

EDWARD ELGAR:

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

WEDNESDAY, 7 MARCH 2012 ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

PROGRAMME: £3

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

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Programme Notes by Nancy Goodchild

Programme designed by Stephen Rickett and edited by Eleanor Cowie © London Concert Choir 2012 www.london-concert-choir.org.uk

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Wednesday 7 March 2012 Royal Festival Hall

EDWARD ELGAR:

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

Mark Forkgen conductor
London Concert Choir
Canticum semi-chorus
Southbank Sinfonia

Adrian Thompson tenor
Jennifer Johnston mezzo soprano
Brindley Sherratt bass

London Concert Choir is grateful to Mark and Liza Loveday for their generous sponsorship of tonight's soloists.

Edward Elgar

born Broadheath near Worcester 2nd June 1857; died Worcester 23rd February 1934

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

(Opus 38)

For Tenor, Mezzo Soprano, Bass, Chorus, Semi-chorus and Orchestra from the poem by Cardinal Newman

Gerontius

The Angel

The Priest/The Angel of the Agony

Friends of Gerontius, Demons, Angelicals, Souls in Purgatory



Adrian Thompson
Jennifer Johnston
Brindley Sherratt

THE POFT

John Henry Newman, the celebrated Catholic convert and Cardinal, wrote his poem 'The Dream of Gerontius' in 1865, "... I really cannot tell how...". It is about a man's death and his soul's journey through the afterlife. He wrote in the belief that "men are not as good as they should be but better than they might be." This exploration of such weighty theological issues as the nature of God, of death, of angelic and demonic existence, Divine Judgment and purgatory is in the form not of a detached or sermonising tract but of a dramatic telling of an old man experiencing all the thoughts and emotions surrounding his death and passing.

Abandoning his usual Protestant antagonism, Charles Kingsley commented "I read the Dream with awe and admiration ... the central idea is as true as it is noble ... the longing of the soul to behold Deity, converted, by the mere act of sight, into a self-abasement so utter that the soul is ready, even glad to be hurled back to any depth, to endure any pain, from the moment it becomes aware of God's actual perfection and its own utter impurity and meanness."

Newman's words found their way into 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' (*Praise to the Holiest*) and the poem inspired many, including General Gordon who made notes in the margins of his copy before his final battle at Khartoum in 1882. Seven years later, this very copy passed into the hands of a couple marrying – much against the will of the bride's family – at Brompton Oratory: Caroline Alice Roberts and her piano teacher, the little-known composer Edward Elgar.

THE COMPOSER

Like Newman, Elgar was a Catholic in a staunchly Protestant era, struggling with his own inner demons and aspirations. The image of Elgar as some stiff, moustachioed upholder of Empire is very far from the man – particularly at this stage when he was still struggling for recognition. Contemporary sources point to his high sensitivity and bouts of moody fatalism, so perhaps it is not surprising that he was strongly drawn to Newman's poem: "I have been soaking my mind (with this poem) for at least eight years, while I have been gradually assimilating the work of the author in my own musical promptings." His chance to set Gerontius to music came at the age of forty-two with a commission for the 1900 Birmingham Triennial Festival. It had been offered to Dvorak a few years earlier but declined. The name 'Gerontius' derives from the Greek 'geron' or 'old man' but also represents 'every man', which appealed greatly to Elgar: "I imagine Gerontius to be a man like us ...not a priest or a saint but a sinner ... a worldly man in his life and now brought to book ... therefore I have not filled his part with Church tunes but a good, healthy, full-blooded, romantic, remembered worldliness."

