical book, and it said that the water lilies produce the following years’ flowers under the water, and that they freeze during the winter because naturally they’re from China, so they freeze solid during the winter. And then when the spring comes, the buds rise to the surface and flower. I thought that’s a fantastic symbol for the idea of coming back from a very difficult place, where you might feel that your life is frozen with illness or whatever. But that summer can come again, and there are the buds there that might flower again, and I thought that that’s a great idea for the piece. But then where are you going to find the poem that specifically says those things? So that was

why I had to write the poem myself. I took a lot of trouble over that poem, actually. It's probably my best effort there. So I generally write a poem when I've got an idea, and I can look through a thousand books of anthologies of poetry, but I'm never going to be able to find anything that's absolutely right, so I try and do it myself. I think poetry's very hard, hard to write, and I don't think of myself as a natural poet at all.

MM-F: Now I understand why I like *Water Lilies*. I didn't always hit me, now [with] your explanation, that's huge for me. That's interesting.

JB: It's a beautiful image, isn't it, that idea of the buds rising to the surface. And you can see it, it's the most perfect Alpine lake. Very warm, bizarrely, you don't expect it to be, high up in the mountains, but it's fed with some sort of mineral springs and it's warm. Very deep, thirty meters deep. And so *The Drowned Lovers* is also about that lake, as well, and about the same experience. After I'd swum in that lake I actually went back to where I was staying, and I wrote the poem of *The Drowned Lovers*. It reminded me of when I was swimming out I thought "gosh, you could drown and your body would sink all that way down." It's a long way down. It reminded me that there was some sort of a folk poem, I can't remember anything else about it except that it was about a lover drowning another lover, pulling them down in the water. So I wrote that poem straight away. That was before I wrote *Water Lilies*. But I set the original poem after *Water Lilies*, so [they] came at different times. A beautiful place.

MM-F: It must be. I think almost any place in Bavaria and Austria is beautiful.

JB: Absolutely. And it's unspoiled, there was only one little shack that sold ice creams and chocolate. Apart from that it was completely as it was. I thought it takes some strength of character to resist spoiling it with all sorts of things on the shore, but it is just

a lake surrounded by trees, very big lake surrounded by trees, and just this one place, hidden place where you could park your cars. But most people walked up from, Oberstdorf was the nearest place that you could walk up. And it was a hell of a walk; it killed me, I can tell you.

MM-F: How do your spiritual beliefs play into your choice of music to compose? Or do they?

JB: Well I would say that certainly my church music has been influenced by changing ways of thinking about Christianity. I've read an enormous amount about Christianity. I'm not really a committed Christian, but I am very, very interested in it. I like reading about it. And I like reading about it from different angles. I've sung in churches for a lot of my life, I was in church choirs. It's made me think about it from lots of different angles, so they come up, certainly those different things affect it. You might say I was very interested a few years ago to read the Koran for the first time, and I read it. I was very interested to read about the Virgin Mary in the Koran, because it's a whole other slant. I liked the idea that it's supposed to be the Angel Gabriel who dictates the Koran to the prophet Mohammed. So the whole life of the Angel Gabriel is quite interesting; in fact I did think at one time it would be interesting to do an opera about the actual life of the Angel Gabriel, because it's very curious, the way the Angel appears throughout the Bible and the Koran, in different roles, very different roles. That was just an idea, but because of that, I wrote the organ piece that's called *Ancient Sunlight*, which has got a quote from the Koran in the front. It's very much about seeing that story about the infancy of the Virgin Mary and her betrothal to Joseph, which is very much from a Muslim point a view. So my reading, different sorts of reading about Christianity has

certainly altered the way that I've written, different settings of things like different *Mag.* and *Nunc's*, different Mass settings, giving you a new angle on it, a new way of thinking about it. Because Christianity is so multi-faceted. It's so fascinating how one of the reasons it was such a successful religion is that it is possible to view it from all sorts of different angles, and it can be spongy, it can sponge up other ideas. For instance, I like that mix between the Celtic religion and Christianity that happened here in England, in Britain if you like. That thing of bringing in an earth, a spirit worshipping religion, and then melding it with Christianity which produced something very beautiful. It's very, very beautiful, that Celtic Christianity. I like the idea of taking Christian ideas and putting them in an English setting. I wrote a carol last Christmas, which was a setting of the carol from Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows*, where Mole and Rat wander through a village on Christmas Eve. It's snowing, of course, and they see some dormice, some little harvest mice singing a carol at a door. The carol that they're singing is about the Magi arriving, and the Magi are knocking on the door saying "Let us in, it's cold and it's snowing." I absolutely love that idea of these folk elements colliding with the Christian story, the Christmas story. I like things like that, I like trying to get a different angle on things. It's very easy to slide in that Anglican...which is very middle, to me it's a little bit dull. And there's a lot of that Anglican music around. I think it's nice to just get a different take on it.

MM-F: What's the name of the *Wind in the Willows'* carol?

JB: Well, I think in the book it just says "carol," but my piece is called *Now the Magi Arrive*. It was done at St. Bride's last Christmas.

MM-F: And it's published?



JB: I just gave a copy away this morning. I had it with me, but it's gone now. You'll be pleased to know I've given it away. There's no recording or anything.

MM-F: I'll see what I can find.

JB: It's in the book, you'll find it's about half-way through the book. I think John Rutter set it, actually. I didn't look at it, I didn't want to see what they had done.

MM-F: No, you don't want a preconceived notion.

JB: No, absolutely not.

MM-F: Now, I sort of know the answer to this, but how do you compose? What do you hear in your head, and what do you add after that? Or do you add after that? Do you hear everything?

JB: It depends what you're writing. Obviously if it's a fairly simple piece, if it's a piece for one or two instruments or a choir or something like that, then I want to hear the whole thing at once. Once it gets bigger, if you're into ensembles or brass band, wind band, orchestra, anything like that, then I would tend to write it in short score. It would be pretty complete in short score, and I would put in lots of instructions; I would put in if there are any sort of solo things, and then I would after that go to the computer and I'll score it onto the music software, and expand it and play with it. But, to be quite honest with you, I quite like to try and get the whole thing there, more or less. Certainly with smaller pieces everything is there. When I sit down to copy it, I do it by hand, and when I sit down to copy it onto the computer that's when I might have little extra ideas, like I might add a 32 foot pedal there. You know, that kind of enhancing ideas. Or I could have the sopranos hum that as well, those sort of enhancing ideas that come to you as you're doing it, because, you know, copying is so slow, if you're doing that. I've learnt

about myself that I'm quite a mercurial person, and I find it very difficult to spur myself into doing anything like reworking or revising, anything like that. So I try very hard to get it absolutely right when I'm writing it. And I'm quite painstaking, I write absolutely in chronological order. I start at the beginning, and if I get stuck, I don't go on until I've unstuck myself. I wouldn't think I'll go on and do the second movement because I can't think of how to go on. I can't do that. You have to be, every bar has to be right before I move on. I'm quite painstaking like that, and I would never do anything out of order, like some people start at the end. I just can't even begin to think how you could do something like that. I don't like to break off to do another piece, but I have had to do that on occasions. The organ piece [*The Everlasting Crown*], I had to break off to write another piece, because of the demands, the deadlines and all that sort of thing. So I did that in three chunks, that organ piece. But it's very, very hard for me to go back and then get back into a piece. I like to get into that momentum of working on it every day, and it just edges forward a few bars every day. You get locked into it. Some people's working methods I can't even begin to think how they do things, people who just do lots of sketches, "I've done a sketch of that piece and I'm going to do something else, and then I'm going to go back and think about it again, I might do another sketch." No, I think about it, I sit down and I write it from the beginning bar by bar until it's finished, and then I go on to the next piece. I'm a bit pernickety like that. I just know myself that I'm not very good at [it], I need to keep myself interested, that sort of thing. Because my mind very easily flies off and gets interested in other things. If you're writing to commission you've got to be very disciplined about your diary [schedule] and when you're delivering things, and that all has to be done in a very disciplined way. I've just

learnt how to do that, because otherwise you can get into a complete mess. Young composers, they very soon find they've got one piece they should have delivered a month ago and something else they've started and now they're not sure that's going to happen. You have to be very disciplined about it, otherwise don't do commissions, do just write the pieces, get them played. If you're going to write to commission then you're going to write eight to ten pieces a year or something like that, you've really got to know how long you've got. I time it all the time, a piece, like every thirty seconds I time it on a stop watch and so I'm very aware that if I think I've got to deliver this on such and such a day, I've got so long to write three minutes, which means that by the end of next week I've got to this point, always really aware of the timing of it. It's a way of spurring myself on. I have to write a minute's music today, and I can tell my subconscious mind: "today we're going to write a minute and finish this movement." It just seems to work because I can put myself on a fast mode, or I can say: "we have to finish it by Wednesday." It's like a lot is then sorted out on a subconscious level and it seems to work like that. Because otherwise I would get in a state if I was late with deadlines and things like that. I would find that very difficult. But also, then, people don't recommend you and they get pissed off with you, you know.

MM-F: Not a good thing. You don't use a keyboard,

JB: I do.

MM-F: Okay, I misunderstood.

JB: I used to use a piano until about, well it was when my marriage broke up which was 1994 or so. I bought a Yamaha keyboard, it's actually an SY-85. It's a cult item now. There's an actual website dedicated to SY-85's, because they're heavy keyboards, full

sized keyboards, synthesizers. They were very much meant for pop gigs. They're meant to be carted around and thrown in the back of a van and still survive. And they used the floppy disk technology so that you could record things onto a floppy disk, put it in the machine and then play on top of that. You can record on them and you can multi-track so if I'm doing a big piece I can put music on track by track and overlay it. I find that, because I'm not a particularly good pianist, to be able to just play something back to myself rather than try and actually play it, I find it's really good, because my whole working method is to keep going back playing it, play as much as I've done all of the time, keep listening to it. It's much, much easier to just press the button and hear it than think, no I've got to try and play all of this complicated stuff. I've just found it was brilliant. It cost quite a lot of money back in 1994, it was about a thousand pounds, which is a lot for a keyboard like that. But it's lasted brilliantly. It's not ever been thrown around in a van. It's lasted really well, touch wood, it doesn't break down now. I don't really care about the sounds, there's lots of sounds you can use, but I hold the sounds in my head, really it's kind of an aid to help me keep listening to it rather than having to play it. So I don't really think a lot about what kind of sounds shall I use or anything like that. It's got sounds on it like helicopter arriving as well as...

MM-F: I'm sure you use that one a lot.

JB: I do. I used to sit in the Albert Hall and that sixty-four foot sounded like a helicopter.

MM-F: It did! There's no pitch, it's just a wahhh...

JB: Just a fan going around in a box somewhere. It got mentioned in the review.

MM-F: Did it really?

JB: Yes, they didn't know what it was, of course. The critic didn't know anything about organ music, so [he said] there was this extraordinary original sound moment near the end, and I thought it's just a sixty-four foot.

MM-F: Nice of him to find out what he was talking about. From which composers beyond Berlioz do you get inspiration? And what qualities from each? I'm sure there are lots.

JB: Beyond Berlioz, you mean...

MM-F: I knew that originally you mentioned Berlioz a lot.

JB: I loved French Baroque music as well. I still do. That was a big influence on me, I think. Most Russian composers I absolutely love. At the moment I love Prokofiev, and I'm hearing a lot of Prokofiev that I've never heard before. I like composers who wear their hearts on their sleeve, really, so I love Tchaikovsky, although it's a bit non-new. If you're talking about orchestral balance he's someone you can really learn from. It's a difficult thing. I've never been part of any music group. I think it's unusual, back when I was in my twenties it was still very unusual for a woman to be a composer. It's still pretty freaky. I didn't feel I was part of any new music circle then because I didn't relate to the whole Boulez/Stockhausen thing. And really, it was a bit of a police state here, there was really music police here. That was it for new music, that was the new music scene, it wasn't diverse like it is now. I can remember at the Academy you would never say "I really love Chopin." People would be like "what?" It was an extraordinary time, it was quite fascistic in its own way, I think. But it was very non-you to like all the English composers like Vaughan Williams, or Finzi, or anybody like that. Really non-you. Nobody really ever admitted to liking them. A piece that I absolutely loved,

*Thomas Tallis Fantasia*, when I was growing up I used to play that a lot. It used to be quite difficult to say I really love that music; it put you in a dodgy position as a new music composer. And I felt that I just didn't fit in. I didn't come from the right kind of background. I just didn't fit in with all of the stuff that was going on. The only composer I would say, in my early twenties, who really had an effect on me was Peter Maxwell Davies with *The Fires of London*. Because *The Fires of London* concerts were just wonderful. It was very much that period when he was writing for Ken Russell films like *The Boyfriend* and *The Devils* and all those Ken Russell films, and he was in to a kind of demonic phase if you like. So, sort of extraordinary pieces which were very theatrical, and had a lot of theatre in them, a lot of drama. And extraordinary performances. That was an influence on me because I'd never really seen anything like that till I got up to London. And it seemed I quite liked that whole demonic thing. Students always do like that. You know, now it's *Twilight*, isn't it. It's vampires and things. I remember Peter Maxwell Davies, people said he slept in a coffin, which I only feel strange [sic]. It may well have been. But apart from that, I felt very distanced from the whole new music scene. I didn't really get it. I didn't like music that was just perpetually dissonant. I found that very difficult. Although you never admit that, you never say "I just actually don't like it very much." And there was a lot in the seventies here, there was some crazy stuff going on. I was in a lot of it. I used to take part in things where you just used to laugh all the time. [At the] BBC Singers, we used to laugh all the time because the things were so ridiculous and crazy. I remember people do things like getting onto pianos and hitting them with hammers underneath, and all that. It was kind of a wild... it was all seen in a rather intellectual way, but it was crazy and

ridiculous and you couldn't laugh at it because you were looked down on. People thought you didn't understand it if you laughed at it. I think laughing at something is a very natural response. And I think if somebody does laugh at something, then you've got to think about that. Why is that funny? You'd get composers come to rehearsals and saying "I don't understand why you're all laughing." And you say "it's just human, because we're doing something rather silly. We're making silly noises and it's funny." If you don't get that it's funny then, I don't know, something's up there. I've given an incredibly long-winded answer to this. But I think the thing was that I looked all over the place for all sorts of things which were influential, and I would say that early music was one of the biggest influences, discovering all those new sounds, and the kind of theatricality of it, the gestural quality of early music, especially that French Baroque thing. Discovering the different instrumental sounds that came along, all of that sort of thing, I just found it incredibly inspiring. And I still liked all the things that I had liked before, Romantic music. I've always liked the Romantic era, especially early Romanticism, Paganini, William Blake, and Shelley and that kind of really wild early Romantic movement. I could just go on and on because I just find I'm like a magpie, I go from one thing to another and what I was trying to say originally was that I never became wedded to any kind of group, in the way that I saw men doing. I just never fitted in. And I never tried to fit in. I didn't know how to. I felt very isolated. And because I was using a wide range of harmonies, I was using consonant sounds like thirds and actually even putting a common chord in, kind of a shock thing, which it was.

