‘For all music is singing’:
A Critical Analysis of the Mass Settings of Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

including a stylistic overview of Kenneth Leighton’s choral music

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List of abbreviations:

ASB	-	Alternative Service Book
BCP	-	Book of Common Prayer
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
OUP	-	Oxford University Press
RAM	-	Royal Academy of Music
LRAM	-	Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music
QEGS	-	Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (Wakefield)

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List of musical sources:

All music is by Kenneth Leighton unless otherwise stated.

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Dedication:

To Michael Williams, who encouraged and engaged with my youthful curiosity about music.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Of the moderate amount of published material on Kenneth Leighton's music, the bio-bibliography by Carolyn Smith still remains the most significant single volume.[1] Its collection of relevant quotes from musical journals is extremely useful; however Smith's index of Leighton's works is rather unclear and suffers from many inaccuracies. The biography itself is rather facile, whilst useful in attempting to capture a complete picture of Leighton's compositional output and life, it does not attempt to analyse or engage with the music. Certainly for detail on Leighton's earlier years, it is superseded by Adam Binks' doctoral thesis – which focuses on Leighton's stylistic development in his first thirty years.[2] Binks has also compiled a complete catalogue of Leighton's works which is more comprehensive and also corrects numerous errors that occur in Smith's.

Binks' work is a much more thorough examination of Leighton's work and includes a substantial amount of biographical detail as well as analysis. It provides an invaluable insight into Leighton's early life and career, and his influences up to 1960. It is worth noting that although Leighton did not write a large volume of church music in this period, some of his best-known works do come from this time such as the setting of the Coventry Carol and the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for Magdalen College, Oxford. This means that Binks' thesis primarily charts the development of

[1] Smith, Carolyn (2004). *Kenneth Leighton. A Bio-Bibliography*. Praegar, Westport.
[2] Binks, Adam (2007). *The Development of Kenneth Leighton's Musical Style 1929-1960 and a complete catalogue of his compositions from 1929-1988*. Doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh.

Leighton's instrumental music and identifies the emergence of his mature compositional style.

There are numerous smaller theses and articles that focus on Leighton. Bruce Gladstone has also produced a thesis which looks at some of Leighton's music from a critical perspective.[3] Gladstone's thesis only runs to 157 pages and uses a selective range of well-known pieces as representative works but nonetheless does insightfully draw attention to some key features of Leighton's writing. The majority of these smaller academic studies however do not engage with Leighton's wider output.

In addition, there are a number of articles, CD liner notes and books which examine some aspect of Leighton's choral music – either studying specific pieces or giving an overview within a larger topic (such as Martin Thomas' *English Cathedral Music & Liturgy in the 20th Century*). Whilst these are useful, there is no substantial volume of in-depth analysis or criticism looking at Kenneth Leighton's role in the canon of the English choral tradition. In some volumes there is a noticeable lack of discussion of the significance of Leighton – most notably perhaps is the positive but rather cursory paragraph that appears in Erik Routley's volume *Twentieth Century Church Music*, although it being written in 1964 Routley could be forgiven – but it seems that an understanding of Leighton's importance is certainly not universal.[4] Nick Strimple's *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* also fails to give Leighton more than a small paragraph (and, oddly, in the section on Scottish composers of choral music).[5] Despite this, it remains true that Leighton's works are some of the more-

[3] Gladstone, Bruce Edward (1999). *A style analysis of the choral music of Kenneth Leighton using representative works*. Doctoral thesis, University of Illinois.
[4] Routley, Erik (1964). *Twentieth Century Church Music*. Herbert Jenkins, London. p.75.
[5] Strimple, Nick (2002). *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*. Amadeus, Portland. p.94.

often performed of even significant twentieth century composers like Howells and Vaughan Williams. John Patton's survey, *A Century of Cathedral Music* gives a glimpse into the adoption of Leighton's two evening canticles into the mainstream repertoire with the *Magdalen Service* being performed in 40% of surveyed cathedrals in 1986 growing to 48% in 1998; similarly the *Second Service* from 21% to 43% in the same corresponding surveys.[6] Patton's survey serves as a useful indication, albeit it a limited one – the most recent survey being over two decades ago. Admittedly the trend is less pronounced for Leighton's anthems (which, from looking at Patton's survey seems quite usual for other, comparable composers) but even there the statistics point towards a growing popularity.[7]

* * *

As the principal aim of this thesis is analytical, the music itself is the primary source of material. Fortunately, nearly the entirety of Leighton's work is published and remains in print and the Leighton archive in the special collections of the University of Edinburgh Library is well-maintained.

[6] Patton, John (2000). *A Century of Cathedral Music 1898-1998*. Patton, Winchester. p.141.
[7] Patton (2000). pp.69-70.

‘For all music is singing’:

A Critical Analysis of the Mass Settings of Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

PART ONE:

A Stylistic Overview of Kenneth Leighton’s Choral Music

INTRODUCTION

Leighton's *Symphony No.3 'Laudes musicae'* (Opus 90) has the surprising inclusion of a tenor soloist alongside the usual orchestral forces, yet there is no inclusion of a chorus or other vocalists. From the brooding introduction, this lone voice proclaims:

> O Yes, I must sing.
> And so must you sing also
> For all music is singing,
> And in music there is praise of life.[1]

This short stanza was penned by Leighton himself which, along with a second verse, bookends a portion of Sir Thomas Browne's 1642 *Religio Medici* and forms the text of the first movement. It is hard not to see this proclamation as a manifesto for a composer who was concerned with the voice throughout his life.

Like Leighton, my early musical training was as a chorister and it was as a member of the choir at Chester Cathedral that I became acquainted with his music. I remember enjoying the challenge and effect of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis written for Magdalen College, Oxford (*Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* more commonly referred to as the *Magdalen Service*) and of the *Preces and Responses*. I was drawn to the vibrancy and range of textures – the ebullient staccato sections marked *pianissimo* and then the visceral tensions of cascading entries that verged on the

[1] Leighton, Kenneth (1984). *Symphony No. 3*. Novello.

edge of cacophony. I was drawn to the intensity of it yet at the time was ignorant of how much more choral music there was and also the vast range of instrumental music too.

In choosing a topic for postgraduate study, Leighton seemed a natural progression from my undergraduate projects which included an overview of the developments in canticle settings for Evensong between 1890 and 1990 and an exploration of modernism in the music of Herbert Howells. I was particularly taken with Paul Spicer's suggestion that Kenneth Leighton could be viewed as the successor to Howells – particularly in church music.[2] One of the aims of this thesis is to consider Leighton within the canon of English church music in the twentieth century.

The quality of his composition is apparent and Leighton is today generally recognised as a distinctive and original voice of the mid-twentieth century. Leighton's legacy may be as a church composer but he wrote in all major genres, producing three symphonies, numerous concertos and an opera. His instrumental music does not enjoy the same success in the concert hall although much of it has been commercially recorded. His choral music extends beyond church music too and includes a number secular (as well as religious) cantatas. Any study of Leighton must take all of these elements into account and not view parts in isolation. Leighton's lack of recognition seems to be the product of a combination of factors. Leighton clearly reflects some of the modern traits of his more famous contemporaries, and even embodies an aesthetic similarity to some degree (for example, to Britten and Walton amongst others), yet he has not enjoyed the same level of celebration. This is not for wont of

[2] Interview by author with Paul Spicer (February 2014).

getting initial performances either as Leighton was the recipient of a number of prestigious awards and commissions, although for much of his early career critics were concerned with how much of his music was truly 'modern'. Leighton was careful to keep reviews of his work, even against the advice of Gerald Finzi, and generally they are positive and he was considered critically successful. Second and third performances seem to have been the difficulty and so the neglect of his works was already occurring in his life-time and continued following his early death. Only his church music has achieved a firm place in the repertory and, as a result, Leighton appears to be relegated to a mere 'church composer' – a status which is unfairly burdened on too many British composers. His death at only 58 surely cut short another two decades or more of active composing and left him in the shadow of older composers who were still living or had only recently died.

Possibly changes in taste have not encouraged a greater deal of Leighton's works being explored beyond those which have already achieved popularity. The frequency of performances of only a handful of pieces have allowed a reputation to build up which does not reflect Leighton's broad and varied style. The legacy of contemporary composers such as William Mathias and Edmund Rubbra might well support this theory as, like Leighton, only a comparatively small amount of their music enjoys frequent performance (and again, this tends to be in churches and cathedrals despite a large corpus of orchestral music). Paul Spicer reflects that one issue might be Leighton's relative conservatism 'at a time when musical experimentation was at its height'.[3] It seems that throughout Leighton's composing career critics attempted to categorise him but as he never truly abandoned tonality, he was ultimately

[3] Spicer, Paul (2004). *Kenneth Leighton - a 75th anniversary tribute*.

considered a traditionalist and therefore, possibly, somewhat overlooked.

Leighton's legacy is not just limited to composition. He was also a seasoned performer and conductor of all music, not just his own, and was a well-regarded teacher. Excepting two years as lecturer and fellow at Worcester College, Oxford, he taught at Edinburgh University from 1956 until his death and many of his pupils (such as James MacMillan, Kathryn McDowell, and Donald Runnicles) are significant figures in music today.

All of these elements I wanted to explore and so I wanted to assess and demonstrate the quality of Leighton's choral music as part of his entire output through an analytical approach. My initial plan was to cover nearly all of the choral music but the scope of such a project became all too evident and I looked for a way to give an overview that was sufficiently in depth but managed to cover his whole compositional career. It became clear that within the sub-genres of his choral work, none span the length of time or offer as many examples as his settings of the mass ordinary. The unpublished *Missa Brevis* of 1949 is one of Leighton's earliest works and the *Missa Christi* was completed only a few months before his early death in 1988. The masses also allow for a greater deal of comparison between works than could easily be achieved with those of differing texts. One of the difficulties of looking at the components of Leighton's composition is their ultimate entwinedness – embodied in a style that is anathema to excess (an attribute which could be considered an indication of quality composition).

Subsequently, the first part of this thesis deals with the key elements of Leighton's style, which are explored using examples from the whole of his output. I discuss these features in turn: counterpoint, voice-leading, rhythm, and so on, but undoubtedly there are many elements that are identified which could be placed under several headings. The second part of the thesis then uses this analytical approach with which to examine the ten mass settings in greater detail.

Ultimately, the scope of this project has not been as far reaching as I would like. By the nature of Leighton's compositional style, beyond discussing how his harmonic language operates, the non-functional nature of it coupled with structures which are, by necessity, governed by the text rather than purely formal organisation makes it difficult to do much more than describe. There is still much more scope for contextualising his choral output as part of his entire opus but I hope this thesis goes some way towards opening up that academic dialogue.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER ONE**

Influences

Kenneth Leighton was born in Wakefield on 2nd October 1929 to Florence (née Dixon) and Thomas Leighton. His upbringing was a humble one but his parents provided a stable and nurturing home for Kenneth and his older brother, Donald. They lived in two-up two-down terraced house on Denstone Street – the house still stands today and is now adorned by a blue plaque in Leighton's honour.[4] In 1953, Gerald Finzi visited Leighton and his parents; he was struck by the unassuming 'back-to-back four roomed house in a cobbled street' and the contrast with the musical genius it had nurtured.[5] Whilst it would be inaccurate to say Leighton's family were unmusical (his father and older brother both sung in the choir at their parish church, Holy Trinity) they were certainly surprised at the precociousness of their younger son's talent.[6] Unlike many of his contemporaries, and certainly the vast majority of composers before him, Leighton did not have a privileged upbringing and so he did not necessarily have access to music tuition – in fact it appears Leighton was largely self-taught in his early years. It was at Holy Trinity boys' school that Leighton's early musical talent was discovered; during his time there between 1937 and 1940, Leighton used to play the piano for school assemblies. During these years, it is unclear whether Leighton had any formal piano lessons.[7] An article in the local

[4] Binks, Adam (2007). *The development of Kenneth Leighton's musical style 1929-1960*. pp.2-3.
[5] McVeagh, Diana (2005). *Gerald Finzi His Life and Music*. p.215.
[6] Hardwick, Peter. 'The Liturgical Music of Kenneth Leighton, Part 1'; *The Diapason,* (February, 2005) p.22.
[7] Leighton, Josephine (2019). Personal correspondence.

paper quotes Leighton as having taught himself up to the age of fourteen.[8] It seems that Leighton's 'promotion' from the choir at Holy Trinity to Wakefield Cathedral in 1938 was his first step into a more regimented musical training. Leighton was interviewed by the BBC to mark his 50th birthday and his remarks show his gratitude for the training it gave him:

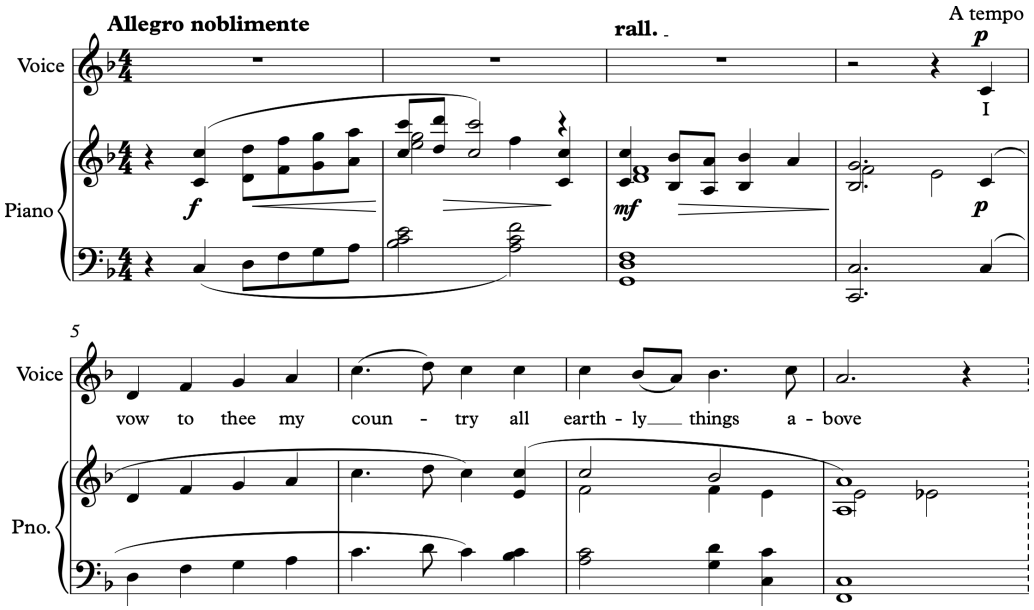
> It is a well-known fact that our earliest experiences in childhood are crucial in life, and I am sure that this is true in music as in all else. I had the great good fortune to be a cathedral chorister and I am sure that this is still the best early musical education to be found in this country.[9]

Newell Smith Wallbank was the Cathedral Organist when Leighton began his choristership at Wakefield. Leighton described 'Tosh' Wallbank as: 'most extraordinary – not a great musician perhaps – but a man with an unusual ability to inspire even small boys with a sense of the power of music'.[10] During Wallbank's tenure, the choir at Wakefield maintained a broad repertoire, possibly more so than most other inner-city cathedrals of the time (if contemporary reports are to be believed) but still chiefly based on a diet of Victorian composers. Leighton also recalled singing carols by Peter Warlock, as well as some Britten which Leighton admitted he found difficult and did not like very much at the time describing it as: 'outrageously modern and cacophonous'.[11] It seems the music which most stirred

[8] Cutting from the Leighton archive. *Young composers* (Wakefield Express). Not dated.
[9] Leighton, Kenneth - from a talk given on BBC Radio (26/10/1979).
[10] Leighton, Kenneth (1979). From an unpublished speech given to the Wakefield Old Choristers. See Smith (2004). pp.1-2.
[11] Leighton, Kenneth (1979). From an unpublished speech given to the Wakefield Old Choristers. See Hardwick, Peter. 'The Liturgical Music of Kenneth Leighton, Part 1'. p.22.

Leighton's interest during his choristership however was Renaissance polyphony – in particular that of Palestrina. Wakefield's 'high church' tradition meant that plainsong was also a prevalent feature in services alongside the choral repertoire.[12] Despite his training at Wakefield, Leighton seems not to have been a full member of any choir after 1945 although he would always have close connections with choirs throughout his career.[13]

Leighton's earliest surviving compositions are predominantly songs, which show a clear influence of late nineteenth and early twentieth century composers. Leighton would have sung the church music by many of these composers at Wakefield too, including Hubert Parry, Edward Elgar, John Ireland, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Some of the songs verge on pastiche; his *I vow to thee my country* (1945) has a remarkably strong deference to Hubert Parry's *Jerusalem* (1916) both in gesture and in melodic shape (see example 1.1.1). The songs exhibit Leighton's ability to compose a structurally-assured melody and a knowledge of the voice.



Example 1.1.1. *I vow to thee my country* (1945). bb.1-8. Kenneth Leighton archive.

[12] Hardwick, Peter (2003). *British Organ Music of the Twentieth Century*. p.259
[13] Leighton, Josephine (2019). Interview with author.

Leighton is quoted as saying that he was also particularly inspired not only by Vaughan Williams but also Herbert Howells, Benjamin Britten, and William Walton's music.[14] The comparison with Walton is an interesting one considering that, like Leighton, Walton came from a relatively unprivileged background in North of England and it was his choristership at Christ Church, Oxford that essentially secured his career in music. Leighton's choristership at Wakefield was certainly less prestigious but undoubtedly played a role of similar magnitude in the formation of him as a composer. Howells' piano lessons with Herbert Brewer, the organist of Gloucester Cathedral, and his subsequent articled pupillage is another precedent for what Howells' later termed the: '…unbroken tradition… of the English Cathedral organ loft' as the 'alma mater' of British composers (or, in the case of Walton and Leighton, the choir stalls).[15]

Leighton's musical horizons continued to expand after his time in the Cathedral choir at Wakefield through the encouragement of his teachers. The provision of academic music at that time in Wakefield was almost entirely absent and so often these figures were mostly schoolmasters who taught different subjects and happened to be interested in music and sought to nurture their appreciation in some of their pupils. Ronald Chapman, a history master at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, was perhaps the most significant of them. Chapman encouraged Leighton's interest in music and often played him records of new music. It is in these years that Leighton is likely to have first experienced orchestral music in any great amount. Through

[14] Dewitt, Lawrence (1976). *Kenneth Leighton: His Life and Solo Compositions for Organ*. Dissertation, University of Indiana. pp.2-3.
[15] See Cleobury, Sophie (2006). *The Style and Development of Herbert Howells' Evening Canticle Settings, 1918-1975*. MPhil thesis, University of Birmingham. pp.220-221.

Chapman, Leighton first became aware of contemporary British composers outside of their church music as well as composers from across Europe.

When Leighton himself arrived at Oxford, his writing reflected a style very much informed by current trends in British music. At the Queen's College, Oxford he was eager to take advantage of the musical opportunities available to him and he immersed himself in the University music scene from the start. He was an active member of the College's Eglesfield Music Society and he continued to compose at a similar rate to his schooldays. In that first academic year, when Leighton was librarian, the Society put on performances of Purcell's *Birthday Ode for Queen Mary,* Handel's *Alexander's Feast,* and Bach's *Missa Brevis* in A (BWV 234) in addition to more contemporary works including Edmund Rubbra's *Canterbury Mass,* Arthur Bliss' *Pastoral,* and Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*.[16] He described the time as being 'steeped in music and particularly in English music'.[17]

He was particularly encouraged through his meeting with Gerald Finzi in 1949. It was Leighton's tutor at Queen's, Bernard Rose, who sent a score of Leighton's *Symphony for Strings* (Opus 3) to Finzi and arranged them to meet. Leighton had recently discovered Finzi's song-settings and found them incredibly rewarding and inspiring. An influence of French chansons seems to have entered Leighton's songs in this period, adding a slightly softer accent to some of Leighton's chromaticism. It is not clear however whether Leighton was familiar with any; it possibly may have been an affectation of Ravel via Vaughan Williams' music. *In the dark pinewood*

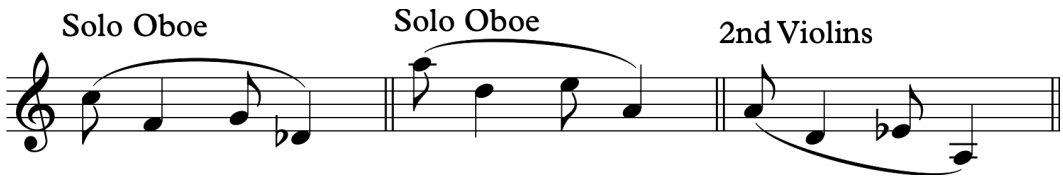
[16] The Queen's College Record (Oxford, 1948). p.15
[17] See Binks (2007). p.48

(1949) has a distinct feel of Fauré about it with a rich brooding harmony in the piano accompaniment. Finzi was evidently impressed enough with the *Symphony for Strings* to invite Leighton to hear the Newbury String Players rehearse the work. This proved to be a transformative experience for Leighton; he had not before experienced the same quality of the players perform a work of his before and he appreciated the sensitivity of Finzi's direction and advice.[18] The work was premiered by the Newbury String Players under Finzi in December 1949. Finzi was no doubt impressed by Leighton's well-developed handling of contrapuntal textures and linear approach to composition but was able to advise Leighton where he could strengthen his writing in places and be made more secure. Leighton's string-writing shares many characteristics of Finzi's and the 'English' style more generally. There is an economy to the part-writing that was to become an important feature in his choral music.

Leighton had begun work on a cantata based on texts from Helen Waddell's collection of *Medieval Latin Lyrics* however he completed a suite for small orchestral forces and decided to send it to Finzi and the Newbury String Players in 1950. Leighton dedicated his *Veris Gratia: Suite for Cello, Oboe, and Strings* (Opus 9) to Finzi and, after Finzi's death in 1956, inscribed the work to his memory.[19] It was premiered in May 1951 by Finzi and the Newbury String Players. It is a striking work from the young composer and certainly bears the impression of Finzi and indeed Vaughan Williams. It exceeds mere imitation or pastiche as with early songs, even if some of the figures are similar to those which appear in Finzi's work. Whether these were intentional quotations or not, it is hard to say. The motif, appearing in various

[18] Leighton, Kenneth. 'Memories of Gerald Finzi'. *Finzi Trust Friends Newsletter;* Vol.6, No.1 (1988), pp.5-6.
[19] Smith (2004). p.3.

chromatically altered forms, (see example 1.1.2) which is prominent in the first movement, is also present in Finzi's *Magnificat* and anthems *Lo, the full final sacrifice* and *Welcome, sweet and sacred feast*, amongst other works. Leighton admitted that the final movement was 'a clear though unconscious tribute to his [Finzi's] melodic style'.[20] The similarity to Finzi was certainly a point of contention for the Liverpool Post reviewer who heard the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra perform *Veris gratia* alongside Finzi's *Cello Concerto* in 1986, describing the music as 'pleasantly relaxing, dreamlike, pastoral and wouldn't harm anyone' but under the title 'Similar style creates music clash'.[21]



Example 1.1.2. *Veris gratia* Opus 9 (1950). 1. Lento sostenuto. Figures from bb. 9, 26, 28. Novello.

Finzi felt suitably impressed by the *Veris gratia* to perform it with the Kalmar orchestra in London later that year and with Jacqueline du Pré as the 'cello soloist. Finzi even invited Ralph Vaughan Williams to attend the concert. Vaughan Williams and Finzi both frequently attended London performances of Leighton's works from then on and he enjoyed their support and encouragement even as his style became more 'advanced' following his time in Rome.[22]

Leighton's music at Oxford can be characterised by its economic texture, propensity for lyricism and an individualistic chromaticism that fed Leighton's harmonically

[20] Leighton (1988). p.6.
[21] Liverpool Post (06/02/1986).
[22] Leighton (1988). p.6.

wayward tonal schemes. On the whole, dissonance is used sparingly, particularly in the choral music. The *Missa Brevis* and *Pater Noster* of 1949 both appear to be an exercise and something of an experiment in a greater amount of dissonance. Leighton's compositional progress is more to be heard in his instrumental writing which develops an increasingly adventurous chromaticism.

Leighton was awarded the Mendelssohn Scholarship in 1951 for his grandiose Opus 8 work, *Hippolytus*. This had received a failing mark when submitted as part of his BMus but managed to impress the judges enough to win him the award. After completing his BMus, he went to Rome to study with Goffredo Petrassi between March and October. He had originally wanted to study with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence but Dallapiccola was unable to take Leighton on as a student. Nevertheless, Petrassi was a well-regarded teacher and counted among his pupils Cornelius Cardew and Peter Maxwell Davies. His compositions were serial in nature but his pedagogical style was somewhat informal in style (and in any case, Leighton was not attached to any of the music institutions during his studies in Rome) and he was no particular prescriptivist for serial techniques.[23]

It is hard to build up a complete picture of Leighton's reasons for going to Rome as he wrote little about his time there and there is not much activity in Oxford that suggests a proactive participation in European music. It seems reasonable to speculate that Leighton was aware of the developments on the continent though and, perhaps, he wanted to absorb something of these modern trends. Binks highlights that Leighton had been exposed to serialist composers and the Second Viennese

[23]Binks (2007). p.133.

school as early as his teenage years. His schoolmasters at QEGS had encouraged Leighton's interest in music. Through his history master, Ronald Chapman, Leighton first came across serial techniques in the works of Igor Stravinsky and Béla Bartók.[24] In fact, it would be odd that Leighton would go to study with Petrassi unless he had had some exposure – and interest – in the serialism before he went to Rome. Leighton certainly took advantage of being able to hear modern music much more than he had been able to in Oxford; however, Leighton never fully embraced serial composition, still seeing himself as a Romantic.

Regardless of Leighton being unwilling to yield to purely serialist techniques, tone-rows are present in some of the works following his return to Britain. They form the opening themes of the 1951 *Concerto in D minor for Piano and Orchestra* (Opus 11) and the *Concerto for Viola, Harp, String Orchestra and Timpani* (Opus 15) of the following year. These are not strictly rendered, with some repetition of notes, but the second subject of the first movement from the *Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra* (Opus 12) is an entirely authentic tone-row which was commented on for its Proms performance in the programme:

> … [the] second subject… uses all twelve semitones of the chromatic scale as if it were a Schöenbergian note-series but the composer has emphatically stated that this was pure coincidence… all the themes… were entirely spontaneous and uncalculated.[25]

[24]Binks (2007). pp.9-11.
[25] Anon. '*Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra Opus 12'*. Promenade concert programme, (31/08/1954).

Even in these 'advanced' works, Leighton's lyrical style is still significantly present in at least one movement. Binks draws comparisons to the approach of other serialist composers who did not wish to abandon tonality such as Paul Hindemith, Luigi Dallapiccola, and Béla Bartók whose works Leighton is likely to have studied.[26] Nonetheless, a greater amount of dissonance is found in his harmonic language as well as inflections of quartal harmony (in reality, merely stacked-fourth chords).

Beyond his time in Rome, there were no further significant musical influences that informed Leighton's mature musical style. The development of his music from the mid-1950s can be considered a self-realised process of continually honing his compositional skills. John Cockshoot writing in 1957 concisely and intuitively surmised the state of Leighton's music:

> The natural outcome of this [Leighton's studies in Rome] was bound to be a much more highly chromatic style than formerly, with essays in a serial technique and a general absence of conventional tonality. But at heart Leighton is still a romantic, so that his studies have not encouraged him to write mere abstractions. His works since 1951 show he still has a use for tonality… long stretch of vague or non-existent tonality, however characterise much of Leighton's instrumental work since 1951, and demonstrate most clearly the trends of his musical thought.[27]

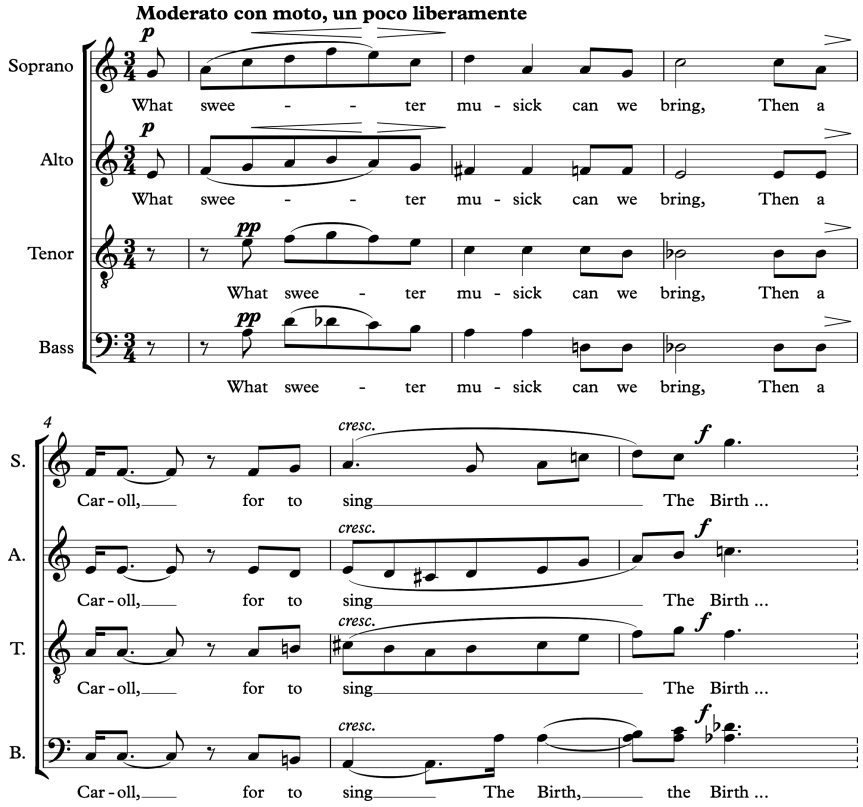
There are works which also show the influence of other composer's works and it is

[26] Binks. (2007). p.149.
[27] Cookshoot, John. 'The Music of Kenneth Leighton'. *The Musical Times;* Vol.38, No.1370. (April 1957). p.193.

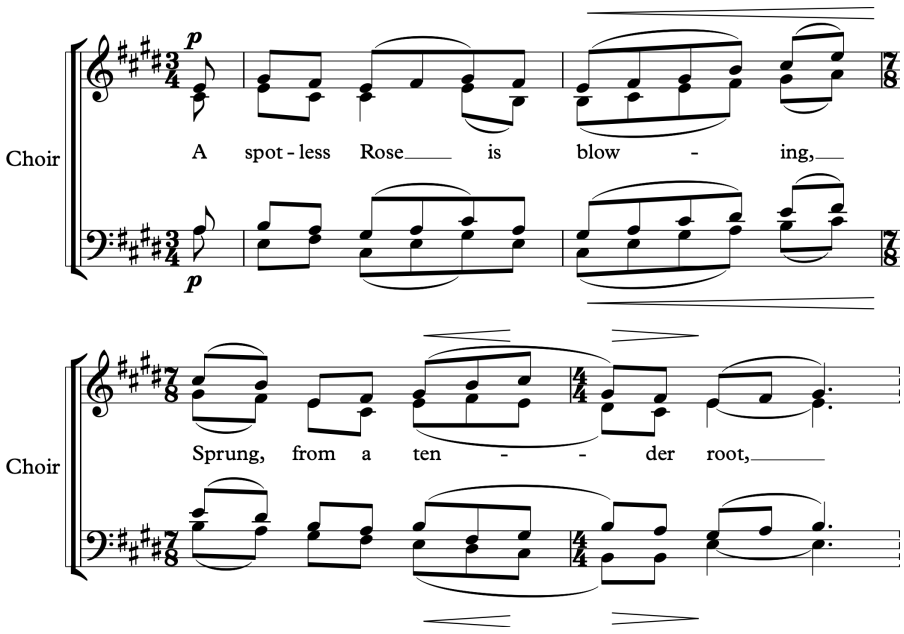
likely that these are conscious imitations and, even then, always in Leighton's own distinctive style. *An Easter Sequence* (Opus 55) written for boys voices in three parts and organ (with optional trumpet) naturally invites comparison to Britten's 1959 *Missa Brevis* for Westminster Cathedral choir; likewise Leighton's *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani* uses the exact same forces as Francis Poulenc's 1934-1938 work. The seemingly conflicting natures of his lyrical style achieved in Oxford and his 'advanced' more dissonant style coloured by serialist techniques are both, however, expressed in Leighton's response to the counterpoint of Bach and Renaissance polyphony.

As a mature composer, it is a little harder to be certain of his influences and particularly with choral music. The legacy of Herbert Howells is now rightly recognised and although Leighton claimed Howells was 'one of [his] heroes' in an unpublished lecture, there is little else that elucidates his appreciation.[28] Conversely, Howells' appreciation of Leighton is better recorded; he frequently made known his admiration for Leighton's harmonic language, referring to the 'wonderful treatment of dissonance' in *Et resurrexit* (Opus 49).[29] Howells' approach to composition was not that dissimilar from Leighton's, a strong sense of linear line and elaborate counterpoint are common to both composers. It is hard to ascertain how much of Howells' work Leighton knew and whether it was his earlier orchestral music or the church music he was writing at much the same time as Leighton. There is one early choral work of Leighton however which clearly bears the imprint of the Carol-Anthems Howells wrote during the First World War (see examples 1.1.3 and 1.1.4).

[28] Leighton, Kenneth (date unknown). From an unpublished lecture – see Binks (2007). p.7.
[29] Clinch, Jonathan (2014).*'Experiments with Sonata Form'. A critical study of the absolute music of Herbert Howells and its place in modern British Music.* Doctoral thesis, University of Durham. p.255.



Example 1.1.3. *A Christmas Caroll* Opus 21 (1953). bb.1-6. Novello.



Example 1.1.4. *A Spotless Rose,* Herbert Howells (1918). bb.1-4. Stainer and Bell.

