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KENNETH LEIGHTON

1929 - 1988

AN ASSESSMENT OF HIS SACRED CHORAL COMPOSITIONS

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KENNETH
LEIGHTON

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INTRODUCTION:

Kenneth Leighton's compositional output numbers more than 150 major items, of which over one third are choral. Religion played a significant part in his life, and there is a spiritual quality about much of his work. His time as a chorister in Wakefield sparked off his lifelong love of sacred music. Yet despite the size and importance of his contribution to the church music repertoire, only a negligible amount has been written about it.

This dissertation aims to assess his contribution by analysing representative choral works from each period of his composing life; the intention is to provide a sequence, not of note-for-note 'dissections', but of general overviews, pointing out important features and characteristics of style. Where relevant, musical examples are included in the text, though for full appreciation the reader should have scores of the works discussed in detail to hand. The works are discussed chronologically, and are divided into three main chapters, covering the three 'sections' of Leighton's composing life. Each chapter has its own introduction, and a general conclusion follows chapter three.

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A chronological catalogue of Leighton's sacred choral works is provided as an appendix (page 51).

Chapter One: Rhythm and vitality - The years 1959-1965.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (1959)

A Hymn of the Nativity (1960)

Preces and Responses (1964)

Communion Service in D opus 45 (1965)

Let all the world in every corner sing (1965)

Kenneth Leighton (1929-88) turned his attentions to church music in his thirties after having made his name as a composer of instrumental music. His early compositions were primarily for piano, strings and chamber ensembles. His first major composition for the church was undertaken at the age of 29, three years after moving to Edinburgh University as lecturer in composition. Interestingly his first composition for the organ came even later, in 1963.

The early church music shows an already distinctive style, and all of the five pieces discussed have much in common with each other. We see certain melodic shapes and rhythmic figures reappearing. Particular chords and harmonic progressions become familiar. Above all it is the rhythmic vitality that characterises Leighton's early church music. He seems most at

home in hymns of praise, where dancing melodies abound ('LET ALL THE WORLD...' being the prime example). Yet there are early hints at innovative harmonic manipulation; the end of the 'HYMN OF THE NATIVIVTY' and moments in the 'PRECES AND RESPONSES' show an enlightened mind at work.

There is no doubt that Leighton draws a great deal of inspiration from the words he sets, and this perhaps explains why he always manages to craft a singable melody. Nothing is uncomfortable to the voice, or to the ear.

MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS (COLLEGIUM MAGDALENAE OXONIENSIS) (1959)

It is perhaps surprising that in Kenneth Leighton's vast output of church music (including some ten settings of the mass), there are only two settings of the evening canticles. Separated by twelve years, they are both representative of Leighton's style at their times of composition; the Magdalen service of the early, almost innocent rhythmic vigour, prevalent in Leighton's music until the late 1960s, and the Second Service of the more thoughtful, serene music of the early 1970s. Peter Moger (1) talks of the 'gradual mellowing of style [that] can be seen in a number of pieces from the early 1970s', and the Second Service is one which he quotes.

The 'Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniensis' was commissioned by Bernard Rose, who had been Leighton's tutor at Oxford. The marked rhythmic organ chords which begin the Magnificat are a good indication of what is to follow. Much of the vocal scoring is unison, with a colourful quaver accompaniment. A large

proportion of the accompaniment is for manuals only, and there are organ quaver passages separating the main sections of the text. The organ remains largely independent of the voices, only occasionally echoing them.

Leighton's favourite chords are all here; the minor triad with added flattened 7th ('He remembering his mercy', 'of thy people Israel'), the characteristic bare 5th chord with added 2nd on the final Amen, and the 2nd inversion major chord makes an early appearance in the Nunc Dimittis, though this chord was not to come to prominence in Leighton's music until the mid-1960s. The 'Magdalen Service' has many parallels with the more subdued and reflective 'SECOND SERVICE' (1971), with both services sharing a return to the opening material at the beginning of the Magnificat Gloria, and an 'ad infinitum' imitative descending 'world without end' section. Words like 'Holy Ghost' and 'to be the glory') are always treated with expansive counterpoint (fig. 1).

The image shows a musical score for a four-part setting of the Nunc Dimittis. It consists of four staves, each with a vocal line and an organ accompaniment line. The tempo markings are 'allarg. poco' and 'a tempo'. The lyrics are: 'and to be the glory of thy people'. The organ accompaniment features expansive counterpoint, with long, flowing lines that often span across the vocal phrases. The score is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

fig. 1: 'Collegium Magdalenae Orionensis' Nunc Dimittis

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The imitation shows a quality of contrapuntal thought comparable to the best English masters of the Renaissance, whose music Leighton would have sung as a chorister. Passages such as 'And his mercy is on them....' in the Magnificat are made up of very strict counterpoint. There are other resemblances too, such as in the word-painting - the proud are scattered with traditional syncopation, and the mighty are put down with a standard descending phrase. The section 'He remembering his mercy' through to the start of the Gloria is traditionally more restrained, and whilst Leighton does not slow the tempo, the voices become homorhythmic, and there is a stronger sense of tonality. There is a melancholy beauty about the closing phrase 'Abraham and his seed for ever' (fig. 2), achieved through the harmony which brings the voices onto a bare 5th.

The musical score consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "A - bra - ham and his seed, for ev - er." The score includes dynamic markings like "pp" and "p dolce", and tempo markings "rall. poco" and "un poco più calmo". The piano part has a "Ped." marking at the end.

fig. 2: 'Collegium Magdalenae Ooniensis' - Magnificat

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Whilst perhaps not a masterpiece, this is a very accomplished composition. Though it is Leighton's first major composition for the church, it shows a firm grasp of vocal colour and texture. Already his unique musical character is very much in evidence.

A HYMN OF THE NATIVITY (1960) Words: Richard Crashaw.

This piece, in Leighton's favourite vocal scoring of S solo, SATB, follows a basic A:B:C:B:A structure. The opening soprano solo, though unaccompanied, is strongly rooted in D minor, and builds throughout, developing the opening figure of a rising fifth. The final line, 'We saw thee by thine own sweet light' ends somewhat surprisingly on B natural, opening up a new tonality.

The chorus enter in unison with the opening solo figure transposed, echoing the last two lines of solo text, and the solo soprano continues, developing the simple minor harmonies of the chorus by adding major seconds. All of the phrases sung by the chorus begin on a unison note and fan out in approximate contrary motion, a favourite device of Leighton. The solo ends the opening verse alone on a C sharp.

The chorus begin the next section, 'No, no, your king's not yet to seek', which apart from a four-bar section ('twixt mother's breasts') of imitation, is strictly homorhythmic. As with the opening, the chords begin in unison, or simple minor tonality, and then are 'clouded' by the addition

of major 2nds and 4ths. The minor chord with added 7th is used extensively. This section ends very tonally in A major - clearly the dominant key of the piece, and the cadence moves in parallel from F major through G major.

The central section of the piece ('Welcome to our wond'ring sight') is a vibrant polyphonic shout, 'Allegro molto e ritmico'. The altos and basses follow the sopranos and tenors at a distance of a bar for most of the section, yet Leighton never allows the texture to become dull, always varying the counterpoint, and occasionally bringing the parts together. The soloist uses the same melodic material, broadening the polyphony to about a 4th higher than the soprano line. The section builds to its climax in B major, approached again in parallel from G major, through A major.

The fourth section, 'Great little one', mirroring the second, is homorhythmic and begins with a D major chord 'ff tutta forza'. Effective word painting is made of the phrase 'lifts earth to Heav'n', with a unison B blossoming into a chord of C major with an added major 7th (the sopranos on a top G).