MM-F: Heaven forbid!

JB: People would say “you can’t have that chord.” Like you were in the nineteenth century and you’d put some mad dissonance in the middle of something. It was like a consonant chord suddenly became an affront. “You need to take that out. It’s not right” and it was an affront to use it. But people would say “it’s regressive to use sounds like that.” It made me feel that I just wasn’t part of anything. I remember in my twenties that Boulez was saying that by the year 2000 all music would be atonal and electro-acoustical. At the same time it was that period when there was terrible worry about nuclear war, and the Swiss were all building bunkers in their back gardens and everything. I just remember thinking “is there any point writing because I’m just not part of any of this and maybe there isn’t going to be a future. What part could I have in a future that was atonal and electro-acoustical?” It’s not that I want to write totally tonal music, I don’t, but at the same time I want to have the whole box of oil paints, but all the colors to pick from. I don’t want to think you can’t use that yellow, it’s regressive using yellow. I didn’t fit in at all. That’s an incredibly long answer to a simple question.

MM-F: Do the ideas and images for your pieces mainly come from your experiences in reading, or do they come from commissions?

JB: People always ask: “where do you get your ideas from?” I do have things that I come back to. There are definitely things that I like to write about. Actually, alpine scenery is one of the things I come back to. And then there are the things that I mean to, and that will always be to do, is reading, whatever I’m reading. At the moment I’m reading a lot about ancient Rome, and I’m going to be doing a piece about, the piece after next is going to be about ancient Celts, so I’m into a rather ancient world thing at the moment. You find that your reading leads you in different directions. It isn’t that often



that you can actually do the piece that you want to do at the time you want to do it. Generally I store up ideas and I'll come back to them, or I'll plan an idea for a future commission. But if somebody's asked you something specific about a brief, then you're going to have to put what you want to do on a back burner. When I'm thinking about a piece I always start with the brief, always. I think that, for me, is the element of trade in what I'm doing, so I always start with a complete list of everything that I know: the timing, the people, the venue, the acoustic, the conductor, the sort of thing they normally do, the standard of their ranges, everything I can possibly think of I make a list of that, and I feed that into my brain like a kind of data thing so that that's where I start. The actual idea I've got is tailored to that brief. I've always thought that a successful commission is ideally suited to the people you've done it for and the occasion. But it's actually not what they could have thought of themselves. So they'll say "I imagine you'll do something like this, won't you?" And you'll think "well, no." Or they'll suggest something and "yeah, right." And then I go off and I have an idea that I try and link up in some way with them, if I can. So I might try and find a text. Say I'm writing for a certain cathedral or something like that, and I try and find someone who's associated with that cathedral. But something they wouldn't have thought of. And maybe put a little bit of extra text in that is not something they would have... People often say "how did you think of that," or "where did you find that?" Because I don't think you just have to use poetry or Biblical texts, you can use prose and anything. I've used newspaper articles and all sorts of things in pieces, as long as you've got permission to use it, or it's out of copyright. I think layering things in is very interesting. I go to a lot of trouble. I've never stopped doing that, and I like things to be multi-layered so that they've got an

immediate, obvious appeal. But that they've got more going for them, if you want to get into them. And I really like people to be pleased, I do. I think that's a bit childish of me, but I like people to say "it's just great what you've done; we just love what you've done." And I go to some trouble to do that. More than anything, I love the preparation of the piece before you start writing, because the writing is such drudgery, really. It's such hard work, it's so slow and such drudgery that I love that period where you're just sitting down and looking at pictures and photographs and texts and writing out ideas. Especially a big piece which takes a lot of preparation, it's the really enjoyable part of writing for me, that bit.

MM-F: Do you carry your choral experience stylistically over into your instrumental compositions?

JB: Definitely. I don't think I ever stop being a singer when I'm writing. I think I write in breath lengths, melodies always in breath lengths. If there isn't somewhere to breathe in something, I have to put it in. I think that's why brass players like me, because I tend to write things in breath lengths. And I find that very strange about string writing that you don't have to think of that. I think in a way, thinking in breaths is a very primal and natural thing to do anyway when you're writing melodies. Even if I'm writing for somebody who can do circular breathing or something like that, I still write in something that I think I could sing in one breath. I can't stop myself. I know I do that. I know when I've written for big ensembles, the brass band or some big instrumental ensemble, that I do tend to put people in groups, I think. I'm sure you could observe it. It's not something that I think I've done that because I've sung a lot of choral music. I don't think I do that. I'm sure you could observe it. I think it's absolutely part of me, the

singer. I often write instrumental lines which you feel could have words to them, or instrumental, a sort of a gestural phrase that sounds like it sounds operatic. It sounds like an expression of something. I like things to sound theatrical. That definitely would spill over into an instrumental piece. I've done it in solo pieces where I've done accompanied arias for an instrument, where they're singing a melody and accompanying themselves at the same time when you write it in. It's actually quite hard to explain to a trombone player or something like a trumpeter or something, what's happening. I'm just absolutely, essentially a singer, and not an instrumentalist, although I can play things. I'm not by nature an instrumentalist, I'm a singer. And it's that sort of the theater of that and the emotional outpouring of that, it's a very singer-y thing, I think.

MM-F: That makes a lot of sense. Why do you think that choral music speaks to you so much? Perhaps you've already answered that.

JB: Well, being in choirs since I was a child, I was in school choirs, and right up to when I joined the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus I've done that sort of choral singing. I have done solo singing, but I'm not by nature a soloist at all, I'd get too nervous. When I hear a soloist that I know talking about how they love to suck the whole attention of the audience towards themselves, I find that a really terrifying idea. I used to find solo singing very nerve-wracking. I did a lot of it, but I didn't feel comfortable doing it. I didn't feel I was a natural soloist. I never had that sort of faith in my voice in some sort of ways. I was very self-conscious. So I think I feel better in a group, even if it's a group that's singing incredibly difficult stuff. I think I feel better being part of a group. Which is funny because as a composer I feel I don't want any kind of interference from anybody else at all. As a composer, maybe it's like some sort of duality in me, I don't want to be

part of any group as a composer. But as a singer I felt much more comfortable and especially I like small groups. I loved singing in church in four people and eight people. I love that consort-sized group. I love the interaction that goes on between singers. I think that's the only answer I can give, really.

MM-F: That's good. One of the pieces you composed while at the RAM, *The Maelstrom*, won the principal's prize and was performed, and then was deemed un-performable. Correct? Are there others that have been deemed un-singable or unplayable? And have they been performed?

JB: I think, by and large, I'm a very performable composer. I don't like to go beyond what people can do. That is to say, if I'm writing for really brilliant people I will write difficult things, but I don't like to get to the point where people are completely bogged down in difficulties. I like to think that they're going to be able, especially if you're writing for amateurs who can vote with their feet... I have had this happen to me that you can get to the point where people aren't enjoying themselves any more. They've gone past feeling challenged, and they've gone to a place where they're thinking "I'm not enjoying this." With amateur choirs I have had it happen that I misjudged something once. I started out with a massive choir of about a hundred and eighty people and ended up with about eighty because they just stopped enjoying themselves. They just stopped coming to rehearsals. And that's very sad when that happens. I don't want to do that. I want people to feel that something's achievable. It might be challenging, but it's achievable. I don't like the idea of writing impossible pieces. When I was in my twenties I was writing much wackier and harder things than I am now. Of course in the Singers we always used to say "why is it when someone writes a piece for the BBC

Singers they always write the hardest thing they possibly can?" What is wrong with writing something that isn't just the most impossible piece of music? I do feel it is a lot easier to write hard music than it is to write very easy music. If you've got to write something that's simple, that's much more challenging, to write something fresh and new that is grade four or something like that. That is the hardest, hardest thing. It's why church music's very hard because there are so many restrictions. You've got to write something which can be prepared in fifteen minutes or twenty minutes. So I'm not very interested in it anymore, the idea of just putting someone through the mill. If someone's really good then it's great that you can write something that's very exciting and that can show off their gifts. But if you're writing something very difficult, you've got to be able to justify why it is difficult and you've got to be able to justify everything, anyway. The thing with *The Maelstrom* piece was that it was just a typical thing that one person had judged it worthy of a prize and it was to be performed and then another, well it was Alan Bush who was my professor at that time who was so high brow and didn't like me very much said it was un-performable. He hadn't even noticed I'd been given a prize and a performance. So it was a little bit embarrassing. "But they've already done it." I can't remember anything that's happened in quite the same way since. Yes, I remember one thing, I wrote a piece for a male-voice choir. They asked for something because they'd got to commission a piece in order to get their grant. I knew they weren't very good, but I thought I would write them something as part of a series that I was writing called "No Discord," pieces that have absolutely no discords in them. They're quite challenging because you've got to try and get some tension in there, and make the consonance sound really fresh without any discords to help you as a foil to the consonant sounds. And I did

a piece for them called *The Waning Moon*. They had it for a long while to the point where I thought, “uh oh.” They finally got in touch with my publisher and said they couldn’t do it because it had too many discords in it and it was too difficult. It actually said “No Discord” at the top and inside the score it said “this is part of a series of pieces that does not use any discords.” So they clearly thought “it’s new music, we can’t do it.” It’s like a paranoid thing. And I then rewrote it, and it became a piano piece called *The Moon Over Westminster Cathedral*, which has been done quite a lot of times as a piano piece. And the choral piece has never been done. But it’s not a difficult choral piece. If you know of anybody who wants to do a piece for male voices and piano, it’s a world premier.

MM-F: Well, that’s something to keep in mind. The harmonies are much more clustered and spiky in your earlier works, like *Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*, than in your later works. What were your influences at the time and what changed? Just being young?

JB: I felt that when I was about thirty, thirty-one, that I discovered a new style. There was a piano piece I wrote called *The Hinge of Fate*, in which I felt I’d ‘discovered,’ as it were, in inverted commas, a whole new set of harmonies and chords. Things had altered in my life, and I think I had a big discovery of something more truthful about myself. The ultimate aim of anything is truthfulness in art. There isn’t a piece of great art that isn’t truthful, and it’s that truthfulness which is the risk-taking thing in all of that. And I think that the style I arrived at in my thirties was somehow more quintessentially me. I don’t think the harmonies were in any way innovatory, they were just new for me. I felt I’d discovered a whole new harmonic way of writing. The music I’d written at the end of

my twenties had gotten really turgid and very muddy, it was all very muddy. You know that piece on the organ CD called *Into the Wilderness*, that's from the end of my twenties. Everything is muddied, every chord. I find it very hard to leave something alone. Everything has got things piling in on it which is probably how I felt, that everything was piling in on me at the end of my twenties. Who can say really? It's a very mysterious thing to try and talk about, isn't it? I think your life changes and the emotional meaning of harmony, which as a language has some real emotional meaning for you, your harmonic style is such a personal language for you, that as your circumstances change, and your emotions change, the harmonic style changes with it. Sometimes very subtly, and sometimes there are big moments of breakthrough. I was very mixed up in my twenties, [an] incredibly mixed up person. I just hadn't got a clue what I was doing really.

MM-F: I think we all go through those phases in some form or another. That doesn't discount anything, it just happens. You often utilize a rocking figure like in *Water Lilies*.

JB: Oh really? Yes.

MM-F: Does it have a special meaning for you?

JB: Well it was water in that, wasn't it? I quite like a chord to keep moving. I like things to keep moving, so I don't like putting down static chords with choirs. For a start, the tuning is more likely to become dodgy if you have, you know that kind of thing doing John Tavener or Arvo Pärt, or something like that where you've got a lot of very static chords. You get very out of breath, and it's all very worthy if you're a really good professional singer then you can keep it in tune. But it's very easy for the music to get out of tune that way if you're just putting down these static chords. So at the beginning

of *Water Lilies* you've got that . . . this chord: [she plays the first chord of the piece]. Basically that chord is repeated for quite a while going [she sings] "Nymphaea, nymphaea." But you don't just want it to be a static chord, you want to feel like it's a rippling surface so people are just moving around between those notes. I like doing that just to keep a sense of the pulse going, even if the harmony isn't changing. On good performances these lines emerge, things going up and down within that sound will come out of the texture. I do that quite a lot with everything, strings, instrumental writing, everything which is to just move the chord, not the harmony. But it keeps the sound refreshed all the time, and a sense of the pulse going. It can sound dead if you don't do that. It's good with choral writing because it means people keep the voice sound refreshed as well, and less likely to go out of tune.

MM-F: Well that makes perfect sense. Can you tell me, this might be difficult, about your harmonic language?