Leighton's influences are not limited to musical stimuli. His vocal music is, of course, concerned greatly with texts. Even a large proportion of the instrumental music has a poetic inscription of some sort. Leighton was never embarrassed by writing religious music, a handful of his instrumental works even take religious themes, but his personal faith was not a conventional or convicted one. He did not belong to any particular congregation or denomination in adulthood.[30] This is notable at a point in history where many composers were avoiding association with religion. Despite his lukewarm faith Leighton recalled the intensity of his experience singing Handel's *Messiah* at Wakefield:

> I was so completely overwhelmed emotionally by the *Messiah* that I was completely unable to control myself and had to escape through the stalls half-way through…[31]

Leighton's ability to convey pathos or elation (and anything between the two) is one of the defining characteristics of his writing. His response to texts show a great emotional depth and, in the case of religious and liturgical texts, familiarity, from his choral training. Leighton's skills as a classicist however, cannot be overlooked. From the diversity of the poetry set in his teenage years it is evident he was extremely well-read from a young age too. His aptitude for classics won him his scholarships to the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (QEGS) in Wakefield in 1940 then into the Queen's College, Oxford on a Hastings Scholarship in 1947. Most of his earliest surviving compositions are songs and the broad range of poetry set shows an

[30] Leighton, Josephine (2019). Interview with author.
[31] Leighton, Kenneth (1979). From an unpublished speech given to the Wakefield Old Choristers. See Hardwick. 'The Liturgical Music of Kenneth Leighton, Part 1'. p.22.

impressively well-read young man. His studies at Oxford led him to begin setting translations of Greek works in works best described as secular canatas such as *Hippolytus* (Opus 8) in 1949 and *Veris gratia* (Opus 6) in 1950.[32] Later these cantatas would be a collection of miscellaneous texts Leighton selected such as in *The Birds* (Opus 28), *Laudates animatum* (Opus 61), and *Six Elizabethan Lyrics* (Opus 65) (see table 1.1.1).

Year	**Title (Opus No.)**	**Forces**	**Text**
1949	Hippolytus (Opus 8)	Orator, soloists, SATB, Orch	Euripides
1950	Veris gratia (Opus 6) [Cantata]	T solo, SATB, Flute, Timp, Strings	Words inspired by Catullus from Helen Wadell's *Medieval Latin Lyrics*
1954	The Birds (Opus 28) - (i) Invocation - (ii) The Robin - (iii) The Blackbird - (iv) Sweet Suffolk Owl - (v) Elegy - (vi) The Linnet - (vii) The Eagle - (viii) The Hymn of the Birds	S solo, SATB, 2 Pnos, Celesta, Perc (later orchestrated for Pno, Strings, and Perc)	 Aristophanes Thomas Hardy Anon. Thomas Vautor Percy Bysshe Shelley Walter de la Mare Alfred Lord Tennyson Aristophanes
1971	Laudes animantium (Opus 61) - (i) Prelude - (ii) Scherzo 'Calico pie' - (iii) The Nightingale [duet] - (iv) The Lamb [marked for '2 solo boys'] - (v) The Kraken - (vi) The Grey Squirrel - (vii) The Tyger - (viii) Every living creature	SAT soli, SATB, SATB, optional boys' choir	 Walt Whitman Edward Lear Joshua Sylvester William Blake Alfred Lord Tennyson Humbert Wolfe William Blake Michael Drayton (after the Benedicite)
1972	Six Elizabethan Lyrics (Opus 65) - (i) Flourish 'Spring, the sweet Spring' - (ii) Dirge 'Slow, slow, fresh fount' - (iii) Madrigal 'Tell me, dearest, what is love?' - (iv) Canon 'Under the greenwood tree' - (v) Nocturne 'Midnight's bell' - (vi) Fanfare 'Pack, clouds, away'	S solo, SSAA	 Thomas Nash Ben Jonson John Fletcher William Shakespeare Thomas Middleton Thomas Heywood
1973	Columba mea (Opus 78)	AT soli, SATB, Strings, Celesta and Harpsi (one player)	Song of Songs

Table 1.1.1.

[32] Leighton's assignation of opus numbers was somewhat erratic.

Certain themes persist in Leighton's writing for periods of time, Spring being one in his early writing. A number of song settings, *Veris gratia* (both the suite and the cantata) and, in 1951, his *Primavera Romana* (Opus 14) for full orchestra all celebrate the season. Leighton's love of animals is also evident from the *Laudes animantium* (Opus 61) which was followed a few years later by *Animal heaven* (Opus 83) for soprano and chamber ensemble and the piano suite, *Household pets* (Opus 86).

Perhaps one of Leighton's most sensuous works is a setting of verses from the Song of Songs, *Columba mea* (Opus 78)[33], which was dedicated to his second wife, Josephine. Even though the material may be biblical, it is evidently not church music and shares a slightly bizarre orchestration similar to that of *The Birds* (see table 1.1.1). Leighton displayed a similar level of interest and skill in choosing texts for his church music. The metaphysical poets Robert Herrick, Richard Crashaw, and George Herbert are well represented in Leighton's work. Unlike many composers, Leighton rarely makes omissions from the texts he set, for example he set the entirety of Isaac Watts' five verse hymn *Give me the wings of faith* in contrast to the well-known setting by Earnest Bullock (titled *Give us the wings of faith*) which is only of three verses. Leighton clearly respected the work of writers and felt that any musical setting should be sympathetic and be capable of engaging with the complete text without making omissions. What unites all of Leighton's music is a highly sensitive and imaginative approach to conveying the meaning of texts in his composition.

[33] The title comes from the Song of Songs 2:14 'My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock'.

* * *

The diversity of Leighton's musical influence demonstrates a composer who was aware of developments across the musical world but also followed his mentor, Gerald Finzi's advice in avoiding joining trends or 'isms' for their own sake.[34] Time has not judged Leighton quite an outright 'traditionalist', but his devotion to the English school of music is at the heart of his writing. As Jonathan Clinch observes in reference to Herbert Howells' *Cello Concerto*:

> The combination of neo-Baroque [or in Leighton's case, neo-Renaissance], modal counterpoint… makes Howells' style unique, though it is also worth mentioning the success that Kenneth Leighton had in his orchestral works, albeit with rather sharper edges and sonorities.[35]

[34] Leighton (1988). p.6.
[35] Ed: Cooke, Phillip & Maw, David (2015). *The Music of Herbert Howells*. Clinch, Jonathan. 'On Hermeneutics in Howells', pp.278-279.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER TWO**

Structure and compositional method

One of the issues of analysing any choral or vocal music is that, by their very nature, their composition is not dealt with purely by formal structures but in response to a text. This can result in an apparent absence of traditional forms, particularly so in the twentieth century, and is especially true of Leighton's compositions. Another facet of this analytical issue is the difficulty in comparing one piece to another when the texts themselves have different structures and have elicited varying artistic responses. This is, of course, less of a problem for multiple settings of liturgical texts – in Leighton's case the two settings of the evening canticles and the ten masses (albeit with varying translations) – where it is easier to identify the syntax and grammar of formal structure. Even with these issues that affect the wider genre, Leighton's style suffers from them more acutely and this can be substantially (if not wholly) attributed to his method of working. It is therefore essential to briefly consider Leighton's compositional approach in order to understand its consequences on the chief elements of his style.

Leighton's writing process gives considerable clues as to how his music was formed and developed on the page. Unusually, he preferred to work bar by bar on all parts and, more often than not, sketches appear in the same order as the finished composition (bringing a somewhat literal meaning to the term 'through-composed'). The manuscripts are neat and evidence this preference for approaching a piece chronologically, rather than marrying up a series of disparate sketches. Most of

Leighton's scores, kept in the archive at the University of Edinburgh, appear as fair copies but these almost always tend to be the only manuscript, evidencing careful and deliberate work. Many are sufficiently neat to have been used for preparation by his publishers. These are not without occasional revisions but, where they do occur, the penmanship and attempts to fit in tight spaces suggest that they have only been made once the piece has been worked through to its final bar.[36] We know from his contemporaries that Leighton wrote at the piano although his widow, Josephine Leighton, suggests that ideas gestated and were worked out away from the keyboard:

> He would go for a walk or take the dog for a walk and work on the next section, and then come back to the piano. Or, he would lie down on his chaise and come up with an idea while he was supposed to be napping. He would just play through at the piano what he had already written in his head.[37]

Leighton composed a couple of hours at a time, keeping Wednesday and Friday available for writing music among his other duties. He apparently found the process quite onerous and was driven by a meticulous desire to find, as he described: 'the next note'.[38] This method has clear consequences in the creation of Leighton's sound-world or compositional 'voice'; consequently, it is key to understanding his music. In an interview for the New Edinburgh Journal, Leighton commented:

> For me, the process of composition is mainly instinctive, and I cannot imagine consciously resisting any influence. It is simply a matter of finding the right

[36] Leighton, Kenneth (1929-1988). Archive, University of Edinburgh Library.
[37] Gladstone (1999). *A style analysis of the choral music of Kenneth Leighton*. p.3.
[38] Gladstone (1999). p.4.

> language to express what one wants to say. In this process one hopes to come ever closer to one's real self.[39]

This candid statement shows not only Leighton's modesty but points towards an intuition that he possessed for what was 'right'. Leighton also seems to hint at a propensity to absorb other stimuli. Presumably this influence was not just limited to music, texts were clearly just as important to him, but Leighton showed an acute skill in pastiche composition in his teens and many of his mature works do seem to suggest deference to other works and composers.

Understanding his compositional process in this way, it is possible to penetrate the key elements of Leighton's style. His music has a spontaneous and improvisatory feel to it which was the young Leighton's initial aim – writing down music in an attempt to record his piano improvisations.[40] Forming a piece of music in this way has a significant impact on all areas of composition and has particular consequences for Leighton's harmonic and formal organisation.

The only piece Leighton claimed to have completed in one sitting was the setting of Phineas Fletcher's hymn *Drop, drop slow tears* which appends the Patrick Carey texts in Leighton's cantata *Crucifixus pro nobis* (Opus 38).[41] Its tonal plot reads a like a list of keys chosen at random. The setting of the first verse goes successively from C-sharp minor to C Lydian to A major to F Lydian to D major/minor to B-flat Lydian

[39] Fulton, Robin. 'Robin Fulton talks to Kenneth Leighton', *New Edinburgh Review*; No.5 (1970), p.25.
[40] Dewitt (1976). p.2.
[41] Gladstone (1999). p.4.

and finally to E-flat major. Of course, nearly all of Leighton's music has a similarly awkward tonal plot regardless of the length of time it took him to write it yet clearly such a scheme is a product of some a very localised harmonic operations which demand exploration. Although Leighton clearly presents Fletcher's poem in its strophic form, the musical material itself is not organised in this way. Each stanza has its own material and gives emphasis at different points; this can be noted in the varying lengths of each of the three stanzas: 15, 12, and 17 bars respectively.

When considering a formal approach, it must be noted that traditional musical structures are also concerned with harmony and modulation as part of functional harmony. Leighton's harmonic language (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.5) is problematic as his style does not relate to traditional dominant-tonic harmony and so these markers to indicate the architecture of form and structure are absent. The remit of this study does not extend to exploring with what and how Leighton substitutes traditional musical organisation in his works that do not include sung texts; however, it is clear that motivic development and contrasting material are the means of achieving structure in his vocal music.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER THREE**

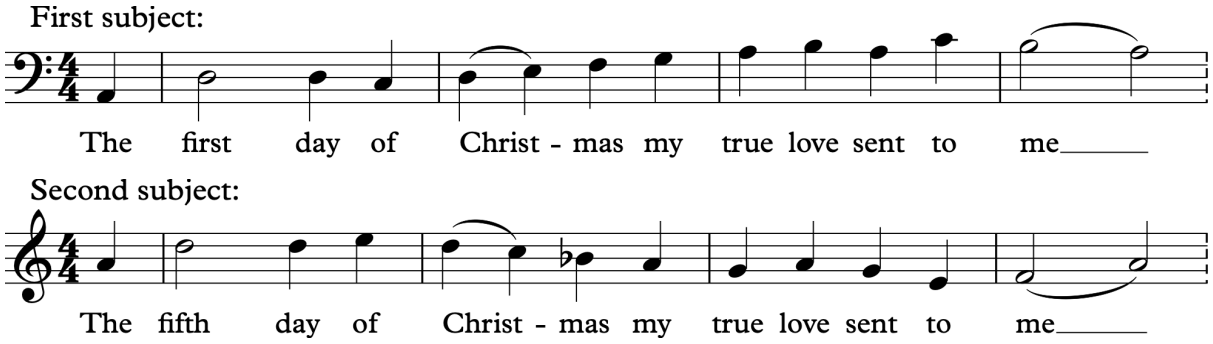
Counterpoint

It is hard to distinguish whether Leighton's linear method of composition is a product or the cause of his style of counterpoint. It seems likely that each have their effect on the other. Leighton's interest in contrapuntal methods of composition stemmed from his particular appreciation of the music of Bach and Palestrina. Winning the coveted Busoni Prize in 1956 with *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* (Opus 24) and its telling subtitle '*Homage to Bach'* clearly demonstrates Leighton's admiration for the Baroque master. James MacMillan recalls from his time studying counterpoint with Leighton at Edinburgh how 'he always made it clear that Bach was his God'.[42] Leighton's colleague and friend, Herrick Bunney (Organist of St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh 1946-1996) observed: 'He knew his Palestrina inside out… and that sort of craftsmanship comes through in his own writing… All his writing is formally very strong, maybe unorthodox, but extremely strong and solid'.[43]

As early as 1947, Leighton was writing fugues for piano and began experimenting with various contrapuntal techniques in his composition.[44] Even the earliest surviving compositions show an economic approach to his part-writing and preference for clean, well-spaced textures – especially when writing for the piano. Leighton's earliest choral music tends be predominantly homophonic with the

[42] Dunnett, Roderic (1998). 'Learning with Leighton'; *The Full Score*, Vol.103 (Winter, 1998). p.10.
[43] Gladstone (1999). p.5.
[44] Binks (2007). pp.31, 34.

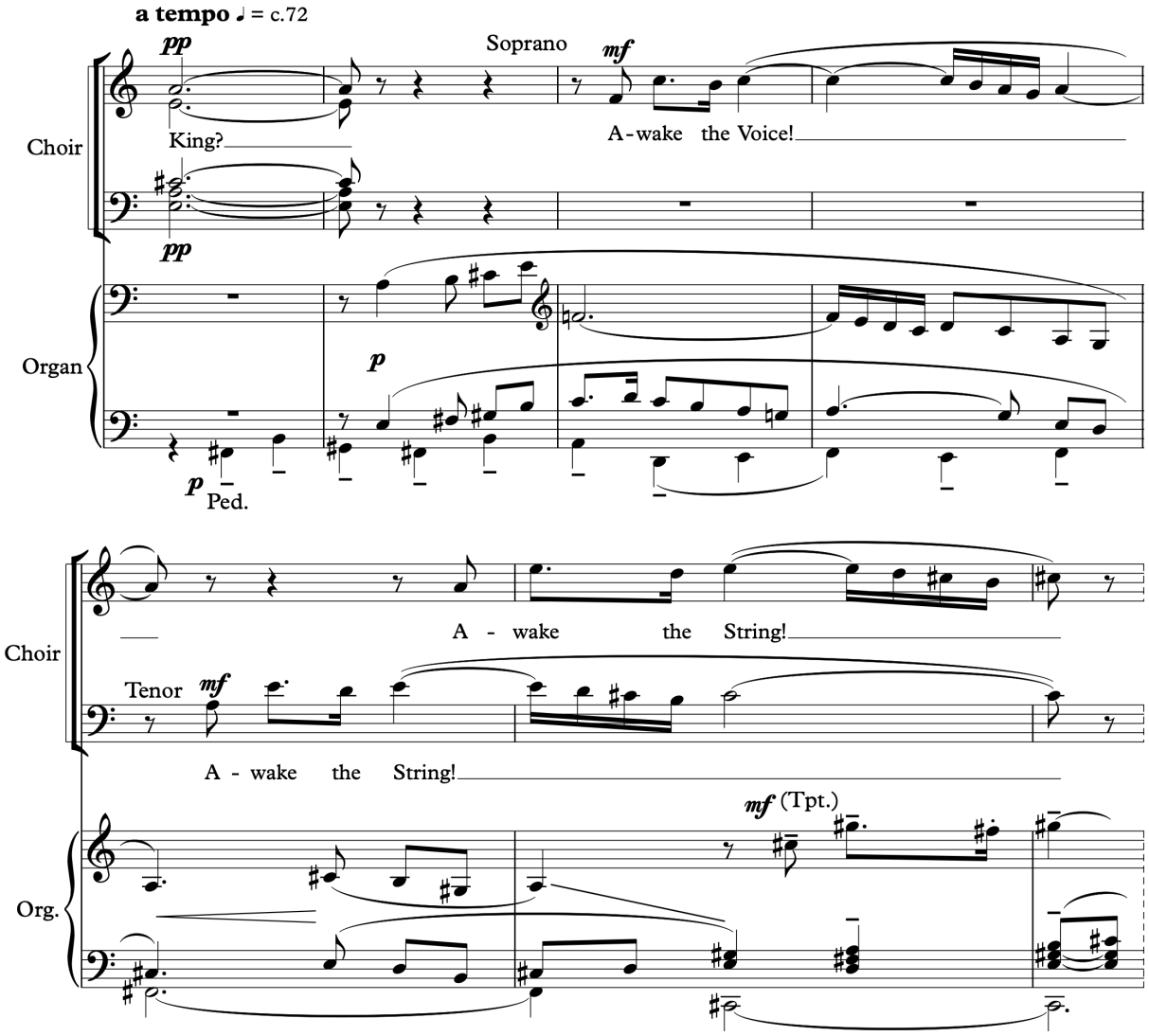
notable exception of an original setting of *The twelve days of Christmas* in 1948 (example 1.3.1). It essentially forms a fugal exercise in three sections dealing with four days each at a time. The subject is announced in the bass, followed by the countersubject in the tenor which the alto and soprano subsequently take up taking days one, two, three, and four respectively. The second section reverses the order of entries with a new subject (in inversion) for days five to eight before the final section combines both subjects and resulting in a coda with many additional partridges!



Example 1.3.1. *The twelve days of Christmas* (1948). Unpublished, Kenneth Leighton archive.

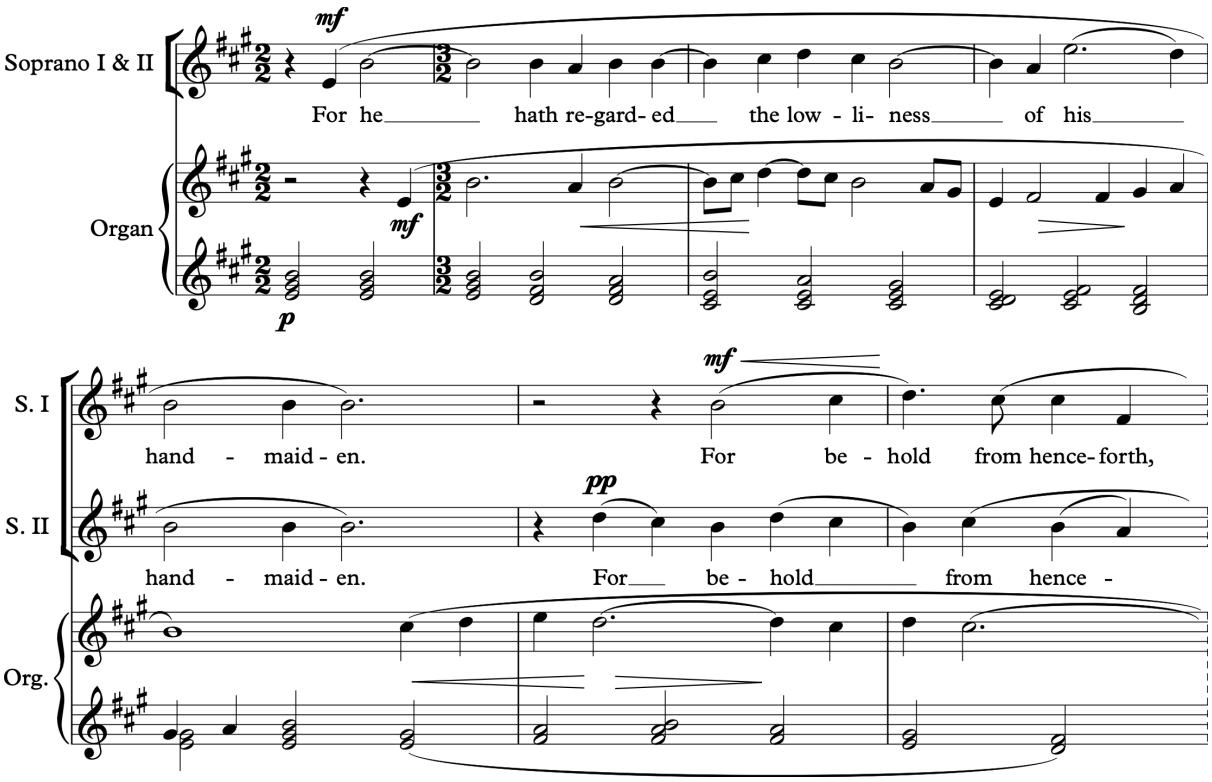
Extended sections of counterpoint are not a feature until the late 1950s and only seem to appear initially in the choral works which have either an orchestral or keyboard accompaniment. Imitative writing is not just restricted to the vocal parts but also included in the accompaniment. Leighton often uses this as a way of unifying the accompaniment with the vocal parts. The imitation tends to be quite loose, which has an almost conversational quality. Example 1.3.2 shows how the soprano part rhythms are pre-empted in both of the manual parts of the accompaniment (and shared between them). The imitation between the tenor and soprano is noticeably stricter. There is a greater flexibility in Leighton's use counterpoint in pieces which have a brisker tempo, especially in terms of gestural

imitation in the accompaniment, which is more a form of fugato than strict fugue. Nonetheless, the integrity of individual parts is absolute.



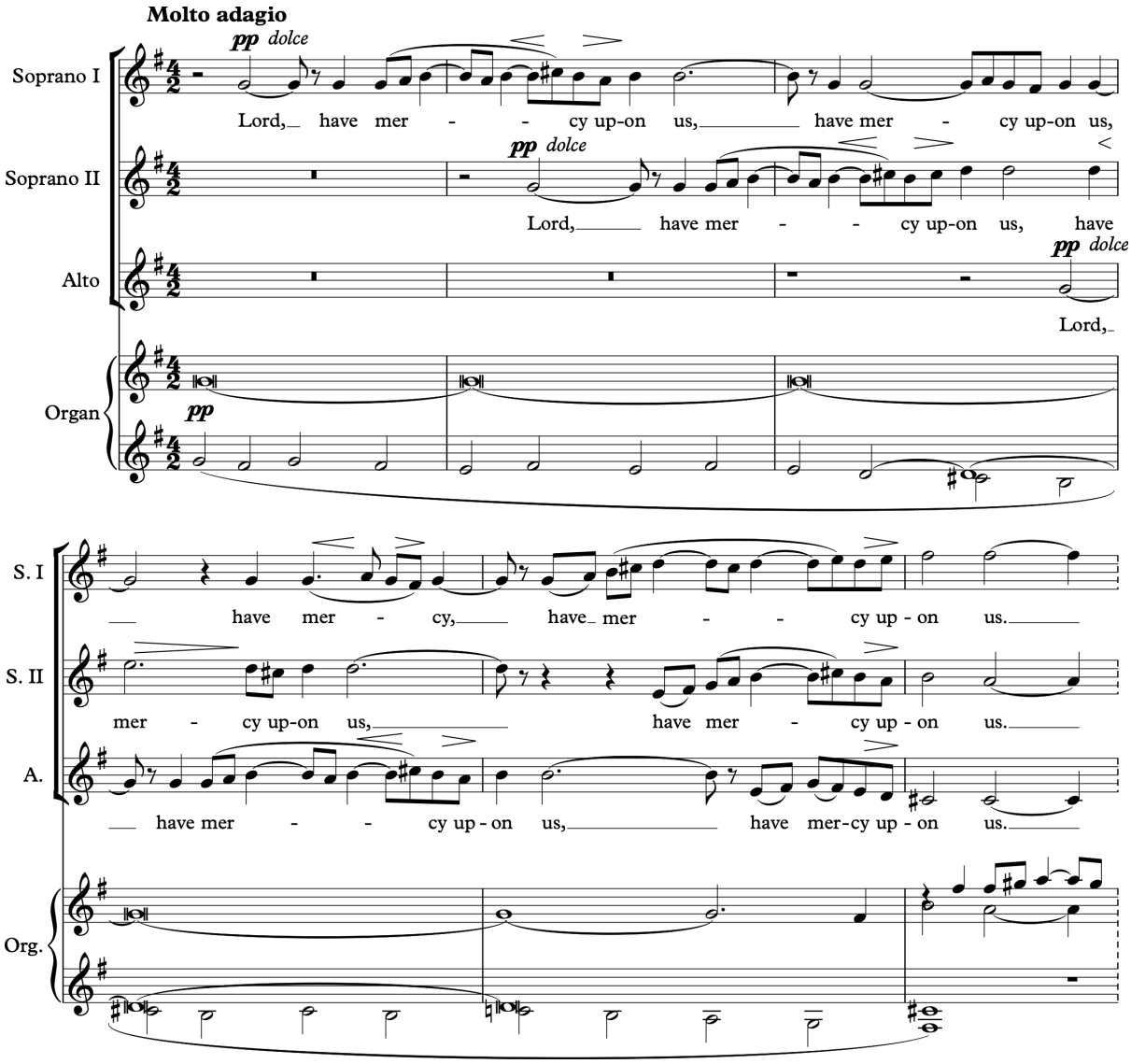
Example 1.3.2. *A Christmas Caroll* Opus 21 (1953). bb.8-14. Novello.

This is not a unique phenomenon to Leighton's choral music; a similar effect is present in Herbert Howells' music. Howells' opening of the Magnificat from the *Gloucester Service* (example 1.3.3) has two soprano parts which, along with the right hand of the organ accompaniment, meld together in close tonal space with small variations in an ersatz canon.



Example 1.3.3. *Magnificat and Nunc dimittis for the Cathedral of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, Gloucester,* Herbert Howells (1946). bb.8-14. Novello.

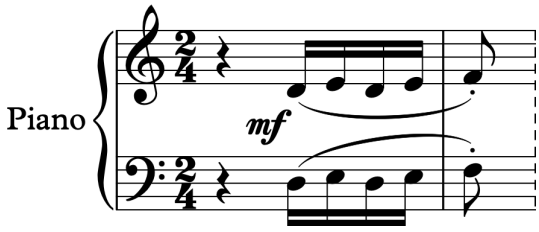
There are examples of stricter canon too, generally in pieces with a slower tempo. Leighton frequently employs them in the Kyrie of nearly all his mass settings. The earliest published settings – *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40), the double choir *Mass* (Opus 44) and even the *Communion Service in D* (Opus 45) – tend be based on the unison (see example 1.3.4), but the later settings occur on the fourth or fifth. Often these features are tethered to a sustained note or even a repeated motif (such as in the Kyrie of the Opus 44 *Mass*).



Example 1.3.4. *Missa Sancti Thomae* Opus 40 (1962). 1. Kyrie, bb.1-6. Novello.

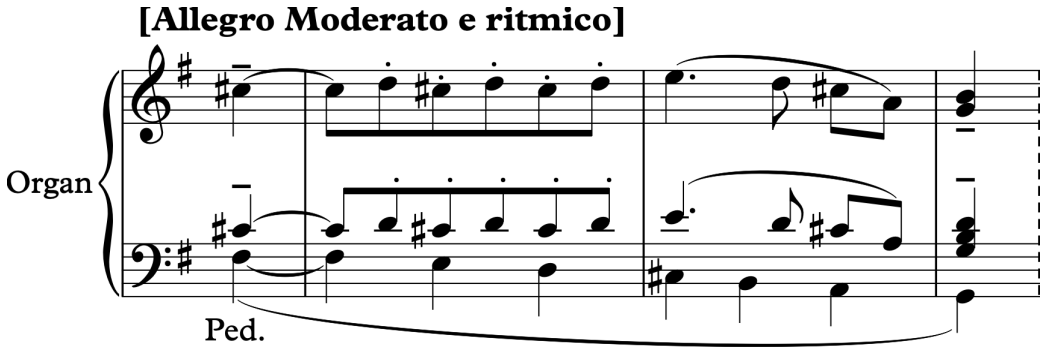
Examples 1.3.2 and 1.3.4 also show that often passages of counterpoint are built around two or three very slow-moving voices, comparable to the slow harmonic rhythm in complex Renaissance polyphony – which Leighton would have understood well. This rather simple construction is one of the ways Leighton is able to build up tension in his music and can even be prolonged by shifting the tonal centre before arriving at a resolution. Leighton is able to disguise the lack of harmonic movement through motivic filigree and ornament-like decoration. Some of these figures are the

most distinctive 'finger prints' in Leighton's work. One such figure first appears in the opening of the Opus 11 piano concerto (see example 1.3.5).



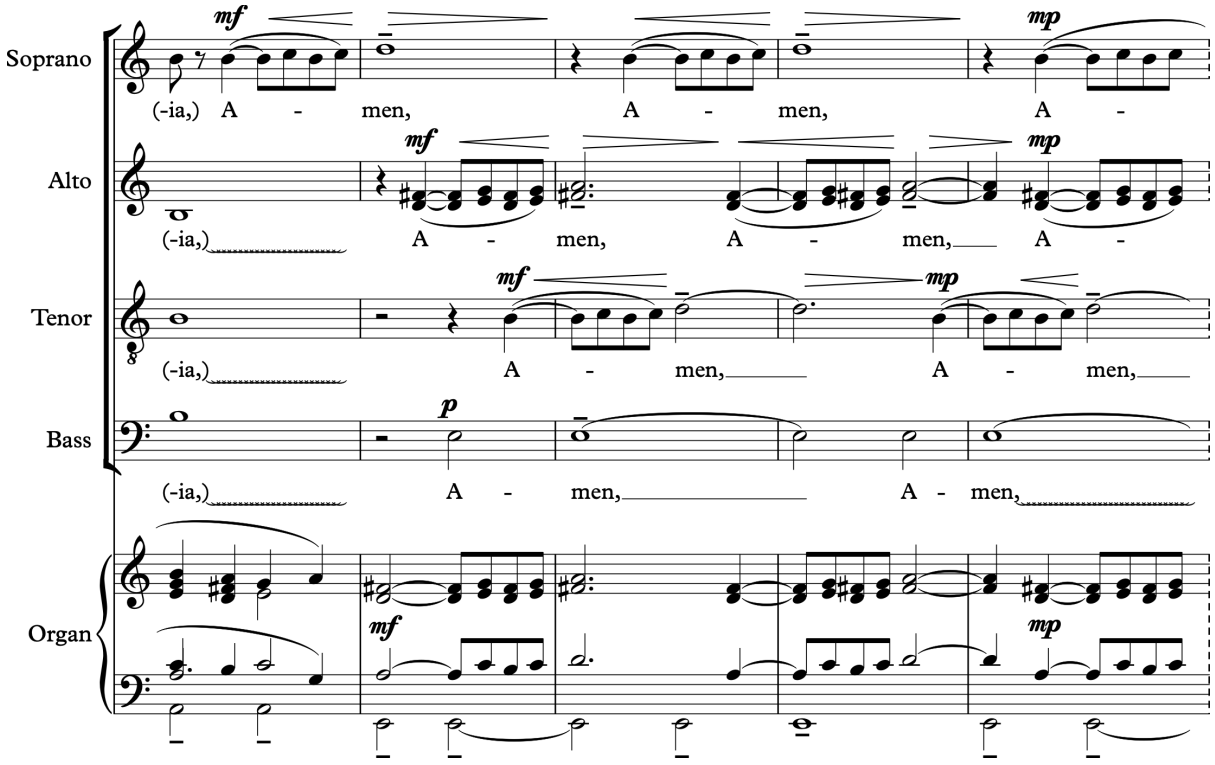
Example 1.3.5. *Concerto in D minor for piano and orchestra* Opus 11 (1951). bb.1-2. Novello.

Whilst the function of this figure is purely motivic in the first *Concerto for piano* (Opus 11), it holds a distinct function within much of Leighton's choral and keyboard music. Its first appearance in a choral work comes some eight years after the Opus 11 concerto, in his setting of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* in 1959. It is still a key motif in this relatively early work but it frequently appears at moments of harmonic tension before their resolution. Example 1.3.6 shows how it adds momentum and increases tension in the unison manual parts of the organ accompaniment in what is functionally merely a sustained C-sharp against a descending bass.



Example 1.3.6. *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* (1959). Magnificat, bb.15-18. Novello.