The final section returns to the subdued beauty of the first. The chorus repeat the words of the previous section, this time 'p molto legato', while the solo voice preserves the rhythmic movement over the chorus' harmonic backdrop. There is a strong sense of tonality about this section, with an unusually high proportion of major chords in root position, occasionally with an added sharpened 7th. Leighton is always fuelled by an especially strong text, and the ending of this one, dealing with the central aspect of

faith - giving oneself over to God - is treated in the most memorable way. The last phrase begins with a sudden shift from B minor to Bb major, using D as the pivot note, and adding an A natural. Whilst the soloist remains rooted to D, the chorus move through C major, and a chord of A minor with added flat 7th, to a warm return to the tonic major. (fig. 3)

The image shows a musical score for five voices. The top staff is marked 'un poco più sostenuto' and 'p'. The lyrics are: 'Our - selves be - come our own best sac - ri - fice!'. The second and third staves are marked 'pp'. The lyrics are: 'Our - selves be - come our own best sac - ri - fice!'. The fourth and fifth staves are also marked 'pp'. The lyrics are: 'Our - selves be - come our own best sac - ri - fice!'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

fig. 3: 'A Hymn of the Nativity'

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PRECES AND RESPONSES (1964)

A set of Preces and Responses is a real challenge for any composer, and one that Leighton met with considerable success. The problem is the brevity of the phrases which restricts the potential for thematic development and imitation, resulting in most responses being homorhythmic. Leighton's set are the first truly modern responses. (Bernard Rose wrote an excellent set in 1960, but these are distinctly tonal, being firmly rooted in D major.)

The first response 'And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise' (fig. 4) begins with all voices on unison middle D, branching out as the basses go down the scale and the sopranos up, to end on a chord of C# minor. This is most characteristic of Leighton, and is indeed a feature of the Responses, with five sections beginning in this manner, most notably the Lord's Prayer, and the final 'Amen.'

Smooth and flowing

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

fig. 4: 'Preces and Responses'

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Each response is given its own instruction in English: 'Dance-like, but not too fast', 'Flowing and rather free', or 'Rhythmical but expressive', to name three. Leighton provides two contrasting settings of the Gloria response: one slow and legato, and the other faster and rhythmical. There is lively counterpoint in some responses, most notably 'O Lord make haste to help us', which is strictly imitative, and 'And mercifully hear us...' which ends on the ambiguous chord C# G# F# C#. For the most part syncopation is absent, but the response 'And make thy chosen people joyful' (fig. 5) compensates for this with a bar of 2/4 + 3/8!

The Lord's Prayer was probably the most difficult section to compose, bearing in mind the restrictions of a four-part unaccompanied texture. Homorhythmic throughout, it relies entirely on harmony for its momentum. Beginning on a unison A, the parts spread out within five notes to a second inversion chord of A flat major on the word 'Heaven', and then moves straight onto a major 7th chord of C. The second inversion chord is a Leighton 'trademark', normally reserved for words like 'peace', or 'heaven', as here. Yet later in the Lord's Prayer it is used, almost paradoxically, on the words 'earth' and 'evil'. It is often not so much the chord itself that is beautiful as the way it is approached - almost always by step, and with apparent ease. The Amen is a simple cadence from a chord of G major with added F# to A major.

Fast and rhythmical

The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different vocal part: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'Fast and rhythmical' and the time signature is 4/4. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics for all parts are: 'And make thy cho- sen peo- ple Joy- ful.' The Soprano part has a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The Alto part has a similar line with some rests. The Tenor and Bass parts have more rhythmic, step-like lines. The lyrics are aligned with the notes across all parts.

fig. 5: 'Process and Responses'

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Mention must be made of the 'Amens' for the Collects (fig. 6). Every single set of responses composed prior to these had simple Amens, usually consisting of either a perfect or plagal cadence, or even remaining on the

same chord, with a more elaborate third 'Amen'. Leighton implements an ingenious harmonic scheme which leads from one Amen to the next:

The first consists of a cadence from a first inversion A major chord with sharpened 7th onto a chord of D major. The feeling here is that it is not a 'full' cadence, and that D is not the ultimate tonic. The second Amen repeats the cadence, but from a root position A major chord with sharpened 7th onto a root D major with added 6th. This suggests that the tonal centre is in fact A.

The final 'Amen' begins on a unison A which branches out to include a C# before the bass begins to descend. The soprano and tenor begin in canon at the unison, as do the alto and bass, but with less strict imitation. The tonal feel is vague, but seems to go A major - F# minor - D major - before ending on a chord of (bass upwards) B F# D A E - effectively B minor with added flat 7th and 11th. This last chord does contain however all the notes of the D major triad, and starting on D the notes of a chain of 5ths: D A E B F#. Although it seems as though the chord needs to resolve into A major, as the echo fades one feels it could go on forever unresolved.

The musical score consists of three systems. System I and II show two staves each, with the word 'Amen' written below the notes. System III is marked 'Very steadily' and features a complex harmonic progression. The bass line in System III shows a chain of fifths: D, A, E, B, F#. The soprano and tenor parts begin in canon at the unison. Dynamics include 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The score ends with a final chord of B F# D A E.

fig. 6: 'Prayers and Responses'

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COMMUNION SERVICE IN D op. 45 (1965)

Leighton always enjoyed the challenge of writing music for a specific purpose, and the challenge of composing a simple Anglican Communion setting suitable for congregational singing was well met. The music is versatile enough to be sung with any of four combinations of voices, with organ accompaniment, ranging from congregation only (unison) to choir only (SATB).

The congregational part is simple and singable, mostly moving by step, and staying within the octave range D - D, except for a brief spell in the Gloria, where low B is reached. The rhythms too are easily grasped, with nothing shorter than a quaver, and much rhythmic repetition.

The (optional) choir part is only present in parts of the work - the 'Amen' of the Creed, the whole Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, and about half of the Gloria in Excelsis. Additionally the sopranos and altos sing a second part to the 'Christe Eleison' section of the Kyrie. Where the choir do sing, at least one part doubles the congregation (usually the tenors, often with the basses), and the familiar doubling of altos with basses, and sopranos with tenors means that the texture rarely exceeds two parts.

As a result of the restrictions, most of the harmonic and rhythmic interest is concentrated on the organ part, which again is simple, but effective. It provides the unity between movements by means of a descending minim figure,

against a held D or A. The semitone clashes on the organ provide a wealth of colour, especially in lower registers.

The 'Kyrie Eleison' provides a useful example of the simplicity of Leighton's style; there is much liturgical flexibility here, not least in the provision of both English and Greek text, as well as an alternative setting of the 'Responses to the Commandments'. The congregational melody for the Kyrie section is repeated six times, with only a slight variation on the third and sixth. It moves only by step, and rises to the most important syllable, following natural speech inflection. The 'Christe Eleison' middle section (fig. 7) provides contrast, with the congregational melody being an approximate inversion of that for the 'Kyrie'. The organ pedals are omitted to create a lighter texture, and the harmony moving into sharps from flats.

Apart from doubling the congregation in the first 'Kyrie' section, the organ part is restricted to moving in minims. Only at the very end of the second 'Kyrie' section does it briefly imitate the unison melody line in sixths, before ending on a bare fifth 'E' chord. The chord of the 7th features prominently, especially in the 'Christe' section, where the descending bass line creates seven consecutive 7ths. While the two 'Kyrie' sections are rooted to the tonic by sustaining the note D throughout the section, the 'Christe' section is more ambiguous and sustains both a D and an A - the latter for the entire section, and the D until the penultimate bar.

UNISON VOICES

mp

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up - on us.

SOPRANOS and ALTOS

mp

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up - on us.

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up -

mp

legato (Man)

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up - on us.

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up - on us.

- lei - son.
- on us

Chris - te e - lei - son.
Christ have mer - cy up - on us.

fig. 7: 'Communion Service in D' - from *Kyrie Eleison*

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The harmonies Leighton weaves around these two notes are intriguing; beginning on D major first inversion the bass descends from F# by step to B, with the tonality passing through E major, D major root, C# minor, and coming to rest on B minor - still with the D and A superimposed - creating the minor chord with flattened 7th, a favourite of Leighton. From here the right hand recommences its minim descent from A to D, through G#, F# and E, and sustaining the outer two. Three beats later the bass begins its move downwards in 7ths with its tenor. The 'alto' part begins its third descent from A to D at the point where the bass reaches G, creating 9ths on top of

the tenor 7ths for three beats. When the bass reaches E, it turns around and moves back up to A by step, cadencing into the dominant through a characteristic chord of G major with added sharpened 7th and 9th.

