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Former Blackburn Organ Scholar

TOM DAGGETT

is in the news!



**Tom Daggett is the
Community Music Co-ordinator
for the Contextual Theology Centre in London**

This press release was issued in December:

Cantignorus Chorus raises the roof at Angel Studios

The Cantignorus Chorus – part of the Centre's [SingSpire](#) programme – recorded the song which it hopes will be a Christmas Number One! Our Community Music Co-ordinator Tom Daggett blogs about a memorable evening, the climax of many weeks' hard work.



In December, the **Cantignorus Chorus** made history when it travelled a few miles down the road to make its debut recording at Angel Studios – a prestigious studio used by the likes of Robbie Williams, Tom Jones, and the X Factor finalists.

The singers of the **Cantignorus Chorus** are those in need – homeless men and women, recovering drug addicts, people with mental health problems, elderly, isolated, and lonely people, children who don't get a chance to sing, and who find themselves and their families at a disadvantage to others in the country.

It's fair to say that no-one in the Cantignorus Chorus had ever been



to a recording studio before (indeed, many had never tried to sing before they joined the choir). Nevertheless, over two 3-hour sessions, ably assisted from the sound desk by some of the music industry's most skilled professionals, and blessed from the podium by the **Rt Revd Adrian Newman**, Bishop of Stepney, 58 children and around 60 adults gave it their all, producing something utterly beautiful.



The Cantignorus Chorus is SingSpire's flagship project, in partnership with St. Paul's, West Hackney, which is an inclusive neighbourhood church.



Having helped to dream up the idea of this ambitious and exciting choir with Rev Niall Weir, and then having crafted what has quickly become one of the country's most surprising choirs into harmony, needless to say, I was immensely proud of what we'd achieved in a few months.

Recording in one of the music industry's most famous venues is one thing, but the real success story with this choir has been the people involved:

These homeless men and women, vulnerable adults, elderly, isolated and lonely individuals, young professionals, and staff from the charities which minister to many in the choir's number – not to mention people from the congregation of St. Paul's, West Hackney – have joined together, modelling a respectful and joyful community, largely against the odds.

The Cantignorus Chorus [**'Can't-Ignore-us'**] has presented many opportunities for transformation – both musical and personal. 'I've heard many heart-warming reports of new encounters in the streets of Hackney,' said Tom Daggett, 'between those who would usually have crossed the road to avoid one another.'

There's something inherently spiritual about singing together – even those who profess no faith can agree with that – and that spiritual connection has surely made its way into people's daily lives, changing the way people see one another.

A professional recording takes a huge amount of emotional dedication and solid hard work – not just from the producers, sound engineers, and director, but from every person involved. Despite the challenges of taming excitable personalities and maximising musical quality, the choir pulled together remarkably. Indeed, it was bound to – because every participant was entirely committed to the song's message: that 'we could make it through, holding on together'.

The achievements of the Cantignorus Chorus have received widespread recognition and support. We're honoured and delighted that **the choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral** and poet and comedian **John Hegley** are also part of this project, and will feature on our Christmas single. Financially, we're grateful to Near Neighbours, as well as to countless generous benefactors who 'sponsored a singer'

Share in some of this joy by purchasing 'Holding out a helping hand'. **Only 79p on iTunes**. All of the proceeds from the choir's sales will go directly to those charities which meet in St. Paul's West Hackney church hall, week in, week out, and which continue to serve some of those in our country who are in the greatest need.

'Google' SINGSPIRE to discover what a great work is being done in the East End of London by Tom Daggett and his colleagues.