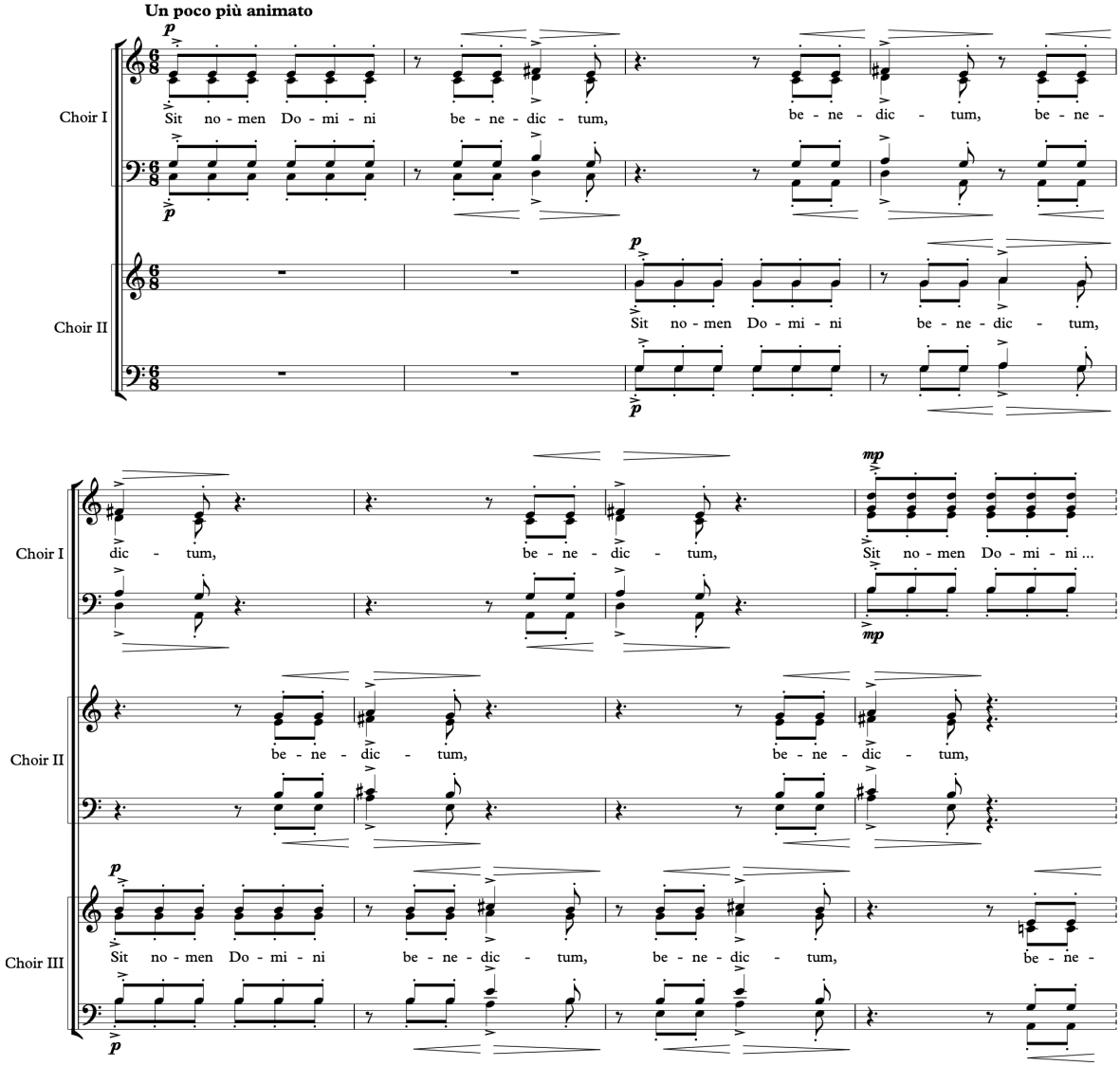
It could be described as an 'intensifier motif' and it appears in many guises throughout Leighton's music in both the major and the minor mode. In places it is expanded to an alternating third but chiefly appears as a major or minor second. As a distinct rhythm, it cuts through in Leighton's economic textures allowing for staggered entries that can sustain and increase tension even though the harmony is static. Perhaps the most obvious early example of the this comes from Leighton's *Alleluia, Amen* in which there is no harmonic change from the D major/B minor chord over a pedal E for four bars and the only interest comes from this repeated 'intensifier motif' (see example 1.3.7).



Example 1.3.7. *Alleluia, Amen* (1961). bb.154-158. Novello.

The influence of Elizabethan music, rather than Bach, is dominant in Leighton's vocal writing where imitation and independent part-writing are not necessarily constricted to the rigidity of the formal techniques of the Baroque era. Of all Leighton's experience in the choir at Wakefield Cathedral, it seems that the Tudor

soundworld was that which spoke to him most powerfully, certainly in terms of compositional inspiration. There are three works which have a distinct resonance with Renaissance vocal music: the *Mass* (Opus 44) for double choir, *Three Psalms* (Opus 56) for five male voices, and *Laudate pueri* (Opus 68) for triple choir.

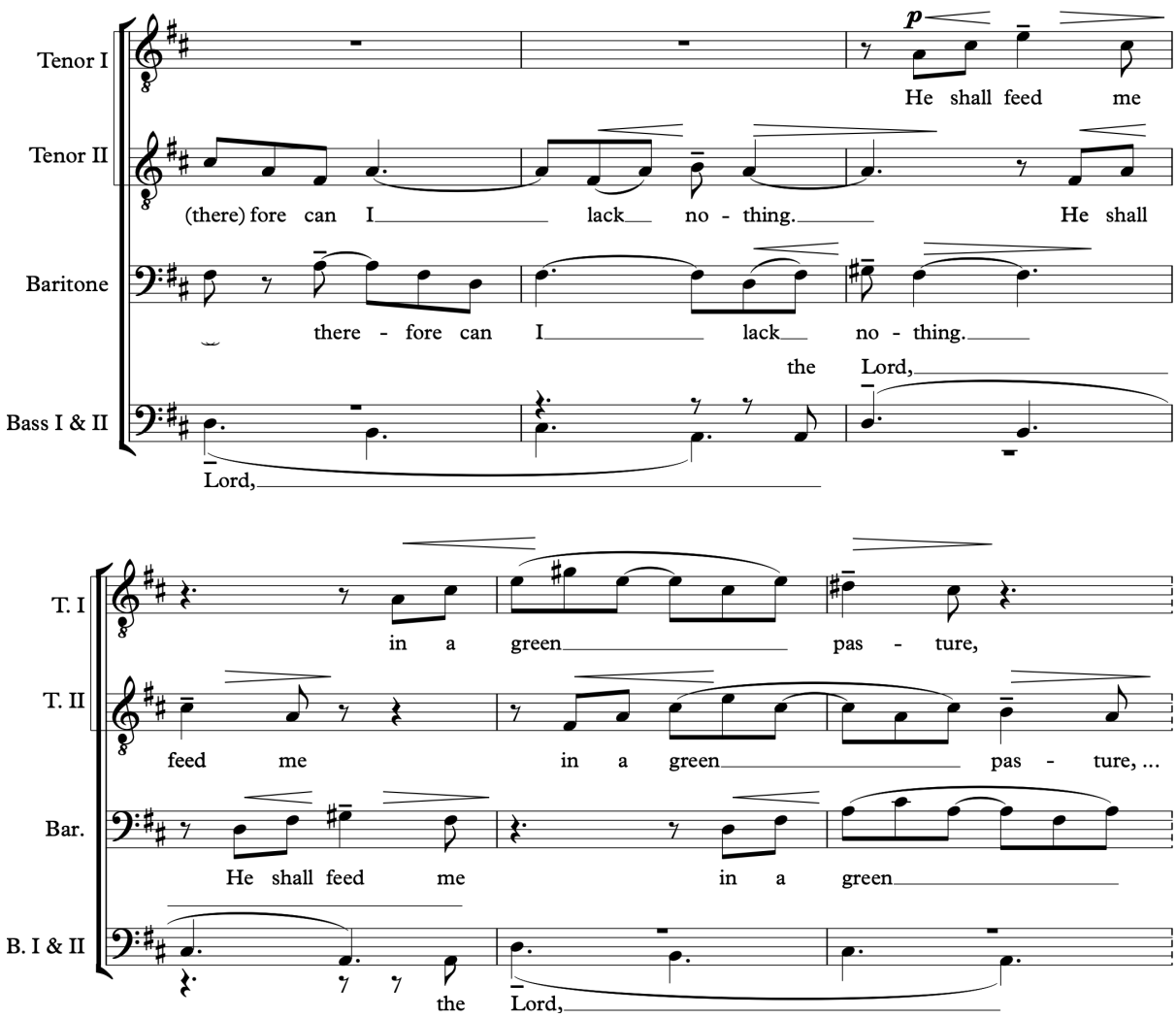


Example 1.3.8. *Laudate pueri* Opus 68 (1973). bb.37-44. Novello.

Leighton creates a mid-twentieth century response to the style of Byrd and Tallis and his economy of texture deftly deals with so many individual parts. Leighton probably knew Palestrina's motets for 12 voices (and perhaps the *in extremis* example of the form, Tallis' motet *Spem in alium* written for 40 voices) and could have used these as models. The antiphonal effect is the chief element of *Laudate pueri* (Leighton wrote

with specific instructions concerning the placement of each of the three choirs) so thematic material is taken by each choir as an ensemble rather than 12 separate parts (see example 1.3.8).

Three Psalms provides more substantial sections of handling all voices (in this case, five) in a more authentic polyphonic rendering (see example 1.3.9). Leighton frequently pairs two voice parts together, giving them a theme that bounces between them which, in the case of the lowest parts, can take the form of an ostinato or ground bass.



Example 1.3.9. *Three Psalms* Opus 54 (1968). 2. The Lord is my shepherd, bb.7-12. Novello.

One consequence of the counterpoint that Leighton employs is the inevitable presence of a tonic. The strength of the melodic fourth in contrapuntally-treated melodies naturally suggests a dominant-tonic relationship of some kind and possibly could be one of the reasons Leighton began to adopt elements of quartal harmony – in order to weaken the sense of this relationship. In Leighton's harmonic idiom, he manages to subvert a sense of traditional harmony allows him have imitative voices not only at the unison, fourth, and fifth but also occasionally the second or third. The full implications of these harmonic elements are discussed in Chapter 1.5. Again, in much the same way his freer fugato-style imitation operates, Leighton's counterpoint expands beyond the strict rendering of fugal techniques due to clarity of his texture and line but also the singularity of the melodies he uses as subjects.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER FOUR**

Melody and voice-leading

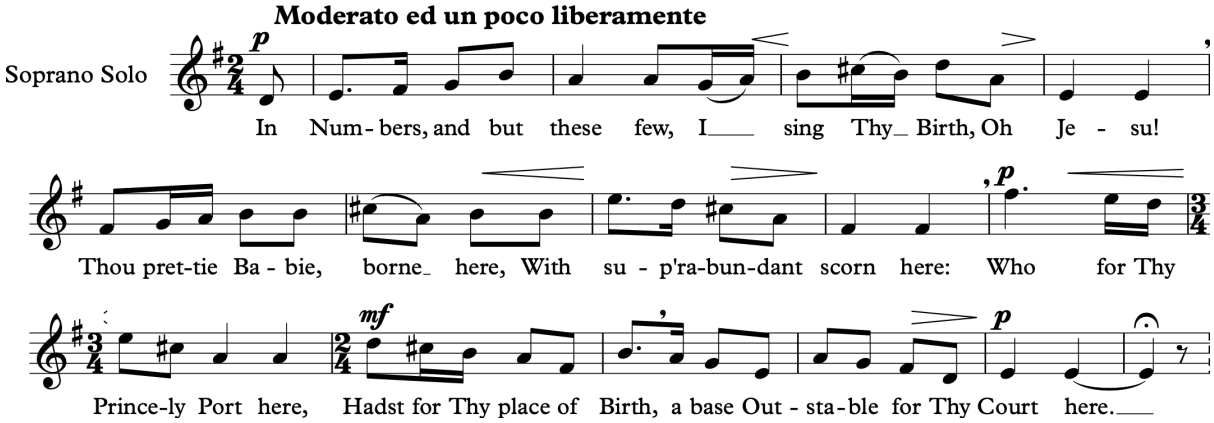
Leighton's sense of Romanticism, which tempered his adoption of modern techniques, manifested itself chiefly in his quest for lyricism. Whether exaggerating or not he claimed: 'All my days are spent trying to find a good tune'.[45] Leighton's choral music is largely characterised by melodic lines made up of relatively small intervals - predominantly seconds and thirds (this can be observed in the majority of examples in this thesis). This is an economy Leighton exercises with an increasing strictness through his composing career and one particularly true of his choral music; Leighton's writing for soloists however makes use of the expressive nature of many larger intervals as well - this is equally true of the numerous solo parts in his choral music. It is clearly an intentional crafting of music appropriate for choirs to learn and perform.

This is most clearly seen when comparing Leighton's music with some of the composers that inspired him. Howells' warmer extended diatonic harmonies sometimes, conversely, call for awkward vocal parts in order to achieve soft-sounding sonorities. The bass part in the Magnificat of the *Gloucester Service* has no fewer than three melodic sevenths in the space of five bars, a compromise that is contrary

[45] Spicer, Paul (2004). *Kenneth Leighton - a 75th anniversary tribute*.

to Leighton's compositional instinct, yet for these results he is able to produce a harsher texture.

The melodies themselves are often harmonically ambiguous (or certainly cope with being treated as such) which gives them an ethereal, detached quality that is particularly amplified when Leighton writes in one of the old church modes. Even in Leighton's early songs, in which he affected the style of English pastoralism, Leighton's melodies notably use the whole diatonic scale (see example 1.4.1) and do not follow the tendency of the folksong-inspired composers of the early twentieth century, which tend towards pentatonic and hexatonic derived melodies. This is perhaps due to Leighton's ability to imbue his melodies with a sense of spontaneity. It lifts some of the juvenilia beyond pastiche composition and is perhaps a demonstrations of Leighton's natural gift and individuality as a young composer pervading the limitations of his fledgling compositional skill.



Example 1.4.1. *Three Carols* Opus 25 (1948-1956). 3. An ode of the birth of our Saviour, bb.1-15. Novello.

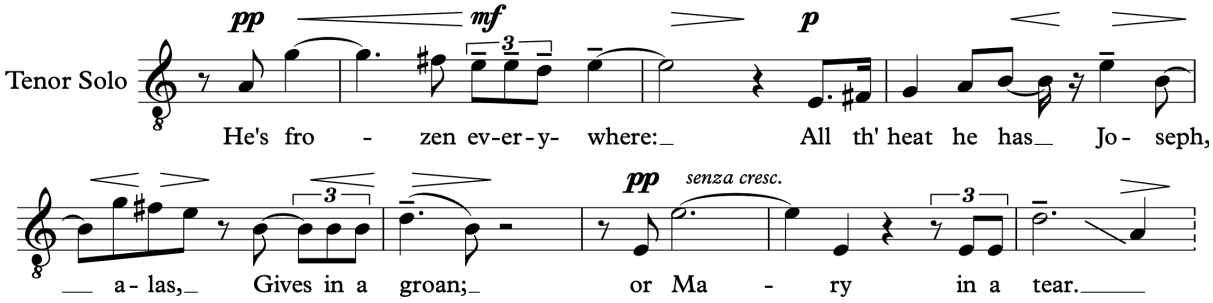
Much of Leighton's choral work features a solo part, particularly earlier on in his career when they seem to be utilised for textural and structural variety as much as anything else. Nearly all of Leighton's early published choral music has a prominent solo part fulfilling a structural role (the only notable exceptions without solo parts

before 1962 are *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* and *God's grandeur*). In *Alleluia, Amen* (1961) the work begins and ends with the full choir but the substantial middle section is bookended by the baritone solo. Similarly, the baritone solo that appears towards the end of *A Christmas Caroll* (Opus 21) is utilised to introduce a new tempo and motivic material.

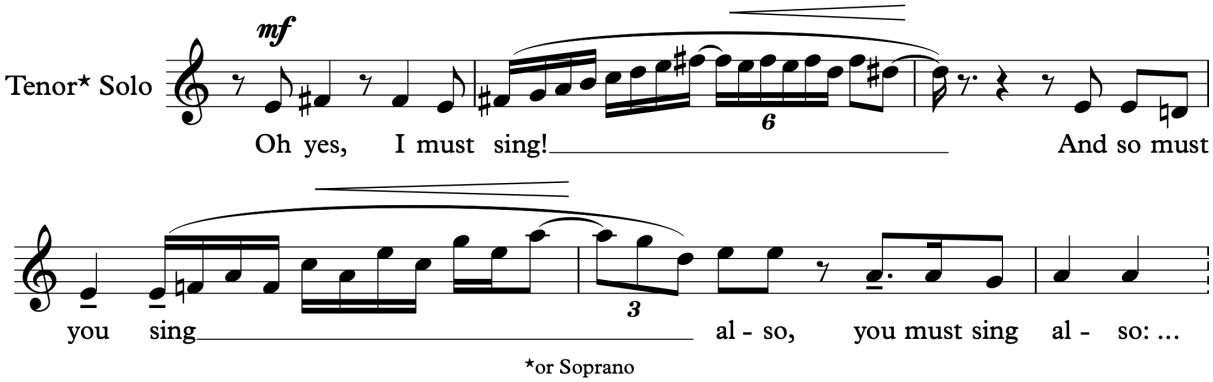
'An ode of the birth of our Saviour' from Leighton's 1956 set of *Three Carols* (Opus 25) begins with an unaccompanied soprano solo (example 1.4.1). The melody spans a tenth, with the highest note coming in the middle and a clear sense of rising preceding the climax, and descending after. Without accompaniment, Leighton is still in his harmonically-wayward idiom although the tonic is clearly D and this is principally achieved by the slightly jarring falling fourths at the end of the first phrase (bars 3 and 4). This figure is then contracted into the space of two thirds (rather than two fourths) which appears in bar 7 from which the last line is entirely created, treated in sequence. Larger intervals (including the octave leap between the second and third lines) are employed sparingly; the majority of the melody is constructed of seconds and thirds. Coupled with the use of sequences, Leighton can clearly convey a sense of tonality without being forced into purely traditional diatonic spaces - note how each phrase seems to subvert a sense of a cadence.

Leighton was clearly aware of the potency of larger intervals and he utilises them fully in his cantata *Crucifixus pro nobis* (Opus 38) but in a manner that sensitively responds to the text (see example 1.4.2). The pathos Leighton is able to imbue the work with is almost certainly achieved through the physical challenge the tenor soloist has in performing these disjointed phrases and large spans towards the top of

his register. Utilising the voice in this way demonstrates his knowledge and skill in vocal writing, however, Leighton becomes increasingly economic with intervallic gestures as his harmonic language develops. In the opening movement of the *Third Symphony*, the solo voice covers the range of nearly a fifteenth which is almost entirely achieved through adjunct movement (see example 1.4.3). Even the interlocking thirds that result in some fifths have a precedence in his lyrical style such as the motif from the *Veris gratia* suite discussed in Chapter 1.1 (see example 1.1.2).



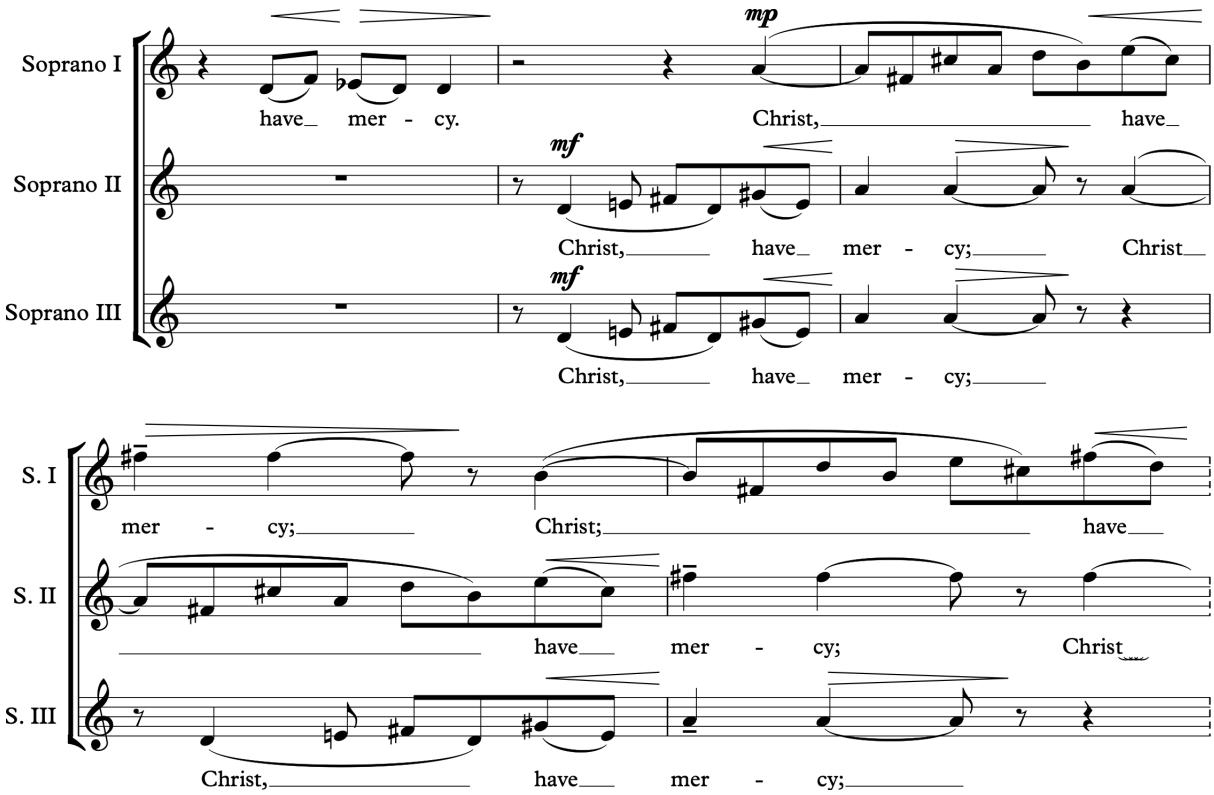
Example 1.4.2. *Crucifixus pro nobis* Opus 38 (1961). 1. Christ in the cradle, bb.25-33. Novello.



Example 1.4.3. *Symphony No.3 'Laudes Musicae'* Opus 90 (1984). 1. Allegro con moto, bb.33-38. Novello.

From around 1960, Leighton begins to make significant use of musical 'cells' which are motivically expanded throughout each piece. Quite frequently these are apparent as ostinato or rhythmic effects (discussed in Chapter 1.6) but often they are used in

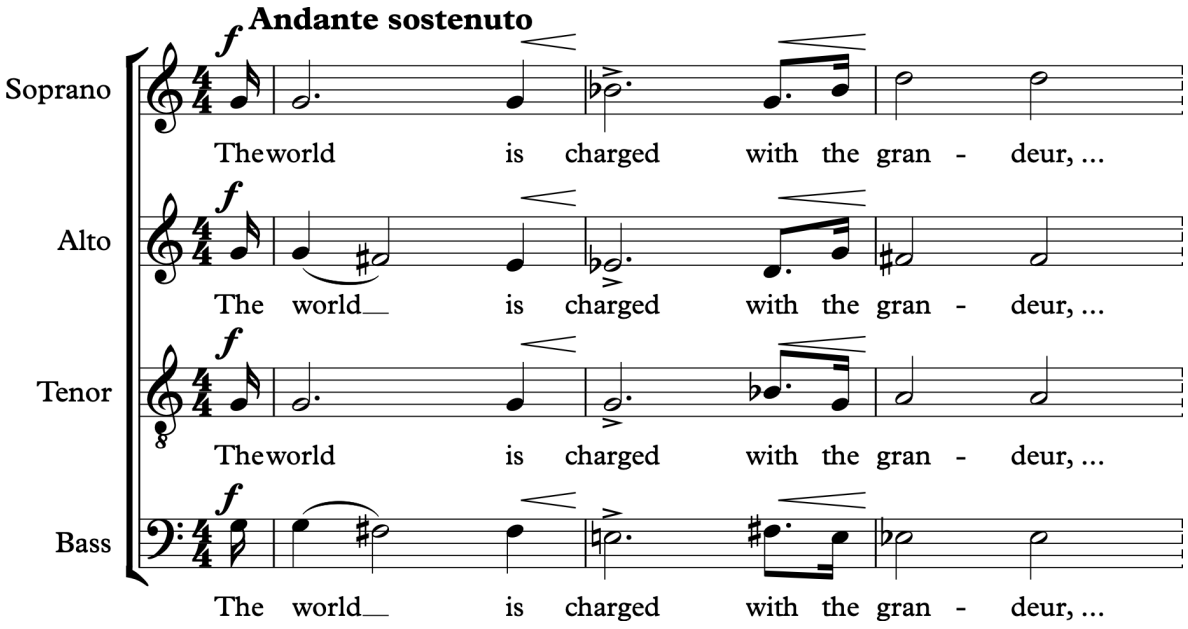
the developing of small melodic motifs. Melodic shapes are altered and usually expanded creating a structural as well as a motivic crescendo - an effect used particularly in the Kyries of the masses (see example 1.4.4).



Example 1.4.4. *Missa Cornelia* Opus 81 (1979). 1. Kyrie, bb.12-16.

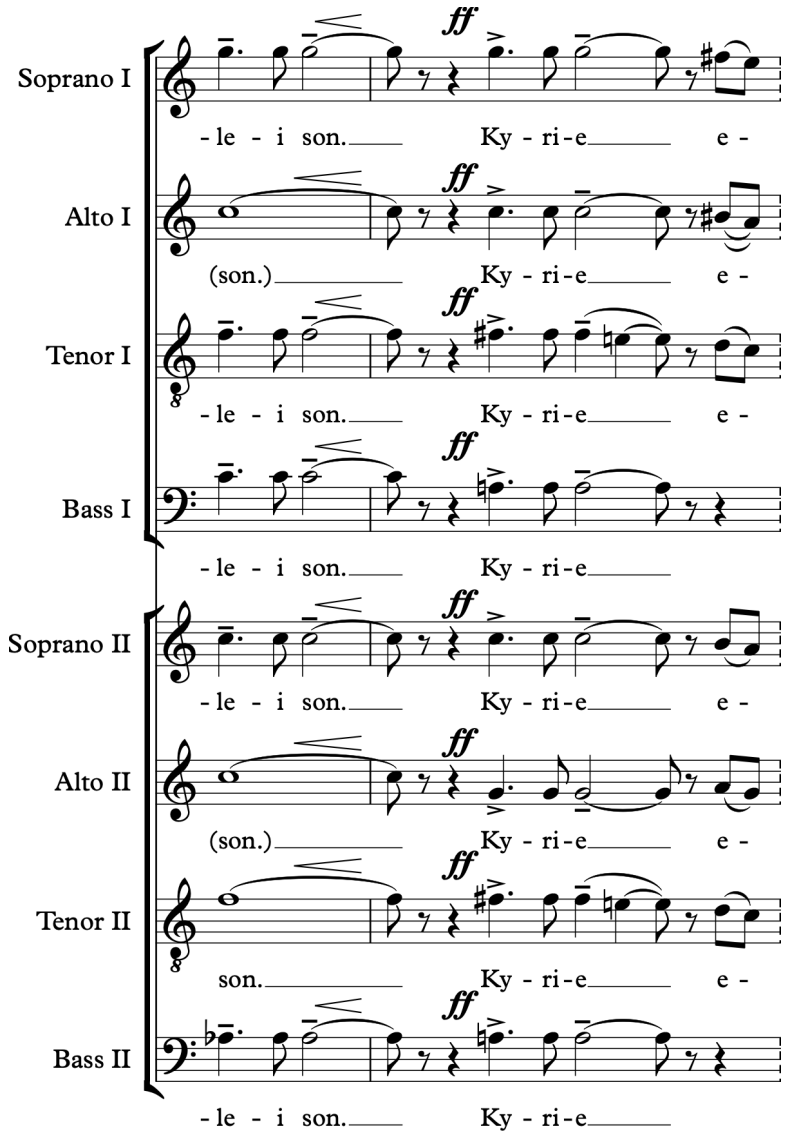
There is a distinct wedge-like shape to this compositional device, with a clear sense an increasing range as well as intervallic space (i.e. adjunct movement in seconds becomes thirds, and so on) which is found in all of Leighton's melodies. Leighton often explores chromatic alterations of modal scales too. The phrases also substantially elongate, often making use of the 'intensifier motif' which keeps interest even though the harmonic rhythm is arrested. Leighton manages to imbue a sense of improvisation in this type of filigree, to a greater extent in solo parts, particularly when these appear in thirds which is possibly the most important element of Leighton's spontaneous-sounding melodies.

In the use of small intervals there is, perhaps, an element of the plainsong from Leighton's chorister days at Wakefield. The quality of which imbues much of his music with an inherent singability which Leighton makes significant use of in his choral textures. It is perhaps not always apparent, the ear being distracted by the harsher and more angular textures of some of his music, but even the most extreme of Leighton's dissonant harmony abides by these principals. The relatively early (and somewhat experimental) *God's grandeur* is Leighton's furthest stretch from tonality seen in his choral music although it still shows a certain degree of restraint with the main component of the individual voice parts only expanded to thirds, rather than seconds (see example 1.4.5).



Example 1.4.5. *God's grandeur* (1957). bb.1-3. Novello.

Excepting the larger intervals in the inner parts necessitated for the complete voicing of the chord, the harmonic expansion from the unison is achieved through adjunct movement – either chromatically or by whole-tone step. As Leighton refines this method of achieving his exotic harmonic landscape, barely anything as large as a third appears in any of the vocal parts, even with larger forces (see example 1.4.6). At which point the operation of Leighton's voice-leading and the closeness of the production of Leighton's harmony can clearly be observed.



Example 1.4.6. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). Kyrie, bb.16-17. Novello.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER FIVE**

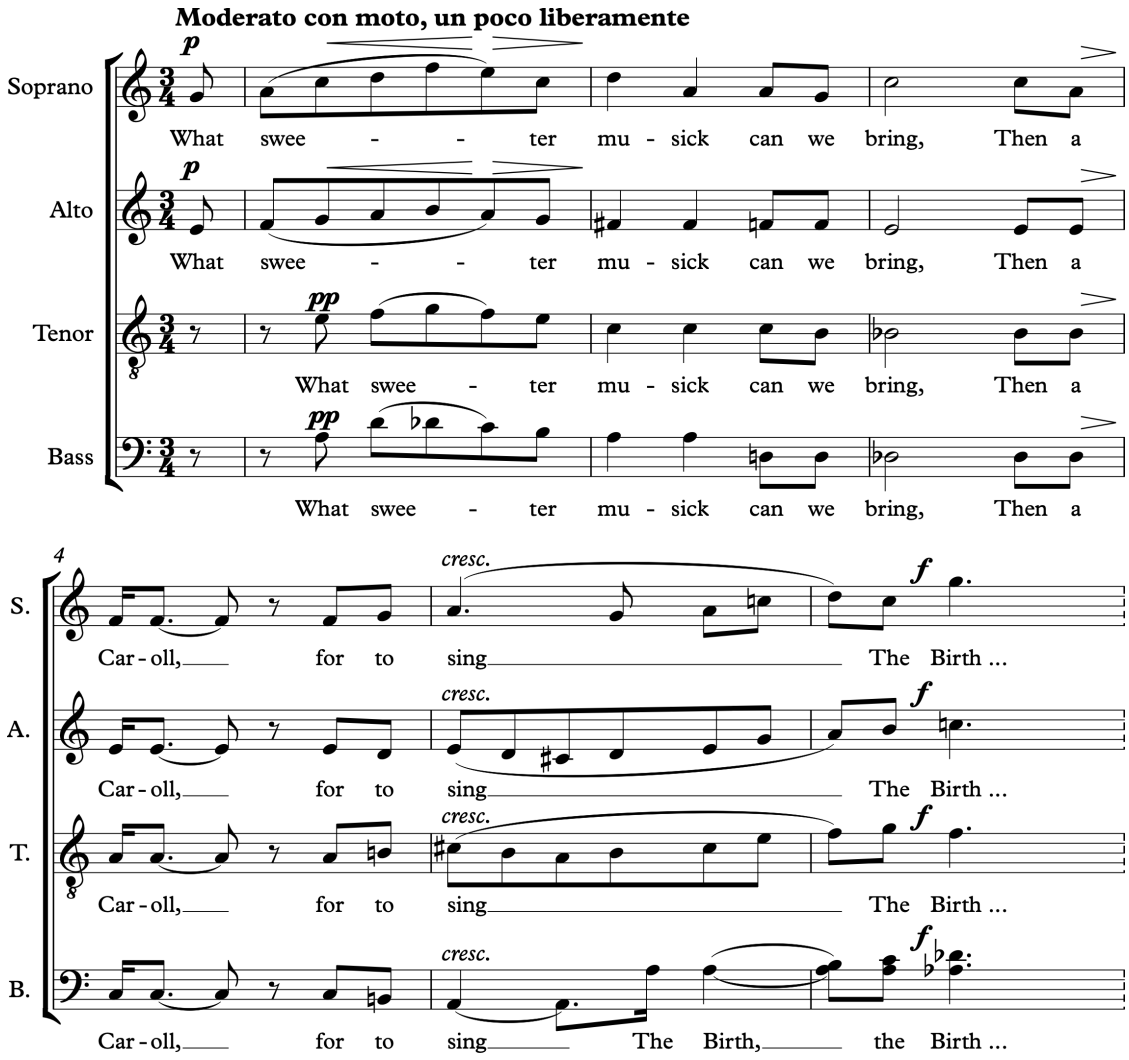
Harmony

Ultimately, Leighton's harmony is a product of all the elements discussed in the previous chapters: compositional method (Chapter 1.2), counterpoint (Chapter 1.3), and melody and voice-leading (Chapter 1.4). The operation of his harmony seems almost the incidental result of Leighton's horizontal approach. There is, however, a clear development of Leighton's harmonic style which demonstrates a conscientious approach to a cultivated harmonic sound-world.