Tremendously complex as all this may sound on paper, the actual musical result is one of great simplicity and beauty. Leighton's skill here was to craft something fresh out of a complex network of ostinati and imitating figures. His commissioners (The Church Music Society) must have been more than happy, and the success of the venture can be clearly seen in the frequency of performance in parish churches and cathedrals worldwide.

LET ALL THE WORLD IN EVERY CORNER SING (1965) Words: George Herbert.

This buoyant celebration is representative of Leighton's early rhythmic style. Geoffrey Cox analyses this piece in his dissertation (2) to illustrate Leighton's tonal coherence, yet becomes bogged down with detail in trying to justify each chord. This throws into the air the whole question of analysis and why we do it; what purpose does it serve?

We analyse a piece of music to see what makes it work; how it fits together, and how different ideas relate to one another. Analysing a number of works by the same composer will give us a picture of how his technique develops - what new features come into his music, and what old ones are discarded.

Cox, in the introduction to his analysis, quotes Leighton as saying, "Music itself often requires more words of explanation than it has musical notes" (3). Although Cox says himself, "analysis should not pretend to explain every note by reducing the process of composition to a series of simplified grammatical formulae" (4), this is exactly what he proceeds to do. To strive to get 'inside' a piece of music is only useful if you can take others with you in your explanation.

'Let all the world in every corner sing' is a piece of contrasts. The text is split into refrain and 'verse'. The three times the refrain is heard it has the same basic rhythmic structure, and the same groups of voices (soprano/tenor, alto/bass) in unison. The organ part is largely independent of the voices, and serves to push the rhythm along. Its opening 'fanfare' is related to the vocal parts only loosely in rhythm, and not at all in harmony. The sections in between the refrains are more subdued, yet retain their rhythmic impetus with syncopation, together with organ interjections in which much is made of the F#/G semitone clash.

At this stage in Leighton's writing, the harmony is not too complex, with most of the dissonance deriving from the sharpened 4th against 5th, sharpened 7th against tonic, and major 2nd replacing 3rd; yet the harmony is still very fluid and never remains static. In this piece much is made of the interval of a 4th, particularly in the bass line, where it is used as a means of moving from key to key with a loose feel of cadence [cf. bars 58 - 68]. At the same point the imitated vocal part moves up and down through the interval of a fourth. (fig. 8)

The image shows a musical score for two vocal parts: DECANI and CANTORIS. The lyrics are "But a-bove all, the heart." The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *espress.* and features various musical notations like slurs, ties, and a circled '60' in the lower part of the score.

fig 8: 'let all the world in every corner sing'

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The rhythm of the melody never detracts from its expressive quality, as the bars quoted above show. The word 'part' is set to the favourite minor chord with flattened 7th, and this heralds the 'recapitulation', where the organ returns to the opening rhythmic figure, but with the notes getting higher, rather than lower. The pedals enter in bar 70 with an augmentation of the top line from the following bar, and each time the voices enter with 'let all the world', there are more parts to the texture; in bar 72 there are two, in bar 75 three, and in bar 79 four. Tension is further heightened by the organ 'interludes' between entries, which are off-beat staccato quaver chords, changing the effective 4/4 pulse to 3/8 + 5/8.

The organ returns to the opening material again right at the end, finishing on what is effectively a D major chord with added G, and a C pedal. With the incessant harmonic ambiguity throughout the piece, it was inevitable that Leighton would end on an even more ambiguous chord, yet as the echo dies away, the impression one is left with is of C major, with added sharpened 4th - the same as the very first chord of the piece.

It can be clearly seen that Leighton has a natural feel for choral composition. These 'early' works are a far cry from the very tonally based compositions of his university years, whose English 'security' owed much to Vaughan Williams and Britten. Here Leighton establishes his own musical identity. The music is unmistakably Leighton from the very opening of the 'Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniensis'.

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- (1) Moger, P.J. 'The Organ Music of Kenneth Leighton: Studies in Style and Technique' dissertation, University of Oxford (1985).
 - (2) Cox, G.A. 'The Musical Language of Kenneth Leighton: Tonal coherence in two selected works'. dissertation, University of Queensland (1972).
 - (3) Leighton, K. 'The Composer Today'. Unpubl. text of a public lecture given in the University of Manchester, May 1972.
 - (4) see (2) above.

Chapter Two: Harmonic development - The years 1966-1978.

Solus ad victimam (1968)

The Second Service opus 62 (1971)

The Sarum Mass opus 66 (1972)

Lord, when the sense of Thy sweet Grace (1977)

Leighton's 'middle period' is stylistically more erratic. The consistent rhythmic interplay of the earlier works is now clouded by a desire to achieve darker, more complex harmony. Some works, such as 'ADVENTANTE DEO' (1970), and 'LAUDATE PUERI' (1973), are direct references back to the earlier period where counterpoint had the upper hand over harmony. Others, such as the 'MISSA BREVIS' (1967) and the 'THREE PSALMS' (1968) abandon melodic interplay for the most part in favour of intense harmonic dissonance (the 'Agnus Dei' from the 'MISSA BREVIS' being perhaps the best example). It is always the text that provokes Leighton's mood, so inevitably the Gloria retains its joyful vigour. The four works selected for analysis in this chapter represent a good cross section of the changing style.

SOLUS AD VICTIMAM (1968) Words: Peter Abelard (tr. H. Waddell).

Whilst not a remarkable piece in itself, 'Solus ad victimam' is significant in representing the culmination of the changes in Leighton's style. Here we see darker, more sombre harmony, with none of the rhythmic vigour of the earlier work. The grief-laden Good Friday text goes some way to explain this, as does the fact that, like the 'Communion Service in D', 'Solus ad victimam' is a commission that is intended to be within the reach of parish choirs.

The simplicity of the vocal parts is concealed by the strong harmony of the accompaniment. The first two lines of text, for example, are almost a symmetrical lyrical melody in D minor, yet the tonality of the accompaniment alters each bar as follows: D C C# B Bb F G D, creating the dark, empty atmosphere suggested by the text. Where the vocal parts are not in unison, their harmony is 'logical' and mostly homorhythmic.

Throughout the whole piece there is a feeling of mounting tension, and this is brought about by raising the tonal centre. The second verse of the text, 'For they are ours, O Lord', begins firmly in E minor - one tone higher than verse one. Half way through the verse (bar 34) Bb major is reached - a tritone away from E.

The third verse (bar 44) has a soft, unaccompanied opening, which echoes the first verse. Half way through, as the text becomes more optimistic ('Until the day break with the risen Christ'), the music begins to build once again, and only at the end of the final verse does Leighton's rhythmic obsession come to light on the word 'laughter'. The harmonic depth is underlined on the last sung note, a unison E, under which the organ plays

consecutively chords of E major, F major, Eb major, Db major, D major and C major, before the final triumphant E major chord ends the piece.

'Solus ad victimam' is a very intense piece, and Leighton's sensitive interpretation of the text illustrates his strong feeling for it. It is also a further example of how he adapts well to compositional restrictions.

THE SECOND SERVICE (MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS) op. 62 (1971).

Commissioned by the Cathedral Organists Association in memory of Brian Runnett, Kenneth Leighton's Second Service is without doubt his finest treatment of any liturgical text. After his responses it is the most widely sung of all his choral works, and one of the most frequently performed of all 20th century settings of the evening canticles.

The Second Service is a real treasure, showing remarkable treatment of the text. There is a new colour to Leighton's harmony here, a freshness that stands apart from his earlier works. The rhythmic intensity is perfectly balanced with the harmonic subtlety, creating a polished, well-structured composition.

