Bob Chilcott Requiem **Wells Cathedral Choir Matthew Owens** hyperion

T IS NOT ACADEMICALLY SOUND-but it is perhaps understandable-to suggest that Bob Chilcott was almost certain to write a Requiem at some point in his career; indeed, the portents stack up and combine so that it seems almost inevitable. To begin with, his background in church and, later, collegiate music, and the support of a church-going family, was a constant source of influence. 'My parents went to a parish church in Watford, and I sang in the choir there', he says. 'There were thirty-five boys in the choir-mainly because you got a free trip to the circus, and a shilling for weddings-and I absolutely loved it.' It was here that an enlightened and generous vicar took note of Chilcott's voice and suggested that he audition for choirboy entry to the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. He got in, and began a relationship with the college that continued through university as a choral scholar, and eventually to twelve years as a tenor with the world-famous King's Singers.

His time as a chorister at the Choir of King's College under Sir David Willcocks produced some of his most treasured memories. 'We used to sing the Duruflé and Fauré Requiems in alternate years', he says, 'In 1967 we recorded the Fauré, and I sang the solo in the Pie Jesu (the recording is one of the best-selling Fauré Requiems of all time). We recorded it at Christmas and it was released very quickly, only three months later. Just before it was released, we travelled down to London to sing Holst's Hymn of Jesus at the Royal Festival Hall, and the producer presented my mother and father with a copy of the newly pressed disc. They were so proud, and my father died only a few weeks later, so the piece has incredible resonance for me and for my family. When I came to writing my own Requiem, and the Pie Jesu in particular, it just had to be sung by a soprano solo.'

For Chilcott, personal history and memories such as this are intensely important in the creation of his

compositions, as are the traditions of the Anglican church within which he sang. 'I find that the culture you come from is extremely influential. A lot of the pieces you sing in church develop more meaning than the text alone—they come surrounded by cultural attachment. Take something like singing the psalms of the day: often the moment that you realize what a particular psalm is saying will coincide with an important part of your life elsewhere. This human angle of one's belief is something I find incredibly motivating.'

This interest in the human side of religion played a large part in one of the movements in Chilcott's Requiem, the only movement in English: "Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts". 'I just love that text', he says; 'it's so unbelievably English. It has none of that idea of revenge, it's just about one human saying: "Here I am, Lord, with all my faults: be decent to me." I find that very compelling. I could never give up everything I own in the world—I freely admit that—but this text takes into account the fact that you are in the real world, with all that that means. It's a concept that is central to my belief.'

Writing a Requiem is a daunting task for any composer, particularly with so many different and evocative settings already written, and with a tantalizing yet dangerously free choice of text; comparisons—sometimes distracting, often irritating—are nevertheless inevitable. 'I was terrified by the idea of it, but I decided that I wanted to write one', he says. A joint commission for a large choral work from the Oxford Bach Choir, from the Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas, and from Music at Oxford provided the catalyst, and Chilcott set about choosing his texts. 'I wanted the piece to work liturgically and as a concert piece, and this was an influence in structuring the work.'

Another influence was from that most famous of Requiems: 'Having sung the Fauré Requiem every other year at King's', he says, 'one of the things that struck me about the work was that Fauré deliberately underplayed any of the words that define God as vengeful—the Dies irae passage lasts only sixteen bars, for example. I found that vengeful language hard to deal with. I wanted to write a contemplative setting."

Chilcott's Requiem, which is dedicated to his niece, Samantha Verschueren, who died at the age of just twentythree while he was writing the piece, is indeed beautifully reflective. At the same time it is given focus and direction by the composer's keen sense of melody and innate feeling for rhythm, be it the lyrical, rolling tenor solo in the Agnus Dei, or the crystal simplicity of the Pie Jesu; the gently pulsing first few bars of the Introit, or the driving, irregular beats of the Sanctus. The work's different components develop at different paces-it is hard to put a finger on one particular moment of arrival. So the Sanctus, with its dance-like patterns, provides the dynamic peak of the Requiem; the Pie Jesu perhaps offers the emotional centre of the work; and 'Thou knowest, Lord', from the Book of Common Prayer, presents a central point for the text. This combination of differently paced pulses ultimately carries the listener gently through the Requiem; at once continuously moving forward while maintaining a comforting sense of reflection and stillness.