JB: Well, not really, not in any good, clear, analytical way. But I do know that I think one of the reasons I like Prokofiev, because I like chords that don't quite ring true. I love chords like this sort of chord: [she plays a major chord with a flat third on top], it's that bluesy sort of chord, or [she plays another chord], the final chords that have a false note in them. I think you get that in Prokofiev a lot, those chords which seem to have a false note in them all the time. I'm trying to all the time avoid being tonal. I know I write music which has got strong tonal centers. Sometimes I get into it more than other times. I think church music, sometimes you're getting into something which sounds very definitely tonal, but once I get away from that, like string music or something like that, then what I want to keep is a tonal center, and a sense of modulation, though maybe not



quite expected modulation, which is always ambiguous. There's something ambiguous about it. I like diminished harmonies, and I'm always trying not to use them. I like the octatonic scale, and I always try not to use it. That's why I started using more unusual modes, like the locrian mode, which of course is basically a diminished triad. I try to refresh things as well. It's very easy to get drawn into using the same harmony, the harmony that you like, and you can get locked into it. So I try and discover things, new things that refresh it, but apart from that I've never really tried to analyze it at all. People tell me analytical things about pieces and I just think "oh really?" I'd no idea I was doing that at all.

MM-F: Well I suppose that'll be my job now.

JB: That's your job!

MM-F: Absolutely! Would you describe your feeling for keys?

JB: Do you mean as a composer or as a person?

MM-F: As a composer.

JB: Because if you asked me as a person I would say I'm definitely one of these people who see these colors and see certain keys as meaning certain things, a quality about them.

MM-F: But that doesn't carry through to being a composer?

JB: Well there are definitely things I would avoid. I would avoid anything smacking of F major, G major, C major or D major, I think probably. But I like a lot of something, like a lot of flats or a lot of sharps. And I definitely feel that how you notate something . . . for instance I think I would use E-flat minor if I were to think of that, which I wouldn't. But say I thought this is basically E-flat minor, it would be about a very different emotion than if I decided to have D-sharp minor. It would be a completely different thing. I'd

want it to look a certain way on the page which is why I'm constantly having arguments with myself about accidentals and how they look, because there's always a lot of accidentals, and it's always a bit of a battle as to whether to have something which makes sense horizontally or vertically. Whether it enquires how much people are looking up or across or listen next to them, and all that stuff. What do you do, do you have something awkward in a bar, but look okay within the line? There's all that sort of thing. But it's really important the way something looks. I feel very much as a singer, this is where a really good choral singer will adjust an accidental to make a chord ring properly. You actually do have to be a good choral singer to do that. But, like me, if you're an alto, the way you will sing an F-sharp in a D major chord, you need to adjust the fractions of the interval, and the way you space a chord is very, this isn't what you asked me is it? You asked me about keys.

MM-F: That's alright.

JB: The whole way that you space a chord, knowing how a singer will sing it and will adjust it, good singers do that without thinking, they tune a chord without thinking. In singing you've got the potential to move tuning around. That's why I see big differences between sharps and flats. Because I think singers do see a big difference. It's much easier for a singer to see a top B-flat than a top A-sharp. A top A-sharp looks a horrible thing, doesn't it. It's a horrible looking thing an A-sharp, or like a top C-flat, you just wouldn't write something so, it's not what a singer would want to see.

MM-F: It's the same with string players and brass players, brass players like flats and string players like sharps.

JB: It's just the way it falls under the fingers or under the lips.

MM-F: You mentioned once about correlating tonal centers with chakras. Can you elaborate on that? Do you still do that?

JB: I do think there's something to it. And I do a meditation with chakras. I do think that certain sounds vibrate in a certain way with your body. I think it's true. I have one piece which was, what was it, though? It was really about that chakra thing. Sometimes I will think of it if I write a section that's really angry. I might think about the color red, sometimes I do think of those things. It's one of those nice ideas that you can give yourself when you're writing, but it's not really that massively important or influential in the end. I do tend to think that B major is the most spiritual key. And that's the crown chakra, you know. I do tend to feel that B major is a very special key. But I'm not sure just how consciously I would work that into a piece. It might be that I feel if I want to make a piece like a journey and not end in the same place I started it, then sometimes it's nice to start off in a heavily flat key and work your way through, maybe it starts in a kind of a B-flat way, and then ends in a B major way, which would give a sense of having journeyed from something quite muddy to something very light. I think of things like that. It's just one of the sort of ideas you might have when you're writing. I do tend to do one of two things, like not end a piece where I started it. But these days I find more often I start a piece in a certain place and I think of that as being like I'm starting it and working towards the actual key that it's in. So it's more like a journey. I don't feel so keen about coming back to where I start anymore. I think that's an emotional thing. I want to feel I've made some progress.

MM-F: That's very helpful to understand, actually.

JB: I'm a great believer in enticing someone into a piece, taking them by the hand and then a bit like Virgil with Dante, walking them through something which is unsettling and difficult, but then walking them out the other end. And the other end is a different place to the first place. I also think of the beginning of Dante's *Inferno* the idea that Virgil is there like a kind of spirit guide, he is a spirit guide to Dante, and that there's a progression, you're leading someone through. You entice them in with something which isn't too worrying, and then you give them the unsettling thing and then you gradually move them out the other end. It seems to me that is what Bach does. Bach does that so often, and I think he is doing it for his own benefit as much as for anybody else, and probably doing it without consciously thinking about that psychological progress. But to me so many of the organ pieces start up from a very angry way and then they move into something which is rather regretful, self-pitying even, but often regretful or pious in some way. Then there's a gradual feeling of relief and release. It's like he's taking you through that progression; it's why you often feel so much better at the end of a piece of Bach. Because he's vicariously or cathartically taken you through that series of emotions, and you trust Bach to take you out the other end of it and not leave you there, and write you in this horrible place and say "I'm off now, goodbye!" and leave you like some pieces do. Sometimes I feel something like Tchaikovsky is almost immolating himself at the end of pieces. Often there's nothing very comfortable at the end. You think of the end of something like *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini* especially where you've got these huge, stabbing chords at the end, very dissonant stabbing chords, it's almost like he immolates himself in the end of the piece, he's killing himself. And you feel this fantastic rollercoaster of emotions, but you don't feel that was a very healing

experience, you feel kind of thrilled by it in a melodramatic way, which is wonderful, of course, and I love that. But you don't get that sense with Bach that you have been actually helped. What was the question again?

MM-F: Let's see, what was the question – coordinating tonal centers with chakras, that was the original question. This was great, this was wonderful. In going to Bach, am I correct in saying that you use a lot of symbolism similar to Bach, like numbers, text painting, things like that?

JB: Yes, I do use quite a lot of stuff, and I do encoded things occasionally, probably not quite as much as I used to do, but I'll use that method that Elgar used to turn a sentence into a row of notes. Do you know what that is?

MM-F: No, not really.

JB: I'll show you. Apparently there's lots of ways Elgar uses it, but no ones been able to decipher it. Here's the notes, and then you can write the rest of the alphabet underneath, like that, and then that means if you've got a sentence you can use any letter to get a note.

MM-F: I see.

JB: So you might write your name out, or something like that, names of people. Of course that would be great, but then of course the thing is you could do it the other way around. So for somebody who really wanted to decipher it they might have to work up some sort of computer program. Sometimes like the beginning of [she sings] *The Clouded Heaven*, [she whistles the first four notes] that's the name of someone I loved at the time. Then *The Clouded Heaven* was very much about an experience of the night sky in Austria. That's why it has that very starry feeling about it all of the time. But I put that at the beginning, it's actually in the score at the top, just that little motif. I said to

the boys, “if you can work out what word this is there’ll be a prize.” But no one could do it. It was too difficult. But it is difficult. When you’ve taken out your basic notes, you know, B and D, whatever, then you can add whatever accidentals you like as well.

Deciphering it is very difficult. But I think the height of it was when I did *Three American Icons*, the [?] piece, because that’s about conspiracy theories. That’s got all sorts of things in it. It’s got “I’m just a patsy,” the Lee Harvey Oswald thing, all in notes. A lot of the themes are something cryptic. So yes, I do that. And I do often think about number symbolism and that kind of thing. I wouldn’t want to let it dominate things to the point where it wasn’t good musical material anymore. But it’s fun to do.

MM-F: How did you learn to write so well for instruments having only studied the oboe?

JB: Well I played the piano always from when I was a small child, because I was one of these children that climbed up on the piano when they were toddlers. My father was a pianist so I was a pianist, too. So I know the piano. I did have some lessons but I was basically self taught. And then as well as the oboe, I did have a short time with the flute. And I believe I did learn the violin for a while when I was about twelve, but my mother made me stop. She couldn’t bear it. Which is a shame because actually I think learning a string instrument is a most useful thing for a composer because those techniques are hard to learn, actually. I think it was because right from being young I was reading scores. Composers listen in a certain way. They listen in a very analytical way to music. And they clock things, like if you’re in a choir and you’re sitting back of an orchestra you clock things all of the time, certain things which might go unnoticed, but you just learn it all by osmosis, it’s going in all of the time. And I think the thing about writing for instruments is thinking about the quintessence of that instrument, idiomatically what that

instrument is. I like composers who write idiomatically for instruments. For instance, I love Janacek, and if I was going to show a student how to make a wind sextet, or is it septet, I can't remember now, where every instrument sounds absolutely like itself, like the Janacek one. Fantastic. Each instrument is so distinct, and yet that's a lineup, that wind lineup, it's so easy for it to all just homogenize, you know. But he gives each instrument its own separate character. It's something about locking into the quintessential nature of that instrument. And then you learn about ranges, you write things, you make mistakes, you talk to performers, listen, listen, listen, reading scores, you just pick it up. But most composers learn by their mistakes more than anything. You make a lot of mistakes when you're young, and they're so humiliating. They're so, so awful. There's nothing worse than those experiences you have when you're young when someone says "you do know this note isn't on the instrument?" Young composers now, the classic things they get wrong is that they hear film music, and of course in film music you can make anything sound really loud, so you can have one bass singing a really low note, and he sounds incredibly loud with the orchestra. Obviously they can play with the sounds. One of the things that young composers do now is that they assume that they can put *forte* on something in an orchestral lineup and it will sound *forte*. Or they'll put something that they'll just think "well, a low note can always be played quietly." But there are some instruments, like say the bassoon, that actually find it really difficult to play quietly low down. But you make assumptions, and then in the rehearsal you get humiliated. That's really when you start learning properly because young composers don't tend to listen to their teachers whatever anyone says. They get things off of scores and listening and playing and . . .

MM-F: Experience.

JB: Yes, they'll come back to you and say "I've decided I'm going to change this" and it might be something you told them, you said "this won't work, I'm sorry but it won't work, it won't come out." They don't take any notice and then the night of the performance they say "oh, by the way, I decided I'd change the horn line," or whatever. I did that as well.

MM-F: In the same vein, you write so idiomatically for the organ, did you work with organists to perfect your style? How did you learn this?

JB: I was very lucky. Like it says in the organ CD, I was lucky to have that thing when I was a student, meeting David Roblou and writing pieces for him because most students don't get an opportunity to do that. That was just a fluke that I knew him very well. So I didn't think anything of it. Actually it's quite unusual to be writing lots of organ pieces. I just did it, and I had the opportunity of sitting at an organ and working out how it was registered and all of that. So my initial thought was that you (back in the seventies) could completely register every note and that it would then sound the same on the next organ. And then I wrote one other piece before the eighties, but then of course in the eighties I started getting in to writing church music, and especially in the nineties then, writing church music, then I started writing the organ to go with that, to go with anthems and stuff, mass settings. And that was when I started to really pick things up because then I was also singing in church choirs and standing next to the organ. I just gradually picked it up. I think I just gradually clocked things about it, the standard things which take long while to understand which is that it's not a piano with an extra bass line. It's not a horizontal instrument, it's a vertical instrument. It may be keyboards but it's totally



different from the whole thing of writing for a piano. The pedal doesn't have to be the bass line, all these things. I had lots of little eureka moments picking it up gradually. Yes, of course, talking to organists, I knew a lot of organists and listening to them playing things, just osmosis gradually. And then realizing that every organ was really different and that not all organs have all those stops, they don't all have three manuals and even if they did they're probably going to sound different anyway. So that whole thing of putting in some crazy registration thing, I stopped doing that and started putting in feet and expressive marks. I found it quite tricky because I thought you get that feeling that you're not in total control of the piece. I am a control freak with my pieces so I did find that quite hard at first, that you've got to hand it over to the organist. And some organists are very dull, and they will just do their standard registration, and you think "couldn't you do something a bit . . ." Of course you can't tell them what to do, you can't say "couldn't you just play a bit of this one?" It just doesn't work, and hand it over to them. Some organists are very imaginative and they will do very magical things. So I'd got used to that idea that instead of thinking I could control it right up to the end, but to think it had this aleatoric ending where something unexpected would happen each time. Sometimes that would be great, and sometimes it would be, you know, not so great.

MM-F: When you get somebody who really has been trained in understanding registration I think that's when you can get some exciting sounds.

JB: One of the things I loved is what Thomas Trotter did in *Secret Garden*, because the Albert Hall organ, famously, people say is kind of on or off, which is sad. It's got some very nice soft sounds, string sounds, but it's also very good when it's very loud. But

there's not a lot of subtlety in it like you might get in some of the other organs. It's un-subtle as an instrument. It can sound very on or off, loud or quiet. I've heard it sound really boring and not good at all. They did move the box, so the soft sounds sound much further away now. But when he did *Secret Garden* he got something quite magical out of it. It's exquisitely registered and it sounds exquisite. And when I said to him "how have you done that," he said something very technical, in a very dismissive way like "you wouldn't understand it really, I won't try and explain it to you." But he'd done something that I would not ever have been able to think of, you just have to be a very good organist to take sounds, something like alchemy that he'd done with it, and it's just magical. I loved it, what he'd done. It was clever.

MM-F: And that's the recording on the CD.

JB: That's the Prom on that recording. That album they rerecorded the other pieces, but they took the Prom recording.

MM-F: Oh, that's nice. You mentioned in an interview that the Wesley *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace* was not directly quoted in *The Darkness is No Darkness*, yet you quoted *The Blue Bird* in *The Drowned Lovers*, very briefly. What changed, and what other pieces did you compose like that?