Leighton's musical education was largely through exposure to British music from all centuries. He spoke of his time at Oxford as being 'steeped in music and particularly in English Music' and, whatever quantity of serialism or other modernist music was available, it was certainly less present.[46] Whilst some of his earliest works are harmonically conservative, there are clear hints of an individual voice that wanted to operate beyond traditional dominant-tonic harmony. Binks points to a lack of key signature (suggestions of the old church modes are present too) and the emergence of a well-crafted but harmonically untethered form.[47] *To Daisies* (1945) stays resolutely in D major for its 48 bars yet *I will make you brooches* (1946) manages to writhe between E minor and F major, ultimately wandering by way of A-flat major to G major in a mere 36 bars. Whilst a tonal plot from a minor key to its relative major is not particularly unusual, the harmonic spaces in between demonstrate Leighton's

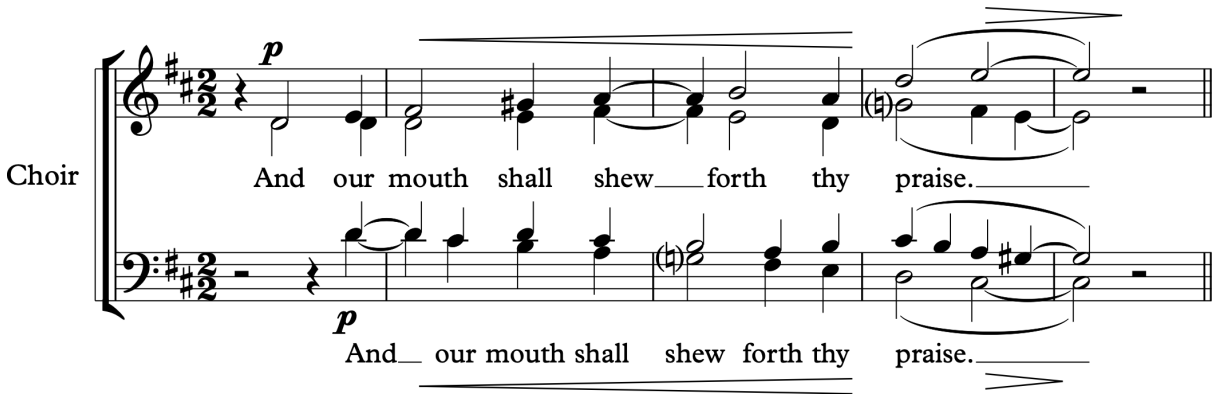
[46] Binks (2007). p.48.
[47] Binks (2007). p.24.

tendency towards non-functioning harmony. Some songs show some exploration into extended-chord harmony (usually in the form of major seventh chords) and a certain amount of chromatic inflection is present too. A finely cultivated chromaticism is the defining feature of Leighton's early harmony, coupled with non-functioning harmony and (perhaps most strangely) a lyrical approach all broadly governed by economic voice-leading. In 1953, when Leighton's orchestral works were nearly all constructed around serialist techniques (i.e. tones rows – such as in the Opus 12 *Concerto for Violin and Small Orchestra* and Opus 11 *Concerto in D minor for Piano and Orchestra*), the opening of *A Christmas Caroll* (Opus 21) is almost certainly a nod to the early carol-anthems of Herbert Howells and a signal that Leighton has not entirely abandoned his sense of English lyricism. The use of melisma and shape are particularly reminiscent of Howells' *A spotless rose* and, although they are very much part of his own style, the false relation in bar 5 has a particularly Howellsian flavour (see example 1.5.1).



Example 1.5.1. *A Christmas Caroll* Opus 21 (1953). bb.1-6. Novello.

The chief issue in this early style is that any sense of a tonic is so ephemeral and fast-moving that it is impossible to truly relate chords to each other. The choral music from 1962 onwards develops an adoption of diatonically-treated modal harmony (the first instance being in *Missa Sancti Thomae*) which more readily reveals its tonal centres also because of the greater degree of counterpoint found in these works. Yet Leighton achieves his exotic harmonic landscape through exactly the same mechanism as discussed in the previous chapter: through step-wise voice-leading.



Example 1.5.2. *Preces and Reponses* (1964). Novello.

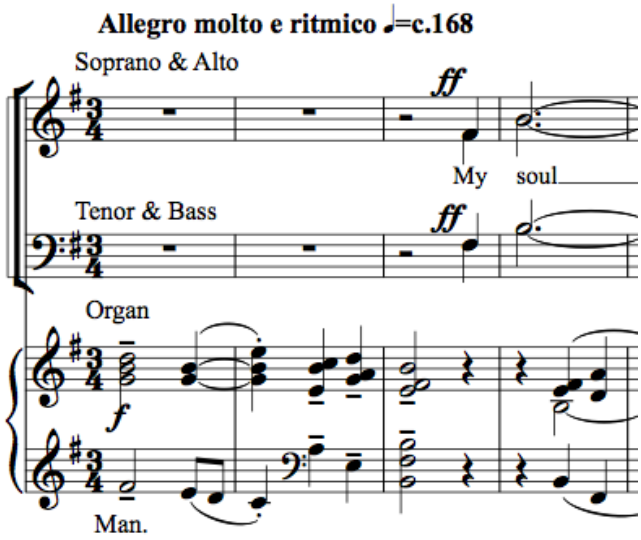
Perhaps the most distilled illustration of Leighton's harmony can be seen in the opening of his 1964 *Preces and Responses* (see example 1.5.2). The work bears several of the Leighton hallmarks already discussed in the previous chapters. The response begins from a unison middle D (the lower parts' entry being staggered) from which the soprano and bass move out in contrary motion – in this case both ending a ninth away from their original starting note. All of the melodic lines are made up of either major or minor seconds with the only exception being the fourths in the soprano and alto parts into the penultimate bar. The falling bass line gives harmonic solidity which is simply achieved by the natural sense of 'gravity' that such a figure has about it. A harmonic ambiguity is created at the outset through the close spacing of the parts at the start and, although D is clearly signalled as the tonic, the Lydian fourth further weakens any sense of centre (making the pull of the bass part the more compelling harmonic structure). What then becomes the issue is explaining the 'cadence' of the response as the tonal plot of the five bars moves from D (major) to a chord of C-sharp minor. In traditional harmony, it might be possible to claim that the C-sharp minor chord is a substitute for the Dominant of D major, but as Leighton does not always go to a chord that could be considered a substitute there is not a consistency enough to think that this is the case. Instead, we are left with the

potency of the bass line and the economy of movement in the upper parts, usually with contrary motion in the top-most part. Leighton's music is intrinsically wrapped in the paradox of having tonics which are completely free-moving and do not hold a 'functional' relationship with other triads as in traditional harmony.

In terms of theoretical approaches, the key elements of Leighton's harmony suggest a sympathy towards the Neo-Riemannian school of analysis – whose aim can be surmised 'Any chord can go to any chord'.[48] Its original purpose was to more satisfactorily explain the triadic and chromatic harmony of the Romantic era within traditional harmonic boundaries, which it did by citing minimal or 'maximally-efficient voice-leading'.[49] As Leighton never entirely abandons tonality, and his harmony chiefly operates through similar principals of voice-leading, it can offer a vocabulary for understanding Leighton's shifting tonics. Richard Cohn's treatise attempts to marry together various analytical models in order to achieve what he terms a 'fully-mapped triadic universe'.[50] Leighton's tonal centres are often related by thirds. In his emerging mature style, the *Magdalen Service* has three distinct tonics (and their resultant dominants) that switch between each other all a third

[48] An epithet attributed to various theorists and composers including Carl Friedrich Weitzmann, Franz Liszt, and Max Reger. See Cohn, Richard (2012). *Audacious Euphony*. Oxford University Press. p.84.
[49] Generally this means moving between two triads that have as many shared tones as possible and/or only require movement by semitone. For example, C+ to Ab+ (one shared tone: C, and two moving by semitone: E to Eb; G to Ab)
[50] Cohn, Richard (2012). *Audacious Euphony*. Oxford University Press.

apart: G (major), E (minor), and B (minor) which can be observed even in the first three bars of the Magnificat (see example 1.5.3).



Example 1.5.3. *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* (1959). Magnificat, bb.1-4. Novello.

G major and B minor can be found in the same hexatonic cycle and are classed as an 'L' or *Leittonweschel* transformation. G major and E minor is a Weitzmann region 'R' transformation or 'relative' which reflects their diatonic relationship as relative major/minor . Although Neo-Riemannian theory can help us name these tonics and their transformations (see table 1.5.1), Leighton's voicing of chords (particularly in his accompaniments) often contains added notes which, when coupled with Leighton's form of diatonic modalism mean they have an ultimately different relationship than the ones implied by Neo-Riemannian terminology. However, a Neo-Riemannian approach demonstrates the exact way in which Leighton's harmony is achieved, excepting that his voice-leading by seconds is not discriminating between major and minor seconds.

Bars	1-3	4-8	9-18
Text	*Organ introduction*	My soul doth magnify	and my spirit
Tonal plot	G+ to b- (via e-)	b- to f#-	c#- to G+
Relation to G (major)	Tonic		Tonic
Relation to E (minor)	Tonic		
Relation to B (minor)	Tonic	Dominant	Secondary dominant

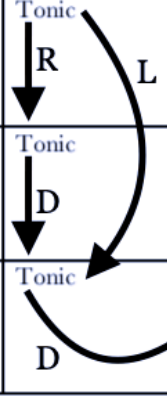
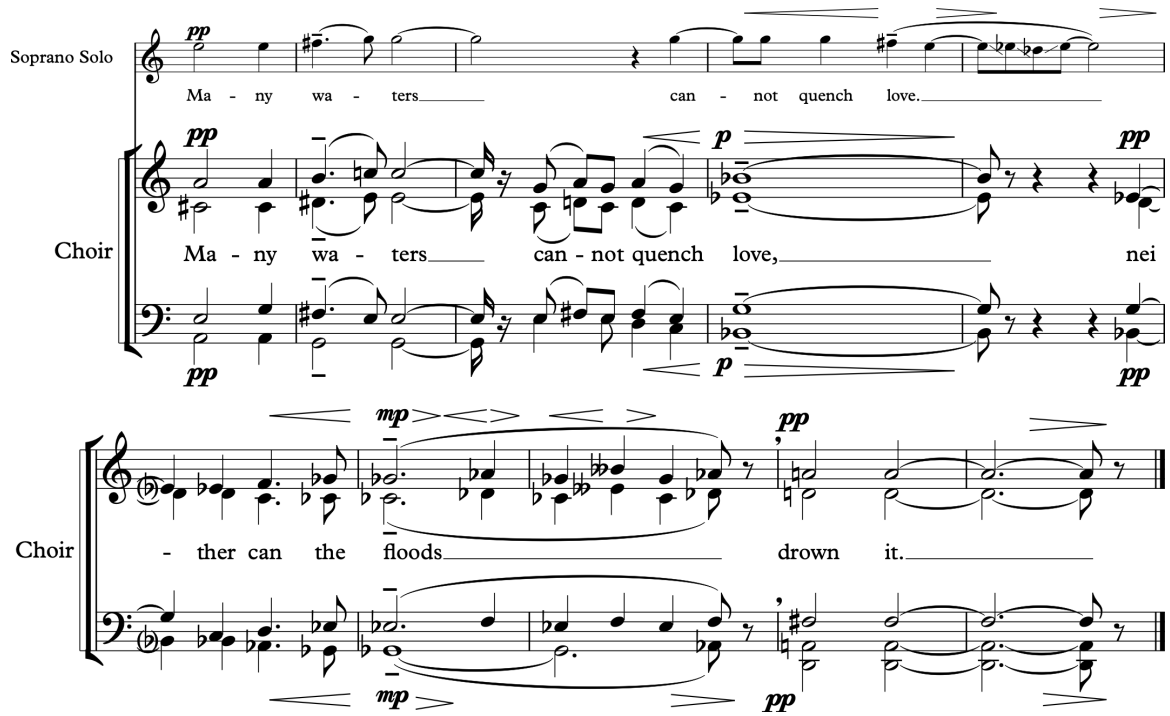


Table 1.5.1

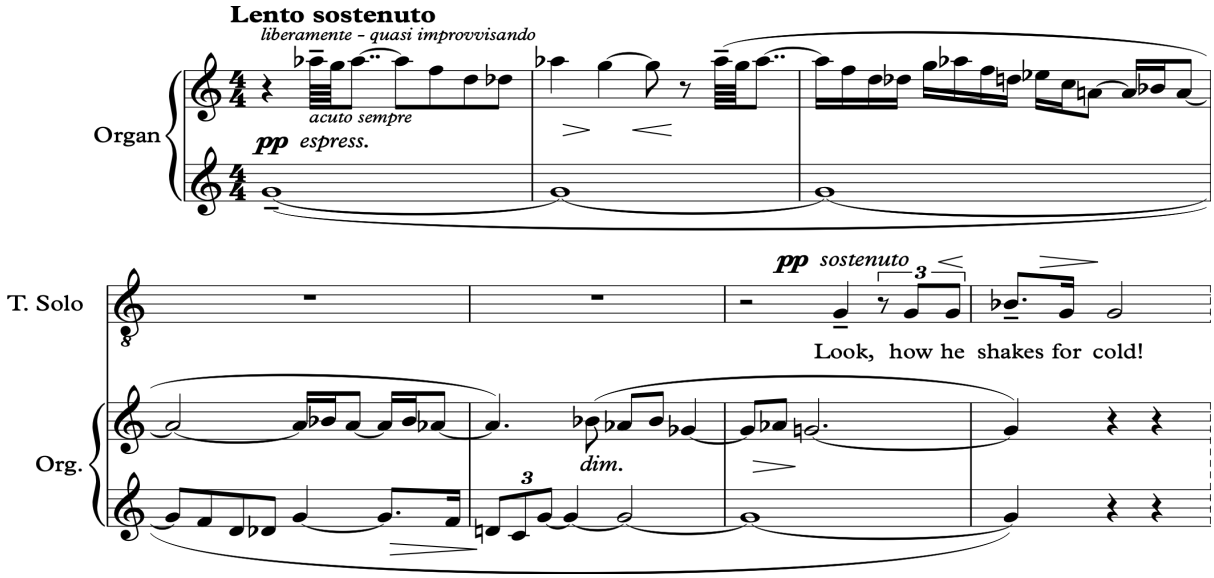
As Leighton's harmony is both tonal and yet non-functioning, there are certain musical devices he frequently uses in order to give enough of a sense of tonal security, but equally creates a convincing harmonic language in which to be able to enter a new tonal space. This is usually created by undermining any tonal centre in the other parts (for example through use of modes, an unrelated bass or bi-tonality) and the source of Leighton's creation of tension in his music; in this sense it is a purely harmonic concern. The devices which Leighton most commonly employs can be identified as three distinct forms and nearly all occur in his bass parts:

(1) sustained or (suspended) pedal note(s) (see example 1.5.4);



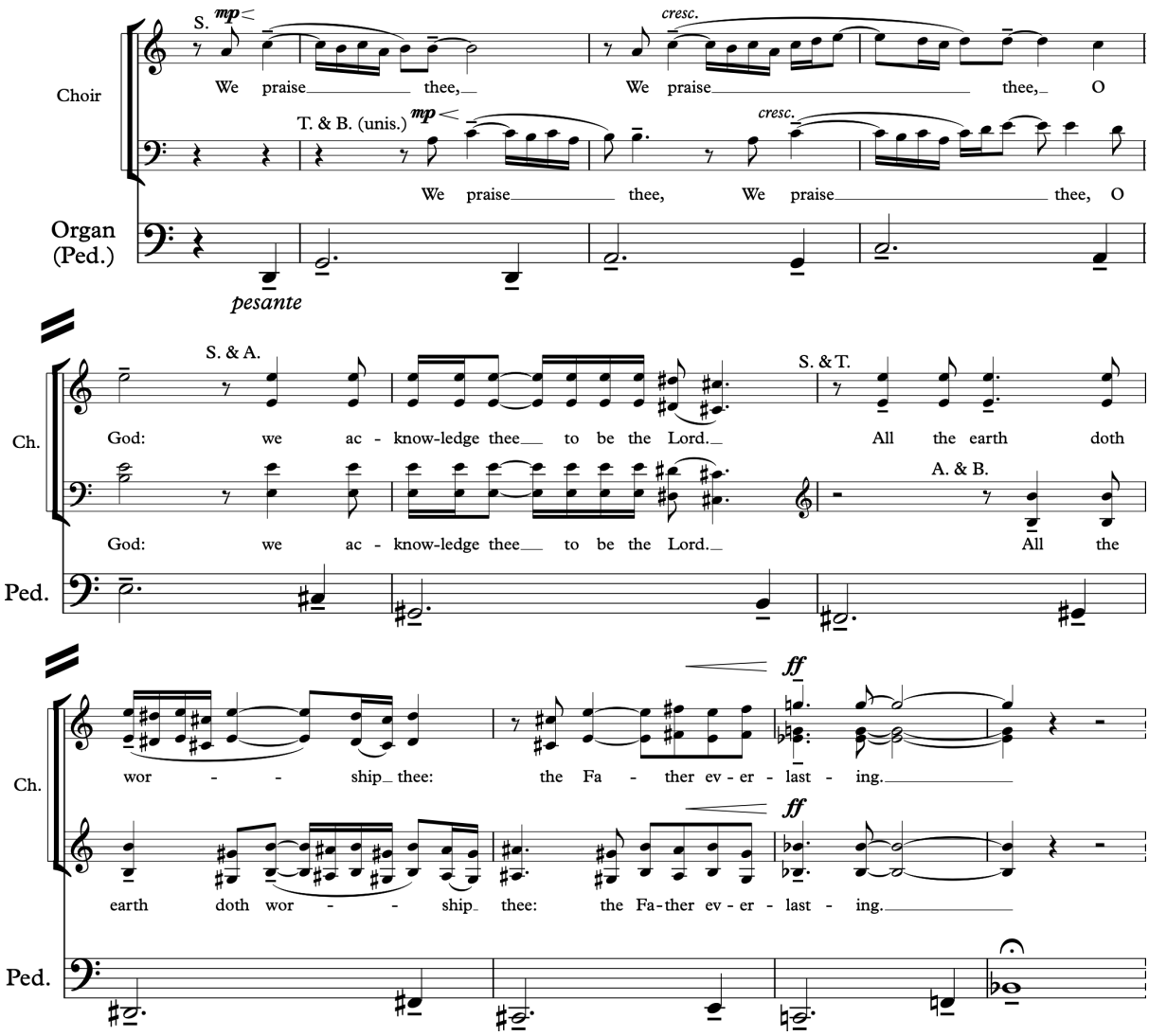
Example 1.5.5. *Columba mea* Opus 78 (1978). 6. How beautiful are thy feet, bb.70-79. Novello.

(2) descending bass line (see example 1.5.5);



Example 1.5.4. *Crucifixus pro nobis* Opus 38. (1961). 1. Christ in the Cradle, bb.1-7. Novello.

(3) a series of unrelated melodic fourths in the bass (see example 1.5.6).

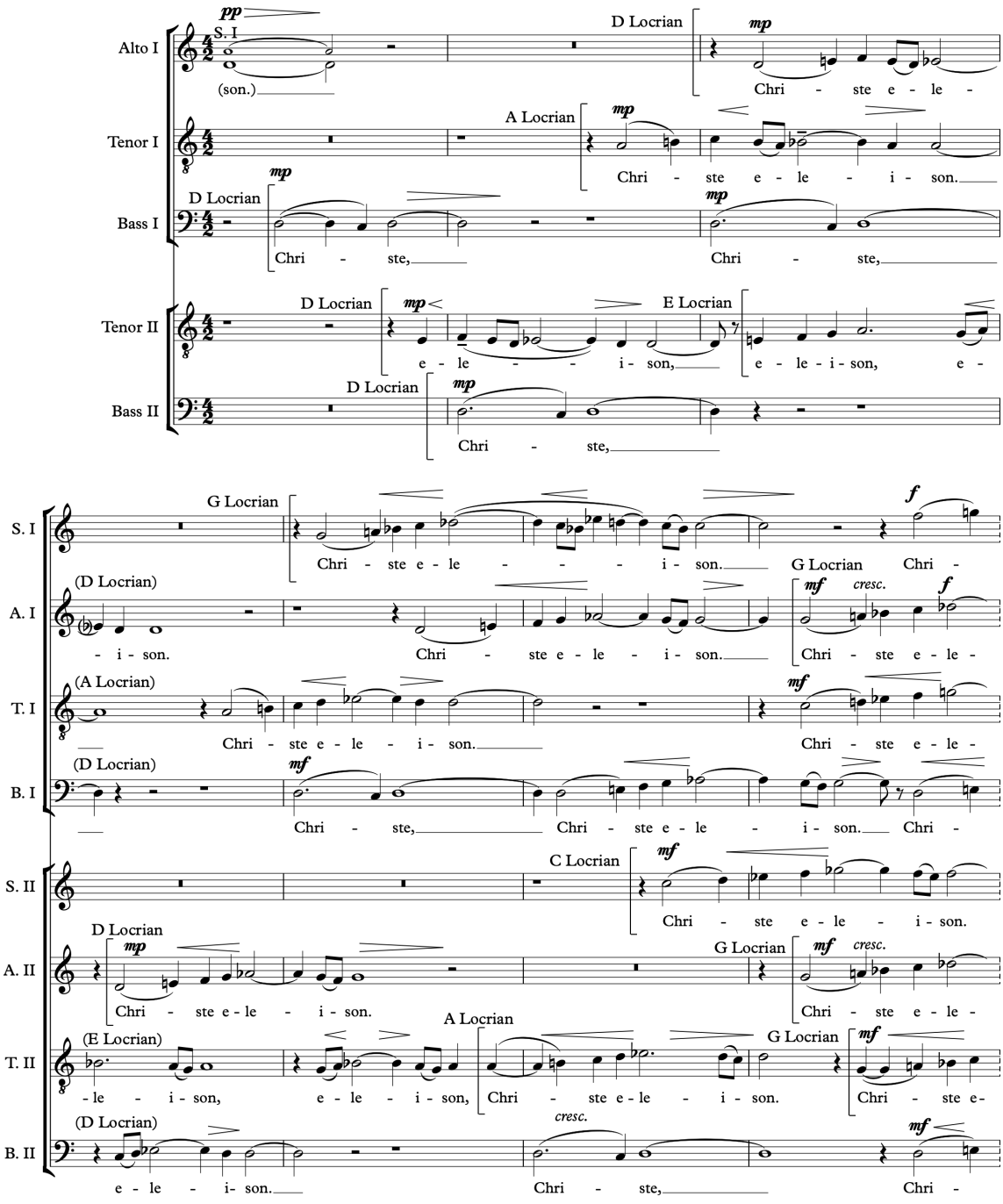


Example 1.5.6. *Te Deum* (1964). bb.11-21. Novello.

Of these methods, the first requires the melodic parts to keep sufficient harmonic ambiguity for Leighton to be able to move. Modal lines help, particularly when chromatic alterations are made (such as the alternating between a natural and Phrygian second in Kyrie of the Opus 44 *Mass*). In Leighton's earlier work this was achieved largely through chromaticism. The second creates a particularly strong feeling of tension with a sense of the upper parts pulling against the 'gravity' of the bass part. The third of Leighton's techniques usually has the opposite function when it first enters and serves to initially destabilise any sense of tonic in the upper parts.

Leighton often uses this under a sparse texture than is either mostly rhythmic or in sections of imitative writing where the harmonic rhythm is slow. The effect of this wandering bass seems to sufficiently upset the sense of a tonic in the other parts and Leighton sets them on a precarious course which then suddenly arrives in the same tonal space at the desired point. None of these systems are particularly complex, however, they allow Leighton enough of a structure to hold together his harmonic language. These techniques can all be identified whether in Leighton's earlier chromatic style or his mature modal style.

Since Leighton's harmony is non-functional there are several instances when bi-tonality can be found. Leighton does employ bi-tonality for aesthetic reasons if the text demands but more frequently it occurs as part of a transition from one tonal centre to another in sections of his polyphonic writing (see example 1.5.7). In the Kyrie of the *Mass* (Opus 44), each voice operates in a separate tonal space. The melodic alteration of the flattened and naturalised second in the Locrian mode accommodates this layering of tonics. The bass part resolutely stays tethered to the section's original tonic of D. Notably the first choir soprano and tenor parts both have false entries in bar 15, which begin on what seems to be a new tonic (as is the case with such leads in the other voice parts) but are in fact still in the mode of their previous tonic.

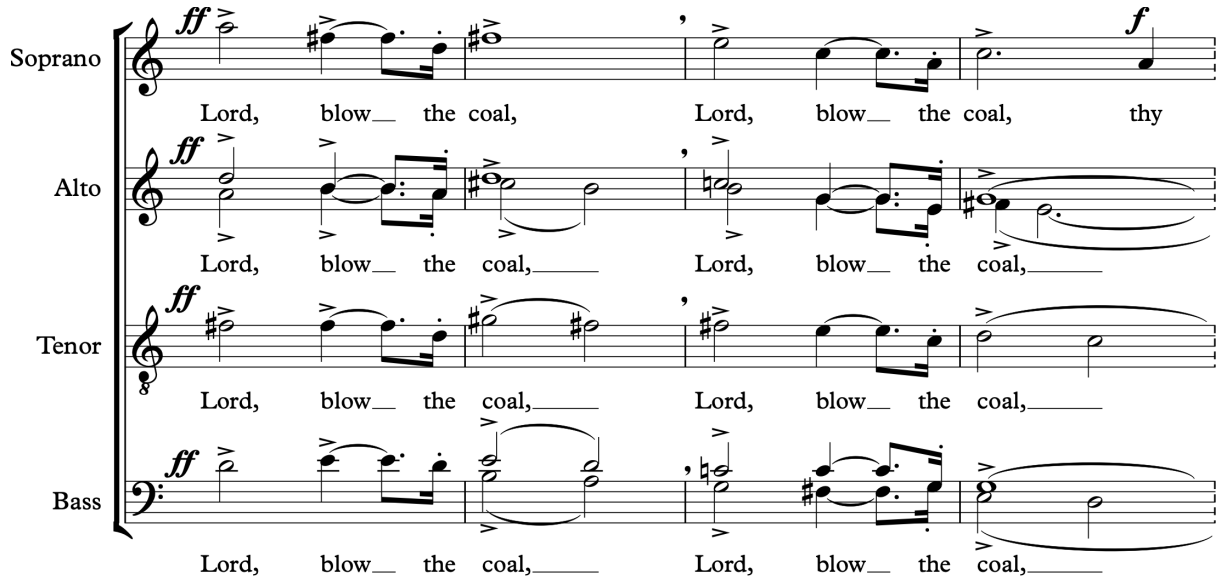


Example 1.5.7. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 1. Kyrie, bb.9-15. Novello.

Leighton's use of modal language, particularly in his choral music, acts as the compromise between his lyrical sensibility and, perhaps, the critical pressure to find a more 'contemporary' voice. At a fundamental level, Leighton probably understood that singers require some sense of tonality to find performing music enjoyable and not too complicated. It seems Leighton's *The Birds* had proved that continuing in a

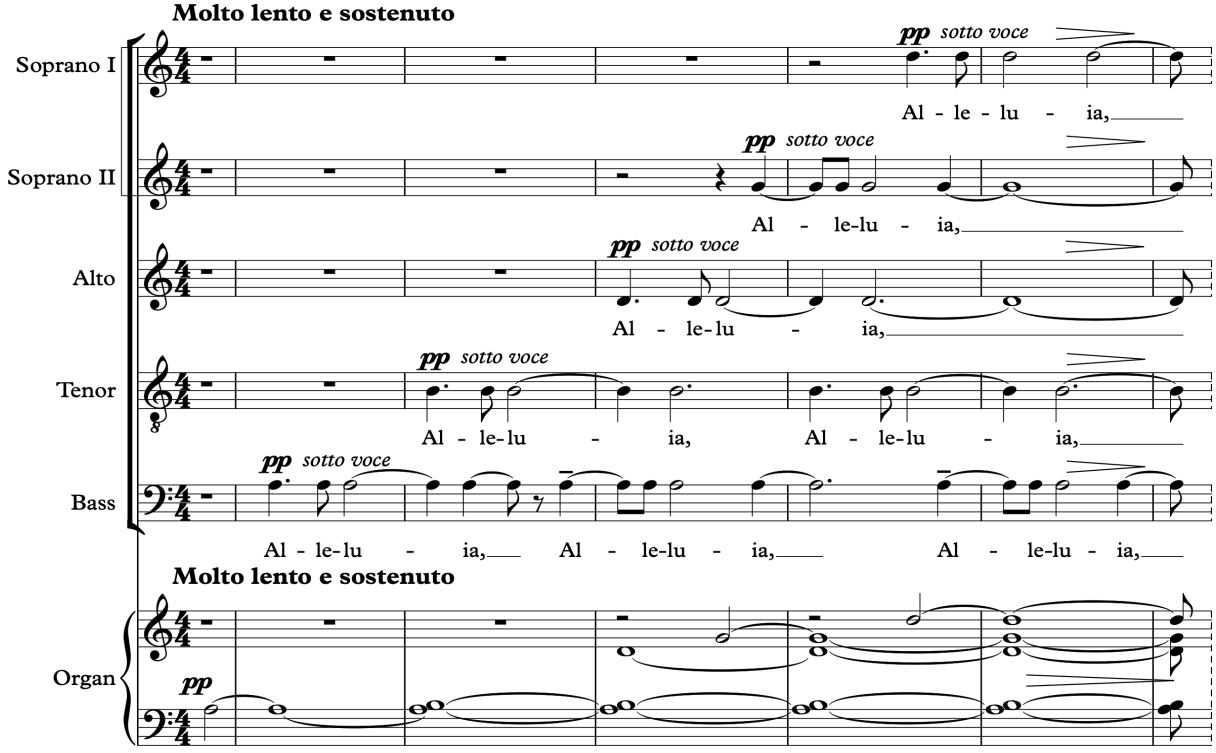
purely chromatic idiom caused issues for choirs, and still was represented in the challenges of works like *God's grandeur* and *Drop, drop slow tears* (from *Crucifixus pro nobis*). Leighton never completely abandons this style, *What love is this of thine?* shares many traits with these earlier works but these are exceptions. The major mode is replaced by the Lydian mode (with its distinctive raised fourth) giving the impression of the harmonic space in which traditional harmony modulates from the tonic to the dominant. Leighton uses both the Phrygian and Locrian modes almost interchangeably as the substitute minor mode. Chromatic alterations do occur, particularly in the minor modes, but Leighton's writing clearly preserves and respects their characters and there's not much evidence of 'synthesised' or self-made modes.

After Leighton studied with Petrassi in Rome, his harmonic language began to incorporate a greater deal of dissonance which mainly manifested itself in the form of stacked-fourth chords. Leighton's harmony is never truly quartal, although the sonority of fourths is an extremely important part of his language. In fugal writing, the melodic fourth is an essential melodic interval and is most commonly found in Leighton's choral music as the anacrusis to a section of imitative writing. Earlier in the chapter, Leighton's use of unrelated fourths in the bass was discussed. Parallel fourths (as well as fifths) can be found occasionally in his early work but these become an essential part of his mature style. The harmony at the end of one of Leighton's last anthems, *What love is this of thine?* is almost exclusively made up of stacked parallel fourths and fifths (see example 1.5.8).



Example 1.5.8. *What love is this of thine?* (1985). bb.77-80. Novello.

In the earliest examples of such writing, Leighton prefers the sonority of particular chords. One which is particularly prominent is found in the opening of *Alleluia, Amen* but is also present in *Crucifixus* and *Missa Sancti Thomae* (see example 1.5.9).



Example 1.5.9. *Alleluia, Amen* (1961). bb.1-6. Novello.

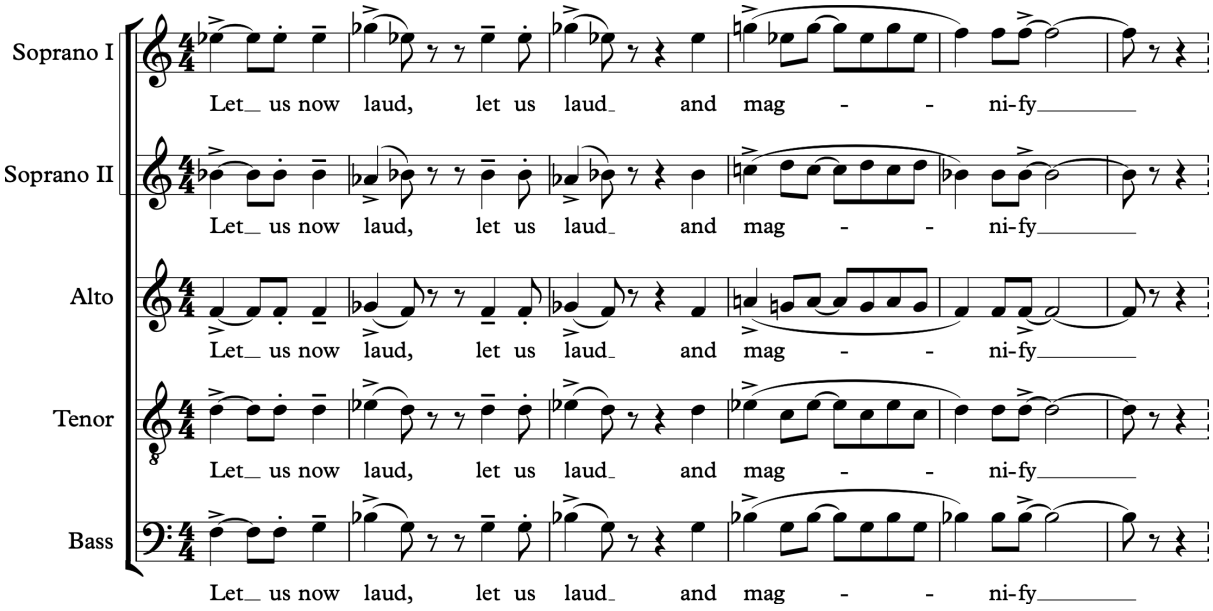
* * *

Leighton's harmonic language is as nuanced as it is distinctive and original. The operation of his harmony is achieved through his skills in counterpoint and well-wrought voice-leading. It must also be recognised that although certain elements are distinct in terms of process (both compositionally and in an analytical approach), all of them are flexibly interwoven in Leighton's writing. Certain periods are defined by a greater concentration of one particular style or another, but they are all interconnected even in their apparent contradiction. The intrinsic trait of Leighton's methodical approach to composition is in the level of connection between all of the elements studied here - each of which has some effect on the others. Some devices are revealed to be quite simplistic but they are effectively employed by Leighton's skilled hand.

PART ONE | **CHAPTER SIX**

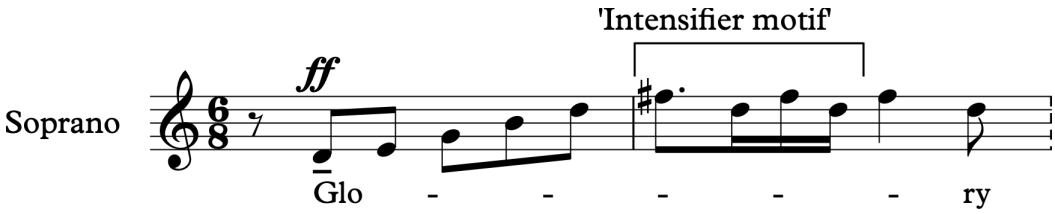
Rhythm

Leighton's music can more or less be categorised by two character-types of his rhythm: the first, an ethereal, improvisatory kind where the meter is almost non-existent; the second is characterised by highly arresting 'cells' with dance-like syncopation. The latter is possibly what Leighton is better known for. The melodic development of 'cells' has already been discussed but they have significant rhythmic implications. There are many examples of Leighton developing the rhythmic material of a cell as the main musical feature, whilst the melodic content remains relatively restricted (see example 1.6.1).