The Magnificat builds out of a soft whole-tone scale in a slow, lilting 12/8 time (fig. 9). The sopranos begin with triadic shapes to their line, while the organ forges whole-tone clusters as a background. The tenors enter next with an exact imitation, one tone higher than the soprano line,

then the altos and finally the basses, all weaving their triadic shapes over the rising organ accompaniment.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for Soprano, the middle for Choir, and the bottom for Organ. The tempo is 'Lento espressivo ma anche ritmico (♩ = c 44)'. The Soprano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with some rests. The Choir part is marked 'legato' and provides a harmonic accompaniment. The Organ part is marked 'p Swell' and features a rhythmic accompaniment. The lyrics 'My soul doth magnify the Lord,' are written below the Soprano and Choir staves.

fig. 9: 'The Second Service' - Magnificat

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On reaching the word 'blessed' the organ pedals enter, plunging the accompaniment into a rhythmic frenzy from which it does not emerge until 'He remembering his mercy' (p. 11). Playing effectively 6/8 against the choir's 3/4, the choir and organ begin what amounts to a rhythmic shouting match! The almost cheeky syncopation on the word 'magnified' is achieved by shrinking the repeated four-note 'cell' by a quaver. Conversely, the repeated word 'Holy' (fig. 10) is extended harmonically to sustain interest over the repeated syncopation. The rhythmic figure is then broken down and transferred to the organ part, where it is used throughout page six as a staccato contrast to the legato unison vocal line.

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in a choral setting. Each staff begins with the instruction *subito p*. The lyrics are "Ho - - - - ly, ho - - - - ly". The music features a rising melodic line with a quaver rhythm, and the lyrics are spread across several bars with long dashes indicating sustained notes.

fig. 10: 'The Second Service' - Magnificat

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The proud are "scattered" quite thoroughly on page seven, to an almost elusive rhythmic figure, while the detached organ part concentrates on developing the rising quaver figure from the start of its ostinato shape. On page ten ('He hath filled the hungry with good things') the rising figure culminates in cluster chords, which scales down the rhythmic activity. A fresh organ ostinato figure in the fifth bar of page eleven marks the start of the closing section, with the altos starting an imitative series of rising triadic shapes based on the opening counterpoint.

There is a return to the opening material at the beginning of the Gloria, with the tenors and basses beginning in unison and creating a feeling of deep reverence with their soft flowing melody. This is the only Magnificat Gloria that I have found never to exceed a dynamic marking of 'mp', creating the intense feeling of awe for which Leighton was undoubtedly striving. The D minor organ chord which begins the 'world without end' section is the most unexpected, simple and subtle chord, opening up a whole new tonality for this infinite concept. Infinity is achieved through the descending melodic ostinato, and the diminished chord which it outlines, eventually coming to rest on a 7th chord of E major (fig. 11). Subtle dissonance and harmonic ambiguity precede the final organ resolution onto a chord of C# major.

The Nunc Dimittis has no thematic links with the Magnificat. It begins with the familiar branching out from a unison note and explores both unison and contrapuntal textures. The part-writing is less remarkable than in the Magnificat, though this is often the case with the Nunc Dimittis, where the text lends itself less to the device of word-painting. It is left to the accompaniment to provide the climax as it enters on the word 'Israel'. The Gloria briefly builds to 'f' after a characteristic second inversion major chord on the word 'Father', and the second Amen of the three is an interesting exercise in harmony with each successive interval in each part being tone then semitone.

Misterioso e sostenuto (ma ritmico)

Dec. *piu p*
world with - out end, world with - out end, world with -

Cant. *piu p*
world with - out end, world with - out end, world with - out end,

piu p
world with - out end, world with - out end, world with -

piu p
world with - out end, world with -

p
world with - out end,

pp
Swell

40.

- out end, world with - out end

world with - out end

- out end, world with - out end

- out end, world with - out end

world with - out end.

fig. 11: 'The Second Service' - Magnificat Gloria

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THE SARUM MASS op. 66 (1972)

The Sarum Mass was commissioned by the Southern Cathedrals Festival to the (then new) text of the Holy Communion Rite A ('series 3'), which is essentially a more modern translation of the traditional Latin texts used in the Communion. As well as the 'standard' movements, Leighton also set to music the 'sentences', such as the Gospel Responses, Eucharistic Prayer, and Dismissal, which are usually either spoken or sung to plainsong. The resulting setting, of twelve 'movements' for dividing SATB with organ, is vintage Leighton. The 'Creed' was not set, its textual length doubtless proving prohibitive to performance.

Most of the movements develop out of the characteristic unison opening notes and end on ambiguous chords. The imitation is disciplined, particularly in the 'Kyrie', 'Blessed is he' and 'Agnus Dei', and much is made of the traditional unison pairings of soprano and tenor, alto and bass. The 'Gloria', being the longest movement, provides a rich source of material for comparison:

The opening organ 'fanfare' (fig. 12) develops a small fragment (bar 1) into an extension (bar 3), which provides the rhythmic momentum for the movement. The opening vocal phrase (fig. 14) shows a similar marked syncopation, returning to its note of origin. Word-painting comes into play early on with a tranquil 'and peace to his people on earth', before a return to the opening rhythmic figure for 'Lord God, heavenly King...'. The middle section of the text (centred around 'have mercy upon us', pages 11 and 12) makes effective use of unison writing. Used well, unison creates a

forceful and expressive contrast to counterpoint, and here Leighton's expressive legato lines are matched well by the 'spiky' off-beat organ accompaniment. The rising phrase 'have mercy upon us' is made all the more imploring by a sudden switch from five flats into four sharps (effectively F# minor).

The ending, predictably perhaps for a 'Three Choirs' Gloria, is huge. The build begins on page 12 ('you take away the sin of the world'), and the dynamics never fall below 'f' in the final 52 bars of the movement. Much development is made of the opening rhythmic figure (see 'you alone are the Lord', 'Jesus Christ', 'Holy Spirit', and 'in the glory'). Leighton perhaps overindulges a little in the last phrase, where the words 'in the glory' are heard 17 separate times, the penultimate time fitting the words 'in the glory, glory, glory, glory' to the rhythmic figure! This, together with the final D major added sixth chord, points perhaps to Leighton's light-hearted interpretation of the 'new' text. It is interesting to note the comparison between the 'Gloria' rhythmic figure, and one from the final movement of the 'SEQUENCE FOR ALL SAINTS' (1977). (fig 13).



fig. 12: 'The Sarum Mass' - Gloria



fig. 13: 'Sequence for All Saints' - Finale

The 'Sanctus' and inconsistently titled 'Blessed is he' are both typical of Leighton's style, the former with its lilting 6/8 swing, and the latter with its thoughtful unison bass opening, forming the basis of an imitative 'competition' between rising major seventh and rising octave.

The 'Agnus Dei' highlights Leighton's love of the minor 2nd/unison dissonance, which he had explored to great effect in the same movement of the 'MISSA BREVIS' (1967). The organ introduction here bears close parallels with that of the 'Nunc Dimittis' from the 'SECOND SERVICE' (1971) with its weaving of minor 9ths and major 7ths around the bass note. Both introductions resolve onto a bare 5th from doubly suspended minor 6ths and minor 9ths, in each case the 9th resolving first. Each monorhythmic call, 'Jesus, Lamb of God', 'Jesus, bearer of our sins', and 'Jesus, redeemer of the world' is followed by a contrasting imitative plea, 'Have mercy upon us', and 'give us your peace'. The movement resolves onto a 'clean' major chord; as so often in Leighton's masses, the only movement to do so.

The musical score for 'The Sarum Mass' - Gloria features five vocal parts: Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 'Glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry, glo - ry'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* and *mf*, and various musical notations like slurs, accents, and fermatas.

fig. 14: 'The Sarum Mass' - Gloria

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The Sarum Mass was Leighton's first 'festival' commission, and placed different demands on the composer, which were well met. A 'festival' composition is, by its nature, 'big' in many different senses, not just volume and vocal scoring. Where the 'SECOND SERVICE' (1971) relied on harmonic subtlety for its drive, the 'Sarum Mass' uses more rhythmic momentum, coupled with harsher, barer dissonance. Gone are the flowing quavers and crotchets of earlier accompaniments. Here, instead, are jolting syncopations and rests. There is much more 'air' in the piece, and this only adds to the rhythmic intensity.