JB: *Darkness is No Darkness* is just the harmonies. That was the first time I'd done one of those re-workings. I did it for fun over Christmas, not for anybody. I'd been playing it a lot because we were doing it somewhere, and I took the copy home with me and I thought "why is it so nice to sing? Why is it so familiar and yet something very satisfying about the harmonies, because I was singing the alto line, I noticed things. I played it very, very slowly. There's some really strange harmonies in it, and some strangely

spaced harmonies which are when the men and women are a long way away from each other. I thought this was really curious because when you're singing it you just think "oh this is the Wesley, I've done this hundreds of times." But when you take it apart it's actually much more unusual than you think it is. I thought "I wonder what would happen if you took out all of the unusual harmonies and then make them into another piece?" So I read them all out and I thought "what text can I use?" Then I thought "why don't I use something from the same Psalm but which similarly has words taken out of it so that the text reads more like a love poem?" The Wesley is about divine love, and my piece is about secular love, or personal love. At that time it wasn't for performance or anything, I was doing it for fun. What I wanted was that people wouldn't realize it was anything like Wesley, it just sounded like something by me. But that when you went into the Wesley it would be like opening a window to these very familiar harmonies. So I could say to people, "no, that harmony is in the Wesley." It is there. The BBC said "we'll do it at a concert in Norwich cathedral." The man who was sitting front of me at the concert burst into tears when the Wesley came in. I just remembered! He was like "oh my God." He was really moved. I just thought "gosh" because suddenly the Wesley sounded very different because it pointed it up, it was like an ultimate homage. And then I thought "I'm going to do that again. That was good, what can I do next time?" Then I thought we must have done *The Blue Bird* in the Singers and similarly went home and played it very slowly. They've just become quite popular things to do because they're just a great way of doing new music in a concert, a popular concert, because they just make you think about the other piece in a fresher way. Some of these bonbons have really strange moments in them, harmonically. It's just that they're so familiar that you don't think

about them. Like the Tallis one I did, *The Spirit of Truth*. That's *If Ye Love Me* by Tallis which you wouldn't think there's anything in that but if you play it very, very slowly with all the passing notes and things you suddenly think "wow, it's amazing, the dissonances in it." You don't notice it when you sing it. Now I think I'm not going to do any more because I've done for now, but I think probably I will at some point. They're just interesting to do.

MM-F: So you've got the Wesley, *The Blue Bird*, you said the Tallis,

JB: The Tallis and *My Soul There Is a Country* by Parry which is called *Distant Thunder*. The idea is to do only very familiar choral pieces, and maybe only British choral pieces, but then the piece I'd like to do is *The Dying Swan*, the Saint-Saëns which has some strong harmony in it, and I thought maybe I'll do a piece for cello and piano, which is a reworking, really.

MM-F: That would be very interesting. As *The Ivory Tree* was composed with local forces in mind, is the choral part more simplified than if it were just for a cathedral choir?

JB: No, it is only for the cathedral choir. Yes, it was for them. And they're quite good, they're an averagely good cathedral choir. They've only got those four movements, basically, and then they all sing at the end. The idea was not to do too much for them, but to involve them. There's no other choir in it.

MM-F: All right. Tell me about the choral opera that you've been thinking about.

JB: What choral opera?

MM-F: Somewhere I read that you were interested in or thinking about a choral opera.

JB: No.

MM-F: Not really?

JB: That probably came out of some interview somewhere.

MM-F: Somewhere. Okay. Does it concern you that much of your choral output is beyond the reach of a lot of amateur choirs?

JB: I think it probably won't be so much in the future. I think maybe a hundred years from now, if people are still doing it at all, then I think it will seem less difficult. And one of the things that annoys me sometimes is that people struggle with something, and yet they'll do something in the same concert which is harder, which they know. A lot of choral pieces are hard, like the *Messiah* is hard. When I sight-read my first *Messiah* at a concert with Barbirolli I was terrified. I had only sung about one note in ten. He didn't realize it was a, "we all know this, don't we?" Christmas concert. I don't know any of this! *Dream of Gerontious* is tricky, isn't it? *Belshazzar's Feast* . . .

MM-F: Very tricky.

JB: Very tricky. I just think people would become familiar with things and then they stop worrying about them. As soon as you tell them it's new, it can be quite easy and people start with tuning forks and just – chill. I do try and really write things in a way which will enable a choir to get past obvious difficulties, so I do a lot of signaling of notes. I don't ever expect anybody to come in on an entry without giving them some help before it. Amateur choirs I would always do that. Every entry would have help. One of the reasons I developed the whole humming thing which has become a bit of a signature of having humming in pieces, was that it seemed to me that if a chord is going on and then the tenors are going to come in and they're going to worry about that note, sometimes you can have them hum that note through the chord, so that you can write that chord so that they can hum it. You can actually think about signaling part of the piece so

they can get their note from just humming before they come in. I do all sorts of things like that to try and make things easier for people. But I do think there's a kind of mindset about new music. The anthem I've just written for this choir in Hollywood, the rector sent me a panic-stricken email saying "do you think you could write it to sound like Byrd or Palestrina because that's really all they do?" "No!" Even if it did sound, in fact, I could send them a piece by Byrd, put a new title on it and say it's by me, and it'll be like "oh my God, this is so difficult." People get a mind set about new music. And that's why it's always down to the way the conductor will present a piece, and enthuse people. That means that some choirs will do pieces that other choirs could do, but they just don't have that enthusiastic presentation. I'm never going to write really very tonal or very obvious . . . I'm never going to do that.

MM-F: It's not your style, is it?

JB: But I do think more people could do it than think they could. And after all, it's very singable always. But people do get in absolute terror and you say "you're just going from an A to a B and it's like ahhh, ahhh, it's just an A to a B. But they get themselves in this whole "it's difficult, I can't do it. It's really tricky, I don't know how it sounds."

You see their whole body language changes. You just heard them sing something, it was real loud, and suddenly it's really quiet and you think "where have you all gone?" And they're all singing much quieter, and they hunch, and crowd mentality, crowd behavior.

MM-F: The pieces I've chosen, we've been through this before, the *Hymn Before Sunrise*, *The Drowned Lover*, the *Water Lilies*, *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus,"* *Ghost Towns in the American West* and *Shakespeare Requiem*. Are there any of your choral works that I've not already selected that I should include?

JB: No. It's a very good list. It's a comprehensive list.

MM-F: It seems to cover a broad area, a range of what you're looking at.

JB: Yes, absolutely.

MM-F: Good. Perfect then.

JB: Don't worry yourself.

MM-F: Thank you! The rest of them are about individual pieces. Do you want to take a break?

JB: No, do you?

MM-F: No, I'm fine. *Hymn Before Sunrise In the Vale of Chamouni*. The score is marked Opus One. Why?

JB: Yes, that was my first published piece. So I think maybe some decision was made at Novellos to put Opus One, but nothing ever happened after that, there was no Opus Two. I don't remember who decided it, but maybe somebody at Novellos said "do you want to put Opus One?" It's a bit silly, isn't it? Because I wrote about a hundred pieces before that. In no way is it Opus One, but it's the first published piece.

MM-F: Right. From where did the inspiration come for this particular piece?

JB: I'm trying to remember the dark ages. I'd written two versions of it before the published one, and I loved the poem. I was into Coleridge. I've always loved the Lake poets, always, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, though he's not really part of it but it's the same time, though. But I've never lost my love of those. But when I was in my twenties I loved Coleridge more than the others. I don't know. I just loved the kind of pantheistic exclamations. I did another piece called *Dove Cottage By Moonlight* which is a piano duet, or two pianos, and it was based on Coleridge, when he lived in Keswick,

[he] decided to go and visit the Wordsworths in Grasmere, running over Helvellyn at night, stopping every now and then to write something in his notebook like “Oh moon and stars and time,” it’s sort of ecstatic an outpouring. And he fetched up at the Wordsworth’s about one o’clock in the morning, and they were sitting outside drinking tea in the garden. They could hear a folksong coming up from the village, someone singing coming up from the village. So I thought this was just brilliant because at the beginning of the piece there’s a map, an ordinance survey map with all the places marked where he stopped in the notebook, and then it finishes up finally with a kind of Cumberland folksong thing ending. It’s really ecstatic, it’s this thing of these ecstatic outpourings, and I’ve written them all in score in the piano piece, you know, just sort of “oh time, oh great mystery of life,” all this “oh” stuff and it’s really extraordinary. I think I liked Coleridge because he’s very much a young composer’s poet, the madness of it, the ecstasy and the madness. I liked that, and there’s a lot of that in that poem, in the *Hymn Before Sunrise*, there’s a lot of “oh ye icefalls, ye glaciers, ye” there’s all this sort of ecstatic thing, it’s wonderful.

MM-F: Alright, good. That wasn’t commissioned, was it?

JB: No. As I say, I did a couple of versions of it and then managed to persuade the BBC Singers to do it, so that was my first BBC Singers performance, but long before I was singing with them.

MM-F: You mentioned that Coleridge’s poem was inspired by Scafeld, is that right?

JB: Scafell.



MM-F: . . . in the Lake District, and you already said what you know more about the poem's origins. Did you surround yourself with pictures when composing in those early days, and if so, what pictures? Do you recall?

JB: I've always liked having pictures there. It's got more and more developed, that thing of having to create almost like a flat, a theater flat, to put behind. I've got more developed with that now. I would always have had pictures around me, pictures probably of Coleridge and, I've no idea, I can't remember what I had, but I definitely would have done. But sometimes they're not the things you would expect. In this case I might have had some Turner, I might have had some of those Turner watercolors of the Alps or that sort of thing. Sometimes I like pictures of actors or something which you might not think I would have, just something which is the right emotional feel. It's too long ago I'm afraid, I don't remember, it's thirty-five years ago. I could look in my diary and see if there's something in my diary if you like, because I've always kept a diary, so I might have written something about it, so I'll send it you if there's anything that's repeatable .

MM-F: Alright. Did you visit Scafell, or Chamouni before for inspiration?

JB: No, in fact I don't really like visiting places like that. I'd rather imagine something. I do, of course, but I'd much rather imagine it. I find, when I wrote a piece about Karnak, in Egypt, everyone assumed I'd gone there, but I'd much rather think about it. I look for pictures, and preferably old photographs, or old paintings of things. I like old maps and anything which calls you back and away from the present. I like that. I'd much rather do that, and I find that often things are a disappointment if I go. There's too many people there.

MM-F: Yes, or there are power lines or that kind of thing.

JB: I mean I'd like to go to places like the Taj Mahal, but I think I'd probably be disappointed, because although I'm sure it's wonderful, but it's this thing about being with lots of people.

MM-F: Screaming children and . . .

JB: Tour guides are the worst, shouting. *Ancient Sunlight*, the organ piece, it's about the Giotto frescoes in Padua, in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua. They're amazing, if you've seen them, it's amazing, the whole chapel has these Giotto frescoes going all the way around it, the time progression from Old Testament right on with the Annunciation in the middle, and then the New Testament and hell on the side. It's really a world that's very blue and wonderful. And right there was this tour guide shouting, just standing in the middle shouting. I said to him "can you shut up?" Who do they think they are?

MM-F: Talking about *The Drowned Lovers*, when you take the chords from *The Blue Bird* into *The Drowned Lovers*, are they in the same inversions? Just the chords?

JB: They're differently spaced, of course, because they have to be. You couldn't, well you could make it work. No, it's all re-spaced and doubled up, but it's just the same harmony. I wouldn't change the inversion of it, if it was an inversion I'd keep the inversion, but . . .

MM-F: Because that one seems to be mostly inversions.

JB: Yes, because I ignore all of the concords, that's why. It's taking the more unusual things.

MM-F: Do you use any of the same . . .

JB: Did I quote any of *The Blue Bird* in it?

MM-F: Just a tiny bit, yes.

JB: I don't think I remember that.

MM-F: [singing "blue in blue"]

JB: [singing "blue in blue"] Yes, absolutely.

MM-F: Do you use the same chord progression? I didn't notice that, but do you know if you did?

JB: I don't think so because the idea is to make it sound different. I don't remember.

You have to do that, work that out.

MM-F: Why did you choose an alto for the soloist? Is it because that's your voice range?

JB: There was a definite reason for that. It's because the whole thing is about perspective so in *The Drowned Lovers* you've got these two dead lovers who are floating down and looking up at the surface of the water. They've got the fish around them. The surface of the water is like the sky. Then it goes in to *The Blue Bird* and then the blue bird looking down on the surface of the water. One of the ideas was to unsettle the blue bird because then you feel there are two dead lovers beneath the surface of the waters. Somebody said "you made the Stanford sound sinister." Because you've then got this extra knowledge of what's happened before. So you've got the opposing voices of the alto and soprano, or sopranos in *The Blue Bird*, do you see, the low and then the high.

MM-F: Right, good. Then, to *Water Lilies*. Were you contacted by Richard Hickox to submit a composition, or how did this come about?

JB: I think the whole thing was run by Stephen Connock. He had had cancer, he'd had very bad liver cancer.

MM-F: Yes, I know him.

JB: Right. You can tell me if there's something I don't know, then. But he believed that he had been healed by listening to music, Vaughan Williams in particular, in hospital, because he had recovered, basically, from terminal cancer, and surprised the doctors. He had an extremely good liver specialist, and he decided he wanted to give something back. Of course, he's the chairman of the Vaughan Williams Trust, he was the chairman, and so he put together this project. Now although nobody talked about it later on, the original idea was for eight British composers to write an anthem about the healing power of music. That was the brief. But then some way into that, then he contacted everybody and asked them. He contacted a whole load of people, all sorts of people were in and out, dropped out, so he contacted everybody and I agreed to do it. No fee. The royalties to all go to the charity for the first five years or something like that. So we agreed to that. Then, some time later on, he brought in Paul McCartney, which transformed the whole thing, of course, to then be basically about Paul McCartney, and then I think Paul McCartney and his office insisted that it should be about Linda McCartney. That it would then be called *A Garland for Linda*. It was not originally going to be a commemoration of the life of Linda McCartney as it says on the music, and actually, if they'd asked me to do that I wouldn't have done it. Because of course it was completely taken over by the Paul McCartney thing. And then he wrote the piece with the help of John Harle. That's how it all happened, and once Paul McCartney was involved, it took on a whole different tinge, that it was recorded and all of that. It happened in a very different way than if it had just been a bunch of great anthems by British composers.