Chilcott's Requiem came hot on the heels of another, larger-scale work: the *Salisbury Vespers*, which was first performed in 2009 in Salisbury Cathedral by a choir of more than 500 singers from seven different city-based choirs. 'They realized they had a huge number of choirs who never had the chance to come together', says Chilcott. 'At the premiere, the choirs were situated at separate points in the Cathedral—it was a difficult concept to make work, but it was very successful. The main thrust of the work was a number of large-scale psalm settings, and I interspersed these with the four motets heard on this disc.'



BOB CHILCOTT

Chilcott set Marian texts suitable for different times of the year, reflecting the dedication of the Cathedral to St Mary the Virgin; each is dedicated to a different Salisbury choir. I sing of a mayden is a reflective meditation on a medieval Christmas text that shows Chilcott's talent for the deceptively simple melody, as does the third motet, Lovely tear of lovely eye, a beautifully transparent setting of an anonymous medieval poem.

When to the temple Mary went offers another example of memories and tradition making their presence felt in Chilcott's work: the words are the translation by the Victorian priest John Troutbeck of Johannes Eccard's Maria wallt zum Heiligtum, a metrical setting of the presentation of Christ in the temple—the English translation still far more popular in Anglican churches than the German. The comparison with Eccard ends there, however; with its unsettling harmonies and

restless temperament, this setting looks to troubled times ahead.

The final motet, *Hail, star of the sea most radiant*, written for Salisbury Cathedral Choir, brings to the fore another of Chilcott's talents: a knowledge of the voice that results in an immensely joyous, natural and, above all, intensely singable outpouring of celebration that is both infectious and memorable.

And so to another centrepiece of a great Anglican tradition. Chilcott's setting of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, the 'Downing Service', was written for the organ scholar of Downing College, Cambridge, Camilla Godlee. Unsurprisingly, it is another text that has many memories for Chilcott. 'At King's', he says, 'as a chorister and choral scholar, there were all these new settings all the time, by composers like Robert Saxton, Gordon Crosse, Kenneth Leighton, the last of the Howells settings. Then in the 1980s and '90s there seemed to be a tailing off-apart from the odd exception: Giles Swayne and John Tavener, for instance. Now there seems to be a real renaissance of settings, which is very encouraging.' The Magnificat is-on the surface-relatively simple, comprising just two melodic ideas, 'but it's actually quite tricky, as the parts are constantly changing', says Chilcott; while the Nunc dimittis is a slow-moving, epic crescendo to the radiant words 'a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel'.

As quickly becomes apparent when one talks to Chilcott, or studies his music, the text of a piece is supremely important to him as a composer-both for its own, individual characteristics and for all the associations it holds. Sourcing them is a constant job-though there are moments when inspiration falls into one's lap. This happened to Chilcott when he was commissioned to write a carol by Philip Brunelle, choirmaster-organist of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, 'Philip Brunelle supplied a poem by Kevin Crossley-Holland. which immediately inspired me. I asked for a book of his poems, and found them to be quite brilliant. In the three carols-Pilgrim Jesus, The Nine Gifts, and Jesus, springing—he has found a way of saying something that is completely fresh about a subject that is so well trodden. It doesn't bring you back to thinking what a brilliant poet he is, it brings you back purely to the reality of the message, and I think that's absolutely wonderful.'

One of the most admirable sides to the Anglican choral tradition in which Bob Chilcott's compositions are so deeply and lovingly steeped is an openness from congregations to new settings of Christmas carols such as these. Chilcott's remarkable settings of these poems—indeed of all the works on this disc—contribute to a reassuringly healthy state of affairs in church music. Inspiring texts, yes; glorious music, definitely; and a combination that manages to be much more than the sum of its parts.

JONATHAN WIKELEY © 2012

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Requiem

1 Introit & Kyrie

ANDREW STAPLES solo tenor, LAURIE ASHWORTH solo soprano Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus Deus in Sion,

et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem. Exaudi orationem meam.

Ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.

2 Offertorio

ANDREW STAPLES solo tenor

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.

Libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat tartarus,

ne cadant in obscurum.

Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus. Tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus: fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam:

quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eius. Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum

de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.

Amen.

3 Pie Jesu

LAURIE ASHWORTH solo soprano
Pie Iesu. Domine, dona eis requiem.

Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem. Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis sempiternam requiem.

4 Sanctus & Benedictus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis. Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine on them. Thou, O God, art praised in Sion, and unto thee shall a vow be performed in Jerusalem. Hear my prayer.

Unto thee shall all flesh come.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of bell and from the bottomless pit. Deliver them from the lion's mouth, neither let them fall into darkness nor the black abyss swallow them up.

We offer to you this sacrifice of prayer and praise. Receive it for those souls whom today we commemorate: allow them to cross from death into life: as long ago you promised Abraham and his seed.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit. Amen.

Blessed Jesus, Lord, grant them rest. Blessed Jesus, Lord, grant them eternal rest.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

5 Agnus Dei

ANDREW STAPLES solo tenor

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem. Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis sempiternam requiem. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant them rest. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.

6 Thou knowest, Lord

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.

7 Lux aeterna

LAURIE ASHWORTH solo soprano, ANDREW STAPLES solo tenor Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine, cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Let everlasting light shine upon them, Lord, with your saints for ever, for you are good. Grant them eternal rest, Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Salisbury Motets

8 I sing of a mayden

I sing of a mayden
That is makeles,
King of all Kings
To her son she ches.

He came also stille Where his moder was, As dew in Aprille That falleth on the grass.

He came also stille
To his moder's bour,
As dew in Aprille
That falleth on the flour.

He came also stille There his moder lay, As dew in Aprille That falleth on the spray.

Moder and mayden
Was never none but she:
Well may such a lady
Goddes moder be.

9 When to the temple Mary went

When to the temple Mary went,
And brought the holy child,
Him did the aged Simeon see,
As it had been revealed.
He took up Jesus in his arms
And blessing God he said:
In peace I now depart, my Saviour having seen,
The hope of Israel, the light of men.

JOHN TROUTBECK (1832-1899)

Help now thy servants, gracious Lord, That we may ever be, As once the faithful Simeon was, Rejoicing but in thee; And when we must from earth departure take, May we gently fall asleep and with thee awake.

10 Lovely tear of lovely eye

ALFIE IOHNSON tubular bell Lovely tear of lovely eye, Why dost thou me so woe? Sorrowful tear of sorrowful eye, Thou breakest my heart in two.

Thou grievest sore. Thy sorrow is more Than mankind's mouth may tell: Thou singst of sorrow, Mankind to borrow.

Out of the pit of hell. Thy mother sees

What woe is to thee, And earnestly cries out: To her thou speak,

Her sorrow to ease:

Sweet pleading won thy heart.

Thy heart is rent. Thy body bent Upon the rood tree: The weather is passed, The devil defeated. Christ, through the might of thee.

Hail, star of the sea most radiant

Hail, star of the sea most radiant, O mother of God most glorious, A pure virgin always persevering. O gate of heaven most gorgeous, Thou was saluted with great humility When Gabriel said, Ave Maria, Establish us in peace and tranquility, And change the name of sinful Eve. Loose the prisoners from captivity. Unto the blind give sight again. Deliver us from our malignity

To the end we may some grace attain.

Downing Service

12 Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden:

For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

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

LUKE 1: 46-55

Nunc dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

LUKE 2: 29-32

Pilgrim Jesus

Iesus! Christus! Iesus! Natus! In the manger of my body Leaps the tiny child, and his breath Is the word—the dance of God.

Corpus! Beatus! Peregrinus! Natus! In the ocean of my head The steadfast ship rides tide and storm On its pilgrim crossing.

Oceanus! Peregrinus! Christus! Natus! In the orchard of my heart
Springs the singing tree. Its root
Is faith and its sweet fruit charity.

Cor! Arbor! Amor! Christus! Riding ship, springing tree, And in the manger leaps the child Who is the word—the dance of God.

KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND (b1941)
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The Nine Gifts

I bring you my body, darling dear: My ripening song, my jubilant ear. That's what Mary sang.

That's what Mary sang. Alleluia!

And I bring surprise—this sweetest fragrance

Made with love and hope in patience.
That's what Elizabeth said.

Wonder!

I come with a trill and a blue light
And followers stumbling through the night.
That's what the star sang. Rrrrr!

Well, my lamb, I've got you this fleece So your old mother can get some peace. That's what the shepherd said. Yan! Tan! I bring you the broken tooth of a giant, No compromise, the word that is silent. That's what the stone seemed to say.