The fact that this work was only published in 1991 points to the continuing demand for music of this quality. Leighton's affinity with the 'festival' choral composition was underlined with later compositions, 'LAUDATE PUERI' (1973), for the Norwich Three Choirs Festival, and the 'SEQUENCE FOR ALL SAINTS' (1977), for the West Riding Cathedrals' Festival.

LORD, WHEN THE SENSE OF THY SWEET GRACE (1977) Words: Richard Crashaw.

A large proportion of Leighton's unaccompanied choral music is scored for soprano solo with SATB chorus, 'Lord when the sense of Thy sweet grace' being a fine example of this specific 'genre'. It is the last of three compositions written for Ampleforth Abbey during the mid-seventies, and is, by Leighton's standards, unremarkable.

For the greater part of the piece the chorus provides a homophonic backdrop for the expressive solo line, though it is occasionally allowed florid

imitation of its own. In common with all of Leighton's choral music, there is extensive word-painting here. The word 'die' is forced through painful chromatic imitation, expansive running quavers engulf the word 'delicious' almost to the point of over-indulgence. A brutal false relation on the word 'desire' is followed by a major-minor ambiguity on the word 'death', being exactly the same chord (transposed) as on the word 'death' in 'EVENING HYMN' (1979).

Word-painting is implied in the harmony too, most notably in the central phrase, 'though still I die, I live again', where the music moves strikingly from B minor to F major. Where a point is worked through imitation (such as 'Still longing so to be still slain' - beginning bar 49), it is thorough, though here the point is rather static. The section beginning in bar 74 ('still live in me this loving strife') is something of a rhythmic oddity: building cluster chords on a fast one-in-a-bar lilt, and the piece closes rather strangely in G major, a key to which the music had made no previous reference.

'Lord when the sense...' is the only of Leighton's works to be published by Hinshaw Music, Inc. USA, and comes from the curious period 1974-78 when only two of his works were printed by Novello, his main publisher. The Oxford University Press aside, the rest of the material is published by a variety of companies. It comes from Leighton's erratic 'middle-period', when he was working with thicker, darker harmonies. It is hard to believe that it comes from the same year as the 'SEQUENCE FOR ALL SAINTS', with its balanced structure, expressive solo writing, and lively, bubbling counterpoint.

Chapter Three: Culmination of Style - The years 1979-1988.

Evening Hymn (1979)

Awake my Glory opus 79 (1979)

What love is this of thine? (1985)

The beauty of Holiness (1988)

EVENING HYMN (1979) Words: Sir Thomas Browne.

'Evening Hymn' is scored for divisi SATB with soprano solo, and was written for the Chichester Festival in 1979. The original sketches show that Leighton wrestled a considerable time with the first few bars before achieving his goal of a mystic, distant opening (fig. 14). In common with many of his other motets, this begins and grows out of a single note, forging chord clusters out of which the solo line emerges. The wandering tonality first comes to rest on a 2nd inversion major chord on the word 'light', the opening section concluding on a major chord with added sharpened 4th.

resolving suspension on the word 'securely', and more literal word-painting with the rather rare device of 'glissando' on the word 'sleeping' (bar 100).

The poet's final yearning 'Oh! come that hour, when I shall never sleep again, but wake forever' could not be more justly expressed than here, resolving onto the most gorgeous, perfectly spaced chord of D major.

'Evening Hymn' marks a step forward for Leighton, with some quite extraordinary harmonic colouring, particularly at the beginning of the piece. Rhythmic vitality is not as much in evidence principally because the triple time in the fugal section lends itself more to a gentle lilt than to marked syncopation. It has much in common with his other motets, both in vocal scoring and structure - a lively contrapuntal middle section sandwiched by two expressive softer sections.

AWAKE MY GLORY opus 79 (1979) Words: Christopher Smart.

'Awake my Glory' is a piece of consistent quality. It sees a return to vibrant counterpoint, tempered by the harmonic insight of the 'middle-period' compositions. Throughout this large-scale piece there is a feeling that Leighton is always in control: the imitation is strict, the harmony logical, and the motivic development well-structured. If there is one piece that marks the final blossoming of Leighton's style, then this is it.

From the very first bars there is the feeling of awakening. The organ introduction is suggestive of something that has lain dormant for years, stirring to life again. Again the interval of a minor 2nd is crucial in achieving just the right shade of harmonic colour. The angular swell solo brings the piece to life, leaping and plunging through major 7ths and 9ths. The note values shorten as the tessitura rises, creating new tone colours from the higher registers.

A soprano solo emerges from the dissonance with a rising figure, which is then extended from a fifth to an octave in its repeat (fig. 15). A 'molto ritmico' syncopated organ motif (fig. 16), is first extended to span the major 7th, before being fragmented and used as the rhythmic drive over which the opening alto imitative figure is worked (fig. 17). This figure has a certain 'bluesy' quality on account of its marked syncopation, and its rising through a diminished triad (D F Ab initially). Both the soprano solo figure, with its rising semiquavers, and the alto figure, are worked together with the tenor and bass entry adding to the growing 'awakening', throughout which the organ continues its relentless syncopation.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'SOPRANO SOLO' and contains a melodic line with lyrics 'A-wake my glo - ry,'. The bottom staff contains a similar melodic line with lyrics 'a - wake my glo - ry,'. Both staves use treble clefs and show a rising melodic line with semiquaver notes.

Fig. 15: 'Awake my Glory'

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piu mosso, molto ritmico *simile*

mp brilliant and clear, staccatissimo

27

fig. 16: 'Awake my Glory'

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ALTO *mf molto ritmico*

A - wake my glo ry.

fig. 17: 'Awake my Glory'

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After a fierce climax in bar 44 (ending on chord C E B F#), there is a release in the tension with a gentle imitated figure ('my lute and harp myself shall wake'), followed by a short burst of harmonic expansiveness (bars 55-62) which recalls the infinite 'world without end' section of the 'SECOND SERVICE' (1971).

The next line of text, 'Soon as the stately night-exploding bird' cries out to be set to a highly rhythmic syncopated point, and Leighton does not disappoint, exploiting the natural 6/8 rhythm of the words to marvellous effect. The organ part, with its instruction "very dry, bird-like", must have raised a dry smile as it flowed from Leighton's pen, for as well as being 'cheeky', it is perfectly bird-like (fig. 18). As the right hand rattles away, the left hand provides the tonal stability with held cluster

chords, centered initially on Eb, and moving up to F as a 2-bar ostinato figure is established (bars 80-93).



fig. 18: 'Awake my Glory'

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As soon as this figure is exhausted, Leighton plunges into a fresh set of entries ('in lively lay') which are as rhythmic as the previous ones. Here tension is increased by the repetition of short figures moving in contrary motion in pairs, soprano and alto, tenor and bass.

Bar 127 marks the beginning of the central section of the piece, with the introduction of a short 'busy' running quaver figure in the organ. This is developed over the next 50 bars beneath the unison choir 'hymn'. There is a strong contrast between choir and organ here. The increase in tension is well controlled by the gradual rising of the 'central' note for each phrase. Here Leighton divides the sopranos, and gives the upper part the characteristic embellishments and flowing quaver sections which keep the texture varied and the harmony bright.

The unison bond is broken in bar 154, and a short imitated figure in bar 158 ('all hail!') pushes tension to the limit with a distorted minor 7th chord. The further 'hymn' section after the majestic organ interjection has

a 'pagan' feel to it, derived from the use of unison and exploitation of the minor third.

The organ recapitulation in bar 196 is approximate, and is based a major 3rd higher. A long pedal C contradicts the vocal tonality, which centres around D in its expansive extension of the opening rising figure, ultimately rising through a 10th (soprano, bars 206-7). After the voices scale the figure back down, the organ cadences into a soft chord of C major to end the piece.