MM-F: Had you written the *Water Lilies* before Paul McCartney took things over?

JB: No.

MM-F: You had just agreed and . . . it doesn't really matter.

JB: No, I can't remember

MM-F: Besides your swim through the water lilies, were you inspired at all by the Monet "Water Lilies" or anything like that?

JB: Not so much that but more the pre-Raphaelite painter called Waterhouse, J. W. Waterhouse, who did all these very famous paintings of water nymphs in pools of water lilies. There's one in particular about the myth of Hylas. There's a young man who's leaning over a big pool of water lilies and there are these girls who are nymphs, they're all about sixteen, gorgeous nymphs, and they're enticing him in, and he's just nearly fallen over. He was drowned looking at his own reflection, drowned in the pool. That more than the Monet, actually. Because I wanted it to have a slightly morbid kind of feel. It's very much about sex and death, really, I think, more than anything. It's the image of the bud, the flower,

MM-F: Once again, you mentioned these photos, did you have any other pictures around you?

JB: You see, nowadays I actually keep the pictures with the manuscript score, I keep all the pictures, but in the past I just moved on from them and I forget what I had. I know I had that. I probably had some pictures of the place I was in in Austria. I don't remember anything else. But that Waterhouse picture, that's very famous. The picture's in the Tate Gallery. If you Google J. W. Waterhouse and Hylas, H-Y-L-A-S, you'll see it's very famous.

MM-F: Thank you. "*The Road to Emmaeus*" *Missa Brevis* – did Westminster Cathedral choose the scripture "The road to Emmaeus?"

JB: No!

MM-F: It was you!

JB: Well, no, they wanted a mass setting for Ascension Day. I think they thought I'd write something that was upbeat essentially. I thought it would be more interesting if there was a kind of progression through it. Over time I thought of this idea of having two organ pieces at either end and the motet in the middle, that would be the progression of the story. I was thinking very much about the Caravaggio picture which is the moment that Christ breaks the bread, and everybody realizes it's Christ. Everybody's looking astonished. It's a close group of men sitting around a table and there's a sense of recoil. I thought it would be great to have the progression that works up through that story, and then finishes up as, I think it's Luke's Gospel that finishes with the Ascension, actually finishes there. I thought the final organ voluntary could be the Ascension. So that if you had the whole thing at a service, and the Communion motet would be the breaking of the bread, the preamble, the first organ piece is the presentation of the material. It presents everything up front, giving you the fast-forward through what's going to happen. So there's a moment after all of the early stuff, where it suddenly goes [she sings the pedal part in bar 35), it's a moment of surprise and recoil, which is a very theatrical moment in the painting. But apart from that, there's a progression through the story. The motet is when the bread is broken, and then at the very end the disciples go away and at the very end, the *Agnus Dei* ends ambiguously and not finally. There's a sense of rising chords, but they never really resolve, it just keeps singing "Dona nobis," and then it drops down on "pacem" [she sings the motif of the "Dona nobis pacem"] and keeps going to rise up and drops down. It's only in that final page of the organ piece at the end that you get the

resolving of that big upwards thing. As I remember, it's based on B-C-D-Eb, isn't it? It's based on a rising idea, so the whole thing is like that. So anyway, I took this idea to a meeting with the clergy and the music department, and I was very lucky because the music department were like "no way, we can't do that." They were absolutely "no, no, we're not doing that." But one of the clergy who was quite progressive, given that it's a very conservative place, Westminster Cathedral, one of the clergy said "I think it's a brilliant idea because it actually enables people to think spiritually about the day and what's happening. It's a really brilliant idea." So then, of course, the music department was saying "well, I suppose it is, yes," falling behind it but with a very bad will. So they said "okay, go ahead and do it," but on the day of the first performance they didn't do the motet, they backed out of it, which was a shame because that was the actual moment of the breaking of the bread. They did that Weelkes Ascension Day thing that everybody does. It's a famous Weelkes piece that they always do on Ascension Day. But then they recorded it and they did the motet. Since then, I must say I've no complaints because they've done it over and over again, they often do it for Ascension Day, they've done the motet since then, but they often do just the *Kyrie*, the *Agnus* on weekday services, so it's been very useful to them. It was a big success in the end. The actual first performance, the first Ascension Day, there must have been about three thousand people there, so it was a bit jaw-droppingly terrifying, actually. Once I got there and I thought "there's quite a lot of people here! This is quite frightening!" You forget these big holy days, of course, it is Westminster Cathedral, everybody goes. It was a good experience, but I think if you're going to do more than one mass setting, then you've just got to come at each one from a different angle. I've really tried to do that. The first one I did for

Westminster Abbey was very much about snowy landscapes and a magical pantheistic feeling to it. And then that was the second one, the Westminster Cathedral one. The third one I did for Bromley Parish Church was about the rebuilding of the Church after it had been bombed by the Luftwaffe in the war. So it's about the progression of rebuilding and re-consecrating the Church, only the motet is right at the very end, the anthem is at the end. So it's about a progression of emotions from gloom at the beginning through to a sense of achievement at the end, and consecration at the end. I try and get another angle on things because otherwise they're hard to keep doing the same words. And even having said that, you've still got to try and stay within all of those restrictions that are there. I like that, though. I wouldn't mind doing lots of mass settings, I like doing it.

MM-F: I'm curious as to why no "Credo?"

JB: It doesn't happen. Here no churches do sung Creeds. It would only be on a very big day, but it's generally only in concerts really when the Creed is done. It's too long so generally it's just a recited one for everybody. I think that was very much a kind of thing that came in after the Reformation that people started to recite the Creed rather than sing it, because all of those Medieval masses have these massive great long Creeds that go about twenty minutes. It just wouldn't happen here. You could do it, but nobody would ever do it.

MM-F: Alright. Is there a tonal plan running through?

JB: Definitely. It's really through-composed, yes. Definitely, because you would expect, most of the time you're thinking it's going to be done in bits, the *Kyrie* and the *Agnus*, or the *Gloria* and the *Agnus*, or the *Gloria* and the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus*, or whatever, it's got to make sense in bits, and of course the fact that everybody's listening



to it in bits. But also nowadays lots of Masses are done in concert performance as well so you want to have a feeling of that through-composed thing.

MM-F: Is there any Gregorian Chant used or does it just sound like that?

JB: Oh yes, does it sound like that? I suppose the “Sanctus” [she sings the opening motif].

MM-F: Alright. Let’s go on. *Ghost Towns*. How did this commission come about?

JB: It was winning the Barlow Prize. The Barlow Prize you had to submit something and then you were given a commission. So I submitted *Aquileia*, as I remember the first thing the St. Louis Chamber Chorus commissioned. I won the prize and they commissioned it to be done by University of Salt Lake City Choir . . .

MM-F: I thought it was Brigham Young? Am I wrong?

JB: That wasn’t the choir. The competition is from Brigham Young, from Provo, the university there, but the choir that performed it was from the choir in the University of Utah which is at Salt Lake City, I think. Have I got that right?

MM-F: Yes, I think so.

JB: Brady Allred, anyway. And VocalEssence in Minneapolis, and then the BBC Singers, interestingly, who probably would have done it anyway. In the end, Philip Brunelle did it first, in Minneapolis, on Halloween, at a big Halloween concert. Then Utah did it, and the BBC Singers, in that order. It was quite neat the way it all happened because I was thinking what could I do that would link it to Utah in some sort of way? I was reading about it and I read there were all of these ghost towns out there. Once you go on the web there are ghost town societies in Nevada, Utah, and you said Colorado, I imagine the whole middle belt of America has lots of ghost towns. I liked all of the

names of them, and I found one called Bingham as well, quite interestingly. A lot of them have very evocative names, don't they? Fools Gold and that sort of thing. I thought "ghost towns, that's quite an interesting idea." Then how are you going to find a text? I was ferreting around and couldn't find anything, and then I remembered this poet that I'd used years before, actually, just after 9/11, Vesta Pierce Crawford. Because I wanted to write a piece of American text, and I just did it for my own benefit. I found this poem by her in an anthology, and I thought "I wonder if Vesta Pierce Crawford did anything to do with ghost towns because she was a Mormon pioneer. Maybe she wrote something about trekking across the landscape or something." I didn't have anything of hers at all, there aren't any volumes of hers, so I went on ABE Books and there was just one book advertised, first edition, it was like \$1.00. It was in America, \$1.00 first edition volume of her poetry, and I thought "what the hell," so I ordered it. It turned up, it was signed. It was dedicated by her to her granddaughter. It was the Utah Poetry Society. I looked through it and there were these wonderful poems about feeling incredibly small in a huge landscape. Some of her poems called *Pioneer Woman*, with that sense of somebody in this huge, hostile landscape. It was absolutely perfect. So that's why I did that, I put them together. I got in touch with the Utah Poetry Society to say "I'm doing this and I'll be coming to Salt Lake City for the performance and I thought I'd tell you." They invited her relatives, so at the concert these people turned up who were relations of hers. They didn't come to speak to me. I think they thought "what the hell is this?" They didn't get it at all, they apparently didn't even really know that she was a published poet. But they came to the concert, so I thought that was good, anyway. The whole story was quite good because the image of a solitary woman in a huge landscape, I thought

“that’s very good for me, I can relate to that.” To have unusual poetry like that that nobody’s set, it was good.

MM-F: Did you end up visiting any ghost towns?

JB: No.

MM-F: Were you aware at all that the whispering of the ghost town names ends up sounding like rattle snakes?

JB: Yes, a bit, and I was trying to get that feeling of tumbleweed.

MM-F: Because that was the instant thing that it brought to mind.

JB: Yes, rattle snakes, but also forgotten voices that are left hanging. I had some great photographs and things in front of me, brilliant, of the ghost towns. Also because there are ghost towns in Australia where my brother lived, so I’d got some stuff when I was there, I’d picked up some books of photographs there of Australian ghost towns. I got some really evocative pictures of things.

MM-F: How did you choose to use *Home Sweet Home* for the whistling? Even though it was composed by an Englishman, were you aware that it was a popular song during the American Civil War?

JB: I was. That was quite deliberate because I thought I’d like a popular song. I looked it up and I thought it was American, an American music hall song. It’s partly ironic, isn’t it, that it’s the idea of somebody trekking home from some futile day trying to find gold and everything. Just the futility and whistling *Home Sweet Home*. The interesting thing for me was the difference between how it sounded in Utah and how it sounded when the BBC Singers sang it, and how the whole twang of the Utah accent, the solo voices in particular, the whole way they sang the words and everything added a whole new

dimension to it. It was so much better than when the Singers did it. It had a whole special color. I liked it. There were a couple of words in particular. It was the tenor soloist, he was a real, it was so nice, that choir as well. “And there at night the bent shadows climbed/Up from the holes they mined/On the tunneled ridge of the mountains;/Up they came with their picks that clanged” because I say “clanged” and he was like “cla-inged.” And I was like “oh, do I say anything to him?” Because this is Utah, and it’s a Utah poem, so I can’t really say “would you mind saying ‘clanged’ there?” It wouldn’t be right. They just loved it, and I thought it was very interesting. It added a color, but everything they sang was, it’s so different when American choirs do things. The vowels are so different.

MM-F: They certainly are.

JB: And when they did *Otherworld*, at the end where they sing [she sings] “this is the song of the stars” and we say “stahs” but the American choir would go “this is the song of the starrs,” doing the ‘r.’ It spoiled it because it’s meant to be just a staccato: “stah’s.” If you have to put the ‘r’ in then you elongate it. It’s very interesting, that kind of thing. It changes the color.

MM-F: The last one is the *Shakespeare Requiem*. Where did the idea for using the requiem and the Shakespeare come from?

JB: I decided I wanted to do the *Requiem*, and then I thought I wanted to do it with some other text, a bit like the *War Requiem* uses some of Owen and that kind of thing. I wanted to do something that has a dramatic feeling to it so that the other text gives the Requiem movements a dramatic progression. I couldn’t think of anything, I remember it was weeks and weeks. I got to the point where I was going in book shops and just staring

at walls of books. “Can I just get the idea now? What is it?” And I went into Waterstones in Notting Hill Gate, and I think I was waiting for somebody, I was meeting someone. I went upstairs and I was looking at the drama, I thought “maybe I’ll see a play, the name of a play” or something. I was getting really desperate. I couldn’t think of anything at all. Then I saw the whole wall of books on Shakespeare. Shakespeare . . . well it’s a bit obvious to use Shakespeare. I thought “a Shakespeare play, do I want to present bits from a Shakespeare play?” I thought “no, I don’t really fancy that, it was a bit obvious somehow.” At some point I thought about the stages of grief. It was kind of personal because my brother had died and it hit me quite hard, my brother dying. I was thinking about the stages of grief, there’s supposed to be seven stages of grief, and I thought “I wonder if I could do everything as a stage in this progression so that you come through to some sort of acceptance at the end.” That’s when I thought “why don’t I take speeches from Shakespeare, maybe not very well known speeches from Shakespeare so that people don’t have preconceived ideas about them. They may not even recognize them.” Use them to create a drama that’s unfolding, and that’s how I gradually, bit by bit, came to this idea of this place where there’s been war where the king regrets terribly some military action that’s killed his son. The queen isn’t managing it very well, they’ve come apart from each other, there’s a stage where they’re angry and they both cope with their grief differently. You maybe feel that the queen kills herself, it almost feels like the queen becomes absent in a way that Lady MacBeth becomes absent. But the king journeys through to some sort of uneasy acceptance at the end. It gradually, bit by bit, became that drama. I was thinking anyway that I wanted a male and a female soloist, and especially as I wanted Giles Underwood who I’d worked with before, who’s a brilliant

baritone, a very good actor. So I definitely wanted to write it for him. It was like all of these big ideas, they start in a different place and they end up quite differently from where you thought they were going to go. It just was bit by bit. I tell you, I think I read every word of Shakespeare, and also plays thought to be by Shakespeare. I tried to find exactly the right speech, it's very hard, all of that. But I was pleased with where it turned, I was pleased with the final effect of it. I did think that you could actually stage it. It's so visual when I think about it. I did artwork for that, I did a piece of art for every movement. There's a lot of sense of spacial things in it, at the beginning it's like you're in church but you hear a funeral cortege coming. It gets closer and it's going at a different speed, and you've got spacial things. It could be semi-staged, really, or even staged. I'm a thwarted opera composer because I've had so many ideas for operas but never been able to get a commission for an opera. I think it's just filtered through to everything else, I put drama into everything. It's not because I've not written operas, but I feel thwarted in what I want, to do things that are more theatrical. But there are so few chances and resources for doing things like that. In a way it means that what I'm relying on is people's imaginations to visualize it instead.