Example 1.6.1. *Hymn to the Trinity* (1974). bb.3-8. Oxford University Press.

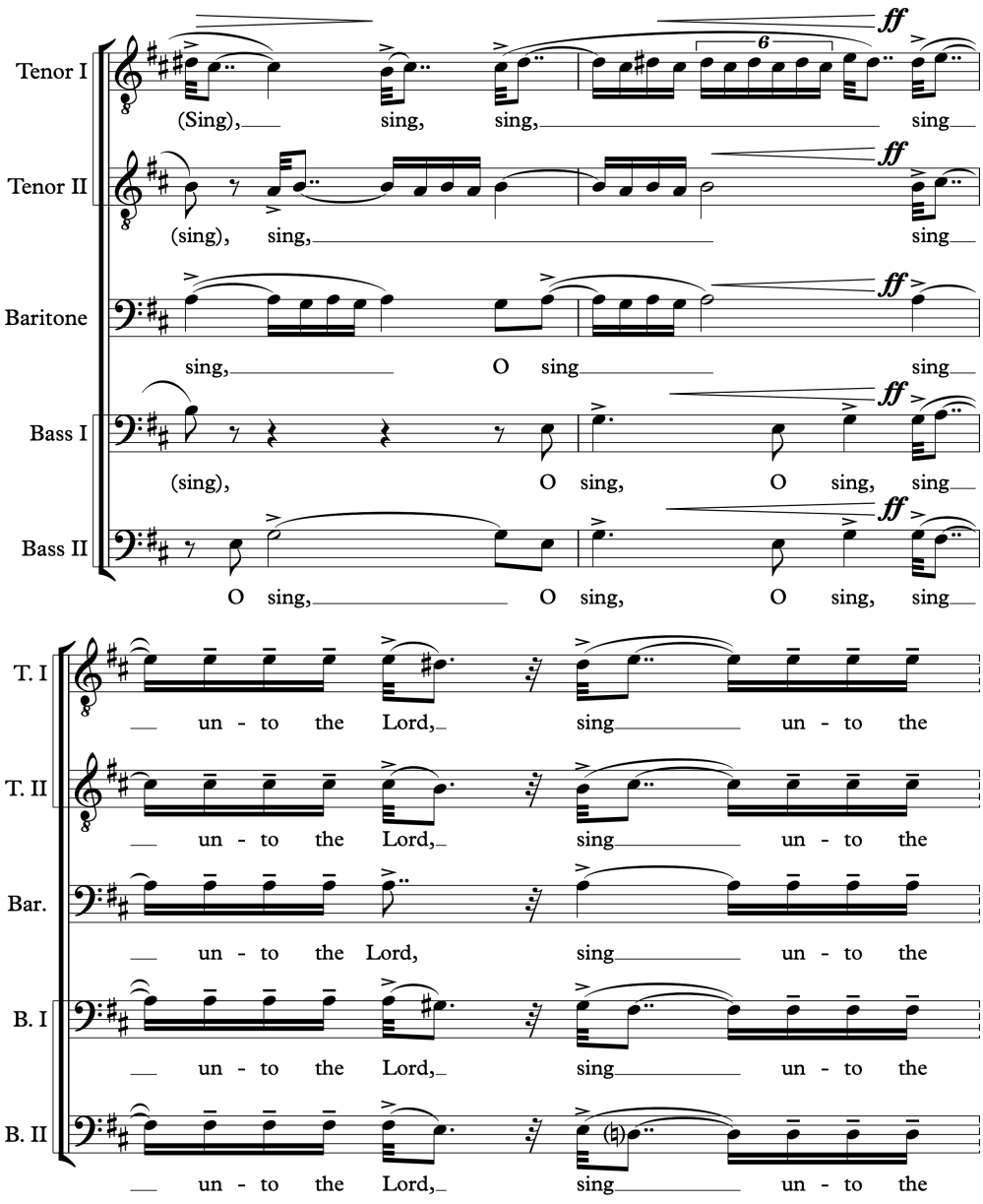
These figures form a key part of Leighton's style across his musical output and (as seen in the previous example) their treatment can include contraction as well as expansion. Syncopation and cross rhythms are a key constituent and the role of such rhythmic devices within Leighton's motifs adds a potency that helps disguise some of his compositional techniques. The 'intensifier motif' (see Chapter 1.3) adds a burst of rhythmic interest where the harmonic rhythm of the music is slow. The 'intensifier motif' appears in several rhythmic, as well as melodic, guises (see example 1.6.2 and previous examples 1.3.5 – 1.3.7).



Example 1.6.2. *Missa Sancti Petri* (1987). 2. Gloria, bb.1-2. Novello.

This form of the 'intensifier motif' in example 1.6.2 can also be found in the *Second Service* (1971). Along with the 'intensifier motif', the 'scotch snap' is another Leighton hallmark (one that is also very evident in his pupil, James MacMillan's music too). Unlike the intensifier motif, which has harmonic and melodic functions, the scotch snap is merely an effect (see example 1.6.3); both features are essentially forms of appoggiatura and acciaccatura. The 'scotch snap' is particularly prevalent in Leighton's work in the mid-1960's including the openings of the *Te Deum* (1964) and

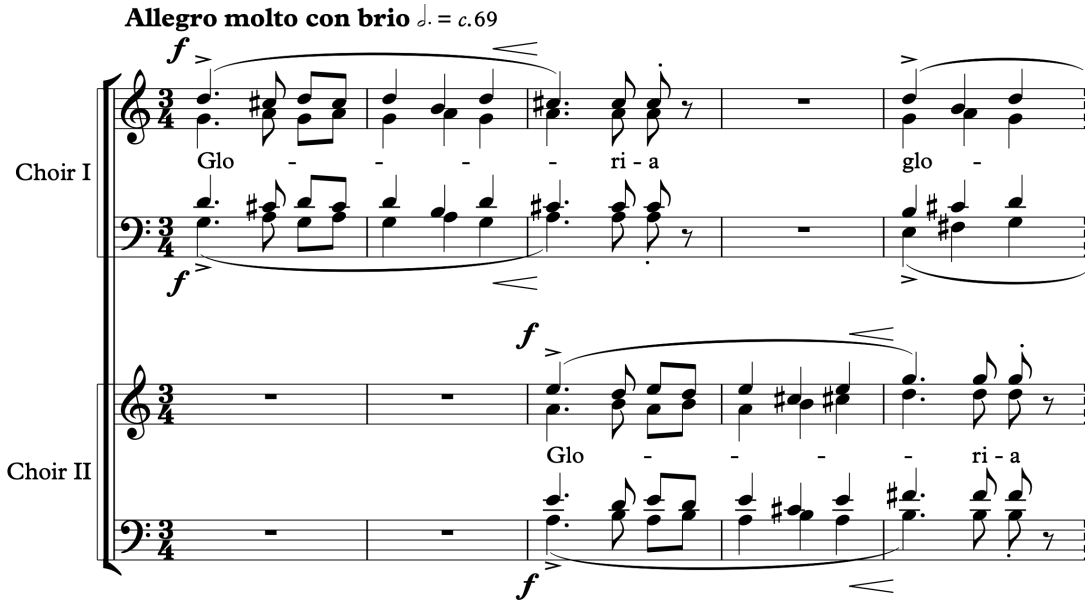
anthem, *Lift up your heads* (1966).



Example 1.6.3. *Three Psalm* Opus 54 (1968). 3. O sing unto the Lord, bb.6-8. Novello.

Such rhythmic devices cut through in Leighton's economic texture which, with their melodic shape, assist in the elements of transposition in his non-functioning harmony. Distinctive melodic shapes with these rhythms are interesting enough to

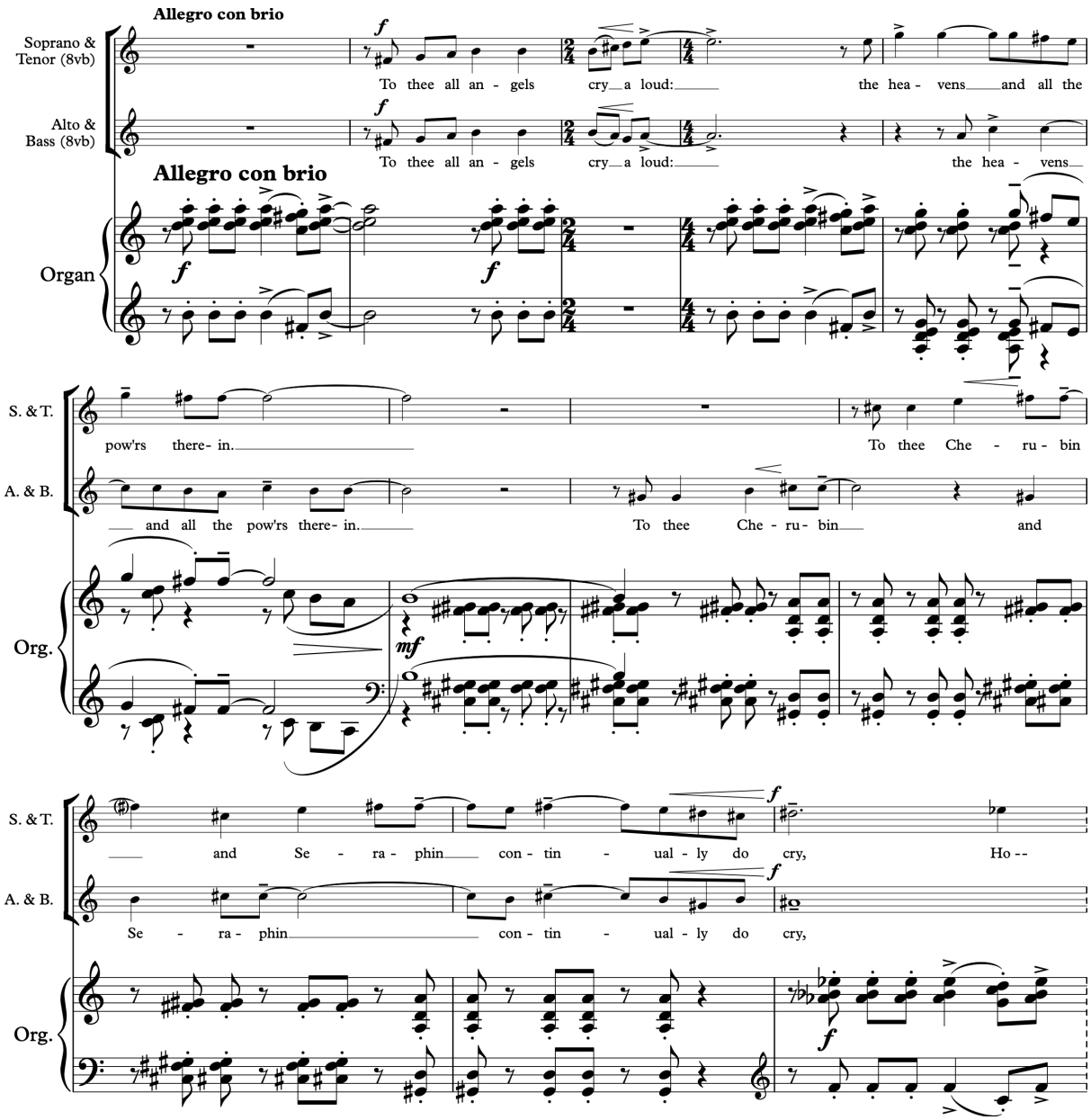
disguise the inelegant crowbarring effect of step-wise modulation (see example 1.6.4).



Example 1.6.4. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 2. Gloria, bb.1-5. Novello.

Ostinato effects are common in Leighton's early work but an increase in their use can be seen after his study in Rome. Again, Leighton seems to have found rhythm a useful element to help distract from the starkness of his economic writing and as his style becomes more dissonant. By their nature, these rhythmic ostinatos tend to appear in the accompaniments. Initially, these are incredibly simplistic chains of crotchet or quaver movement as found in *Give me the wings of faith* and the *Magdalen Service* but soon gain more vitality. They are particularly prominent in *Let*

all the world and the 1964 *Te Deum* (see example 1.6.5).

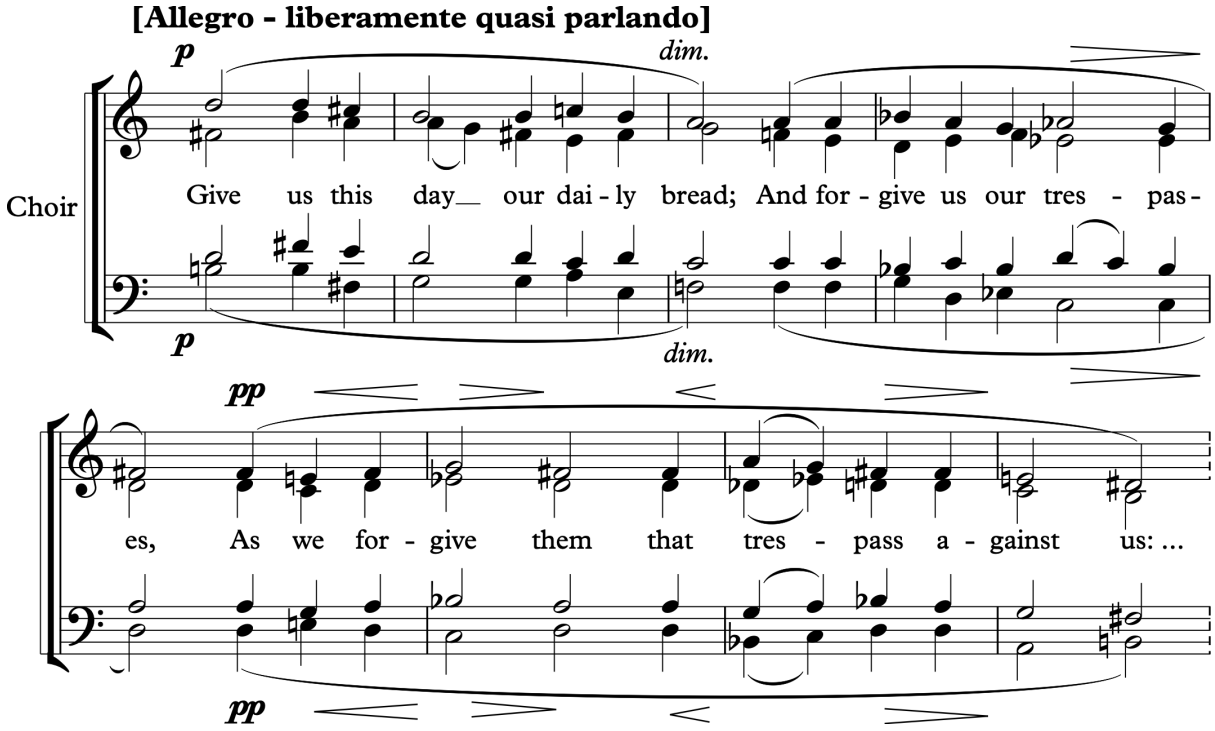


Example 1.6.5. *Te Deum* (1964). bb.22-33. Novello.

The *Te Deum* has a number of ostinato figures which underpin various sections in a very similar way to the Credos in *Missa Sancti Thomae* and the Opus 44 *Mass*. As

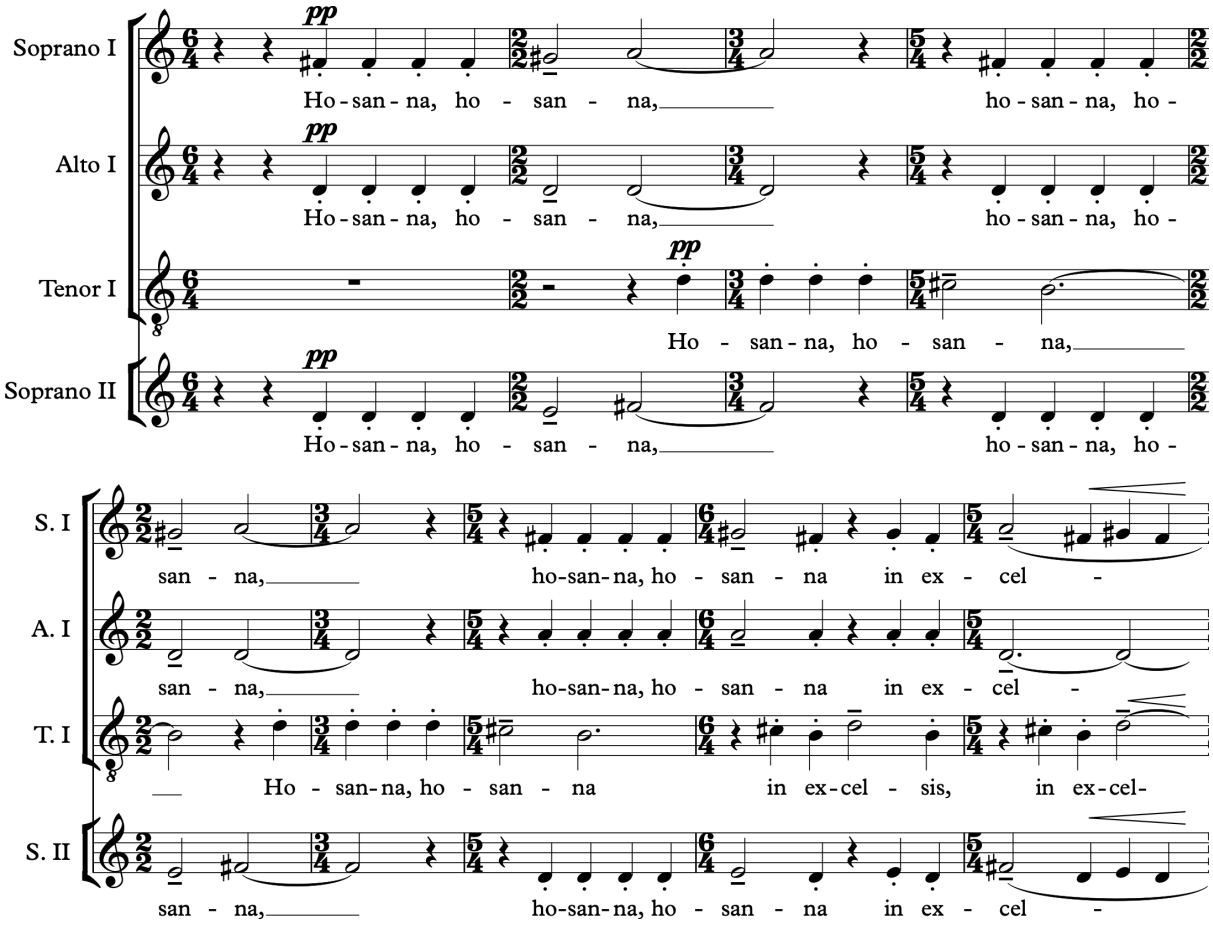
such, they form part of Leighton's structural organisation of some choral works – particularly those with longer texts.

Leighton's treatment of rhythm in pieces with slower tempi are no less involved. The gentle swaying effect cultivated in *Lully, lulla* demonstrates careful management and a nuanced understanding of speech-rhythm. The sensitivity of Leighton's teenage songs and earliest choral music exhibit his innate skill in setting words to natural-feeling rhythms, the 1949 *Missa Brevis* and *Pater Noster* have a conspicuous absence of time signatures, the flexible meter accentuating strong syllables (see example 1.6.6).



Example 1.6.6. *Pater Noster*. bb.9-16. Unpublished, Kenneth Leighton archive.

The subtleties of Leighton's affinity with speech-like rhythms are exemplified in the metrical complexities of the Hosannas from *Mass* Opus 44 Sanctus and also the well-known *Let all the world in every corner sing*. In the case of the latter, the text and ostinato 'cells' are interlinked which, with a constantly shifting meter has a vibrant and exciting effect. The *Mass* however, without an accompaniment, is created entirely by the layering of speech-rhythm effects (see example 1.6.7).



Example 1.6.7. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 4. Sanctus, bb.52-60. Novello.

‘For all music is singing’:

A Critical Analysis of the Mass Settings of Kenneth Leighton (1929-1988)

PART TWO:

A Critical Analysis of Kenneth Leighton’s Mass Settings

INTRODUCTION

Leighton composed no fewer than ten settings of the ordinary for the mass. These works span almost the entirety of his compositional life from the unpublished *Missa Brevis* of 1949 to the *Missa Christi* completed only a few months before his death in 1988. As a section of his entire output, they demonstrate the versatility of Leighton in a variety of contexts and can elucidate some of his approaches to composition. There is no other significant composer of the mid-twentieth century who wrote so many settings. Herbert Howells may have won the accolade of creating a 'wholly new chapter in Service, perhaps in Church, music' for his post-war settings of canticles for evensong but Leighton has not been recognised for his contribution to communion services.[1] It is hard to identify any other mid-twentieth century composers who produced as many masses (and for as many different contexts) as Leighton did. The *Mass* (Opus 44) is a work conceived on a large scale as a concert piece rather than for liturgical use (as Latin settings in Anglican foundations were not have been permitted for liturgical use at the time), calling for a highly-skilled choir which is in contrast to its near-neighbour, the *Communion Service in D* (Opus 45) which is designed for congregational singing in parish churches with varying musical resources.

Unlike the service of evensong, the twentieth century has seen a great deal of liturgical reform for Eucharist services in all denominations and this has, to some

[1] Cooke, Phillip (2013). *The Music of Herbert Howells*. Boydell & Brewer. p.87. from a letter to Howells by Eric Milner White.

extent, rendered Leighton's settings as dated. In contrast, Leighton's two evensong settings (the service for which still uses the 1662 BCP) both remain popular. The Church of England began introducing various alternative 'commended' liturgies from 1960, which ultimately superseded the service of Holy Communion as prescribed by the 1662 BCP). This would have been the form that Leighton knew as a chorister at Wakefield and four of his settings are written for BCP use.[2] Subsequently, Leighton's later settings use the new rites: the *Sarum Mass* (Opus 66) in 1972 which was eventually published in the Alternative Service Book (ASB) Rite A form and the *Missa Sancti Petri* in 1987 in the Rite B form. Leighton's last mass, *Missa Christi*, was commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis and so used the Americanised version of Rite A (the English version being used for publication). The *Mass for Ampleforth* (Opus 67) and *Missa Cornelia* (Opus 81) both use the Roman Catholic vernacular of the ordinary although subsequent translations have also dated these settings.

The previous restrictions in the Anglican church of music for use in Holy Communion (the main one being that settings must be in English) were relaxed in the second half of the twentieth century and now allow choirs to sing the ordinary of the Mass in Latin which has led to a large increase in the repertoire from all musical eras. This has come at the expense of many English settings falling out of the repertoire and, as Leighton's were not so established as those by the likes Harold Darke or Stanford, his masses have not become part of the mainstream repertoire of choral foundations.

[2] The BCP form of Holy Communion is now rarely heard as a fully choral service with any regularity with the notable exceptions of the chapel at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich as well as Chester and Southwell cathedrals.

Nonetheless, Leighton brings a high-quality and modern approach to the form – and moreover one that is liturgically sensitive. In terms of the musical material, Leighton frequently carried themes and ideas from one work to the next and this is especially true and noticeable in the masses.

Year	Title (Opus No.)	Forces	Text	Notes
1949	Missa Brevis - (i) Kyrie 'in the Dorian mode' - (ii) Credo - (iii) Sanctus - (iv) Benedictus - (v) Agnus Dei - (vi) Gloria - (vii) Amen	SATB	BCP	Unpublished
1962	Missa Sancti Thomae (Opus 40) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Response to the Commandments - (iii) Credo - (iv) Sanctus - (v) Benedictus - (vi) Agnus Dei - (vii) Gloria	SSATB, Org	BCP	Commissioned by the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral for the 800th Anniversary of the Consecration of St Thomas Becket as Archbishop of Canterbury
1964	Mass (Opus 44) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Gloria - (iii) Credo - (iv) Sanctus - (v) Benedictus - (vi) Agnus Dei	SATB soli, SATB SATB, Org (Credo only)	Latin Rite	Written for the Edinburgh University Singers and Herrick Bunney
1965	Communion Service in D (Opus 45) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Response to the Commandments - (iii) Credo - (iv) Sanctus - (v) Benedictus - (vi) Agnus Dei - (vii) Gloria	Unison voices, Optional SATB, Org	BCP	Commissioned by the Church Music Society
1967	Missa Brevis (Opus 50) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Response to the Commandments - (iii) Sanctus - (iv) Benedictus - (v) Agnus Dei - (vi) Gloria	SSATB	BCP	Commissioned by Liverpool Cathedral
1972	Sarum Mass (Opus 66) - (i) Dedication* - (ii) Kyrie - (iii) Gloria - (iv) Gospel Responses - (v) The Eucharistic Prayer - (vi) Sanctus - (vii) Benedictus - (viii) Christ has died - (ix) Blessing and Honour - (x) Agnus Dei - (xi) Dedication* - (xii) Dismissal	SSAATTBB, Org	Published in 1990 with ASB Rite A *texts from the Sarum Rite	Commissioned by the Southern Cathedrals Festival at Salisbury
1973	Mass for Ampleforth (Opus 67) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Gloria - (iii) Sanctus - (iv) Benedictus - (v) Agnus Dei	Unison voices, SATB, Org	Roman Catholic vernacular	Commissioned by Ampleforth Abbey for the Schola Cantorum Unpublished
1979	Missa Cornelia (Opus 81) - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Gloria - (iii) Sanctus Benedictus - (iv) Agnus Dei - (v) Acclamation - (vi) Great Amen	SSS, Org	Roman Catholic vernacular	Commissioned by St. Leonard's-Mayfield School (East Sussex)
1987	Missa Sancti Petri - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Gloria - (iii) Sanctus Benedictus - (iv) Agnus Dei	SATB, Org	ASB Rite B	Commissioned by Peterborough Cathedral for its 750th Anniversary with additional funds from the Eastern Arts Council
1988	Missa Christi - (i) Kyrie - (ii) Gloria - (iii) Sanctus Benedictus - (iv) Agnus Dei	SATB, Org	American Episcopal Rite A (published with English ASB Rite A)	Commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis for its 150th Anniversary year

Table 2.0.1. Leighton's mass settings.

PART TWO | **CHAPTER ONE**

The Early Masses

1949-1967

Missa Brevis (1949)

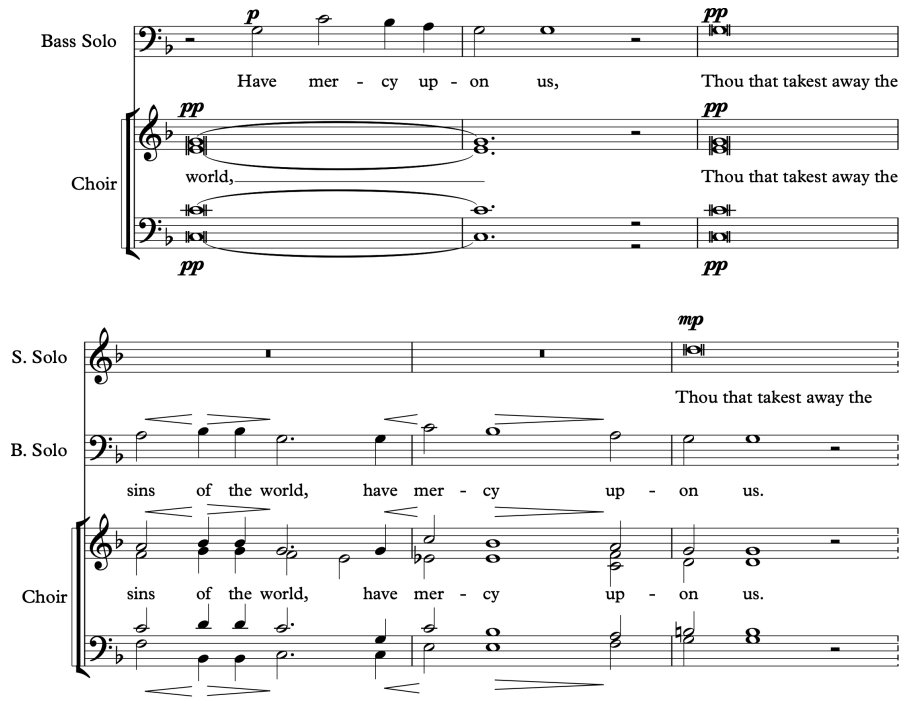
It is, perhaps, not all that surprising that one of Leighton's first choral compositions was a communion service (preceded only by *Three Carols* and *The twelve days of Christmas* in 1948) considering his training in the choir at Wakefield Cathedral. Consequently, the 1949 *Missa Brevis* proves something of a youthful exercise. It is telling that Leighton kept the manuscript of this early work even if he never felt the need to publish it. Whilst key elements, such as voice-leading and sensitive text-setting are clearly evident, the *Missa Brevis* comes across as an experimental exercise – and not an altogether successful one.

It is not known whether the *Missa Brevis* (or its sister piece, *Pater Noster*) was ever performed. It may have been a purely academic exercise. In Leighton's choice of title, there is a suggestion of his awareness that his early harmonic language does not sit comfortably with the normal nomenclature of settings in English in the Anglican tradition. The form follows that of morning or evening canticle settings – usually the composer's name and the key (*e.g.* 'Stanford in C'). The Latin name avoids the need to identify an over-arching tonal centre, the profundity of the issue being all too

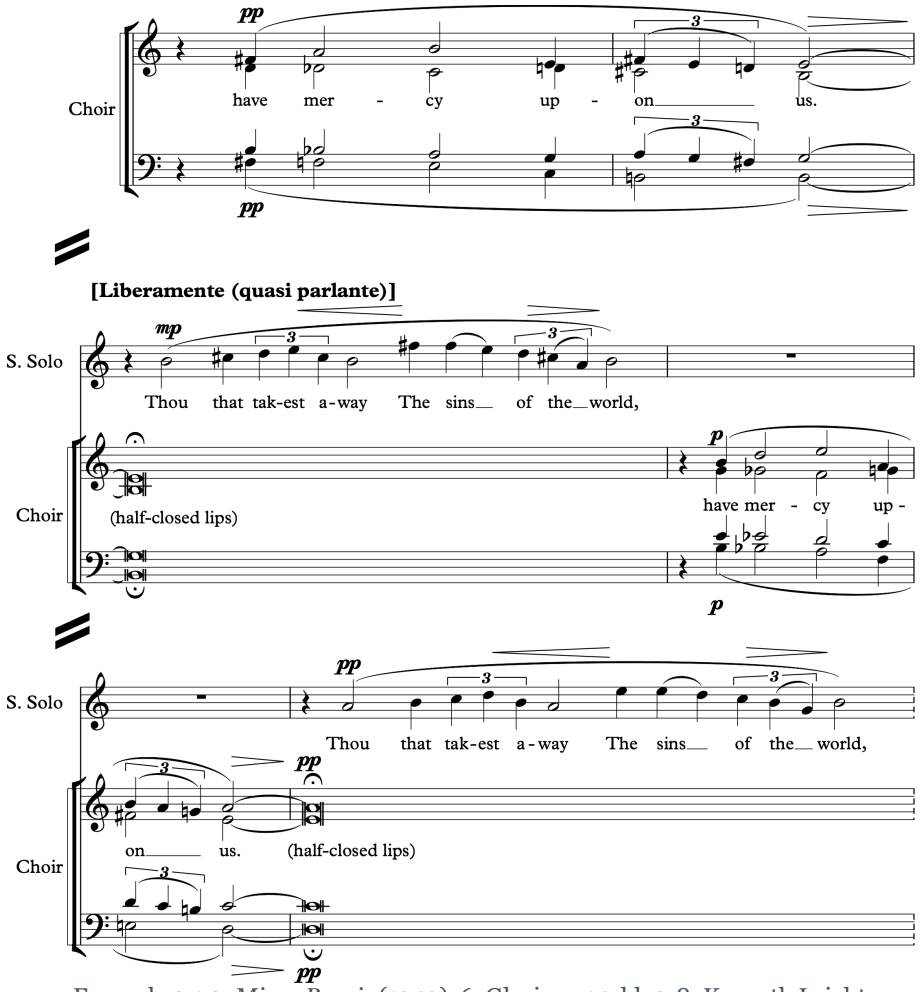
apparent in the Benedictus which begins on C major chord but the ends in G-sharp minor – all within the space of 11 bars. [3]

The *Missa Brevis* is a relatively ambitious work for the young Leighton and his largest work in terms of its constituent movements at that time. There is not much evidence of an attempt to unite each section motivically, instead relying on the stylistic similarity and brevity. There are aesthetic influences from the masses Leighton would have learned as a chorister in the choir at Wakefield Cathedral. John Ireland's *Communion Service in C* is a likely candidate but the solos in the Gloria and Agnus are distinctly reminiscent of the Harold Darke's *Communion Service in F* (published in 1926), which Leighton referred to in a speech he gave to Wakefield Old Choristers' Association: '…we also sang what was then the latest thing, - Darke in F a most exciting experience…'.[4] The rhythms Leighton employs seem to emulate the effect of the speech-rhythm Darke demands (see examples 2.1.1 and 2.1.2).