I bring you guffaws and loops of mist, And a band of brown hair for your right wrist. That's what the donkey said. Eeyore!

I bring you my crown and an uneasy dream Of duty and honour, gossip and scheme. That's what the king said. *Heigb-bo!*

Open your hand for this fitting glove:
The name of the song in my throat is love.
That's what the ringdove sang.

Coo-oo!

But what can I bring you? I bring me.
Whatever I am and all I will be.
That's what the child sang.

Little Jesus!

KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND (b 1941)

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Jesus, springing

I am the heart that houses the cone, the cone enclosing the cedar, I am the cedar sawn for the cradle, forest of the body, body of the tree.

I am the cradle rocking the baby, I am the baby containing the man, I am the man nailed on the cross, tree of the body, body of the forest.

I am the cross sawn from the cedar, I am the cedar enclosed in the cone, I am the cone housed in the heart, here in my heart Jesus, springing.

KEVIN CROSSLEY-HOLLAND (b1941)
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THE CHORISTERS OF WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR WITH MATTHEW OWENS AND BOB CHILCOTT

WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR

boy cboristers Robbie Armstrong, Oliver Buckland, Isaac Coton (Deputy Head Boy Chorister), Gabriel Donoghue, Lawrie Graham, Cassian Gray-Newton, Alfie Johnson (Head Boy Chorister), Finn Lacey, Frankie Osborne, Thomas Yaughan, Dillon Whitehead, Robbie Wills girl cboristers Imogen Berry, Molly Bruce, Jordan Deans, Annabel Green (Head Girl Chorister), Mary Johnson, Suzy Kingston (Deputy Head Girl Chorister), Isabelle May, Harriet Peck, Hannah Wills

Vicars Choral

countertenor Timothy Angel, Simon Clulow, Stephen Harvey, Jonathan Woodhouse tenor James Butler, Edward Coton, Mark Hounsell, Iain MacLeod-Jones bass Stephen Foulkes, Andrew Mahon, Christopher Sheldrake, Jonathan Wagstaff

Wells Cathedral Choir celebrated its 1100th birthday in 2009: boys first sang at Wells Cathedral in 909 and the full choral tradition dates back over 800 years. In 1994 the choral foundation at Wells was enriched by the addition of girl choristers. Today the choir comprises eighteen boy choristers, eighteen girl choristers and twelve Vicars Choral. The boys and girls usually sing separately with the

Vicars Choral but occasionally come together for larger events. In 2010, in a feature on the world's finest choirs, Gramopbone rated Wells Cathedral Choir as the greatest cathedral choir in the world.

The choir is at the heart of the worshipping life of the Cathedral, and sings a wide repertoire of music ranging from the masterpieces of the Renaissance period to the finest choral works of the present day. New music is also commissioned from some of today's most exciting composers, including Gabriel Jackson, James MacMillan, Tarik O'Regan, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and John Rutter. The choir broadcasts regularly, and its recordings have won international praise, with *Gramophone* hailing the choir as 'one of the most impressive of today's British cathedral choirs' in 'world-class form' and making two of its recent discs Editor's Choice. Other recordings for Hyperion include discs of Herberts Howells (CDA67494), Kenneth Leighton (CDA67641), William Mathias (CDA67740), Jonathan Dove (CDA67768) and James MacMillan (CDA67867).

MATTHEW OWENS is Organist and Master of the Choristers of Wells Cathedral, having previously been Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral, Tutor in Organ Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, Assistant Conductor of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, and conductor of The Exon Singers. He is also conductor of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society and President of the Cathedral Organists' Association. Born in 1971 he studied at Chetham's School of Music. The Oueen's College, Oxford, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Sweelinck Conservatorium, Amsterdam, He is in demand for choral workshops and masterclasses in the UK and abroad, and has made over twenty-five CDs as a conductor or solo organist. He has championed new music, particularly of British composers, premiering many new works ranging from Jools Holland to James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

JONATHAN VAUGHN is Assistant Organist at Wells Cathedral, a post he took up in September 2007. While at school he was Organ Scholar at Croydon Parish Church and while still sixteen had gained both diplomas of the Royal College of Organists, winning a number of prizes. After a gap year as Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, Jonathan spent four years as Organ Scholar and later Assistant Organist at St John's College, Cambridge, while studying the organ with Dame Gillian Weir. Particular highlights of his time at St John's included performing on critically acclaimed recordings of Lennox Berkeley and Edward Elgar for Naxos's English Choral Music series. After leaving Cambridge, Jonathan spent three years as Assistant Director of Music at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, where he was also Director of the St Edmundsbury Singers. He performs frequently as a recitalist at venues across the United Kingdom.