MM-F: I understand that you read something that suggested that the author of the text was not actually Shakespeare, but Sir Henry Neville, the ambassador to France. Can you tell me about this?

JB: Yes, well I read this book which very plausibly suggests that . . . for years I've been interested in the Shakespeare authorship thing, and I haven't believed that Shakespeare wrote the plays for a long time now. But I've never thought there was a really plausible candidate for it. But this woman, Brenda James, did this first book about Henry Neville,

about how his life, everything about him conforms to the progress of the plays. I think it's very, very plausible. I got in touch with her, I met up with her, and she's written more published books since then, and she's written a novel which is just about to come out. Of course the whole world of Shakespeare authorship is one of bitter rivalries and I didn't want to be involved in it. She's had quite a difficult time because she's not strictly speaking a scholar. She's not part of the scholarly world, so she's had a lot of people being very bitchy and bitter towards her. The Shakespeare thing is just incredible. Anyway, I'm totally and utterly convinced by it, I think it's obvious it's him now that she's found so much stuff, it just seems obvious. I quite like thinking about it. I wrote another piece, a cor anglais solo which is called *Billingbear* which is the name of his house in Berkshire, which isn't there any more. I wrote a piece about the ghost of the house, this Elizabethan Mansion. I'm sure I'll do something else because I think it's really interesting. But whether this country could ever let go of the idea that Shakespeare was this bloke from Stratford who had no education and somehow managed to write the greatest literature. The whole economy of Stratford-upon-Avon is predicated on Shakespeare. And yet when you go there it's a complete chimera, Shakespeare wasn't born in that house they show you, and it's all just such rubbish. Most of it's just made up. It's really shocking. Whether people would ever be prepared to actually let go of it, and acknowledge that Shakespeare was clearly a very brainy person who may have been over-educated, not under-educated. The thing I've read about is that people have put together an actual life of Shakespeare based on the known facts which, of course, are minimal. He emerges as a kind of a rogue. I think that's quite interesting, I think that would make an interesting piece.

MM-F: Are there any motives specifically for ideas of the king or ideas of the queen, like Wagnerian motifs?

JB: I think there are, yes. I'm glad you asked me that. The starting point, I wrote a piece a few years ago that's called *Lacrymosa* but it was from an idea for a bigger piece which was going to be called *Venetian Requiem*, which was used as a ballet and done by the Royal Ballet, for countertenor and saxophone. It was just a two-handed ballet that was done at the Linbury Theater by the Royal Ballet. It was a disaster on an epic scale. The actual commission that was supposed to happen to write the whole thing, the whole *Venetian Requiem* that was going to be done in Venice and was going to be the most gorgeous thing, all fell through and it was a very difficult, the whole experience was awful. I thought I want to come back to this *Lacrymosa* which is an extended watery piece. When I did *Shakespeare Requiem* I thought "why don't I use the material from the *Lacrymosa* as the basis for the *Shakespeare Requiem*," so that's why when she sings that *Lacrymosa* in the middle, that very watery *Lacrymosa*, that is very much based on the original duo and expanded into orchestral terms. So that material turns up everywhere in the whole piece.

MM-F: Is that printed?

JB: Yes

MM-F: Okay, I'll get a hold of it.

JB: Yes, or I could send you a pdf of it if you like.

MM-F: Perfect.

JB: Yes, you ought to see it, but I'd quite like to withdraw it in a way, the original thing, but I won't because it's silly withdrawing things.



MM-F: Yes, as you said that people do them anyway.

JB: The weird thing was that it went horribly wrong in performance, it was just a nightmare. It was the worst performance I've ever had of anything, it went horribly wrong in every way. It was a very difficult experience. But the weird thing was that it was done again a few years later, just in concert, and the concert performance went horribly wrong. The saxophonist walked off stage in the middle. And I thought "oh my God, this piece is jinxed!"

MM-F: Yes. The reason I would like to see it is to see the material.

JB: Yes, absolutely. It's only a two-part thing, the original thing.

MM-F: That would be very helpful.

JB: Yes, okay, I'll send you a pdf of it.

MM-F: Why both orchestra and organ?

JB: Because part of the commission was that Simon Lindley, who is the Leeds . . . what do they call it . . . city organist, a lot of those northern towns have city organists like Birmingham has a city organist, Thomas Trotter, Simon Lindley has been the Leeds city organist for a long time, and he was part of the commission. The concert hall in Leeds is a wonderful Victorian hall which has been fully restored. It's absolutely gorgeous. It has a restored organ in it which is very good. So that was part of the commission.

MM-F: The vocal parts are frequently doubled in the organ or orchestra, including some of the soloists parts. Was this necessary or did you just desire it?

JB: I would have done it to either enhance the line or to give a line a slightly different tonal quality, a different color. If you showed me an individual example I could say maybe what I was doing there was this, but there would be different reasons for it.

MM-F: It wasn't specifically that the choir needed help or anything.

JB: No, except that those big amateur choirs, often the alto's quite weak. Sometimes you feel you want to beef up the alto line a bit. Sometimes if you add an instrument to a vocal line, especially with a choir, you give it a truer color, a steely middle to it. Those big amateur choirs, sometimes you can get rather a waffly sound, especially with tenors and basses. Especially people who should realize that they are baritones and not tenors, but are deluding themselves.

MM-F: Wishful thinking.

JB: Just shouting. But you can get that big "wuh-uh-uh." Sometimes if you add an instrument you can give it more of a core. It might not be audible particularly, but it just adds a core to the sound. That would probably be the main reason I'd do it.

MM-F: Good. That makes a lot of sense. My very last question: would it have been any different if it had not been a commission?

JB: Yes. Yes, because you would feel free to do other things or more expensive things, more percussion probably. You're always thinking about the cost of things. More people or extravagant things like off-stage things. Yes. If you were just writing something like *Chartres* was written, which has got a cimbalom in it, and extravagant things, and seven percussionists. Nearly always the brief is restricted, and that's what the brief is about, to let you know not to do things, not what you can do but what you can't do. I never thought of that before, but it's really true about doing what you can't do. So yes, it would be different, and I might feel I wanted to do things that you just wouldn't be able to run past things like more fantasy things. But they lead you on about expense rather than the will to do them, or about if you were to say "look, here's fifty grand. This is what I

want.” People would be fine with it, but it’s just that people will be nervous of you doing something . . . Sometimes I think it would be great to be able to just go away for a few years and just follow my thoughts and write absolutely spontaneously, without thinking at all about any kind of brief or any performance. Maybe I wouldn’t get up in the morning, and maybe I wouldn’t be bothered if I didn’t have the brief there. Maybe I need to be driven a bit by things. But it’s nice every now and then just to write something freely without thinking of it.

MM-F: This has been brilliant. You’ve helped me immensely.

JB: Good!

MM-F: Thank you so much! Very wonderful.

**APPENDIX C**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN FARR**

31 July 2011 at the Wilton Arms

Pub, London

Marjorie Monroe-Fischer: Stephen, [do] you play a lot of Judith's music?

Stephen Farr: Yes I first encountered her stuff when I first arrived at Winchester [Cathedral] as assistant. A couple of days before a recording session we were doing a piece that she'd written for the cathedral choir called *Epiphany*, which I had to learn very fast. And then, during the course of my time at Winchester she wrote one or two other things for us which I played. I met her, actually, more than once, I think, at the cathedral, but played some other items of hers as solo music, and have accompanied various things of hers and conducted other things, so I know her music quite well.

MM-F: So you know her choral music then as well as the organ music?

SF: I know that even better.

MM-F: All right.

SF: I wouldn't say I know it in an encyclopedic sense.

MM-F: Tell me first, what is your impression of her writing for organ?

SF: I think given that she's not a [?] organist, it's extraordinarily idiomatic and ergonomic. Which isn't the same thing as saying that it's always easy, and certainly in the new piece there were some passages that really took quite a bit of unraveling. But I think she has a fantastic command of texture. Although she doesn't specify sound beyond pitch, eight and four, or four foot, or plus sixteen, whatever. I think she has a way of kind of encouraging me to think about color which is very creative. So, for want of a better metaphor I think she's very good at laying the bait for you as a player, and either you kind of take the bait or you don't. I think in the choral music the accompaniments have a way simultaneously of supporting the voices, and adding

independent detail in the texture, which is very, I mean the word I keep coming back to, I think about Judith's music, and we can talk about it, is craftsman-like. I think she's a fantastic craftsman composer, craftsperson if you prefer. And, although the music isn't always easy, there's no reason why it should be, things don't have to be easy, but you never get the feeling that the difficulties are there as an obstacle. Things are difficult in her music because they need to be difficult. And I've never encountered a passage that, with a little bit of thought and contemplation, wasn't perfectly feasible, which isn't the same for all contemporary composers.

MM-F: You mentioned her accompaniments, and that's something that I'll be looking at, the accompaniments of the choral works. Does she do a lot of repeating of lines, or is it merely a support of the chordal support? How does that work?

SF: When you say repeating of lines?

MM-F: Playing the same line as the singer is singing.

SF: I think, speaking slightly from memory, I suppose the first thing to say is that, it depends slightly on the nature of the ensemble she's writing for. So that's another expression of her practical craftsmanship. If she's writing a piece for the BBC Singers she's going to adopt a different approach than if she's writing a piece for example, once or twice here at St. Paul's we've sung a mass that she wrote for a parish church. But we sang it not because the singers couldn't sing anything more difficult, but because it's a very good piece, and it works beautifully liturgically. But very often you'll find that all the things that the singers need to hear, for example, if there needs to be a cue, for a part to pick a note for the start of a new phrase that isn't immediately apparent, it'll be there somewhere. If you say to the sopranos as to the pedal, if the F# is in the pedal then that's

where you get the note. And so I think she's very good at crafting the textures in her writing to give those cues where it's necessary. But no, if she's writing for an ensemble where the sky's the limit in terms of technical difficulty, then there's more independence of writing. Certainly, in the piece I remember that she wrote for Winchester there was some quite tricky cross rhythms, four against three in a 2/2 tempo, that kind of stuff. We took a little bit of working out. But I think she's fantastic at tailoring her language to the level of difficulty that she can aim at for an individual ensemble, but it still sounds like her music.

MM-F: Which is amazing.

SF: Yes, absolutely.

MM-F: Do you ever find that the organ overshadows the choral music or the choral parts or is the organ in...

SF: No, do you mean in terms of interest?

MM-F: Yes.

SF: I wouldn't say overshadow, I think there are pieces where the organ seems to lead more, and there are pieces where it seems to be a little bit more of a supportive part. But I suppose I would say that each of the pieces that I'm sort of familiar with gives a slightly different impression. There isn't a template: this is what the choir does and this is what the organ does in relation to the choir. I think there's very much a sense that each piece is a new enterprise, and there's a slightly different sense of that relationship. And I don't think that Judith is a composer who churns things out to a formula. So I think that that relationship shifts from piece to piece but always with a very good reason.

MM-F: For a good balance?

SF: Absolutely. And certainly I can't remember ever having to; sometimes you come across accompaniments that are, they're nice, but you have to recast them, you have to perform all sorts of black arts on them to make them work. But actually, Judith's accompaniments, you put them on the desk and just [?] them with care and they work. You never have to kind of recast them, re-divide the parts and it's all just beautifully crafted, and you can just, open the copy, put it on the desk and go. And it always works.

MM-F: And considering she's not an organist, that's pretty amazing.

SF: Of course you know she spent a long time as a professional singer and at the start of her career wrote quite a lot of organ music, which is sometimes more mediated by David Roblou, who was the organist at the church where she sang at that stage at St. Giles [?]. So I think, it's possible to see in the earlier organ pieces the, it's kind of a embryo. It doesn't always work. I think it's, I haven't studied it in detail [?], but I think it's possible to see that, the ideas are there, and they kind of coalesce, with a little bit of guidance at that early stage, into something more completely finished as a compositional craft. But yes, her organ writing is sometimes more idiomatic than people's writing for the organ who are organists.

MM-F: That was my impression, although I've never actually played any of them, just looking and listening, I've been amazed.

SF: Yes. And I think it's a kind of craftsmanship that, in the past perhaps wasn't so remarkable. If you were a professional composer writing for a particular medium, the expectation would be that you would have a command of the possibilities and the limitations and the idioms of that medium.

MM-F: Exactly.



SF: And I think, that might possibly [be] an old-fangled view to take. But I think that's something that perhaps we've lost a little bit, because the people I think sometimes put things on the page without a great deal of consideration for whether their performable, or whether the effect that they're seeking is actually compatible with the means with which they're meaning to express it, if you know what I mean.

MM-F: Yes, I do.

SF: If you've been around the BBC Singers long enough, you know that they get a lot of scores where people start the piece, as an example, with the sopranos singing a top C pianissimo on an E vowel, which is not possible. But, the composer's given no consideration to, it's as crazy to do that as to write a bottom A for a cello. It's just not possible. But it doesn't seem to stop some composers.

MM-F: No, and that's a shame. Going to choral music, what are your impressions of her choral writing?

SF: In terms of technical difficulty, or in terms of idiom, or...

MM-F: Idiom, first.

