

Balulalow

Carol for soprano solo and a cappella SATB chorus, with divisions

Text by James, John, and Robert Wedderburn (16th cent.)

Composer's note:

Written in March 2009, this setting was dedicated to Judy Martin and the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, where for some years I seemed to be a sort of unofficial composer-in-residence. The strophic arrangement of the text is preserved in the music, with a gentle first verse for chorus succeeded by a second in which a soprano soloist spins a more passionate line above a free variation of what has already been heard. The second verse also features division of the chorus parts to create a richer texture, but the setting returns ultimately to the hushed E flat major from which it arose.

Balulalow was published by Oxford University Press in 2010. It was recorded by Commotio and Matthew Berry, with Grace Davidson, soprano, for the Naxos CD 'In the Heart of Things' (8.572739) released in 2012. A second recording was made in 2013 by Paul McCreech, Emma Walshe (soprano solo) and the Gabrieli Consort on the Signum label ('Incarnation', SIGCD 346). With my blessing, the Signum recording transposed the setting up a semitone for purposes of accommodating it within an unfolding sequence of related tonalities.

For promotional purposes a further performance of *Balulalow* was recorded for Oxford University Press by The Oxford Choir under Christopher Robinson (producer: John Rutter). A sound clip of this may be heard on the website of the soprano soloist, Kirsty Hopkins:

<http://www.kirstyhopkins.com/#/listen/4544528421>

<http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780193368958.do>

<http://www.signumrecords.com/catalogue/new-releases/incarnation/sigcd346.html>

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