[3] This issue remains the case for most of Leighton's settings of canticles and masses (with the notable exception of the *Communion Service in D* (Opus 45)).
[4] Binks (2007). p.7

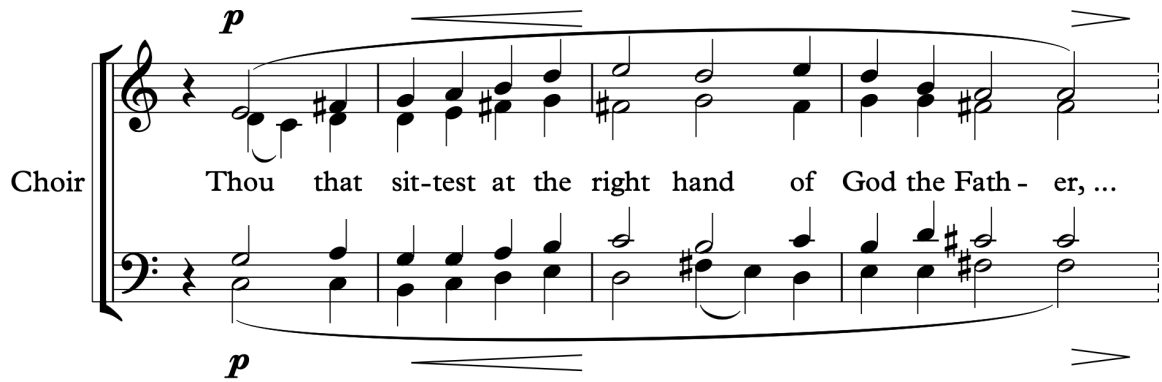


Example 2.1.1. *Communion Service in F*, Harold Darke (1926). 8. Gloria, bb.32-36. Oxford University Press.



Example 2.1.2. *Missa Brevis* (1949). 6. Gloria, p.14, bb.3-8. Kenneth Leighton archive.

The freedom of the rhythm is not confined to these particular solos, as Leighton never commits himself to a single time signature (in fact, Leighton did not write any in) and there is a constant interplay between a crotchet and minim pulse. This is not a mere quirk and demonstrates a sensitive rendering of important syllables in the text as well as another possible manifestation of the influence of the Renaissance choral music such as that by composers like Byrd and Tallis. The setting of 'Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father' gives subtle stresses to each of the strongest syllables in a shifting metre either through elongation or ensuring it comes on the first beat of the bar (see example 2.1.3).



Example 2.0.3. *Missa Brevis* (1949). Gloria, p.15, bb.3-6. Kenneth Leighton archive.

The metrical flexibility does provide some rhythmic interest to what is otherwise a syllabic and predominantly homophonic rendering with only the briefest sections of counterpoint. Admittedly, it does achieve the justification of 'brevis' in its name but it tends to result in a number short, clipped phrases. The Credo and Gloria in particular have more caesurae than might be considered ideal with their longer and more substantial texts. The Kyrie makes calls for antiphonal singing between the singers in the decani (first choir) and cantoris (second choir) stalls which, through a brief overlap, means at least eight singers are required in performance. Along with

the inclusion of the subtitle for the Kyrie: 'in the Dorian mode', it is the only real indicator of Leighton's interest in sixteenth century music.

The harmony in the *Missa Brevis* is somewhat unusual and does not seem to have a precedent either in the 1948 *Three Carols* or any of Leighton's other works – and certainly not in the volume present in this setting. Excepting the Kyrie and the soprano solo in the Gloria, there is no divisi and it forms an exercise in strict four-part writing. The chromaticism is rather unusual and not wholly convincing, with frequent changes of mode. It is achieved through the same operation of all of Leighton's choral music (and to an extent demonstrates a strictness that Leighton returns to later in his mature career but deviates from for a few decades) of economic voice-leading. This, perhaps, creates some difficulties for Leighton and causes some of the less secure harmonic dalliances. It may be that Leighton wanted to experiment with a greater amount of dissonance in his harmony, the work is littered with false relations and changes of mode but these completely undo any previous sense of tonality. Although important traits of Leighton's mature style are present in these works, the syntax and grammar that makes this kind of harmonic language work are missing. It hints at Leighton's flexible semi-diatonic approach but ultimately the effect is not a cohesive one, again – failing to be convincing. The harmonies may work on the piano (and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Leighton used the piano as a tool for this experiment) but they are not the kind that work so well with voices in spite of the small intervals that make up the individual horizontal lines. It shows that although perhaps Leighton understood how he could permissibly achieve a complex harmonic language in his choral music, he was yet to find quite what that language should be. Nonetheless, there are several key features which are already present in these youthful works but Leighton's development at this time is more

readily shown in his *Symphony for Strings* (Opus 3) from the same time. Its survival through a time when Leighton appears to have purged and disowned some of his early works suggests he thought it was worth keeping as something of a memento but obviously never meant for publication.[5] Instead, it serves as an indicator of Leighton's development and the very beginning of his compositional output.

Missa Sancti Thomae Opus 40 (1962)

The decade-long gap between the *Missa Brevis* and the next mass that Leighton composed, the *Missa Sancti Thomae*. The time in between the two works represents a period in which his orchestral music was Leighton's chief focus and, naturally, his orchestral writing particularly develops. After a hiatus of a few years however, Leighton begins writing at least one choral work per year from 1953. The style of these pieces shows a much slower transition than in his orchestral works, fluctuating between the more lyrical style that generally defined his Oxford days (such as the two carols in 1956 that, along with the 1948 setting of the Coventry Carol, form his Opus 25) or experimenting with the harsher dissonances and textures most noticeably observed in *God's grandeur* (1957). Nevertheless, Leighton received a number of prestigious commissions, including from the Three Choirs Festival in 1958 and a cantata (*Crucifixus pro nobis*) for New College, Oxford in 1961.

The Friends of Canterbury Cathedral approached Leighton in 1961, wanting a new choral setting of the communion service in celebration of the eight hundredth anniversary of Saint Thomas Becket's consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury.

[5] Binks (2007). pp.44-45.

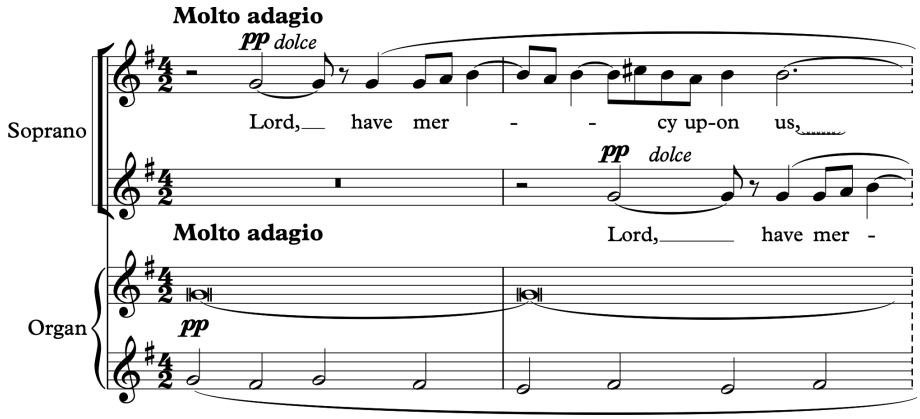
Leighton began working on the setting in January, and completed it in March 1962.[6] The *Missa Sancti Thomae* is the first of Leighton's choral music to convincingly adopt a modal framework. The Kyrie 'in the Dorian mode' from the 1949 *Missa Brevis* does not particularly represent a close application of modalism and while suggestions are present in both the *Magdalen Service* and *Crucifixus* they do not form much more than incidental similarities. This represents the transition from Leighton's chromatic harmony to his own cultivated form of modal diatonicism which is particular (but not necessarily exclusive) to his choral music.

Why Leighton chose to use modes for this particular commission is worth considering. It may have been in an effort to particularly evoke the soundworld of Saint Thomas Becket's era rather than a natural progression of his style. If the intention was the latter, it was serendipitous, fitting easily within established elements of Leighton's compositional style, and all of Leighton's subsequent choral music uses the old church modes. Naturally, there are sections which are still primarily chromatic in their character and their function (particularly the Credo and Agnus Dei) but the Lydian mode is a distinct feature throughout the work.

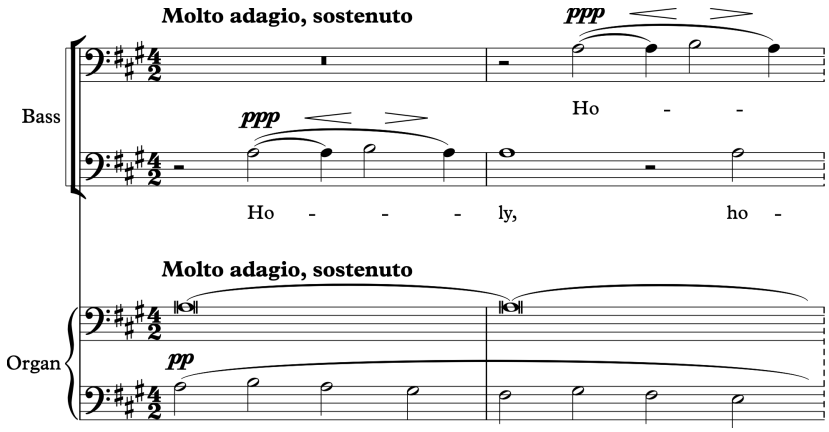
Modal harmony was not unique to Leighton and was very much part of the style of Herbert Howells (whom Leighton described as 'one of my heroes') as well as Vaughan Williams.[7] Many of Leighton's near-contemporaries such as Benjamin Britten made use of modes too, however Leighton adopts modality as a significant part of his compositional style.

[6] Smith (2004). p.37.
[7] Leighton, Kenneth (date unknown). From an unpublished lecture – see Binks (2007). p.7.

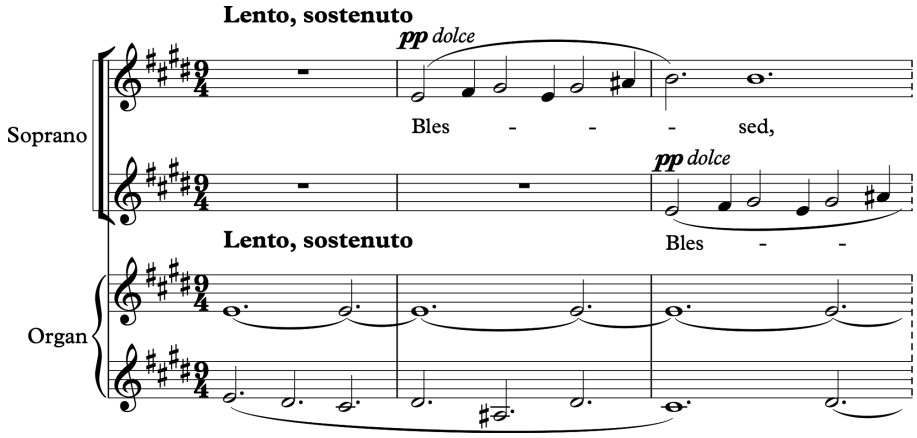
Unlike the 1949 *Missa Brevis,* there is a clear defining theme of the *Missa Sancti Thomae* from which the work evolves and develops. The Sanctus and Benedictus particularly are formed on themes derived from material in the Kyrie. The chief effect in all three is the ethereal haze of overlapping entries in a tonally-restricted space tethered to long, sustained notes in the organ. The initial theme from the Kyrie is truncated to a simple rocking step-wise motion between scale degrees 1 and 2 in the Sanctus which is then expanded into a new figure exploring triadic movement (see examples 2.1.4 to 2.1.6).



Example 2.1.4. *Missa Sancti Thomae* Opus 40 (1962). 1. Kyrie, bb.1-2. Novello.



Example 2.1.5. *Missa Sancti Thomae* Opus 40 (1962). 4. Sanctus, bb.1-2. Novello.



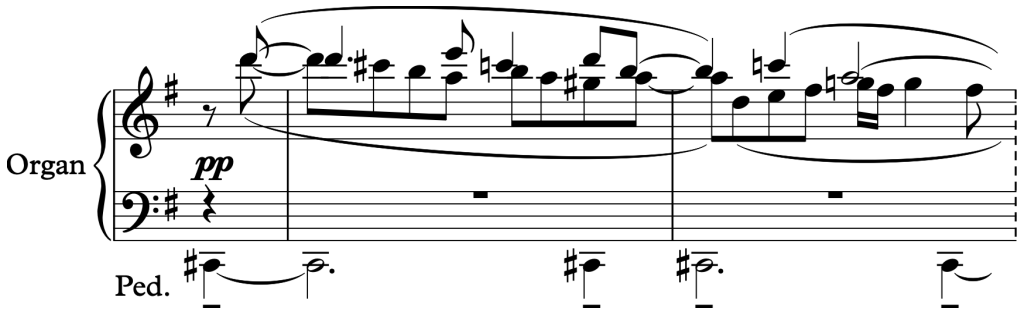
Example 2.1.6. *Missa Sancti Thomae* Opus 40 (1962). 5. Benedictus, bb.1-3. Novello.

One result of this particular motif is a clear sense of an initial tonic, the significance of which is highlighted by the inclusion of key signature. Leighton seems to have preferred working in accidentals in his earlier works which served his chromatic style particularly efficiently and so the appearance of key signatures in the *Missa Sancti Thomae* clearly mark Leighton moving away from his old style.[8]

In contrast to the 1949 *Missa Brevis,* the *Missa Sancti Thomae* has a high proportion of melisma. Leighton still sets the Credo and Gloria syllabically but even then certain climaxes feature more than one note to a syllable. This results in fewer changes of time signature, particularly in the slower movements which keep within standard meters. As becomes a frequent occurrence there are one or two borrowed sections of material from Leighton's other work – principally in the accompaniment. The Hosannas in the Benedictus are underpinned by the same 6/4 crotchet movement in the organ as appears in *Give me the wings of faith* which Leighton was working on at the same time as the *Missa Sancti Thomae*. The second example is particularly

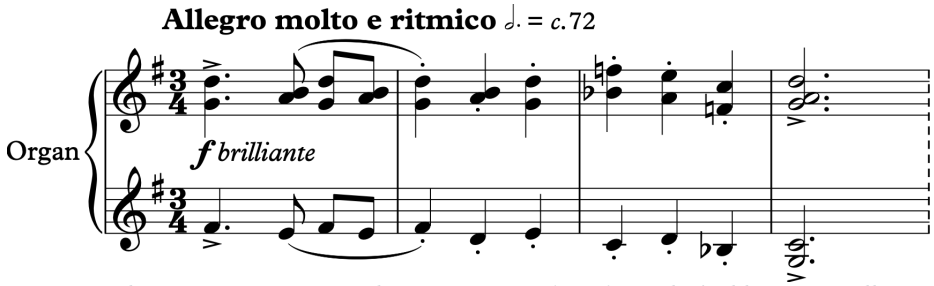
[8] This development of Leighton's style is discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1.4.

obvious as Leighton uses the same interlude from the beginning of the Nunc Dimittis of the *Magdalen Service* in between the sections of the Agnus Dei (see example 2.1.7).

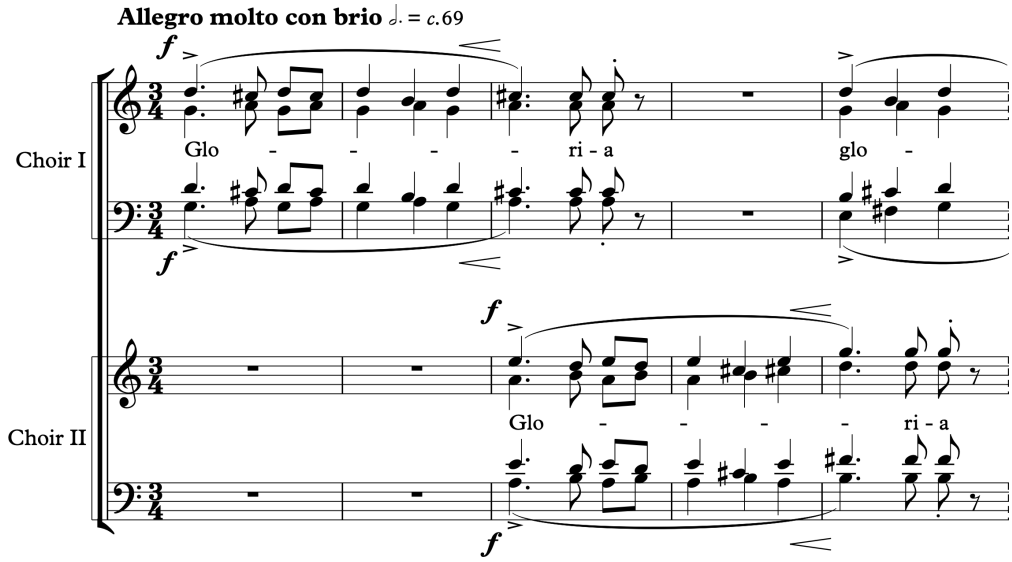


Example 2.1.7. *Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense* (1959). Nunc Dimittis, bb.5-7. Novello.

As a BCP setting, the Gloria is the final movement of the mass. The opening of which forms one of the clearest examples of how Leighton used the *Missa Sancti Thomae* as a model for all his subsequent models, and this is particularly true of the Opus 44 *Mass* that followed two years later (see example 2.1.8 and 2.1.9).



Example 2.1.8. *Missa Sancti Thomae* Opus 40 (1962). 7. Gloria, bb.1-4. Novello.



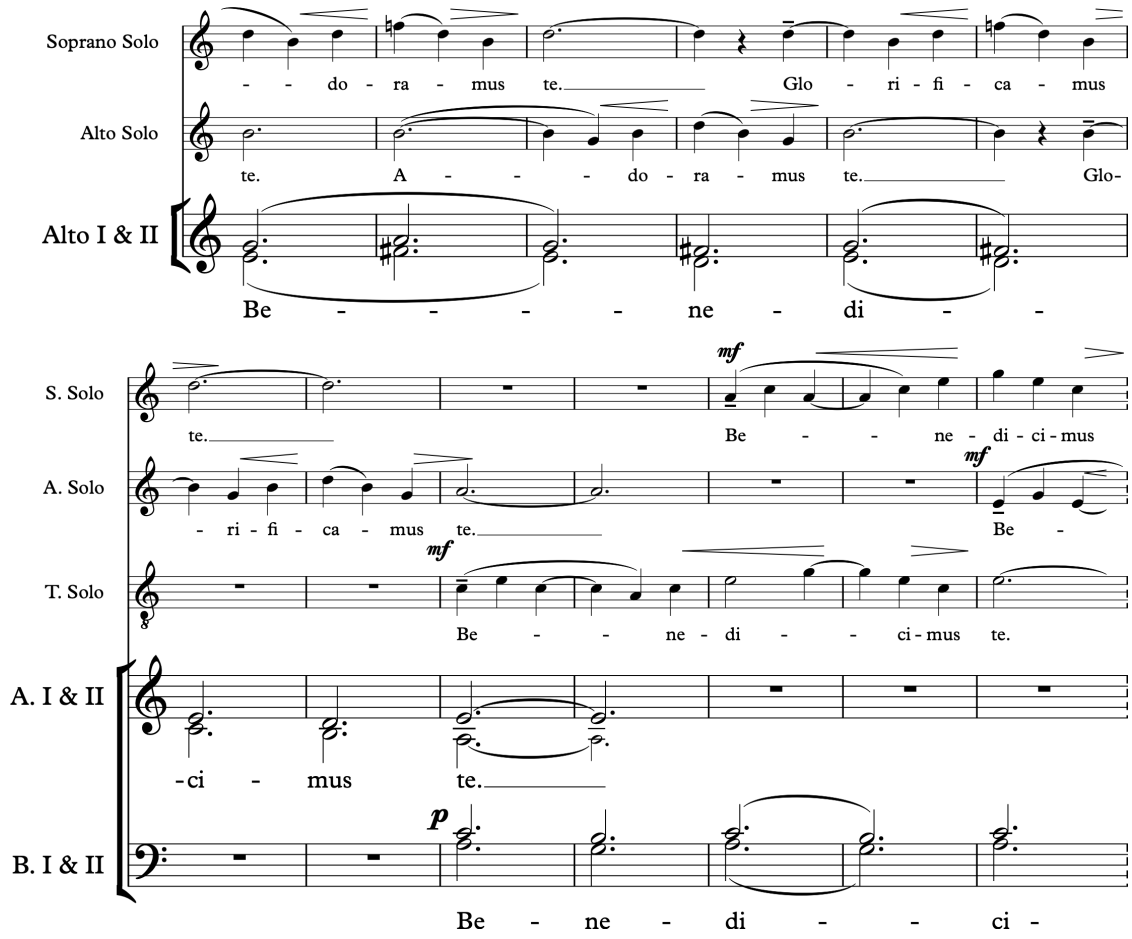
Example 2.1.9. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 2. Gloria, bb.1-5. Novello.

Not only does the *Missa Sancti Thomae* lend motivic material to the subsequent settings, but also clearly acts as blue-print in terms of structure and the aesthetic moods that Leighton imbues to certain movements. As the first major work in which Leighton's adoption of authentic modes appear, the *Missa Sancti Thomae*'s importance exceeds that of only his choral music and acts as a significant milestone of his developing style within his wider compositional output.

Mass Opus 44 (1964)

The *Mass* was first performed by the Edinburgh University Singers and conducted by Herrick Bunney in 1966 at St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh.[9] Latin settings of the mass ordinary could not be performed in Anglican services at this time and so it is really a concert work. It follows very closely to the form of the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40) from two years earlier and the Gloria, Sanctus and Benedictus in particular borrow directly from the equivalent movements (examples 2.1.8 and 2.1.9 demonstrating the relationship of the Gloria from both works). The scope of the *Mass* is significantly larger being written for double choir and soloists – the entire work lasts about thirty minutes. Leighton's use of the eight-part texture is predominantly through canon or double canon, where a pair of voice parts (such as the soprano and alto at the start of the Sanctus) from the first choir are both imitated in a similar way by the corresponding voices in the second choir. The voices are more frequently split between upper and lower parts than antiphonally between the two full choirs (see example 2.1.10), there is also a considerable amount of unison writing. This results in a great amount of textural variety throughout the *Mass* and serves to demonstrate Leighton's economic writing.

[9] Leighton, Kenneth (1964). *Mass* Opus 44. Oxford University Press (1966), Novello (1986).



Example 2.1.10. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 2. Gloria, bb.52-64. Novello.

An organ accompaniment is required but, unusually, only in the Credo although the movement can be omitted in a performance if a suitable instrument is not available. This slightly unusual arrangement is not, however without a precedent. Edmund Rubbra's *Missa Cantuariensis* (which Leighton had heard during his time as an undergraduate at Oxford) similarly has an organ part in the Creed in an otherwise unaccompanied setting. William Walton's later 1966 *Missa Brevis* also has an organ part in only one movement – in this case, the Gloria. It is hard to suggest whether Leighton's *Mass* suffers for missing the Credo. Its character is distinctly more rhythmic than the other movements (which is undoubtedly facilitated by the use of the organ) and offers contrast in a multi-movement work. The Credo, however, does

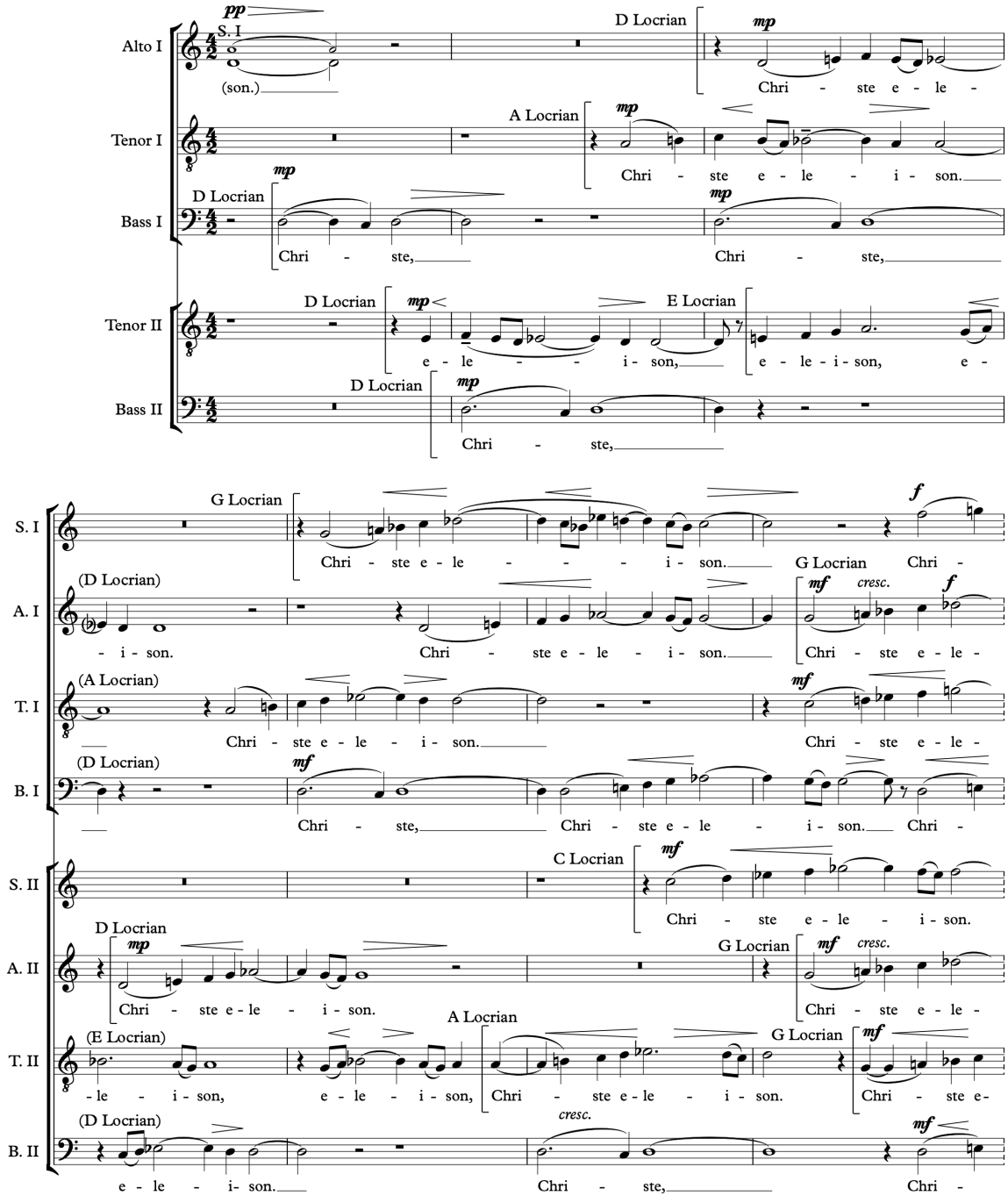
not significantly relate itself to the other movements and it contains no significant motivic development. It is surprisingly concise compared to the other movements, possibly due to its highly syllabic setting, and does not even necessarily require the second choir, being almost entirely in four-parts.

It is hard not to imagine that Ralph Vaughan Williams' 1921 *Mass in G minor* was as much an inspiration to Leighton for the *Mass* as the polyphonic settings of the Renaissance. Like Vaughan Williams, Leighton's music responds to that of the sixteenth century but in his contemporary idiom. The Agnus Dei in particular employs the soloists and choir in a very similar manner to Vaughan Williams' *Mass*. Similarly it is tempting to consider that the double choir mass by Frank Martin may have been an inspiration but as the work was only first performed in 1963 in Hamburg (having been written between 1922 and 1926) it seems unlikely that Leighton knew it. Regardless, Leighton's *Mass* holds its own in comparison to both these important early twentieth century choral works. Leighton said that of all his works, this was the one that was most frequently described (by others) as his choral masterpiece.[10]

What is possibly the most striking feature of the *Mass* is that it does not contain any compositional techniques which are not already displayed in other works (most notably the *Missa Sancti Thomae*) nor is their deployment particularly innovative; what is significant, however, is the scale of their employment. The bi-tonal effect of different polyphonic lines based on different tonal centres can be observed in areas of transposition throughout the *Missa Sancti Thomae* but this becomes a feature of

[10] Lancaster, Thomas. 'Praising Life: The Choral Music of Kenneth Leighton'. p.20.

itself in the *Mass* where this layering effect creates a rich harmonic texture, particularly in the Kyrie (see example 2.1.11) and, to a lesser extent, the Sanctus and Agnus Dei.



Example 2.1.11. *Mass* Opus 44 (1964). 1. Kyrie, bb.9-15. Novello.

The Kyrie is the only movement that can be said to be wholly polyphonic, certainly there are no other substantial sections where each of the eight voice parts are so clearly independent. The Agnus Dei in the *Mass* possesses a greater degree of relation to the Kyrie than occurs between the same movements in the *Missa Sancti Thomae*. The scope of the polyphony in the Agnus Dei is not as large in scale, but not necessarily less ambitious. The solo quartet which begins the movement in a similar manner to the Kyrie but, with four parts rather than eight, Leighton is unable to use a pair of voices to sustain a particular tone (Leighton's substitute for the lack of organ to do so) and so the opening is rendered in an entirely authentic Renaissance polyphonic style, even in Leighton's idiosyncratic style. The opening 27 bars could then be considered to form a distilled version of the opening movement. The homophonic entry of the full chorus gives way to a small continuation in the lower voices but the full choir never truly answer the solo quartet opening even in the 'Dona nobis pacem' section lasting only 13 bars. This section does however resolve the Locrian mode into the usual minor scale, conflating both the style of the Kyrie and the predominance of consecutive fifths that characterise the inner movements of the *Mass*.

The Gloria, Credo, and Sanctus are much more rhythmically driven and, to varying degrees, are characterised by the Lydian mode. All feature many of Leighton's classic hallmarks (canonic imitation and the use of the 'intesifier motif' are particularly evident) however it is the these movements' relatively light scoring that is perhaps surprising. The majority of the middle section of the Gloria is predominantly limited to four or five voices only and there are some sections that are marked 'half voices', a direction for larger choirs only. Although the *Mass* also sees the same 'wedge' shape

that defines the opening polyphony in Kyrie made up of step-wise movement expand to a motif of interlocking thirds, as happens in the *Missa Sancti Thomae,* this development occurs in Gloria rather than the Sanctus and Benedictus (see example 2.1.10).

This suggests that the *Mass* rather than proving to be a stand-alone work of unique inspiration is, instead, the full realisation of the fecund compositional possibilities which Leighton had laid out in the *Missa Sancti Thomae*. This does not detract anything from the quality of the work – the work is highly original in its scope and its idiom, even if it is nominally derivative from its immediate predecessor. The polyphony of the Kyrie is, quite possibly, the best example of Leighton's masterly control of contrapuntal techniques in his own composition.

Communion Service in D Opus 45 (1965)

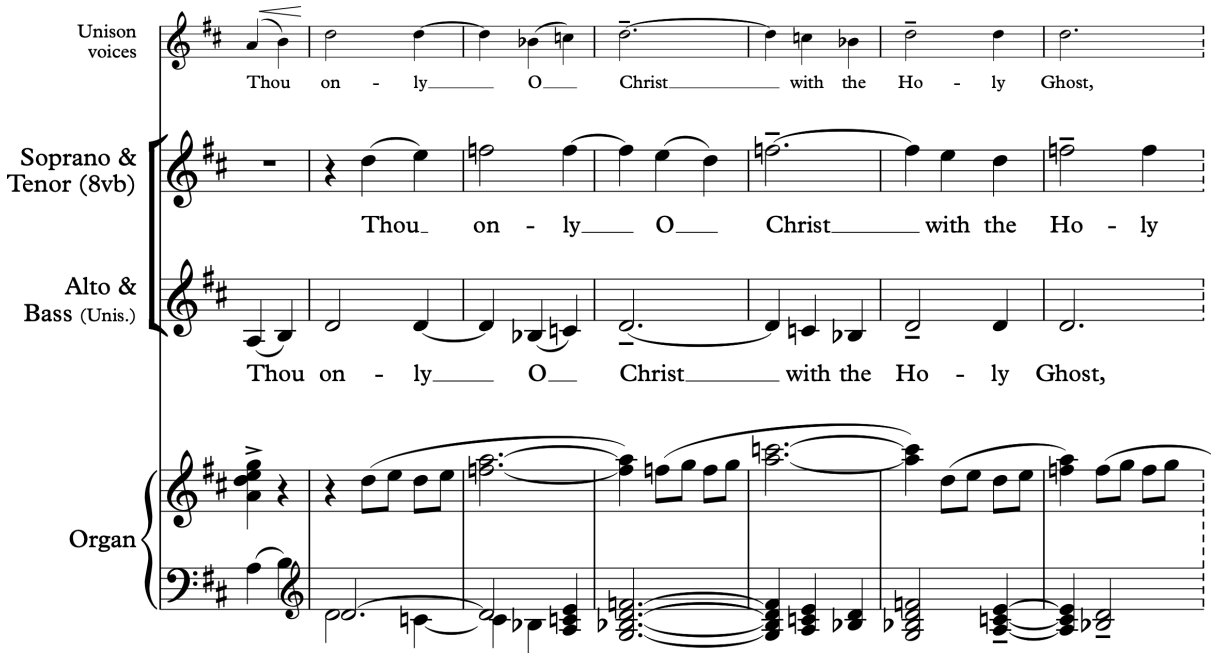
It is not quite clear why Leighton was approached by the Church Music Society for a BCP setting of the Eucharist for the purpose of congregational singing, as none of his earlier works had quite demonstrated such an aim. In the years following however, Leighton worked on a number of projects which were designed for untrained voices including settings of the morning canticles in 1967, a number of hymn tunes for the third volume of the Church Hymnary and even *The World's Desire* ('A sequence for Epiphany') includes hymns for the congregation to join in.

Evidently, there was an aim to create a setting that could be used universally in churches with varying music provision. Leighton included optional choir parts which might help attract churches with choirs of a high standard to take up the work, as well as the parishes that could only manage the unison part. The *Communion Service* had four performance options printed on its cover:

(1) Congregation only (singing the Unison part)
(2) Choir and Congregation (choir singing the semi-independent parts)
(3) Choir and Congregation (both singing the Unison part)
(4) Choir only

The *Communion Service* is one of the few works that Leighton himself identifies the tonal centre – i.e. *in D*. This clearly signals a concession from Leighton's usual style in order to create something more accessible to non-musicians. Elements of modalism are not entirely eradicated (the Sanctus has a clear Lydian flavour) but generally the melodies remain reasonably straight-forwardly diatonic and it is the

organ part that bears the brunt of Leighton's more exotic harmonies. The *Communion Service* is built on a smaller amount of material than any of the fully choral settings but this economy is well suited to Leighton's style. Apart from the Sanctus and the Gloria, each movement builds from a basic cell centred on D, E, and F. The Sanctus and the Gloria are the only two movements set in the major key and have a slightly more ambitious scope. The choir parts are largely split between sopranos and tenors in unison and altos and basses in unison (the latter mostly doubling the congregation part), but this kind of economic writing is present even in the more esoteric *Mass* (see example 2.1.12).