SF: I suppose I'd return to that point that there's something about her harmonic language especially, which is indefinably, unmistakably hers, no matter what the nature of the piece. And I think that covers the whole truth of the secular things that she's written. I think perhaps not inevitably, given that her expertise as a singer, in a previous incarnation, but I think she has a fairly secure understanding of what voices do, how to write most effectively for them, where a particular kind of effect are most telling in particular registers or scorings. Again, I can't recall ever dealing with a piece of hers where you had to say "can we just take a couple of tenors on the alto line there?" There's

never a sense that she's writing against the capacity of the ensemble. I think, there's some sort of very characteristic, coloristic things that occur, vocal trills, and humming against open vowels, this kind of thing, thinking of the start of *Epiphany*, actually, where there's simultaneously a hum and ahh in a rising and descending phrase in the top line. So I think she's got a very individual approach to color. I keep going back to that idea that it follows completely ...and she never asks the voice to do something which is impossible or ungainly or uncomfortable, which isn't again, the same thing as easy, but it's always feasible.

MM-F: Will what she has written last? Will it be beyond...

SF: Who knows. I think the thing about posterity and longevity is that you can't predict, if it were a question of quality and range and depth and originality, then of course it would. But posterity can be a fickle thing. I think there are certainly some choral pieces that will stay firmly entrenched.

MM-F: For instance?

SF: I think *Epiphany* and *The Clouded Heaven* have already become modern classics, actually. I very much would like to think that it would, and it deserves to, every semi-quaver of it deserves to. I suppose it depends on whether posterity thinks that that... I think it's not music which makes concessions. She has something that she wants to say and she has a language in which she knows she wants to say it. And she has a complete command of that language. But whether that's going to be something that posterity will esteem as a virtue or a fault, I can't. I'd feel very [?] about saying yes it will or no it won't. How can I possibly speculate? I think what I would say is that it very much deserves to, and if it doesn't take its place at the expense of things which are less

worthwhile and less craftsman-like and less thoughtful and less expertly done, then that would be an injustice. I think it's a very, very significant body of work in every way, not just the choral music but the orchestral things as well. And if there's any justice, yes, of course it will, but I don't know and neither does Judith. I think she does what she does and says what she has to say, and whether she is concerned about the judgment of posterity you'd have to ask her. That would be my view. ...Popularity is not the same thing as quality...

MM-F: Are people finding her works who didn't commission her work?

SF: Yes, I think so. I think some of her sacred music has started to percolate into repertoires, generally. But I think it very much depends on how enterprising people are about digging these things out. There's so much stuff, isn't there. There's just so much music. I couldn't speculate on how many anthems a month or a year a publisher like OUP or Chester Novello turn out, but it must be hundreds if not thousands. And so, like everybody else's music, it's fighting for a niche. I don't know what the rule of thumb is for saying that something has established itself, or something has percolated. I'm pretty sure, you may well know it, that somebody did some research, something that produced a database of all of the pieces that were in the repertoire in all of the cathedral and collegiate choirs in the UK. How recently that was done I don't know. But I think it is something that gets revisited every ten years. Now whether the last one coincided with the start of Judith's serious rise to prominence I honestly can't remember. But it might be an interesting thing to keep an eye on that, I think that maybe in five year's time or something. But I think *Epiphany* gets done quite a bit, and *The Clouded Heaven*...I think that's been taken up by quite a few choirs.

MM-F: Now where would I find this work?

SF: You might try talking to the RSCM [Royal School of Church Music] to see if that rings a bell with them.

MM-F: I am looking at six works in particular and I would say none of them are anthems that would be within the standard church repertoire.

SF: So which pieces are you...

MM-F: I am looking at *Hymn Before Sunrise In the Vale of Chamouni*, which is a very early piece, and then *Water Lilies*, *Missa Brevis "The Road to Emmaeus,"*

SF: The Westminster Cathedral piece.

MM-F: Yes, and *Ghost Towns in the American West*, *Shakespeare Requiem*, and there is one other that is evading me...

SF: *Hired Hand*?

MM-F: No. But they're not necessarily church anthems. How much has she written for the church?

SF: A lot, actually. I couldn't put a number on it, but I think there are three masses...

MM-F: Yes, there are three *Missa Brevis*.'

SF: And there's the King's [College] commission. She wrote certainly two pieces for Winchester, probably a couple of dozen anthems I would think. I think it's a substantial body of work.

MM-F: That would be something for me to look into.

SF: Yes, certainly significant.

MM-F: These ones that I've spoken of, granted, at some point or other the other one will pop into my head, do you know any of them?

SF: I know the *Missa Brevis* a little. I've never performed it but I have the score. I don't know the others, I have to say.

MM-F: Well, they're not church music so they wouldn't necessarily...

SF: Sure. No, I wouldn't say that I was in a position to comment.

MM-F: Is there anything else that you would like to say about Judith and her music, in general?

SF: I suppose that the very interesting thing with Judith is that she has such fantastic ideas for pieces, *Ghost Towns in the American West* is a piece that the BBC Singers, and my wife, have sung in, but it might be *The Hired Hand*, I can't remember, that's a big bit of musical theater that people sing pub songs from the 1890's London, and the conductor sits in a chair...

MM-F: Yes, they wander around.

SF: She just has these very creative pegs to hang things on, and it seems to be inexhaustible fun. She's not a composer that would ever write a piece called *Prelude and Fugue*. Maybe she has, I don't know. But it just seems that there's a very interesting impetus...

MM-F: There's always some drama involved.

SF: Absolutely. There's a piece I remember doing, playing in a concert again with the Singers in the Chester Festival [?], *The Shepheardes Calendar*, when two singers come on from the back singing a Yorkshire countryside song, and it's very striking. I think there's that kind of dramatic impulse in the music all the time. And I think it gives a very particular imaginative force, actually. You find yourself, not that it's boldly programmatic, but you just find yourself thinking what was the process between the

impetus from the title and how the music is turned out. What was the process for her? I think that's kind of interesting. To talk about the piece that she's written for me [*The Everlasting Crown* for organ solo]: how did she get from the Orloff diamonds to the movement? How would it have been different if it had been a different jewel? There are moments here and there in the piece that seem programmatic, the King Edward sapphire, and the last movement with the elephant stamp, it's just a frank bit of pictorial, programmatic writing. I think that chemistry between the title and the outcome is a very interesting thing.

MM-F: Are you aware that she surrounds herself by photographs and things...

SF: Yes, and I think that *The Everlasting Crown* marinated for years. I think it's something that she thought about possibly even as long as ten or fifteen years ago, perhaps. And then the moment never came along, and it just sat there at the back, and then the commission came and then...

MM-F: it flowed.

SF: Yes. I think she takes her ideas from so many places, art and literature and history and mythology. There's a lot of hinterland which I think makes it very interesting. The really fundamental thing which to me makes Judith's music very worthwhile is that she means every note of it. There's that great, is it Vaughan Williams' talk about the ninth symphony: "I don't know if I like it, but it's what I meant." You just get the feeling that there isn't a lazy or careless or thoughtless note in any of it. It's all exactly how it's supposed to be. Hugh Wood, talking about Brahms, talked about that curious air of authenticity in talking about Brahms, and I think it has an air of authenticity. It's the real

article. How you would define that in analytical or critical terms is not a question for me, but it's the real thing.

MM-F: Thank you very much.

SF: Not at all.

**APPENDIX D**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH TOM WINPENNY**

3 August 2011 at the Refectory at St.

Albans Cathedral, St. Albans



Marjorie Monroe-Fischer: Tom, thank you so very much for meeting with me and taking your time. I really appreciate it. You've had a lot of experience with Judith Bingham's music?

Tom Winpenny: I suppose so, in the last ten years as I left school I became interested. I think the first piece I came across was *The Clouded Heaven* for choir and organ. I think I played it for the Rodolfus Choir or something. I played it for something at school, it might not have been for the Rodolfus Choir, but Ralph Allwood would do that piece with the Rodolfus Choir. He introduced it to me. About the same time there was this organ anthology published by Faber Music called *Unbeaten Tracks*, and Judith had a piece called *St. Bride Assisted By Angels* in that. I think that's by far one of the best pieces in that collection. That was a collection produced under the auspices of the Royal College of Organists, the idea it was a fairly accessible collection of modern pieces for young organists, I suppose for everybody really. There are all sorts of contemporary composers represented in there. They all wrote about the background of the piece in the front of the book.

MM-F: What is your impression of her writing for organ?

TW: I think it's very effective. It's interesting, I was talking to somebody not too long ago, and they said the thing about people who haven't written for the organ before is that they always seem to write things which just sustain notes forever because they're so fascinated about the fact that the organ can do that. Judith doesn't, I mean there are sustained passages but that's not the sole thing she's done with her organ music, it's just a vehicle for her very colorful harmonic musical language I think, really. She's also said to me that she, I think she said it was about ten years ago she said that she was

adjudicating for I think it was the Royal College of Organists Performer of the Year competition. She was on the jury for this. It just struck her then that no two organs are alike and therefore when she writes organ music there was absolutely no point in writing very prescriptive registrations.

MM-F: I understand some of her earlier music did have very precise directions.

TW: That's right. There was a piece from 1982 I think, *Into the Wilderness*, which is actually I think her longest apart from her most recent *The Everlasting Crown*, her longest piece to date. She is very particular about the sounds, but it was because she had the use of an organ in a particular church that she just spent hours to get wonderful sounds on this organ, just enjoying doing that. But then of course now she realizes that if you want to play it on any other instrument you just have to let the organist do their own thing.

MM-F: Do you think that her not being an organist or even a keyboardist makes a difference in her composition?

TW: Yes, I think it probably does. In one sense it's not completely idiomatic for the instrument, but in another sense it's quite refreshing that it is not all of the clichéd organ tricks that lots of composers use. I can't think of any now, any particular features. What strikes me about her use of the organ is she often writes quite high for the manuals, and quite low as well. She really uses the whole range of the manuals which is quite unusual, I think, in organ composition. But I think in doing that when you're playing her music you need to be really careful how you register things because the way an organ's voiced, often it will be voiced to get louder at the top or whatever, so you just need to be really

judicious in your choice of stops. But I think it's very effective if you can judge it well it's really effective.

MM-F: Have you accompanied any of her other choral works?

TW: Yes, one or two. When I was at King's [College, Cambridge] as organ scholar she wrote the commission carol for the Nine Lessons and Carols, that's *God Would Be Born In Thee*. That has a very nice organ part, and I played that. It has an interesting figuration which she says is depicting the fan vaulting in the chapel, spread chords. It's a nice piece. And then the other piece I've played is *Cloath'd in Holy Robes* which I think is a wonderful piece. I did that one at St. Paul's. We did it in a couple of concerts.

That's got quite a big organ part. It's a good piece I think, a very good piece.

MM-F: How do you feel about how she has written the organ part to help the choir? Or is it a completely different part? Is it a part in its' own right? Or perhaps both?

TW: I think both, actually. I think of those two pieces, *God would Be Born In Thee* is different, and probably more typical of her approach to organ accompaniment, which is that this beautiful detail and configurations given the part, but it also helps support the choir as well. So a piece like that would be relatively straight forward to take up with another choir. Yes, the thing about *Cloath'd in Holy Robes* is that it's a different sort of piece altogether really, in a sense that the organ is much more integrated to the narrative in a way. I think she describes it as the weavers or something, isn't it, the weavers in what is the first European settlers in America, and they're all remembering their Protestant roots. She had this idea that they'd all be humming *The Old Hundredth*. So that's built into the organ part. And then there's a moment where, in the central section, the organ basically takes over and just plays *The Old Hundredth* in a very interesting

way, still with the weaving figuration. But the choir hums along still. It's a very imaginative use of the choir and the organ, I think. A very fertile imagination she has.

MM-F: I know you work with the girl's choir here. Have you done much conducting besides that?

TW: I did a fair bit when I was at St. Paul's, yes, and at King's.

MM-F: Did you do any of her works at that point?

TW: I don't think I conducted anything at King's. At St. Paul's there was a piece called *Winter's Pilgrimage*, I think, which she'd written for St. Paul's the previous year or two years before that. I think she wrote it in 2006. But I think that's unaccompanied choir, so I can't remember very much about it. It's a long time ago.

MM-F: So you don't have a lot of experience from the choral side.

TW: No.

MM-F: That's fine because you're helping me very much with the accompaniments, which is what I'm also looking at. What do you think of her music in general?

Obviously you've made this CD [Organ Music].

TW: Well I like it very much. It's interesting actually having the CD out now, and hearing back from other people what they think, in particular people who haven't come across her music. I say it's atmospheric music. It's much more than that, of course, but that's what I say. Lots of people who have listened to it have actually found it very easy to listen to. It's not easy listening in a sense of someone like Eric Whitacre or something. It's not about pristine sounds and beautiful, lush choral textures, but it's interesting, colorful music. And I think the fact that she seems always to have some sort of hook which she bases the whole piece around, some sort of poem or picture or situation,

whatever it is, there's always some basis to it and I think that's very helpful to the audience, really. It makes absolute connection. I appreciate that very much as well. It just shows her great imagination, I think.

MM-F: Do you think, and this is speculation honestly, but do you think her music will last?

TW: I hope so. Yes I think so. There's a lot of choral music now, but I'm sure there'll be pieces that become part of the standard repertoire. I very much hope so. And pieces in the organ repertoire as well, I hope, because that's a very significant contribution.

MM-F: Yes it is. It's nice to have new, refreshing organ music.

TW: Yes. And it's the sort of music that you can pick up easily and play elsewhere as well.

MM-F: Thank you very much indeed!

**APPENDIX E**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH JUDITH BINGHAM FROM  
A BBC RADIO BROADCAST OF A CHORAL  
CONCERT CELEBRATING HER  
FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY**

2 October 2002

Paul Guinnery: Good Evening. Modern composers writing for the voice. Now there's a subject which I could go on at great length about, though I promise I won't tonight. But it's just that I sometimes wonder when I hear the first performance of a new choral work, whether the composer in question has ever opened his or her mouth and actually tried to sing what's being written down. Well, no such charge could be brought against my guest tonight, the composer who's written extensively for the voice, but always idiomatically and very much from the inside. Not surprisingly, because she's Judith Bingham who certainly can perform the vocal parts she expects others to. She was, after all, a member of the BBC Singers for many years. Earlier this year she marked a milestone birthday with a special recording celebrating her contribution to the choral repertoire.