Elgar's editor and friend August Jaeger (portrayed as *Nimrod* in Elgar's best known work *Enigma Variations*), was demanding and critical of early drafts, to a point where Elgar protested that he felt "persecuted." He insisted that the composer push himself further to achieve some of the most impactful moments of the work. The conflict was worth it. Jaeger marvelled at the technical and musical brilliance of the finished piece. "It is wonderful. I have not seen or heard anything since *Parsifal* that has stirred me with the trumpet tongue of genius as has your latest and by far greatest work." His reference to Wagner's *Parsifal* was by no means co-incidental. Elgar was largely self-taught and studied avidly, therefore, the Great Composers of the time, who were predominantly German. He visited Bayreuth as much as he could and admired Wagner's 'modern' and 'difficult' music dramas. Elgar refused to allow *Gerontius* to be labelled as an Oratorio; rather, it is a Concert Music Drama, and although the work is entirely Elgar's own voice, it owes much to Wagner's style of symphonic scale, chromatic unfolding of melody and use of *leitmotifs* (musical themes).

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE

The Dream of Gerontius followed hard on the heels of *Enigma Variations*, Elgar's first major success. However, the fate of its premiere did not bode well for its future. Inadequate rehearsal, lacklustre soloists, an overworked chorus and the sudden death of their choirmaster, along with little sympathy for a Catholic text or experience of such demanding writing, saw to it that the performance was deemed an outright failure that led a furious Elgar to comment, "I have worked for forty years and, at the end, Providence denies me a decent hearing of my work."

Fortunately, its rightful place was established with a highly successful German premiere in Düsseldorf in 1901 and *Gerontius* has since become a much loved triumph of the English choral repertoire.

THF WORK.

PART ONE

In the **orchestral prelude**, Elgar introduces us to a series of interwoven motifs which represent the poem's main themes. They were named by Jaeger and appear in the following sequence: *Judgment* (simply set out here as hushed strings but developed throughout the work); *Fear* (jagged and angular uneasiness) alternating with *Prayer* (steady and reverent woodwind chords); *Sleep* (a fitful 3/4 lullaby-like theme); *Miserere* (a theme of descending notes, an impassioned plea for mercy); awe-striking chords with a melody that rises but always falls back – *Despair* – resolving into a passage reminiscent of a ticking clock; *Committal* (the theme for the Priest's 'Go forth in the name of Angels and Archangels'); finally, a return of the *Judgment* motif as the music ebbs and we draw nearer to hear Gerontius' first utterance.

The prelude has led us seamlessly to the bedside of a dying man intoning **Jesu**, **Maria**, at once fearful and hopeful. His friends (Newman calls them Assistants) gather about him to join in his prayers for mercy and grace. Elgar urged the original choir to sing not in a "churchy" style but with "tears in their voice". Gerontius declares his faith, **Sanctus Fortis**, but also his deepest apprehension, **That sense of ruin which is worse than pain**, before approaching the threshold of death itself: **And I fain would sleep**, **the pain has wearied me**.

As Gerontius leaves this world, the Priest commands **Go forth upon thy journey Christian soul.** This litany is taken up by his friends, the music conveying the enormity and solemnity of this moment and the courage required.

PART TWO

The orchestra's woodwind and strings show us, in calm and almost directionless music, a timeless landscape of the afterlife where Gerontius' Soul is in a state of pensive wonder: I went to sleep and now I am refreshed. He thinks he is alone but becomes aware that he is moving as if borne in the hands of another and drawn forward by music – O what a heart subduing melody. A Guardian Angel greets him, All hail my child and brother. Gerontius eagerly responds, expecting to be led directly to God. In contrast to the 4/4 common time of Part 1, much of Part 2 is written in waltz-like triple time, conveying the "inexpressive lightness" of Gerontius' Soul. The Angel seems reassuring – Gerontius has led a life fearful of judgment and therefore deserving of mercy. He declares I can forward look with serenest joy.

This reverie is rudely interrupted – **But hark upon my sense comes a fierce hubbub**. They encounter demons waiting to drag souls down to hell. The music here, with its roots in the *Fear* theme, is restless, primitive and dissonant (highly challenging for an audience of the 1900s), conveying the seething, scorn and vehemence of the **demons who assemble there**, **hungry and wild to claim their property**... having themselves been **dispossessed**, **aside thrust**, **chucked down**. Elgar was later to use some of this music, fittingly, in a song cycle about the Great War.