'Awake my Glory' is a well-structured piece with clearly defined sections. One always feels comfortable with the tonality, and this to me defines a 'solid' composition. Here there is no dissonance simply for dissonance's sake. Everything is justified and logical. Whereas, for example, the final major resolution of 'LORD, WHEN THE SENSE OF THY SWEET GRACE' springs out of ambiguity rather uncomfortably, here the final major chord fits perfectly. It is clear that Leighton is always aware of tonality, and in his later works is drawn more and more to the major conclusion.

The working sketches for 'Awake my Glory' provide an interesting insight into the composer's mind, and a close study and transcription reveal a number of interesting details regarding Leighton's compositional method, the most obvious of which is how instinctive the process must have been to him. I remember reading in the Edinburgh University 'Student' newspaper an interview with Kenneth Leighton by one of his students. Asked how he went about the process of composition, he replied, with Caesarean brevity, "I start, I go on, I finish". I can remember puzzling at the concept of

instinctively 'through-composing' a piece the size of 'Awake my Glory'. Even a glance at the '1st sketch' shows that this is exactly how Leighton went about the task.

The 12 sheets of 18-stave paper are written on unfolded (effectively using a double-sheet at a time). Each double-sheet is numbered at the top and the sketch can be quite easily followed in chronological order. There are often whole bars crossed out, yet the proportion of the 'finished product' visible in the first sketch is staggering. Of particular note is the complex contrapuntal section from bars 80-128, where only seven single notes are changed from the first draft to the final version.

There are fascinating instances in the opening pages of the first sketch, where Leighton was obviously composing at the piano with the music stand up, as he had when marking pupils' counterpoint exercises. As so often happened, the ink in his biro would run away from the nib, because of the upward angle of the pen, and become fainter on the manuscript. Then he would pick up a different pen and use this until the same thing happened. When sketching the opening organ bars he had a black biro and a blue biro, with the result that in many cases of crossing out, it is easy to distinguish which thoughts came first, and how they were subsequently altered. Fig. 19 shows the various stages of the development of the opening bars of 'Awake my Glory'; fig. 19a the first sketch, fig. 19b the second sketch, fig. 19c the 'original score', and fig. 19d the published version. All four are shrunk to fit A4 paper.

lento *ed in pace liberamente*

mp

(Swell)

Solo *in pace liberamente*

fig. 19a: 'Awake my Glory' - first sketch

(great) *mistakeno*

lento sostenuto - ~~...~~ ...

mp

(Solo-swell) (liberamente)

fig. 19b: 'Awake my Glory' - second sketch

Lento Sostenuto e Misterioso

(Great) *mp*

(Man.)

(Swell-Solo) *un poco liberamente* *mp*

This image shows a handwritten musical score for the organ part of 'Awake my Glory'. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is marked 'Lento Sostenuto e Misterioso' and includes dynamics '(Great)' and '(Man.)'. The second system is marked '(Swell-Solo) un poco liberamente' and includes the dynamic 'mp'. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

fig. 19c: 'Awake my Glory' - original score

AWAKE MY GLORY

Christopher Smart
1722-1771

Kenneth Leighton
Opus 79

Lento sostenuto e misterioso

ORGAN

mp *Gt*

This image shows the published edition of the organ part for 'Awake my Glory'. It features three staves in 2/4 time. The first two staves are marked 'ORGAN' and 'mp Gt'. The notation is clean and follows standard musical notation conventions.

Sw solo
un poco liberamente
mp

This image shows the published edition of the organ part for 'Awake my Glory', continuing from the previous system. It features three staves. The first staff is marked 'Sw solo un poco liberamente mp'. The notation includes various note values and rests.

fig. 19d: 'Awake my Glory' - published edition

The sketches can tell us many different things about the composition. The relevance of their study can of course be questioned, as the information they give is essentially the composer's original (discarded, and therefore inferior) ideas. Yet by studying these we can learn why the finished version was superior to the original, and therefore what he thought was good writing, and what bad. In most cases it is obvious; a more syncopated rhythm, a better text underlay, or even a mis-reading of the text, as occurred in bars 48-53 where the original sketch had 'myself shall awake' instead of 'myself shall wake'. As this occurred on an imitated point, it was necessary to change the underlay in five separate instances.

We can see that the soprano solo (bars 57-62) was added as an afterthought, as it is squashed into the sketch between two systems, and not included in the original stave grouping. It is also apparent that the figure beginning in bar 71 ('Soon as the stately...') originally had no dotted crotchet, and began with three quavers, as the word 'soon' appears half way through the bar in each case. In retrospect it is easy to see why Leighton opted for the latter, more syncopated version.

The alto line in bar 46 ('my lute and harp...') was originally allotted to the sopranos, before Leighton decided that the next entry would fit better above than below the original. None of the quaver rests in the organ part at bars 188-193 were in the first sketch. Their addition adds much to the articulation. The tenor entry in bar 80 was originally pencilled in a fourth higher for the sopranos.

Leighton has his own sketch language, which inevitably makes use of abbreviation. Where two parts are in unison, only one is written. Hence, when it appears that there is no tenor part in the sketch for bars 159-160, this is because it is in unison with the soprano. Ostinato figures are sometimes abbreviated to a number, as in the case of the organ part in bars 86-92. At first I was baffled by the number '4', but realised later that it must represent the 4-note ostinato in the left hand.

There is a wealth of information to be gleaned from the sketches, not least the harmonic alterations, from changing one accidental to altering a whole chord, enough material in fact to constitute a Ph D thesis. What I have done is to merely dip into the manuscripts to study one piece in detail, and to note the major alterations from first sketch to original score.

WHAT LOVE IS THIS OF THINE? (1985) Words: Edward Taylor.

'What love is this of thine?' was to be the last motet Kenneth Leighton would write, and is dedicated to Dr. Dennis Townhill in recognition of 25 years' service as organist of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh. It was first performed in St. Mary's on October 5 1986, conducted by the composer, and taking the organist completely by surprise, as the choir had secretly rehearsed it with the assistant organist and the composer. It is no coincidence that the opening line of text (chosen by Leighton) could refer equally to the love of God (as in the poem) and to the dedication of Dr. Townhill.

The motet represents the peak of Leighton's choral writing, with more subtle, refined harmonies than ever before, a better control of tension and climax, and separate 'movements' which flow into and grow out of each other, creating a more unified whole. Again we have the expressive soprano line supported by homophonic ATB writing at the words 'infinity and finity conjoined' (fig. 20), with the strong cross-relation of F# and F natural between alto and tenor. Again we have the 'Leightonesque' chords - the 2nd inversion major chord on 'confined', and, even now, the root position major chord mid-piece ('making it its bride'). The faster middle section leaves little to the imagination, and Leighton seizes the opportunity offered by the text: 'filling heaven to the brim! O'er running it, all running o'er' is a furious mass of running quavers which builds and builds, pausing only once for breath on the bare 5th chord 'Nay' (bar 36), and reaching a massive discordant climax on the words 'that there our veins might through thy person bleed'.

The musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is the soprano line, marked 'un poco piu intenso' and 'un poco' with a dynamic of *mp*. The lyrics under the soprano are: 'Un - less it in thy ve - ry per - son see - In - fi - ni - ty, and fi - ni - ty'. The second staff is the alto line, marked 'un poco' and *p*. The lyrics are: 'In - fi - ni - ty, in - fi - ni - ty, and fi - ni - ty'. The third staff is the tenor line, marked *p*. The lyrics are: 'In - fi - ni - ty, in - fi - ni - ty, and fi - ni - ty'. The bottom staff is the bass line, marked *p*. The lyrics are: 'In - fi - ni - ty, in - fi - ni - ty, and fi - ni - ty'. The music features a mix of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests and ties.

fig. 20: 'What love is this of thine?'

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Here Leighton's genius shines, with masterful counterpoint incorporating striking passing dissonances - most notably in bar 44, where a Gb, F and Fb meet briefly for a crotchet. (fig. 21).