Example 2.1.12. *Communion Service in D* Opus 45 (1965). 7. Gloria, bb.83-89. Oxford University Press.

Other key Leighton hallmarks are also present such as the 'intensifier motif' also signalling the slow harmonic rhythm common to sections in similar two-part textures. The *Communion Service* demonstrates this no less than his larger works, Leighton's assured handling of texture and musical tension, even when his harmonic language is moderated.

Missa Brevis Opus 50 (1967)

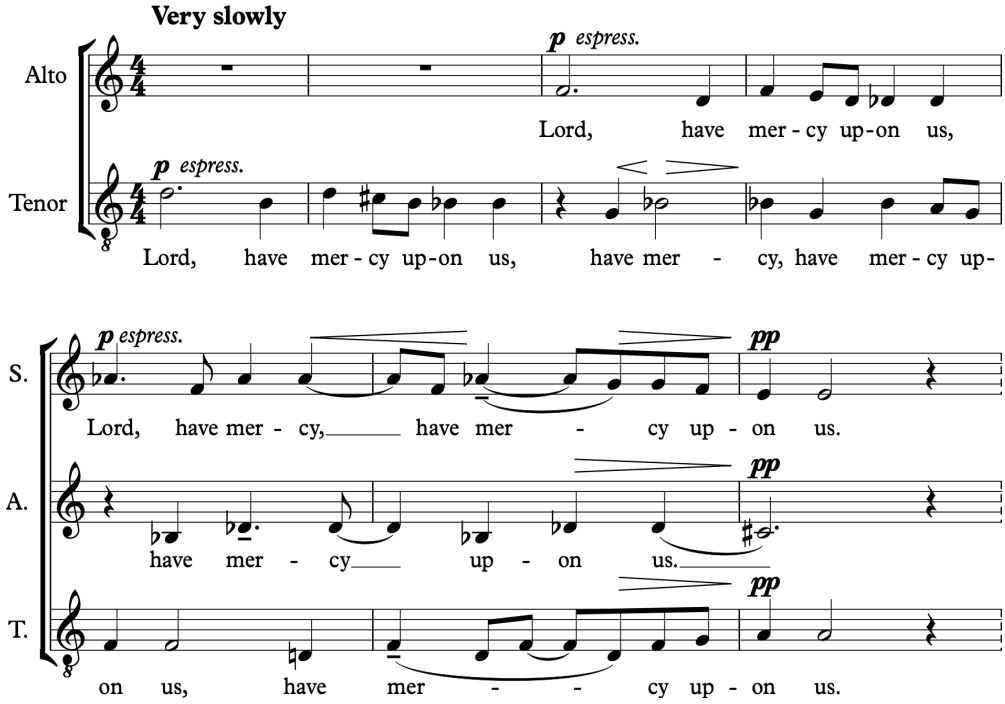
There seems to be no particular occasion for which the choir of Liverpool (Anglican) Cathedral commissioned the *Missa Brevis*. Other than the *Mass,* the *Missa Brevis* (and its eponymous 1949 setting) are the only unaccompanied settings. It also has the accolade of the most frequently performed of Leighton's masses. Patton's surveys record 11% of choral foundations singing the work in 1986 and 12% in 1998.[11]

In much the way that the *Mass* (Opus 44) is an expansion and development of the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40), the *Missa Brevis* (Opus 50) appears to be the result of the opposite process, acting as a scaled-down version of the *Mass*. The *Missa Brevis* includes a considerable amount of material which appears to have been recycled from the previous two mass settings even if it is not necessarily in the form of direct quotation. Other than the name it shares, the *Missa Brevis* shows any musical connection to Leighton's 1949 setting. In some respects, the *Missa Brevis* seems unremarkable, particularly in the shadow of the double choir *Mass*, but it still exhibits the same level of inventiveness as its larger neighbour within a more manageable scale.

The *Missa Brevis* is characterised by assertive melodic shapes and a greater fluidity between contrapuntal and homophonic textures. The use of repeated motifs between the first and second sopranos would have been to great effect in the large space of Liverpool Cathedral, playing on the qualities of the building's acoustics and vast physical space, especially in the Sanctus and the end of the Gloria.

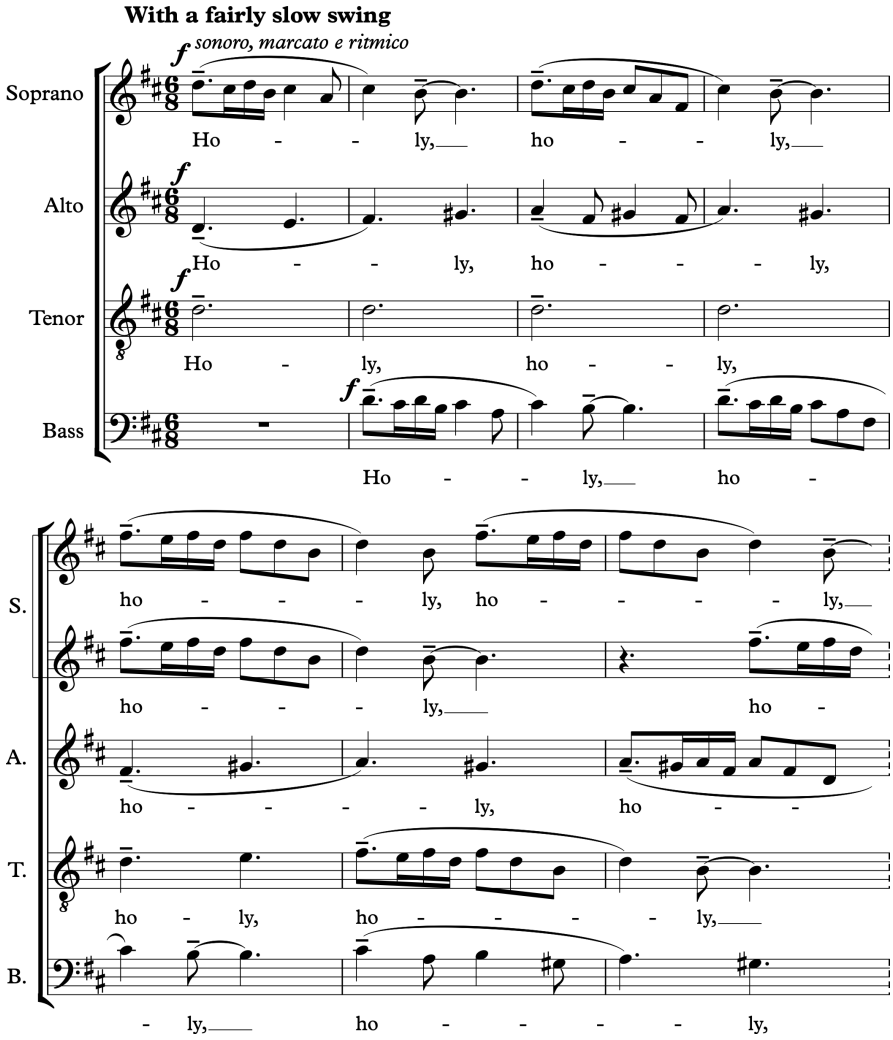
[11] Patton, John (2000). *A Centenary of Cathedral Music.* p.182.

The opening of the Kyrie is a notable departure from the Leighton's previous use of the flattened second of the Phrygian and Locrian modes alternated with the natural second. The same chromatic element however is very much present but with an inversion of the usual rising 'wedge' shape, instead the subject phrase expands from a descending minor third to a major third. The suspended pedal note effect that occurs in the previous settings also appears in the *Missa Brevis* but in a new form. The organ fulfils this function in the *Missa Sancti Thomae* and *Communion Service* (Opus 45) and is replaced by a shared ostinato between two voice parts in the unaccompanied *Mass*. The *Missa Brevis* achieves this sense of a sustained note even though it is not actually held by any part. The three opening voice parts, each a minor third apart (D, F, and A flat), explore a distinct chromatic space around their own tonics. The tension between the tenor and alto manages to give a sufficient impression of the opening D being held, whilst their melodic line actually sinks (see example 2.1.13).



Example 2.1.13. *Missa Brevis* Opus 50 (1967). 1. Kyrie, bb.1-7. Novello.

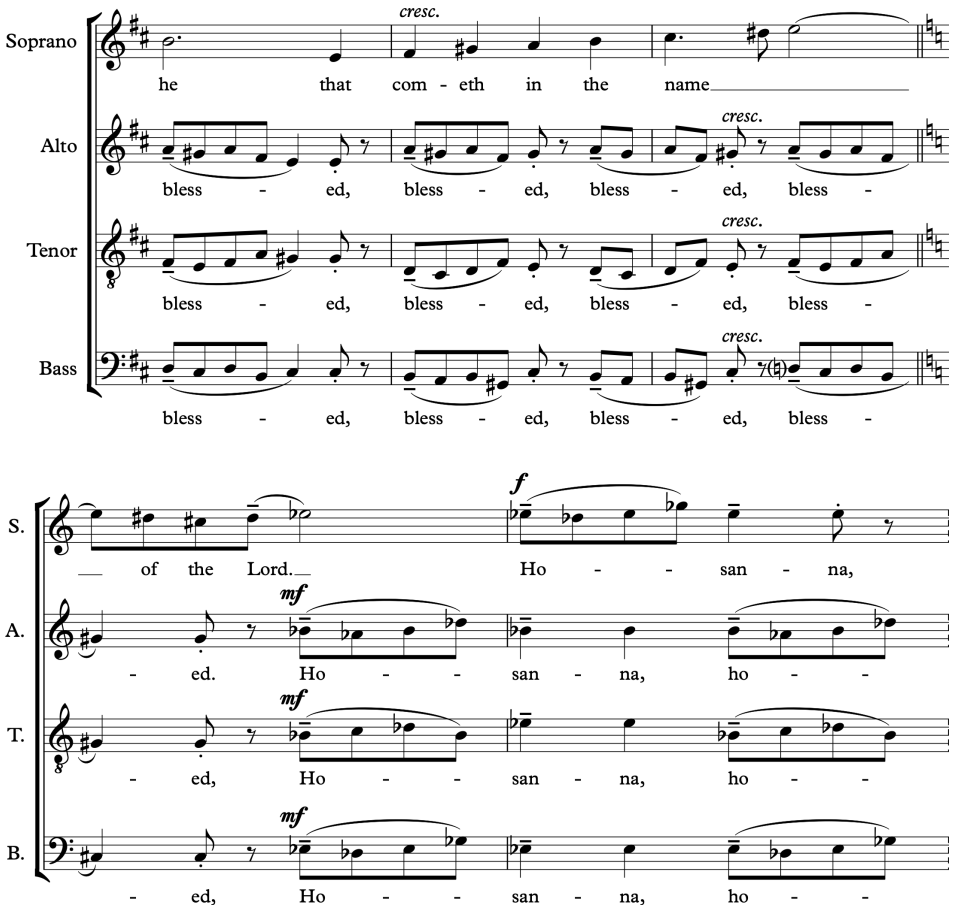
Whereas the motivic development between movements within *Missa Sancti Thomae* and the *Mass* does not quite form a direct musical 'narrative', the descending figure from the Kyrie of the *Missa Brevis* is as recognisably developed into the following movements as it is in the more formulaic *Communion Service*; the Sanctus, Benedictus, and (to a lesser extent) Agnus Dei all possess a similarly sinking melodic shape. The Sanctus does not necessarily throw off the energy and excitement of Leighton's previous settings however; it is presented in the expected compound time signature and in the Lydian mode. The 'intensifier motif' is slightly modified into a figure that falls rather than rises (without losing any of its potent effect) and is appended by the predominant figure of the earlier Sanctus settings: a triad. The rhythm of this adapted version of the 'intensifier motif' also appears at the opening of both the *Missa Sancti Thomae* and *Mass* settings of the Gloria (see examples 2.1.8 and 2.1.9). The theme in the soprano part is imitated in an unconventional canon, initially in the bass part and subsequently in the tenor and a divisi second soprano part (see example 2.1.14). The sense of energy in the Sanctus is, perhaps, the greater in the *Missa Brevis* than in either the *Missa Sancti Thomae* or the *Mass* due to its richer rendering. Here the imitation is closer (in terms of both the 'authenticity' of the canon as well as musical time) and the rhythm is substantially more complex. The 'Heaven and earth' section clearly takes on the characteristics of the ending 'Hosanna's of the Sanctus in the *Mass*.



Example 2.1.14. *Missa Brevis* Opus 50 (1967). 3. Sanctus, bb.1-7. Novello.

The Benedictus receives a similarly innovative overhaul, the usual polyphonic opening is replaced and instead the movement is built around a simple, lilting ostinato (appearing to be derived from the 'intensifier motif' as in Sanctus). The contrast and effect from the preceding Sanctus is particularly effective. The ostinato still implies something of the 'slow swing' in the Sanctus (see tempo indication in example 2.1.14) despite being in a simple meter. The change of text in the accompanying voice parts from 'Blessed' to 'Hosanna' is underpinned by a subtle transposition from C-sharp minor to E-flat minor that is reminiscent of Leighton's

earlier warm chromatic style (see example 2.1.15).

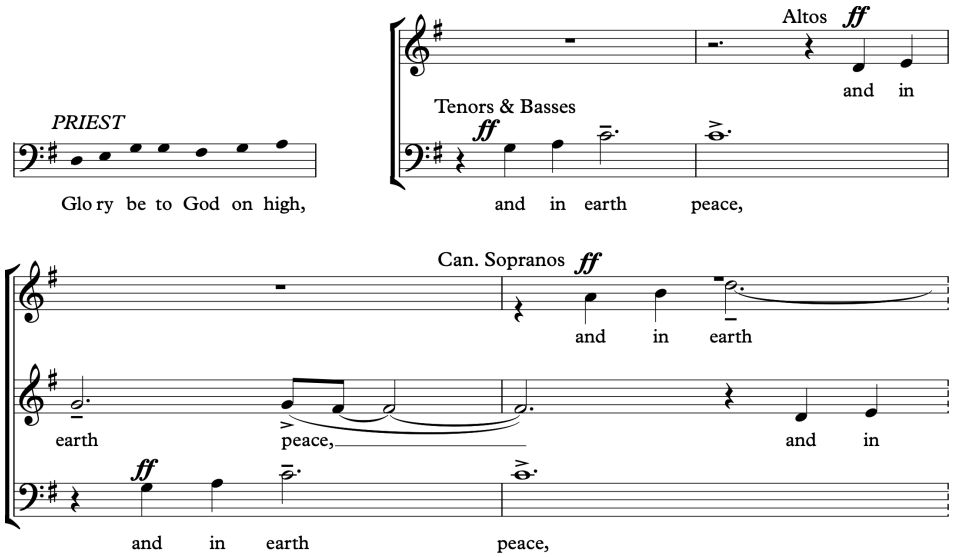


Example 2.1.15. *Missa Brevis* Opus 50 (1967). 4. Benedictus, bb.14-18. Novello.

Unusually, the Agnus Dei is the only movement of the *Missa Brevis* to hint at the Locrian mode, considering its prominence within its larger predecessors (the *Missa Sancti Thomae* and *Mass*). The opening phrases rises to the flattened second suggesting the Locrian mode, but otherwise develops in a sinking figure much like the Kyrie. As in the *Mass*, the end of the movement becomes characterised by consecutive fifths and, in this case, many open fifth chords with no mediant note.

As the *Missa Brevis* follows the BCP form, the last movement is the Gloria and its iteration in this setting is a departure from the model Leighton previously had used.

The staggered entries of the opening make this the first setting of the Gloria that is not homophonic. The opening is derived from the Gregorian plainchant incipit and this resulting figure is has an assertive and arresting quality (see example 2.1.16) building towards a D major chord over the tonic note of the C-based Lydian tonality with the upper voice parts including a 'scotch snap' appoggiatura.



Example 2.1.16. *Missa Brevis* Opus 50 (1967). 6. Gloria; incipit, bb.1-4. Novello.

The rest of the movement subsequently relents into a dance-like 6/4 meter which, between small climaxes marked with a crescendo, is marked at a dynamic level no louder than *mezzo piano*. There are several quieter sections within the large-scale *Mass* Gloria but only where the music is calmer and as part of a subdued texture, in the *Missa Brevis* however this is not the case as the rhythm and meter create an atmosphere of infectious excitement. This is not the first time such a passage appears in Leighton's choral music, the 'Glory be to the Father' from the Nunc Dimittis written for Magdalen College, Oxford in 1959 employs a similar style of a playful rhythms yet with a quieter dynamic marking. The story-telling quality of this whispering effect is particularly potent in English (the 'Hosanna' section of the *Mass*

Sanctus also falls musically into the same category but its Latin language is, possibly, detracts from this quality) and its use throughout much of the Gloria imbues a particularly high level of vitality, somehow emphasising the rhythmic drive. Ultimately, this also allows for a greater crescendo for the final climax of the movement (and the whole setting). At the 'Amen', the return of the 'scotch snaps' and opening material also help give a satisfactory sense of a motivic (rather than necessarily formal) ternary structure. This is notable in as much as such structural elements are not always so obviously present in Leighton's any of choral music yet its employment in the final movement of the *Missa Brevis* gives it a sense of being the most musically homogenous of all his mass settings.

* * *

The early BCP settings, and the Latin *Mass*, demonstrate Leighton's consummate skill for writing liturgical music. His individual musical idiom is a unique offering to the repertoire and also displays the many facets of his harmonic language which are remarkably fresh in comparison to other popular settings of the day (the settings of Darke, Wood and Stanford, for example). The old church modes were utilised and a familiar part of even church music in the early twentieth century but as a tint of diatonic (also, increasingly, extended diatonic) and functional harmony. Leighton's uncompromising, sparser style brings a freshness to the repertory and clearly demonstrates a wider stylistic shift. Within Leighton's work, these earlier settings show a development of Leighton's harmonic language from the adoption of a more

'authentic' modality in the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40) and then two subtly different treatments in the subsequent *Mass* (Opus 44) and the *Missa Brevis* (Opus 50). Leighton's ability to recycle and reinvent his own material is particularly clear to see between these three settings yet each have distinct characters of their own. There is, however, a sense of Leighton reaching a natural conclusion to the musical extent of some elements of his style. The explorations of his own style in the *Mass* and the *Missa Brevis* feel as if their potential is fully played out and this can perhaps be observed in the similarities of all the published choral works from this period of Leighton's career. The two year period between the *Missa Sancti Thomae* and the *Mass* (1962 and 1964, respectfully) appears to represent the 'purest' of Leighton's modal composition, and subsequently other elements become increasingly present in his music.

PART TWO | **CHAPTER TWO**

The Late Masses

1968-1988

Sarum Mass Opus 66 (1972)

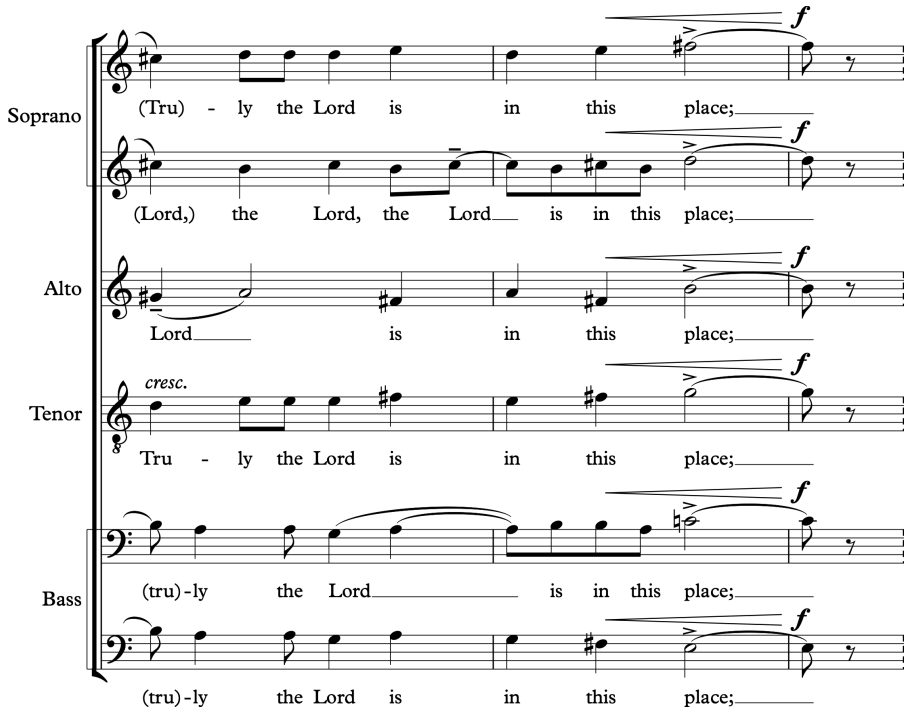
The *Sarum Mass* was commissioned by the Southern Cathedrals Festival at for the 1973 festival at Salisbury (hence *Sarum*). The work even includes two sentences from the old Sarum Rite for the dedication of a church; these sentences form short movements which bookend the ordinary. It seems that the setting of the text used in the main movements may have undergone revision before publication as the ASB Rite A form, which appears in the published work, was not an authorised liturgy until 1980. It is unclear whether Leighton made these alterations himself or possibly these were made by Novello at the point of publication in 1990 – after Leighton's death.[12] There seems to be no indications of the work being prepared by Novello for release before 1990. It is also possible that the many additional movements for use in the Eucharistic Prayer were not necessarily given with the original commission and added later. Unfortunately, there appears to be no surviving correspondence between Leighton and Novello concerning the liturgical text of the *Sarum Mass*.

[12] Friend, Howard [Managing Director, Music Sales Ltd.] (2019). Personal correspondence.

The progression from the 1967 *Missa Brevis* to the *Sarum Mass* demonstrates the last significant change to Leighton's musical style to what could be characterised as his 'mature' style, which defines his music in the last two decades of his life. A new sonority and hard-edged dissonance begins to appear which seems to suggest Leighton's compositional process has a greater deal of focus on the vertical than before. This is not, however, at the complete expense of voice-leading or Leighton's lyricism, however Leighton dispenses with some of his more economic traits resulting in choral melodic lines that more frequently feature larger intervals and occasional moments of voice-leading that are a little awkward for the sake of effect or, at times, simply result in more divisi. There is a greater concentration of stacked-fourth harmony than has been seen in the previous settings. Leighton also takes advantage of having three cathedral choirs at his disposal (the festival involving the foundations at Chichester, Salisbury and Winchester cathedrals) and there are a number of solo parts as well as divisi throughout the setting. Considering his tendency to avoid excess, the amount of divisi almost seems frivolous for Leighton - a reactionary response maybe to the particularly economy and softer-spoken work on his preceding choral projects in *Laudes animatum* (Opus 61) and the *Second Service* (Opus 62).

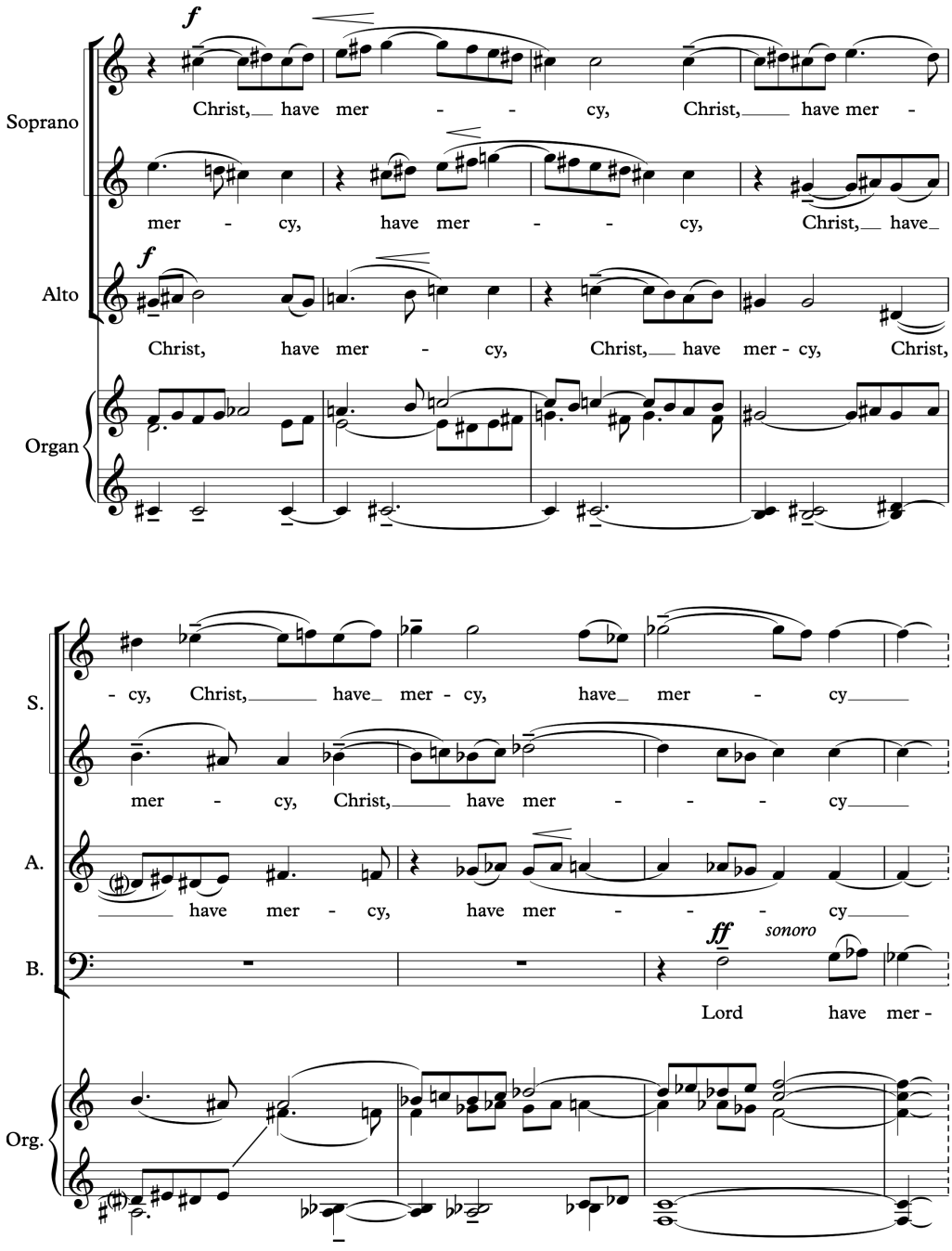
The opening movement (Dedication) opens in the familiar 'wedge' shape pattern that often is reserved for the Kyrie. However, Leighton renders the movement in the happier Lydian mode and, as the opening phrase is given in the tenors, the expansion from the opening note is given in contrary motion (the bass line descending as the upper voices join in with melodic lines that rise). The dissonance in this short movement is distinctly harder-edged and visually, the appearance of substantial amounts of flats and sharps (rather than one or the other) in short displays the

development of Leighton's harmonic language and the increased complexity (see example 2.2.1).



Example 2.2.1. *Sarum Mass* Opus 66 (1972). 1. Dedication, bb.5-7. Novello.

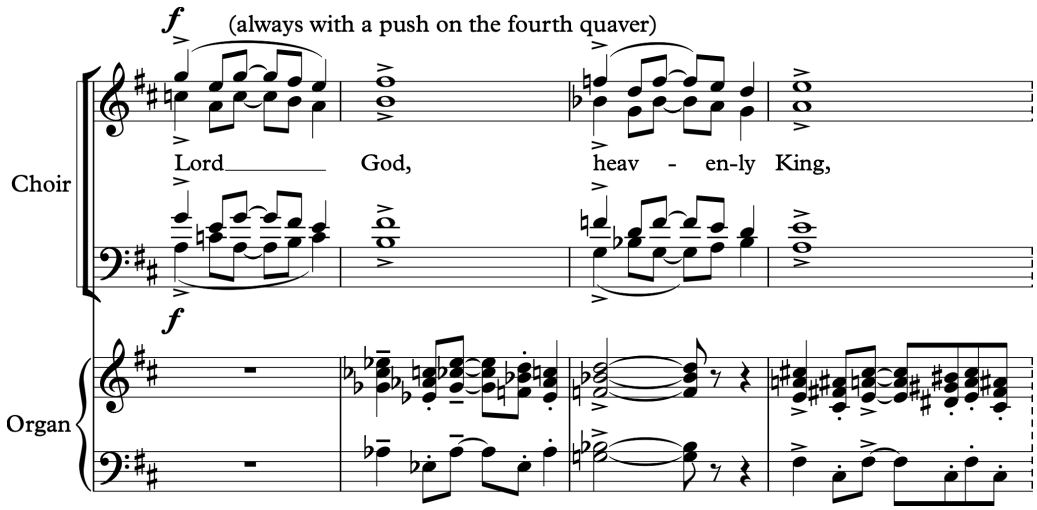
The Kyrie appears to conform to the model of the earlier settings but even the very traditional Locrian flattened second is short-lived, being entirely absent in the alto and soprano entries that follow the bass and tenor. The modality becomes further distorted so that by the middle section of 'Christ have mercy' has a very confused sense of any recognisable tonality; the Locrian diminish fifth scale degree remains but the flattened second is lost (see example 2.2.2).



Example 2.2.2. *Sarum Mass* Opus 66 (1972). 2. Kyrie, bb.8-14. Novello.

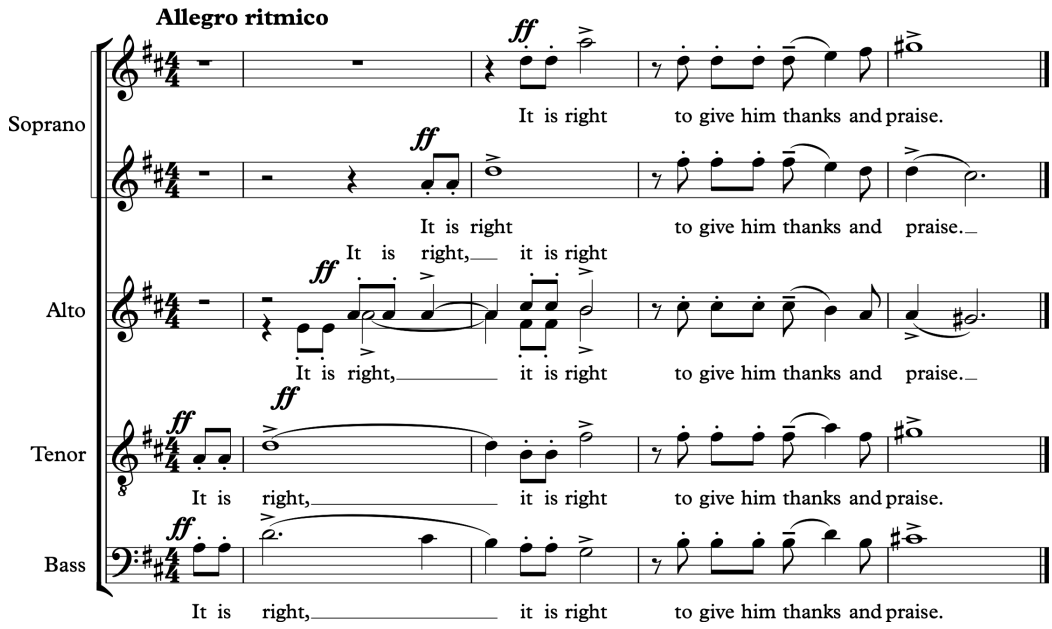
To some extent, the organ accompaniment facilitates this more 'advanced' harmony; it certainly seems to emphasise bi-tonal elements of Leighton's writing. Having completed the *Concerto for Organ, Timpani, and String Orchestra* (Opus 58) in

1970, Leighton's confidence in writing for the organ seems to have grown and the organ a much more prominent role here than in the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40). The organ accompaniment also seems to facilitate a greater degree of ostinato and development of small 'cells'. The highly-energetic ostinato figure of the Gloria is very much in the same vein of the dance rhythms featured in the *Missa Brevis* (Opus 50). Leighton even includes instruction to the singers regarding how to specifically perform the motif (see example 2.2.3).

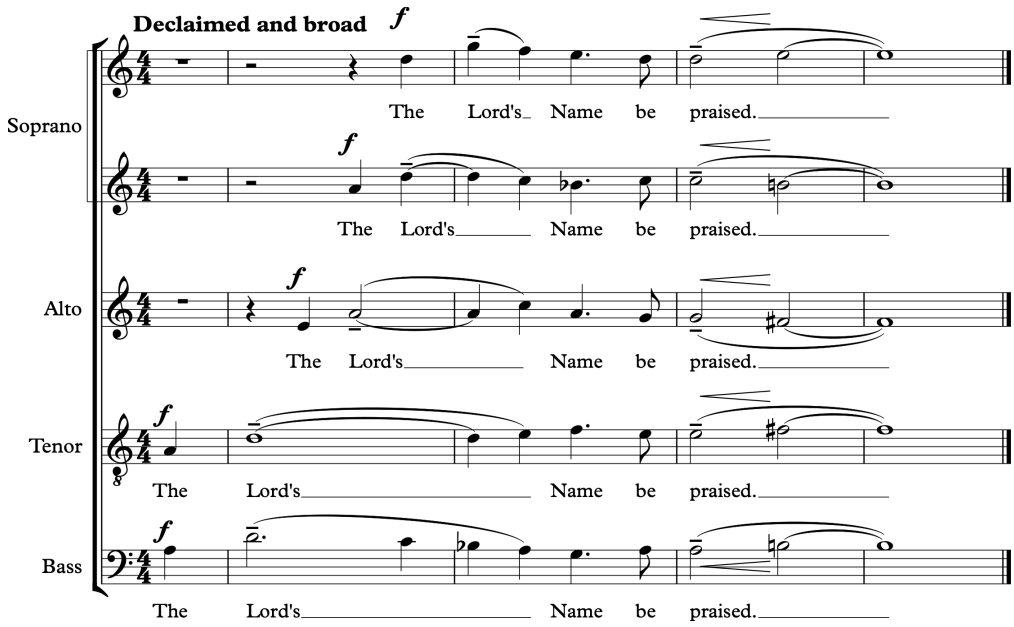


Example 2.2.3. *Sarum Mass* Opus 66 (1972). 3. Gloria, bb.21-24. Novello.