The demons' taunting fades and, restored to calm, Gerontius resumes his wish to see his Lord. The Angel and orchestral undertow warn him that this is no simple request – **That sight of the Most Fair will gladden thee but it will pierce thee too** and tells of another soul's experience (that of St. Francis), as they approach the Chamber of Judgment. Their entrance is greeted by trombones and angelic beings singing **Praise to the Holiest**. Gerontius surrenders – **My soul is in my hand; I have no fear**. Elgar's musical vision of this scene ebbs, flows and builds with layer upon layer of melodic themes to an urgent, impassioned and almost frenzied ecstasy of worship. The final chord – "the Great Blaze" as Elgar referred to it – is in C major, a key associated with a Wagnerian sense of purity and new beginnings. This could be the triumphant end of the journey. But the actual Judgment and encounter with God are yet to come...

Gerontius hears the distant prayers of those still gathered around his deathbed as he is ushered before the Angel of the Agony who reminds him vividly and viscerally of the suffering of Christ – Jesu! By that shuddering dread which fell on Thee and who pleads on behalf of the waiting souls. We hear the apprehensive advance of Gerontius as he enters the Chamber but Elgar stressed that we remain at the door: "none of the action takes place in the presence of God; I would not have tried that, neither did Newman ... we stand outside." This culminates in a loud, shattering and reverberant chord from the orchestra marked in the score as fffz – the loudest each instrument can summon. Gerontius has looked into the Face of God. This brief moment is enough for him instantly to perceive his Soul's impure and unready state. He declares Take me away. Other souls intone Lord thou hast been our refuge in every generation and Gerontius flees to join them. Elgar has saved his most tender and moving music for the Angel's great song of compassion, an unending melody, as Gerontius' Soul is now entrusted to purgatory – a place, as suggested by the music returning to the key of D major, of consolation and hope: Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul, in my most loving arms I now enfold thee... Farewell, but not for ever, brother dear... Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here and I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

Quotation from John Ruskin written by Elgar on the final page of the original manuscript:

'This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was as the vapour and is not; but **this** I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.'

TEXT

PART ONE

Prelude

Gerontius

Jesu, Maria – I am near to death, And Thou art calling me; I know it now. Not by the token of this faltering breath, This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow, -(Jesu have mercy! Mary, pray for me!) 'Tis this new feeling, never felt before, (Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!) That I am going, that I am no more. 'Tis this strange innermost abandonment, (Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee), This emptying out of each constituent And natural force, by which I come to be. Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant Is knocking his dire summons at my door, The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt, Has never, never come to me before; So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.

Assistants

Kyrie eleison. Holy Mary, pray for him.

All holy Angels, pray for him.

Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.

All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.

All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.

All holy Innocents, pray for him.

All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,

All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,

All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

Kyrie eleison.

Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man; And through such waning span Of life and thought as still has to be trod, Prepare to meet thy God. And while the storm of that bewilderment Is for a season spent,
And, ere afresh the ruin on me fall,
Use well the interval.

Assistants

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying
On self, at the last;
From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.

By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross, Rescue him from endless loss; By Thy death and burial By Thy rising from the tomb, By Thy mounting up above, By the Spirit's gracious love Save him in the day of doom.

Gerontius

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus, De profundis oro te, Miserere, Judex meus, Parce mihi, Domine.

Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.
And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified;
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.
Simply to His grace and wholly

Light and life and strength belong.
And I love, supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,

Parce mihi, Domine.

And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church, as His creation,
And her teachings, as His own.
And I take with joy whatever
Now besets me, pain or fear,
And with a strong will I sever
All the ties which bind me here.
Adoration aye be given,
With and through the angelic host,
To the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus, De profundis, oro te, Miserere, Judex meus, Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more; for now it comes again,
That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man.

... And, crueller still,

A fierce and restless fright begins to fill The mansion of my soul. And worse, and worse,

Some bodily form of ill

Mary, pray for me.

Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps Its hideous wings

And makes me wild with horror and dismay.