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics. The lyrics are: "might through thy per-son bleed To quench those flames that might bleed, might bleed, might bleed, to quench those flames, those flames that might bleed, might bleed, to quench those flames, those flames". The score is in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a common time signature. The music features complex counterpoint and passing dissonances, particularly in bar 44 as mentioned in the text.

fig. 21: 'What love is this of thine?'

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The middle section ('O that thy love might overflow my heart') is set homorhythmically, making use of rich harmony. Again, Leighton's effortless treatment of the text shows his deep affinity for it, and brings to mind the comments of William Byrd in the introduction to his Gradualia (1605): "as one meditates upon the sacred words... the right notes, in some inexplicable manner, suggest themselves quite spontaneously" (translated).

After the mystic falling crotchets of bars 60-68 comes the declamatory plea 'Lord, blow the coal. Thy love inflame in me.' As with the Evening Hymn, Leighton really shines at the end of the piece with a beseeching baritone solo, and the final peaceful resolution onto D major (fig. 22).

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'What love is this of thine?'. It consists of five vocal parts and a solo part. The lyrics are: 'Thy love in - flame in me.' and 'Thy love in - flame in me.'. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (pp, poco, fff, mf, p), articulation (div), and performance instructions (Solo!).

fig. 22: 'What love is this of thine?'

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In common with many of his later works, 'What love is this of thine?' shows Leighton striving for a pure tonality, and the result is a much smoother piece. Even in the contrapuntal sections the notes flow more easily; the dissonances seem easier on the ear, and the major chords seem so much sweeter. It is difficult to write unaccompanied music in eight parts, and yet Leighton makes light work of it, treating each part separately to create a rich tapestry of sound.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS (1988) Words: Psalm 96.

This song of celebration was to be the last piece Leighton would complete before his illness and untimely death in 1988. It follows on from the joyful rhythms of the last two mass settings ('MISSA SANCTI PETRI', 1987, and 'MISSA CHRISTI', 1988), both of which combine lyrical counterpoint with thoughtful harmony, the Gloria from 'MISSA SANCTI PETRI' being the best example.

'The beauty of holiness' begins in classic Leighton fashion, with a small figure of two notes, which is repeated and extended, then treated contrapuntally. There is expressive imitation on page 4 in the lyrical phrase 'sing unto the Lord, bless his name'. The major 7th chord continues to have importance in the harmonic structure (see 'idols', p.9 for example), and is also used in its inversion (minor 2nd) to achieve dissonance.

The central section ('O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness') employs a beautifully simple solo melody, the organ providing the momentum with off-beat stresses. (fig. 23):

The musical score for 'The beauty of holiness' consists of two staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, marked *mp*. The lyrics are: 'O wor - ship the Lord in the beau - ty of ho - li - ness'. The melody is simple and features a prominent two-note figure. The bottom staff is an organ accompaniment in bass clef, providing harmonic support with off-beat stresses. The organ part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a steady momentum.

fig. 23: 'The beauty of holiness'

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The following section, (p. 13), also in 6/4 time, makes use of very strong rhythmic figures, with syncopation not overdone. There is a characteristic shift from sharps to flats with the line 'Let the sea roar'. The solo line returns with its simple beauty in the final section. Unharmonized it could as well belong to Stanford as Leighton, and the harmonies Leighton does provide are almost uncharacteristic in their sweet tonality. The organ accompaniment flows as the piece builds to its triumphant finish, the final

words, 'Bow down before him all the earth', being set with an impressive magnitude, and ending on a massive ambiguous chord of D# major with added major 7th, 9th, and 11th. (fig. 24):

The musical score consists of four vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are arranged in two pairs. The lyrics are: "all the earth, the earth." The score includes dynamic markings such as *fff* and *poco allarg.*, and a *lunga* marking at the end. The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure, including a massive ambiguous chord of D# major with added major 7th, 9th, and 11th at the end.

fig. 24: 'The beauty of Holiness'

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CONCLUSION:

If there is a general misconception about Leighton's sacred choral music, it is that it is "all the same". Yet, in the same dismissive way Mozart's string quartets or Byrd's Latin motets can be lumped together. A composer writing a lot of music for specific scorings is bound to achieve similarity, consciously or unconsciously.

Leighton has a unique lyrical style which stands apart from his contemporaries, and much of this looks back to 16th century England for its inspiration. His use of imitation is avid, and word-painting similarly keen. His later works show a move towards stronger cadences and tonic resolutions, almost as if he had been deliberately resisting the gravitational pull of tonality, but gradually realised he had to give in.

Leighton's faith shaped his music. Religion is inherent in his searching harmonies, as if striving to find God in the perfect chord. His interpretation of the metaphysical poets shows a deep insight rooted in his dextrous mind. In terms of consistent quality, Leighton is probably the most significant British composer of Church Music since the war. The popularity of his works is widespread, and the continued availability of almost all of his 'back catalogue' is indicative of its continued enjoyment.

As long as there are churches and choirs Kenneth Leighton will be there too. The music of this inspired man speaks for him, of a depth of soul, of a playful sense of humour, and of a fundamental love of God.

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KENNETH LEIGHTON:

A COMPLETE CATALOGUE OF THE SACRED CHORAL WORKS.

1. Three Carols: (Dec. 1948)
 1. Lully, Lulla SATB (pub. Novello)
 2. The seven joys of Mary SATB + S & T soli
 3. Sleep, Holy babe SATB

2. The Twelve days of Christmas (Dec. 1948)
SATB

3. Pater Noster (Aug. 1949)
SATB, Words: English

4. Missa Brevis (Aug 1949)
SATB [Kyrie SSAATTBB, Gloria S solo, SATB]

5. Communion [arrangement?] (1951?)
Kyrie, Creed, Sanctus + Benedictus, Agnus Dei
Unison melody (Marbecke) with keyboard accomp. [by Leighton?]

6. Three Carols Opus 25 (1948-56)
 1. The Star song
 2. Lully Lulla (see 1, above)
 3. An ode to the birth of Christ our Saviour[no. 2 published by Novello in "Sing Nowell" and "The Novello book of Carols"]

7. A Christmas Carol Opus 21 (1953)
Bar solo, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: Robert Herrick

8. Nativitie (1956)
SATB (pub. Carl Fischer, USA)
Words: John Donne

9. **God's Grandeur (Motet)** (1957)
SSAATTBB (pub. Novello)
Words: Gerard Manley Hopkins

10. **Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniensis)** (1959)
SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Commissioned by Bernard Rose and the Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford.

11. **A Hymn of the Nativity** (1960)
S solo, SATB (pub. Novello)
Words: Richard Crashaw

12. **Drop, Drop Slow Tears from Opus 38** (1961)
SATB (pub. Novello)
Words: Phineas Fletcher

13. **Crucifixus Pro Nobis Opus 38** (1961)
Cantata for T (or S) solo, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: Patrick Casey and Phineas Fletcher
Composed for David Lumsden and the Choir of New College, Oxford.

14. **Alleluia, Amen (Festival Anthem)** (1961)
Bar solo, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: From the Revelation of St. John
Commissioned for the 50th anniversary of St. Nicholas' Parish Church,
Coventry 1962.

15. **Give me the Wings of Faith** (1962)
S + Bar soli, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: Isaac Watts
Commissioned for the Patronal Festival of the Church of St. John the
Baptist, Leytonstone, London, June 1962.