THE NASH ENSEMBLE has built up a remarkable reputation as one of Britain's finest ensembles, and, through the dedication of its founder and artistic director Amelia Freedman and the calibre of its players, has gained a similar reputation all over the world. The repertoire is vast, and the imaginative, innovative and unusual programmes are as finely architectured as the beautiful Nash terraces in London from which the group takes its name. Not that The Nash Ensemble is classically restricted; it performs with equal sensitivity and musicality works from Mozart to the avant-garde. Indeed, it is one of the major contributors towards the recognition and promotion of many leading composers through first performances to date of over 265 new works, including 165 commissions of pieces especially written for the ensemble, providing a legacy for generations to come. The ensemble has won The Edinburgh Festival Critics' music award 'for general artistic excellence', and in 1989 and 2002 The Royal Philharmonic Society's small ensemble award 'for the breadth of its taste and its immaculate performance of a wide range of music'.

LAURIE ASHWORTH was born in Wigan, Lancashire. She studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she won numerous prizes including the RNCM Gold Medal, the college's highest award for performance. In 2008 she completed her Masters at the Royal College of Music, where she studied with Patricia Rozario and Janis Kelly. Since being a finalist and runner-up in BBC Radio 2's The Kiri Prize—a nationwide search by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and the BBC to find a new operatic star—Laurie has made numerous appearances on BBC2's *Friday Nigbt is Music Nigbt*. She has also appeared with Opera Project, Opéra de Dijon, Grange Park Opera and Wexford Festival Opera.

ANDREW STAPLES sang as a chorister in St Paul's Cathedral before winning a Choral Scholarship to King's College Cambridge, where he gained a degree in Music. Andrew was the first recipient of the RCM Peter Pears Scholarship, sponsored by the Britten—Pears Foundation, at the Royal College of Music and subsequently joined the Benjamin Britten International Opera School. He studies with Ryland Davies. In concert he has sung under Sir Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Andrew Manze, Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Semyon Bychkov. He has also appeared at the Royal Opera House as Jacquino (Fidelio), returning as First Armed Man (Die Zauberflöte), Artabanes (Arne's Artaxerxes) and Narraboth (Salome).

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BOB CHILCOTT

(b1955)

Requiem & other works

WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR
*soprano LAURIE ASHWORTH
*tenor ANDREW STAPLES
*THE NASH ENSEMBLE

flute PHILIPPA DAVIES oboe GARETH HULSE clarinet RICHARD HOSFORD horn LAURENCE DAVIES timpani CHRIS BRANNICK

†organ JONATHAN VAUGHN conductor MATTHEW OWENS

Requiem *† 2010 [41'49]

- 1 Introit & Kyrie [9'27]
- 2 Offertorio [7'48]
- 3 Pie Jesu [6'02]
- 4 Sanctus & Benedictus [2'13]
- 5 Agnus Dei [5'00]
- 6 Thou knowest, Lord [5'03]
- 7 Lux aeterna [6'11]

Salisbury Motets 2009 [17'56]

- 8 I sing of a mayden † [4'06]
- 9 When to the temple Mary went [4'39]
- 10 Lovely tear of lovely eye † [6'09]
- II Hail, star of the sea most radiant [3'00]

Downing Service † 2009 [7'23]

- 12 Magnificat [2'49]
- 13 Nunc dimittis [4'33]
- Pilgrim Jesus 2010 [2'12]
- 15 The Nine Gifts † 2010 [4'25]
- 16 Jesus, springing † 2010 [5'50]

all first recordings

Bob Chilcott

CDA67650 Duration 79'39

CHILCOTT REQUIEM
WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR / MATTHEW OWENS

DDD

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WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR

LAURIE ASHWORTH soprano* ANDREW STAPLES tenor* THE NASH ENSEMBLE* JONATHAN VAUGHN organ†

MATTHEW OWENS conductor

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