Appropriately enough, it was given by the BBC Singers with the conductor James Morgan and the organist Richard Pierce in St. Paul's, Knightsbridge in London. And it's that recording we're going to hear tonight. I'm delighted that Judith Bingham's here in the studio with me to talk about it.

In a nutshell, can you say what it is about choral writing that obviously touches something off in you?

Judith Bingham: I think it just goes way back with me, I think it's sort of in my blood because I've just always sung in choirs. I used to sing in school choirs when I was little, and then when I was a teenager I joined the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, and I sang with people like Barbarolli and Giulini and the young Barenboim, Antal Dorati, which has made me very stage-struck about music. And then once I got to the Academy I joined the Monteverdi Choir and BBC Symphony Chorus, and then later on started doing

professional singing with the Singers and Taverner Consort, the Schütz Choir. I mean I think it just is totally in my blood, choral singing.

PG: I can't think of any other composer who has that experience, actually.

JB: Neither can I. Although, you know Medieval composers like Dufay or Machaut, people like that, they were all singers. It's unusual now, you don't tend to think of composers being singers. That's quite an interesting thing that's changed about music.

PG: It's a very good point. We're going to start with some music which goes right to the heart of the service cathedral tradition, if you like, a setting of the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. How did this one come about?

JB: It was during a time when I was going through what you might call an Eastern European phase. Everything I was writing around that time, around '94 – '95, has something to do with Eastern Europe, whether it's a sort of Dracula theme, or whether it's to do with Prague and with the history of Prague, or with Eastern European legends or gypsies. I was very intrigued by all of those manifestations of the Virgin Mary that were happening in places like Medjugorje in Yugoslavia. And so it has a very kind of arcane feel about it, like you're in some rather ancient Eastern European landscape and it's snowing, and that strange mixture of legends and Catholicism which has such a sort of heady feel, there. Once the organ starts you hear this constant repeated staccato figure all of the time which is like a sort of heavy snowfall.

[*Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, *Collegium Regale*, 1995]

PG: *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, a set of *Evening Canticles* commissioned by King's College Cambridge and performed there by the BBC Singers conducted by James



Morgan with the organist Richard Pierce. And the composer, my guest tonight, Judith Bingham.

Judith, the next thing we're going to hear is actually quite unusual because it's a pairing of a work called *The Darkness is No Darkness* written to precede an anthem by S. S. Wesley called *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*. Now what is this all about, this pairing?

JB: There are pieces that choirs just sing over and over again, either in church or in the professional choirs or whatever. And this is one of them, *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*, an incredibly famous church anthem which I just love. I love S. S. Wesley. I love the sort of early Victorian harmonies. And I was literally just playing it through one day and I thought if you play it very slowly some of the harmonies are very strange, they're very unexpected. And it just struck me, what would happen if you were to just take these harmonies out, isolate them, and then rearrange them into another piece. So I thought I would just see if I could do it. And I also took the text, which is I think part of a Psalm, PG: Psalm 139.

JB: And also rearrange that text so that the text sounds a little bit more like a love song. Then you just segue straight into the Wesley, and it's like opening another window on the Wesley. I've done it since. I did it with Stanford's *Blue Bird*, rearranged that, and I'm sure I'll do it again because it's just such a sort of enjoyable thing to do. And it's, you know, without blowing my own trumpet, I mean audiences tend to like it because it does give you this sort of added perspective on something that's very familiar.

PG. Yes. Well, so let's hear then *The Darkness is No Darkness* followed immediately by *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace* by S. S. Wesley.

[*The Darkness is No Darkness*, 1993 – *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace*]

PG: S. S. Wesley's anthem *Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace* and before it Judith Bingham's *The Darkness is No Darkness*, a commentary, if you like, on the S. S. Wesley. The BBC Singers with Richard Pierce at the organ and James Morgan conducting.

Judith, the next piece we're going to hear, *Ave Verum Corpus*, the famous Latin text, this you wrote for the choir of St. Louis in Missouri. Now how did you come to write a piece for an American choir in the first place?

JB: Well I've written a certain amount, and had stuff done by Philip Brunelle in Minneapolis with what was called the Plymouth Music Series and is now called VocalEssence, I believe. But since then I got to know Philip Barnes who has two choirs in St. Louis, Missouri. Of course America has this incredible choral tradition which, you know, we're so proud of our own choral tradition, that when you go to America it sometimes is an incredible surprise to find there are all these brilliant choirs there. Minneapolis is just stuffed full of them, it's wonderful. But Philip gave me a choice, "you can either do *Ave Verum*, *Tantum Ergo*, or *Sacrum Convivium*." As a singer I've just sung *Ave Verum Corpus* by Byrd or Elgar or Mozart, I mean, you name it, over and over again hundreds of times. I really did have to try and get into the heart of those words in order to have a very personal response to them. Because I don't think I'd ever really read the words properly before, you know? I'd just sung it so many times and yet I'd never realized just how penitential the words are, and how much they're about this feeling that Christ has done this thing for us. In that way I wrote the piece to really be very, very penitential, like you're standing at the foot of the cross, and it's a moment of heart-rending regret that this thing has happened. You've got this rather Baroque motif

in the organ which is very much like blood slowly dripping all of the time, and then this very, very *espressivo* drawn-out long line from the choir. So I felt I'd really kind of got to it in the end, and I'd got beyond my memories of the other pieces, as I'd done something which was separate from my memories of those other settings. It was a big test for me, and I found it a hard challenge.

[*Ave Verum Corpus*, 2002]

PG: Judith Bingham's setting of *Ave Verum Corpus*. The BBC Singers conducted by James Morgan, and again, the organist, Richard Pierce.

Judith, another pairing now, again. This is a *Missa Brevis* which you wrote for Westminster Abbey. And also into it we're going to insert the anthem *The Clouded Heaven* with words by Lancelot Andrewes.

JB: You know for me, writing for Westminster Abbey, it's one of my favorite buildings, and I live quite close to it. Going past it on the bus and thinking "I'm writing a mass for that building." It was such a buzz for me, it was wonderful.

PG: Yes. This is a *Missa Brevis*, a short mass setting. Was the anthem though, *The Clouded Heaven*, also written for the Abbey?

JB: No. It was all written in the same year, but *The Clouded Heaven* was a joint commission from Winchester Cathedral and St. John's, Cambridge. And what I did was almost like in the style of the parody mass in the Middle Ages in that I wrote the motet, and then I used the material from the motet for the mass. And the idea was always that maybe at some point somebody would perform the motet before the "Sanctus" because the sort of biggest point of reference comes in the "Sanctus." As the melody from the

motet is used wholesale in the “Sanctus.” And this is the first time that’s actually happened, it’s all being played as one thing.

PG: I just wanted to ask you quickly about the words, Lancelot Andrewes. What drew you to this text?

JB: It’s actually, some of the words are by Lancelot Andrewes, and some are by Wordsworth. I thought I would try and please both Winchester Cathedral and St. John’s, Cambridge which was setting myself a bit of a conundrum there as to how I could find a text which would somehow be pertinent to both of them. And I knew I was writing a piece that was going to be done around Epiphany, so I did something that was to do with journeys, the start of a new journey, the Magi, that sort of thing. And I took Lancelot Andrewes because he was a bishop in Winchester Cathedral, and I took a prayer by him about a safe journey. But I also found a poem by Wordsworth about entering St. John’s, Cambridge as a student, about his feeling of unworthiness to the journey that was ahead of him, and I just put those two things together and, it’s bit too clever for my own good, really, I think.

PG: Quite ingenious. Well, let’s now hear *The Clouded Heaven* which we’ll hear, as I said, before the “Sanctus” in your *Missa Brevis*.

[*Missa Brevis* and *The Clouded Heaven*, 1998]

PG: The *Missa Brevis* by Judith Bingham, and before the “Sanctus” in it, *The Clouded Heaven*. We heard once again the BBC Singers conducted by James Morgan with the organist Richard Pierce.

Judith, the next piece which obviously had a very specific impetus for you to write. You wrote it a couple of days after the events of September the eleventh, last year.

It's a piece called *Beneath These Alien Stars*. A couple of things I want to ask you about. First of all the words which are by one Vesta Pierce Crawford, a name which I haven't come across.

JB: No, me neither. I just found her in a book of American poetry. It's a poem that's called *Pioneer Woman*, so presumably she was nineteenth century, presumably she was some sort of pioneer woman herself. It's really just the writing of somebody feeling isolated in an alien landscape.

PG: This is written for, well, we're going to hear it obviously with women's voices, but it was written for boys or girls or trebles?

JB: About a year before this David Hill asked me if I would write a piece for boys voices and organ for the Royal School of Church Music for a service which would be done in Winchester Cathedral. And I actually said no because I didn't have the time to do it. But then September the eleventh happened, and two days later I just felt so completely stuffed full of feeling and wanting to respond that I thought I'm just going to sit down and write something. And I thought I'll pick an American poem and I'll just write something just to get my feelings out musically. And I found that poem which, I don't quite know why I picked it, really, except that look of the World Trade Center site being so completely alien in the center of New York. I went the following November and saw it, and if you knew New York you could not compute that it could look like that, that it could look like Beirut. So maybe that was in the back of my mind that it was like a sort of an alien landscape. And then I thought "oh, I could do that thing that David asked me for boys voices and organ" so he did then do it later at Winchester Cathedral.

[*Beneath These Alien Stars*, 2001]

PG: *Beneath These Alien Stars* by Judith Bingham. The women's voices of the BBC Singers.

Judith, you mentioned, in regard to that piece, that the text was something that you had come across by chance. This is something that is rather interesting because you're obviously a very literary person and you obviously read a lot. When you're coming across something do you put it aside in a sort of store box and say "that touches me and that's something which perhaps I could use musically, and then I'll come back to that if somebody asks me to write a piece," and then you can draw out of this chest. This is me perhaps putting words into your mouth, but I don't know how it works. Or when you get a commission does somebody say "I want XYZ from you" and well we heard that they often do specify texts. How does it actually work for you?

JB: It's both things that you said, really. I think every creative person has a store chest of things that they think "oh, I'll do that sometime" or "I'd like to do that sometime." I like to have all sorts of different images around me so I like to have visual images, and I like to read a lot about the subject of what I'm writing about. I like to keep myself stimulated by lots of external images all the time. I'm a bit actorish actually. I think what I like to do is almost like create a whole film set around the piece I'm doing, and people it with books that I'm reading or pictures of art or photographs, or write poetry, or even do drawings of what I'm trying to write musically. It's like I create a whole little kind of separate world for that piece. That's really important to me. I don't think I could ever just sit down and abstractly just write something without that stimulus.

PG: In the case of *The Past is a Strange Land*, this is an anthology, isn't it, of different texts. We've got authors as varied as Arthur Conan Doyle, Edward Thomas, Hillaire

Belloc, Christina Rossetti, Anonymous and, indeed, yourself. Is there a thread that links all of these texts together?

JB: Well, I'd set myself an impossible problem here. I had a good idea and then I couldn't think how to do it, which was that I was asked to write a piece for the Chester Festival and for it to be about Cheshire in some way. I was actually in Chester at the time so I kind of went round the bookshops and I found this book called *Cheshire Ghosts and Legends*. It's one of those little tourist books. And what was really brilliant was that the place that the piece was being performed in which was Nantwich Parish Church has its own ghost. So I thought "this is great! I can actually even include the ghost of the place where the piece is being performed." So, having had this great idea and selected my five ghosts that I was going to write about, then, of course, where were the texts going to come from? So I had to cobble together the texts from various sources and then pad it out very much with my own words, and some of the movements are just almost entirely me because there was no way I could find any poems about this. The first song is about a ghost of a black dog in a village called Barthomley, and I used some words from *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, that's where the Arthur Conan Doyle thing comes in, and then I added words of my own. The second ghost is of a child in a place called Combermere Abbey, who was always seen running round and round a bed. And I used words from the clock in Chester Cathedral about time, about time running on. And then the third one is about these monks at a place called Vale Royal who were only ever seen floating above the ground because, of course, the ground levels have sunk since the Abbey was built.

PG: Of course, I see.

JB: I wrote those words for that. The fourth one is really quite gross, and I think the men of the BBC Singers got into this one, quite,

PG: I'm sure they did!

JB: with great abandon, which is the Gatley Groaner, a man who used to adulterate milk, and then when he died used to go up and down the lanes groaning until he was exorcised.

PG: Unusual sort of ghost.

JB: And then the final one was the ghost in Nantwich Parish Church which you only see out of the corner of your eye. That I sort of did my own words for, and left a little space for the ghost to appear if he wanted to, which was quite a scary moment on the day. And then it finishes with these words by Christina Rossetti, these quite famous words "I shall not see the shadows, I shall not fear the rain," about what life would be like after death. And in a way it's really about laying the ghosts to rest, I think.

PG: And did anybody see the ghost of Nantwich there on the day?

JB: No. No, I'm very grateful they didn't. I was quite nervous.

[*The Past is a Strange Land: Five Cheshire Ghosts*, 1993]

PG: The BBC Singers conducted by James Morgan singing *The Past is a Strange Land* subtitled *Five Cheshire Ghosts* by my guest tonight, Judith Bingham.

Judith, what have you got on your writing desk at the moment?

JB: My big project I'm doing at the moment is for what you might call loosely a church opera. It's a kind of sacred dance-drama that I'm doing for the cathedral at Bury St. Edmunds. I'm writing the libretto myself right now, starting music at the end of the year, I hope.

PG: And due for first performance?



JB: November 2004.

PG: Ah, so you've got a little bit of thinking time. Well thank you very much for coming down and talking to me, it has been fascinating. I think some of the insights you've given to the way you tackle texts in particular, and how you turn this into a piece of music is very, very fascinating, so thank you very much.

JB: Thank you.