16. Missa Sancti Thomae Opus 40 (1962)
Soloists, SSATBB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: 1662 Book of Common Prayer
Commissioned by the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral and dedicated to St. Thomas Beckett to mark the 800th anniversary of his consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162.
17. O Leave your Sheep (arrangement) (1962)
S solo, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: Old French Carol
Commissioned by Novello for the collection "Sing Nowell".
18. Te Deum Laudamus (1964)
S + Bar soli, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Commissioned for the Festival Service in honour of St. Cecilia at the Church of St. Sepulchre, Holborn, London on November 24 1964.
19. Wassail all over the Town (arrangement) (1964)
S solo, SATB (pub. Novello)
Gloucestershire Wassail arranged for the collection "Sir Christemas".
20. Preces and Responses (1964)
SSATB (pub. Novello)
Written for Dennis Townhill and the Choir of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh.
21. Mass Opus 44 (1964)
Soloists, SATB/SATB, organ (Credo only) (pub. Novello, formerly OUP)
Words: Latin Mass
Written for Herrick Bunney and the Edinburgh University Singers.
22. Two Single Chants (1965)
for Psalm 99
Written for the Border Cathedrals' Festival.

23. Communion Service in D Opus 45 (1965)
 Unison voices, optional SATB, organ (pub. OUP for Church Music Society)
 Words: 1662 Book of Common Prayer
 Commissioned by the Church Music Society.
24. Let all the World in Every Corner Sing (1965)
 SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
 Commissioned by Michael Nicholas and the Choir of St. Matthew's Church,
 Northampton.
25. O be Joyful in the Lord (Jubilate Deo) (1966)
 SATB, organ (pub. OUP)
 Commissioned by the Oxford University Press.
26. Morning Canticles (Jubilate Deo, Te Deum, Venite) (1966)
 Unison voices and/or SATB and organ (pub. Novello)
 Words: The revised Psalter
 Commissioned for the Centenary Thanksgiving Service of Monkton Combe
 School.
27. Lift up your Heads O ye Gates (1966)
 SATB (pub. Novello)
 Commissioned by Christ's Hospital, Horsham for a Service of
 Thanksgiving.
28. Quam Dilecta (Motet) (1967)
 S solo, SATB (pub. Novello)
 Words: Psalm 84
29. Missa Brevis Opus 50 (1967)
 SATB (pub. Novello)
 Words: English
 For the Choir of Liverpool Cathedral.

30. Three Psalms Opus 54 (1968)
Soloists, male chorus (or 5 solo voices) (pub. Novello)
Words: Psalms 42, 23, 149 and 98
31. Solus ad victimam (1968)
SATB, organ (pub. OUP)
Words: Peter Abelard (trans. Helen Waddell)
Commissioned by OUP for book 1 of "Anthems for Choirs".
32. An Easter Sequence Opus 55 (1968)
Boys' or female voices, organ, trumpet (pub. OUP)
Words: Liturgical and Psalm 23
Commissioned by the Berkshire Boy Choristers.
33. Five Hymn Tunes (1969-70)
1. Dumoon (Most glorious Lord of life)
2. Mayfield (Christ who knows all his sheep)
3. Colinton (O Christ, who sinless art alone)
4. Blackford (Teach me to serve thee, Lord)
5. Headington (Lover of souls!)
(pub. OUP)
Commissioned for "The Church Hymnary 3rd Edition".
34. Gloria in Excelsis (1969)
Unison voices, organ (pub. OUP in "Church Hymnary 3rd Edition")
Commissioned for "The Church Hymnary 3rd Edition".
35. Adventante Deo (1970)
SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
Words: John Addington Symonds
Commissioned by David Patrick and the Choir of Barnet Parish Church.
36. Of a Rose is all my Song (Christmas Carol) (1970)
S solo, SATB (pub. OUP)
Words: Medieval English

37. The Second Service (Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis) Opus 62 (1971)
 SSATB, organ (pub. OUP)
 Commissioned by the Cathedral Organists' Association ~~in memoriam~~
 Brian Runnett.
38. The Sarum Mass Opus 66 (1972)
 Soloists, SSAATTBB, organ (pub. Novello)
 Words: Anglican Rite, Series 3
 Commissioned by the Southern Cathedrals' Festival, 1973.
39. Sanctus, Benedictus and Memorial Acclamation (1973)
 Congregation (unison), SATB, organ (pub. Geoffrey Chapman)
 Commissioned by Geoffrey Chapman for "Sing the Mass".
40. Mass for Ampleforth Opus 67 (1973)
 Unison voices, SATB, organ (pub. Ampleforth Abbey)
 Words: Roman Catholic Vernacular
 Commissioned by Ampleforth Abbey.
41. Laudate Pueri Opus 68 (1973)
 Three choirs (pub. Novello)
 Words: Psalm 112 (Vulgate)
 Commissioned by the Norwich Triennial Festival.
42. A Hymn to the Trinity (1974)
 SSATB (pub. OUP in book 4 of "Anthems for Choirs")
 Words: Anon
 Written for Mairi Rolland and the Kinghorn Singers to celebrate their
 21st anniversary.
43. O Sacrum Convivium (1975)
 Motet for S solo, SS, organ (pub. Basil Ramsay)
 For the boys of Ampleforth.
44. Sequence for All Saints Opus 75 (1977)
 Bar Solo, SATB, congregation, organ (pub. Roberton)

Words: English Hymnal no. 731

Commissioned by the West Riding Cathedrals' Festival.

45. Lord, when the Sense of Thy Sweet Grace (1977)

S solo, SATB (pub. Hinshaw Music, USA)

Words: Richard Crashaw

Commissioned by Ampleforth Abbey for the Schola Cantorum of Ampleforth.

46. An Evening Hymn (1979)

S solo, SATB (pub. Novello)

Words: Sir Thomas Browne

Commissioned by the Chichester Festival.

47. Awake my Glory Opus 79 (1979)

S solo, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)

Words: Christopher Smart

Commissioned for its centenary by the Cathedral Church of St. Mary, Edinburgh.

48. Missa Cornelia Opus 81 (1979)

SSA, organ (pub. Novello)

Words: Roman Catholic Vernacular

Commissioned by St. Leonard's-Mayfield School.

49. Two Anglican Chants (1982)

Written for the Chamber Choir of Kingston Polytechnic.

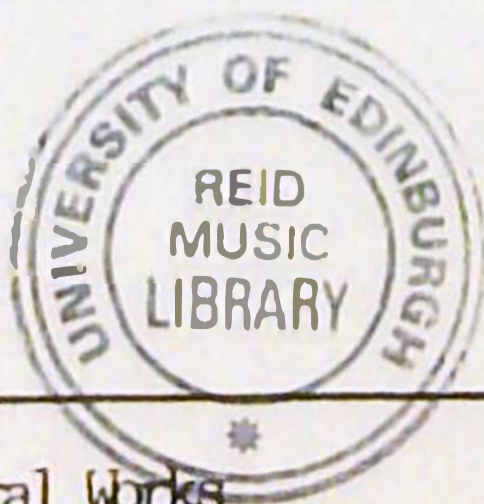
50. Fanfare on Newtown (1983)

2 Brass Quartets, small SATB chorus, organ (unpub.)

Words: William Cowper ('God moves in a mysterious way')

Commissioned by the University of Edinburgh for its 400th anniversary.

51. **The World's Desire (A Sequence for Epiphany) Opus 91 (1984)**
 Soloists, SATB, organ, congregation ad lib. (pub. Novello)
 Words: New Testament, Russian Orthodox Liturgy, Bishop R. Heber,
 Richard Crashaw, G.K. Chesterton.
 Commissioned by the BBC.
52. **What Love is this of Thine? (Motet) (1985)**
 SSAATTBB (pub. Novello)
 Words: Edward Taylor
 Commissioned by the Provost of St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral,
 Edinburgh to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dennis Townhill as
 Organist and Master of the Choristers.
53. **Missa Sancti Petri (1987)**
 STB soli, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
 Words: Anglican Liturgy Rite B
 Commissioned by Peterborough Cathedral for its 750th anniversary.
54. **Missa Christi (1988)**
 STB soli, SATB, organ (pub. Novello)
 Words: American Episcopal Liturgy
 Commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis for its 150th
 year.
55. **The Beauty of Holiness (Festival Anthem) (1988)**
 SATB, mezzo-S solo (or choir of boys and/or girls), organ (pub.
 Novello)
 Words: Psalm 96
 Commissioned by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians for the
 Bicentennial Celebration of the Presbyterian Church in America.



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