The *Sarum Mass* includes a number of fully-choral responses as part of the Eucharist's liturgy. Unsurprisingly, they are reminiscent of Leighton's *Preces and Responses* written in 1964 and their inclusion gives a sense of scale in the middle of the service to the two Dedication movements that Leighton also includes (see examples 2.2.4 and 2.2.5). The 'wedge' shaped build-up of vocal entries is almost universally employed, however the 'Blessing and Honour' movement uses the same musical ideas as presented in the Sanctus. The Sanctus itself is the movement most alike to the previous, earlier settings particularly its immediate predecessor in the *Missa Brevis*.



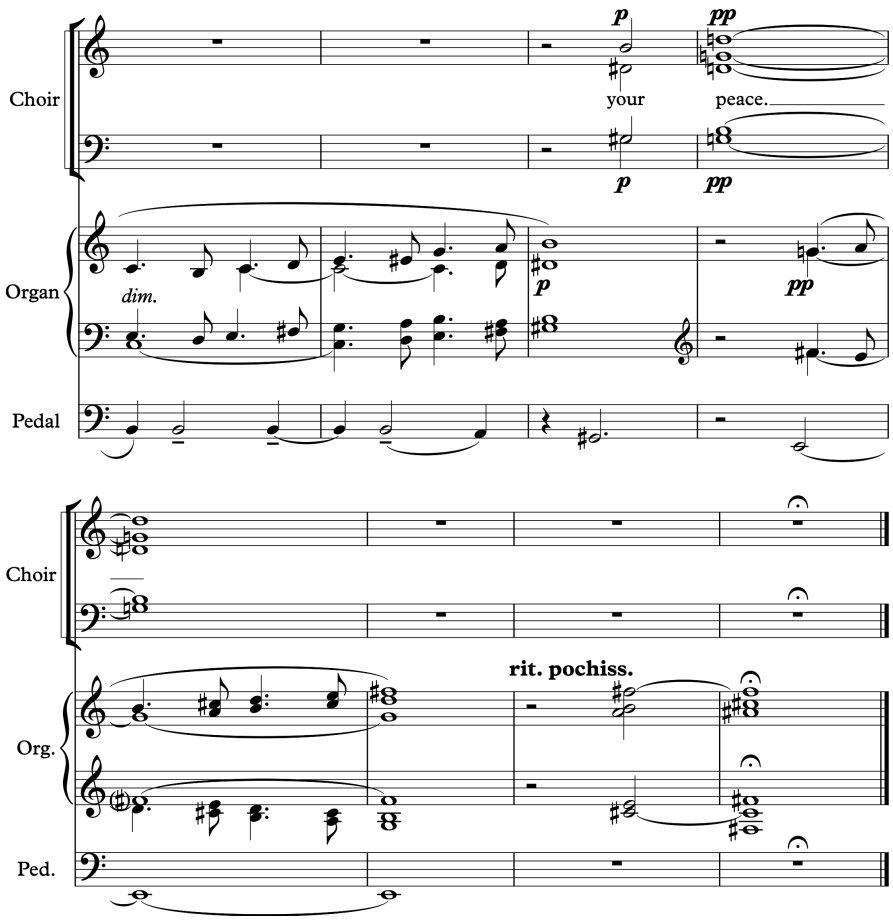
Example 2.2.4. *Sarum Mass* Opus 66 (1972). 5c. Eucharistic Prayer. Novello.



Example 2.2.5. *Preces and Reponses* (1964). Novello.

Leighton's inclusion of two solo semi-choruses in the Agnus Dei for upper voices (SSA) and lower voices (TBB) as well as the full choir and organ accompaniment make it comparable in scale with the double choir *Mass* (Opus 44). The organ introduction is also clearly derived from the opening of the *Mass* Agnus Dei but, as with the Kyrie, the tonal language in the *Sarum* Agnus Dei is more chromatic and

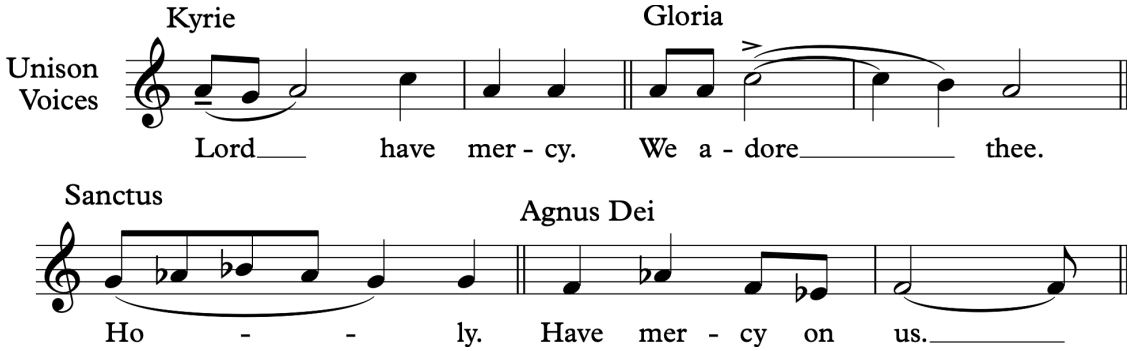
uncertain, relying on a sustained B (which then falls to a G in the subsequent few bars) to give any sense of harmonic centre. The ending of the movement particularly demonstrates the freedom of Leighton's of tonal centres, the operation of which is significantly more extreme than can be observed in the earlier settings (see example 2.2.6).



Example 2.2.6. *Sarum Mass* Opus 66 (1972). 10. Agnus Dei, bb.31-38. Novello.

Mass for Ampleforth Opus 67 (1973)

The *Mass for Ampleforth* was written almost immediately after the *Sarum Mass,* and shares a similar relationship to that of the *Communion Service* (Opus 45) to the *Mass* (Opus 44). Like those two works, the musical resources and scope vary to such a degree that Leighton seems limit the amount of shared material. The *Mass for Ampleforth* therefore does not necessarily give a sense of being closely related to its immediate predecessor. It is the only mature setting of Leighton's that has not been published. It was commissioned by Ampleforth Abbey, North Yorkshire for use in the Abbey Church during term-time for College masses. It is written for congregation (a unison part which generally seems to have baritone rather than treble voices in mind) and SATB parts for the Schola Cantorum. Unfortunately the setting is not currently used at Ampleforth and, due to recent changes in liturgy, the texts would require updating to be so again.



Example 2.2.7. *Mass for Ampleforth* Opus 67 (1973). Extracts from Congregational part. Ampleforth College/Kenneth Leighton archive.

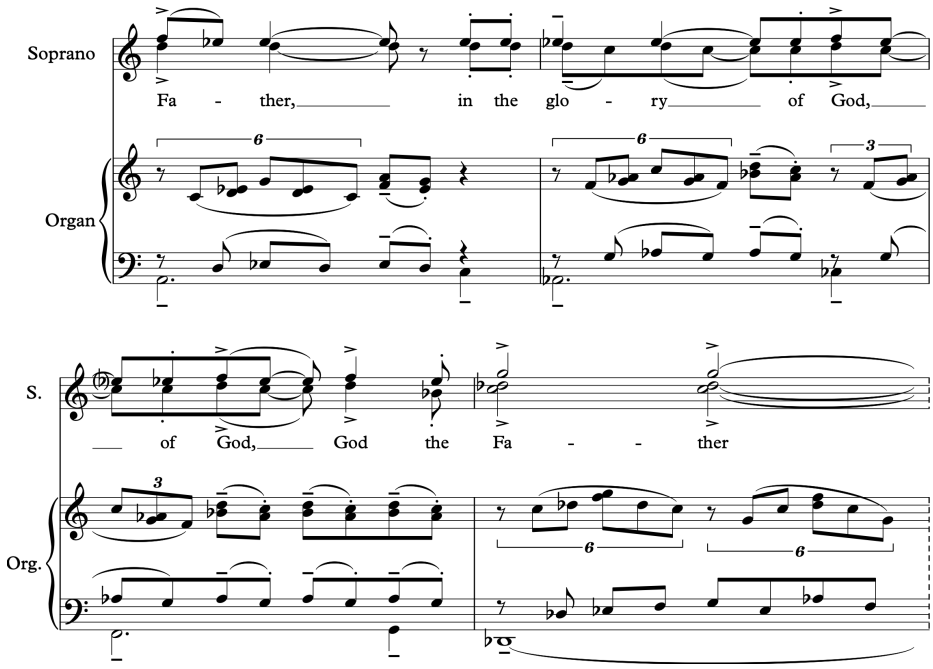
The unison part, much like that of the *Communion Service* (Opus 45), is derived from a small motif based around a third (see example 2.2.7). The choir parts however are as ambitious as in any of the fully choral settings. Even so, the congregational nature of this setting tends towards syllabic text setting, with the occasional short melisma, a requirement which is something of a necessity in the large acoustics of

the Abbey. The congregational part is not overly involved and only joins for certain parts of the texts of each movement. Leighton uses the unison passages more as a potent musical device than as a means for enabling the congregation to sing the entire text (or even substantial portions of it). In the Agnus Dei, which lasts for 52 bars, Leighton has the congregation join in for only six bars! Like in the *Communion Service,* Leighton exercised more caution with the rhythm in his congregational settings but with results that were no less exciting. The *Mass for Ampleforth* bounds along with heavily accented cross-beats in a moderate 2/2 during the Gloria in particular.

The context of the Ampleforth commission may the main reason that the setting was never published; again, there appears to be no surviving correspondence between Novello and Leighton about the work. It may be that a setting in the Roman Catholic vernacular with the need of a good SATB choir as well as a congregational part was deemed too niche to be a profitable release for publication. With the necessary musical restrictions on the work to fulfil its purpose at Ampleforth, it is not impossible to believe that that Leighton may not have been particularly happy with what he produced despite assigning it with an opus number. A conjecture that seems slightly more plausible considering that the manuscript copy (the *Mass for Ampleforth* has never been type-set) is also a little less neat than many of Leighton's fair copies. What is certainly true, is that the *Mass for Ampleforth* does not demonstrate any strong sense of invention or add much to the development of Leighton's choral writing.

Missa Cornelia Opus 81 (1979)

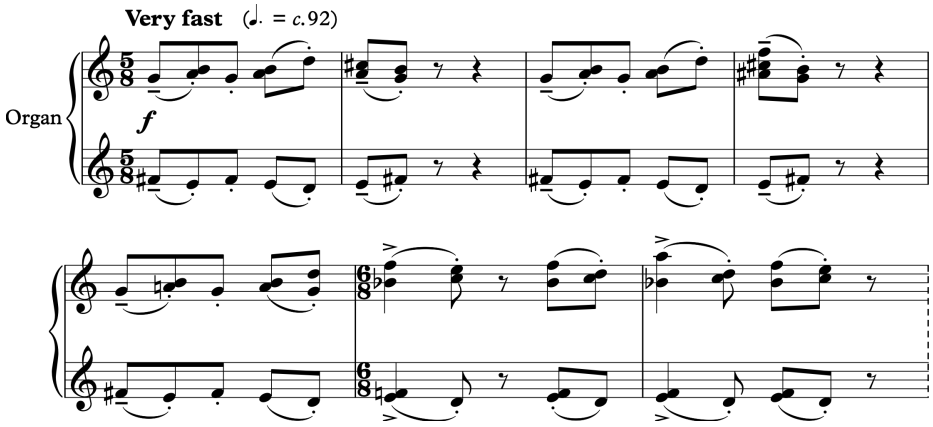
The *Missa Cornelia* was commissioned by St. Leonard's-Mayfield School (now simply known as Mayfield School) in 1979, a Catholic girls' school in East Sussex and first performed in St. Leonard's church the following June. The dedication honours the school's founder, Mother Cornelia Connelly.[13] The setting, for organ and three upper voice parts might invite comparison with Britten's *Missa Brevis in D* (Opus 63) written for the choristers of Westminster Cathedral in 1959, certainly Leighton's *An Easter Sequence* (Opus 55) in 1968 shows some awareness of the Britten but the *Missa Cornelia* is distinctly within Leighton's idiom. Unlike with the *Mass for Ampleforth* (Opus 67) Leighton does not seem to have inhibited himself to make the work accessible for a school choir (which suggests that choir was particularly capable at the time) and so the work is as harmonically complex as the *Sarum Mass* and a more intricate range of rhythmic 'cells' appear in this setting (see example 2.2.8).



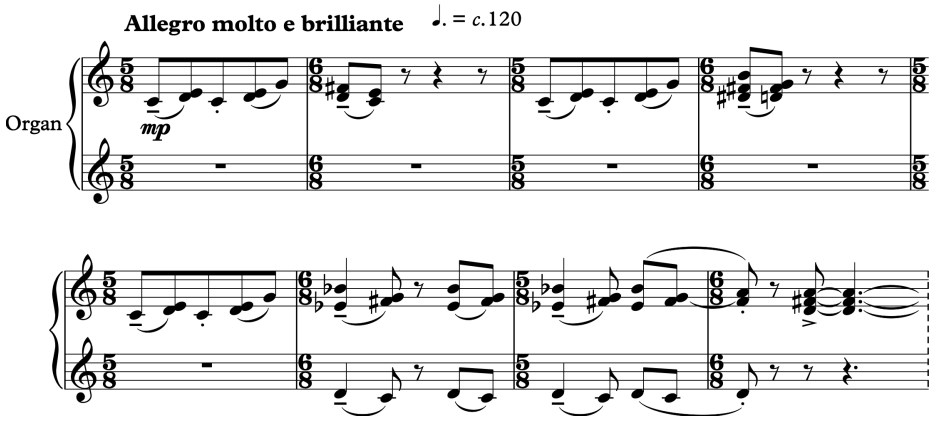
Example 2.2.8. *Missa Cornelia* Opus 81 (1979). 2. Gloria, bb.89-92. Novello.

[13] Smith (2004). p.36.

The interplay of compound and simple meters is evident all of Leighton's previous music and the organ introduction for the Gloria (which was recycled and incorporated into Leighton's Dublin Festival Organ Mass *Missa di Gloria* (Opus 82) the following year) and much of the movement is defined by the same shifting meter between 5/8 and 6/8 is no exception (see examples 2.2.9 and 2.2.10). Leighton's rhythmic palette is also developing and triplets now seem to be absorbed into his duple meter writing, creating more complex rhythmic textures and the use of triplet and straight quaver rhythms against each other is a new feature.

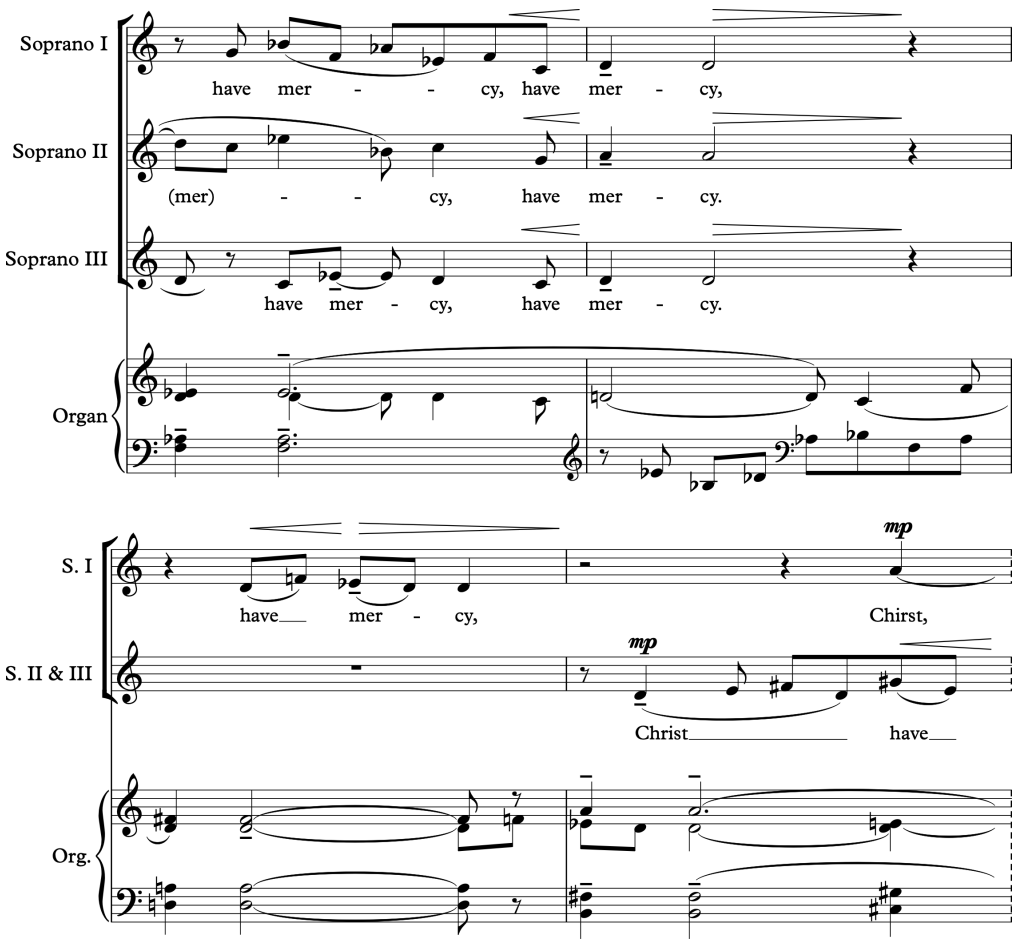


Example 2.2.9. *Missa Cornelia* Opus 81 (1979). 2. Gloria, bb.1-7. Novello.



Example 2.2.10. *Missa de Gloria* (Dublin Festival Mass) Opus 82 (1980). 2. Gloria, bb.1-8. Novello.

These stylistic developments however do not come at a loss of elements found in the previous mass settings. The Kyrie possesses a compromise of the usual Locrian mode in the earlier settings of the Kyrie (and the Agnus Dei) and the more ambiguous chromatic character of the *Sarum Mass* by transitioning into the Lydian mode at the middle section of 'Christ, have mercy' (see example 2.2.11).



Example 2.2.11. *Missa Cornelia* Opus 81 (1979). 1. Kyrie, bb.10-13. Novello.

The through-composed Sanctus Benedictus movement adopts the dotted rhythms found in the accompaniment of the Sanctus in the *Mass for Ampleforth* (Opus 67) but, again, strong elements of Leighton's model for this movement are clearly in evidence not least in the tempo marking 'Very broad (with a slow swing)' which is similar to most of the settings in a compound meter. Triplet triads are also integrated into the vocal lines and the section at 'heaven and earth' is yet another iteration of

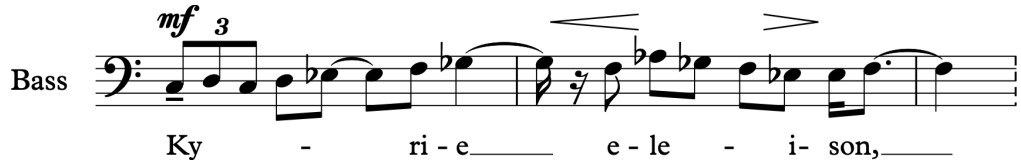
material found at a similar point in the *Mass* (see example 1.6.7) and the *Missa Brevis* but Leighton makes a feature of cross-rhythms to a much higher degree.

The *Missa Cornelia* perhaps represents a taming of some of the excesses in the *Sarum Mass*'s strident harmonic landscape. It is undeniably more economic in its use of musical forces – the texture of the organ part, for example, is considerably lighter than in the *Sarum Mass* and there seems to be a conscious amalgamation of Leighton's more dissonant style with the formula of the earlier settings. Musical lines are still predominantly made up of small intervals but Leighton now begins to frequently use larger intervals for their melodic effect.

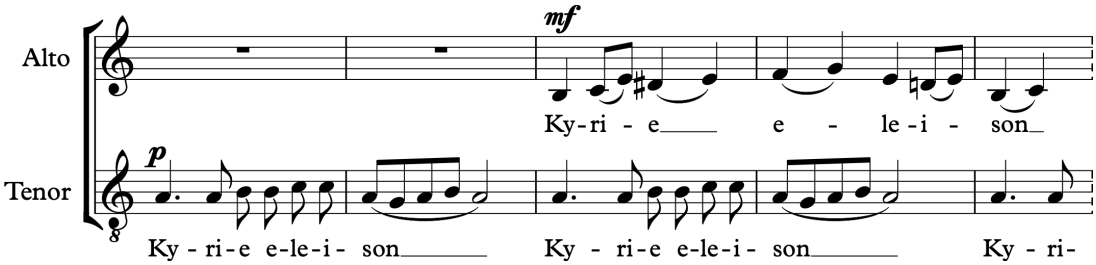
Missa Sancti Petri (1987)

It was nearly a decade after *Missa Cornelia* (Opus 81) before Leighton wrote another mass. Since the *Mass for Ampleforth* (Opus 67) he had written his second and third symphonies (in 1974 and 1984 respectively) amongst other large projects. *Missa Sancti Petri* was written for Peterborough Cathedral's 750th dedication anniversary celebrations in 1987. This was not the first Leighton work Peterborough Cathedral choir had been involved in, Leighton's triple choir motet, *Laudate pueri* (Opus 68) of 1973 for the Norwich Triennial Festival was premiered by Peterborough as well as the choirs of Norwich and Ely cathedrals.

Missa Sancti Petri reflects the greater amount of dissonance that characterises Leighton's later works from the last decade or so or his life but it is softer-edged than that in the *Sarum Mass* (Opus 66). At certain points, particularly the Kyrie, it feels reminiscent of Jean Langlais' *Messe Solennelle* (1949) although there is nothing to suggest that Leighton knew the work (see examples 2.2.12 and 2.2.13). It features no major departure from the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40) but the inclusion of a soprano solo in the final section of the Kyrie is unique to the *Missa Sancti Petri* (and *Missa Christi* the following year). The setting exudes a particular confidence in terms of style and in the presentation of the text, for example the dynamic markings for even the quiet sections tend to be louder than those which appear in the earlier settings.



Example 2.2.12. *Missa Sancti Petri* (1987). 1. Kyrie, bb.2-4. Novello.



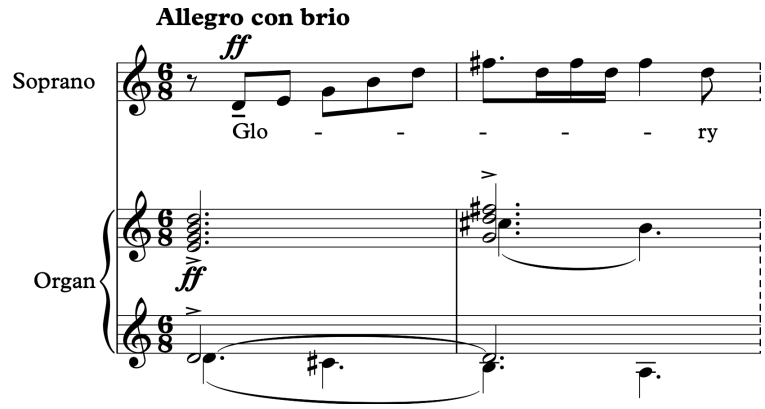
Example 2.2.13. *Messe Solennelle*, Jean Langlais (1949). 1. Kyrie, bb.11-15. Editiones Musicales de la Schola Cantorum.

Example 2.2.12 also indicates that the mix of triplet and tuplet rhythms are firmly established into Leighton's style at this point. This revives the impression of improvisation that is characteristic of his earliest choral music, this is possibly a natural extension of Leighton's increasing use of melisma in his choral work – a development that can be observed within the mass settings too.

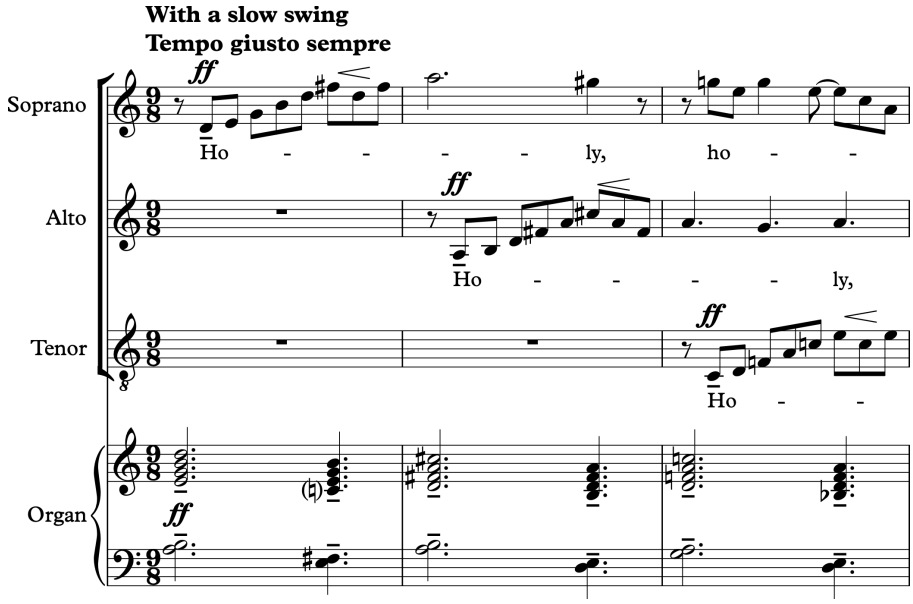
The Gloria, unusually, is based on material usually reserved for the Sanctus. The combination of cascading triads in a compound meter lend some of the excitable atmosphere to the opening, perhaps linking these two sections of the ordinary which are supposed to be the exclamation of angels.[14] The first three notes of the phrase also imitate the Gregorian plainchant incipit from the Eighth tone that Leighton also uses in the opening of the *Missa Brevis* (see example 2.1.16). Leighton still sets the Sanctus using this material though, and the result is two movements which are

[14] The opening of the Gloria comes from the angelic host quoted in Luke 2.14 and the Eucharist Prayer the prefaces the Sanctus usually includes similar words to 'therefore with angels and archangels… ever more praising you and singing:'

highly homogenous with one another (see examples 2.2.14 and 2.2.15).

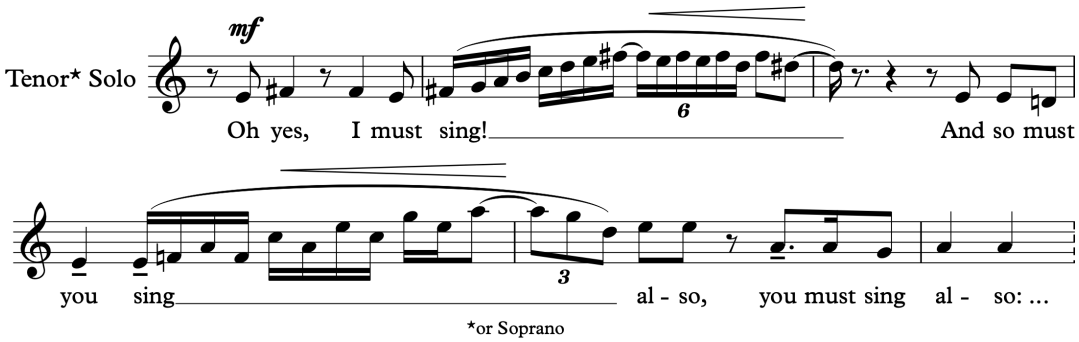


Example 2.2.14. *Missa Sancti Petri* (1987). 2. Gloria, bb.1-2. Novello.



Example 2.2.15. *Missa Sancti Petri* (1987). 3. Sanctus, bb.1-3. Novello.

The expansion of this theme from its first appear in the Sanctus of the *Mass* has served Leighton admirably, but it is here that the figure reaches its apogee. The span of a tenth in the Gloria being stretched to a twelfth in the Sanctus covers the comfortable span of most performers – and Leighton echoes this stretch in all four voice parts without the lines being to the extremes of each vocal tessitura. The large range of this figure is employed carefully by Leighton but it is clear that this gesture comes from his solo vocal writing such as in his third symphony (see example 2.2.16) which, thus far, had not particularly influenced his choral parts.



Example 2.2.16. *Symphony No.3 'Laudes Musicae'* Opus 90 (1984). 1. Allegro con moto, bb.33-38. Novello.

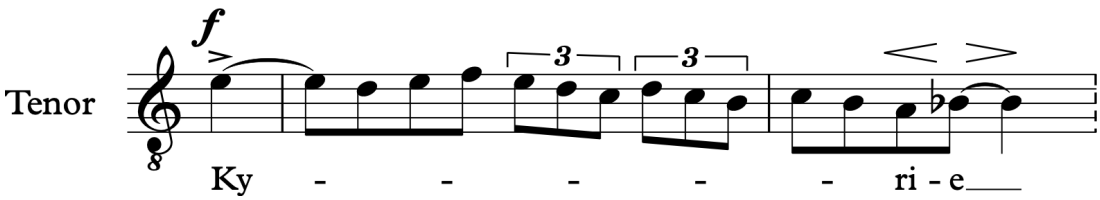
There are significant solo parts for soprano, tenor and bass in all movements of the setting. As with Leighton's earlier work, these have a structural and textural role as much as one for displaying virtuosic quality – the last soprano solo phrase, for example, is little more than one bar and introduces the final section of the Agnus Dei.

Missa Christi (1988)

Leighton inscribed a note into his third composition book by the *Missa Christi*'s entry: 'my last setting of the mass'.[15] It is not quite possible to interpret what this annotation means with any certainty; *Missa Christi* was completed in March but Leighton was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer only the following month.[16] It could have been Leighton signalling a move away from writing church music, he felt he had written his share of music for the genre and was considering to refuse any commissions for a while.[17] This could possibly be the reason that he turned down a commission from the newly installed Organist of Durham Cathedral, James Lancelot for a third set of evening canticles intended for the 1988 Northern Cathedrals Festival (involving the choirs of Durham and Ripon cathedrals, and York Minster) for which he cited already having a busy workload.[18] Equally, it is not impossible that it is a somewhat morbid annotation made by Leighton after he was terminally ill.

The work was commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis to celebrate 150 years since their foundation and was first sung there in June 1988. Unsurprisingly it shares a similar qualities with the *Missa Sancti Petri*, also calling for soprano, tenor and baritone soloists as well as plenty of divisi in the full choir parts. The relationship between the opening phrase of the Kyrie in both works can easily be seen (see example 2.2.12 and 2.2.17).

[15] Leighton, Kenneth. Third Composition Book.
[16] Smith (2004). p.8.
[17] Binks (2007). p.1.
[18] Lancelot, James (2019). Personal correspondence.



Example 2.2.17. *Missa Christi* (1988). 1. Kyrie, bb.1-3. Novello.

The Gloria, as in the *Missa Sancti Petri,* begins in a compound meter and uses material from the earlier settings of the Sanctus. In this sense, it follows the formula Leighton had devised with *Missa Cornelia* which meets between the scale and dissonance of the *Saurm Mass* to the earlier settings. The *Missa Christi* as a summation of the last few mass settings is defined by irregular rhythms and ostinato effects and a distinctly freer use of modal harmony. The quality of the work is to Leighton's usual high standard, however, its importance is not certain. Neither the *Missa Christi* nor the *Missa Sancti Petri* seem to have much to say and it appears that Leighton may have become tired of setting the communion service. It is telling that Leighton did not assign either of his last two mass settings with an opus number.

EPILOGUE

Leighton's contribution, not only to the English choral tradition through his organ and choral music but to British music of the mid twentieth century at large, is one of quality and individuality. Examining Leighton's music through the lens of his mass settings, it is possible to observe not only the development of his style but also understand the workings of his harmonic language in a broader context.

The amount of shared material between nearly all the settings could be considered symptomatic of a limited and repetitive musical vocabulary however each iteration of ideas is distinct from the others. Leighton manages to reinvigorate key motifs and compositional elements and prevents his musical language from becoming too stale. What is also evident from this study is the importance of the three masses in particular: the *Missa Sancti Thomae* (Opus 40)*, Mass* (Opus 44) and the *Missa Brevis* (Opus 50). The *Missa Sancti Thomae* is the first work in Leighton's modal style that is, in many ways, his most refined before he incorporated much more vertical dissonance in his harmonic language. Its mark is indelibly imprinted into all of the other subsequent settings acting as the blueprint for all of Leighton's mass settings, not least the *Mass* which immediately followed it. The *Mass* is not just important due to its scale (and its conceptualisation as a concert work clearly places it alongside his other secular works) but in that it fully elaborates the modalism and style of the *Missa Sancti Thomae*. In that space between these two years, Leighton's compositions have a particular integrity to all the elements considered in the first

half of this thesis. These two early settings also form significant examples within the period of time and are an important marker in the development of Leighton's compositional style. This period is a style that could be seen to have been developed within the prism of writing the mass settings and, as such, is entwined not just with choral music but the setting of the ordinary. The *Missa Brevis* too proves to be another impression of the foundations laid out in the *Missa Sancti Thomae* and the *Mass* and shows Leighton to be inventive and innovative with these ideas. This is not the case with the later settings, however, which cannot claim to have a similar level of importance within Leighton's body of work. They do reflect the changes in his style and their level of complexity is arguably greater. Nonetheless, as representative examples of his late style, the later masses do elucidate certain elements that are present in his major works of the time, including the second and third symphonies.

Leighton was rightly commended during his lifetime but, since his death, a large amount of his music is unjustly neglected – including his mass settings. In the year of his centenary it seems an ideal opportunity to reappraise Leighton's works and to assess their worth. His music deserves reassessment and further critical examination. This thesis intends to provoke further discussion not only about Leighton's choral music but his individualistic and original style by highlighting important features of compositional voice. Leighton's legacy as a teacher at the University of Edinburgh should also be recognised for its significance to the musical life in the Scottish capital and the whole of British music.

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