O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!

Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee
In Thine own agony . . .

Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.

Assistants

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour, As of old, so many by Thy gracious power:-Noe from the waters in a saving home; (Amen.) Job from all his multi-form and fell distress; (Amen.)

Moses from the land of bondage and despair; (Amen.)

David from Golia and the wrath of Saul; (Amen.)
. . . - so, to show Thy power,
Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

Gerontius

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep, The pain has wearied me. . . . Into Thy hands, O Lord, into Thy hands. . . .

The Priest and Assistants

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo! Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul! Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God The Omnipotent Father, Who created thee! Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Son of the Living God, Who bled for thee! Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, Who Hath been poured out on thee! Go in the name Of Angels and Archangels; in the name Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth! Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets; And of Apostles and Evangelists, Of Martyrs and Confessors, in the name Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name Of holy Virgins; and all Saints of God, Both men and women, go! Go on thy course; And may thy place today be found in peace, And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount Of Sion; through the Same, through Christ our Lord

Interval - 20 minutes

PART TWO

Soul of Gerontius

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.

A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath,
nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.

This silence pours a solitariness Into the very essence of my soul; And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet, Hath something too of sternness and of pain.

Another marvel: someone has me fast Within his ample palm; . . .

. . . A uniform

And gentle pressure tells me I am not Self-moving, but borne forward on my way. And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth I cannot of that music rightly say Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones. Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

Angel

My work is done, My task is o'er, And so I come, Taking it home For the crown is won, Alleluia,

My Father gave In charge to me

For evermore.

This child of earth

E'en from its birth

To serve and save.

Alleluia,

And saved is he.

This child of clay
To me was given,

To rear and train
By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia,
From earth to heaven

Soul

It is a member of that family
Of wond'rous beings, who,
ere the worlds were made,
Millions of ages back, have stood around
The throne of God.
I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

Angel

All hail, my child!
My child and brother, hail! what wouldest thou?

Soul

I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion;
though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

Angel

You cannot now Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished

Soul

Then I will speak: I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

Angel

Thou art not let; but with extremest speed Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge.

Soul

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear of meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgment was to me most terrible.

Angel

It is because

Then thou didst fear: that now thou dost not fear.

Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so

For thee the bitterness of death is past.

Also, because already in thy soul

The judgment is begun.

A presage falls upon thee, as a ray

Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.

That calm and joy uprising in thy soul

Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,

And heaven begun.

Soul

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;

And at this balance of my destiny,

Now close upon me, I can forward look

With a serenest joy.

But hark! upon my sense

Comes a fierce hubbub,

which would make me fear

Could I be frighted.

Angel

We are now arrived

Close on the judgment-court; that sullen howl

Is from the demons who assemble there,

Hungry and wild, to claim their property, And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry!

Soul

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

Demons

Low born clods

Of brute earth.

They aspire

To become gods,

By a new birth,

And an extra grace,

And a score of merits.

As if aught

Could stand in place

Of the high thought,

And the glance of fire

Of the great spirits,

The powers blest;

The lords by right,

The primal owners,

Of the proud dwelling

And realm of light.

Dispossessed,

Aside thrust,

Chucked down,

By the sheer might

Of a despot's will,

Of a tyrant's frown,

Who after expelling

Their hosts, gave,

Triumphant still,

And still unjust,

Each forfeit crown

To psalm-droners,

And canting groaners,

To every slave,

And pious cheat,

And crawling knave,

Who licked the dust

Under his feet.

Angel

It is the restless panting of their being;
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

Demons

The mind bold

And independent,

The purpose free,

So we are told.

Must not think

To have the ascendant.

What's a saint?

One whose breath

Doth the air taint

Before his death;

A bundle of bones.

Which fools adore,

When life is o'er.

Ha! Ha!

Virtue and vice.

A knave's pretence.

Tis all the same,

Hal Hal

Dread of hell-fire, Of the venomous flame.

A coward's plea.

Give him his price,

Saint though he be,

From shrewd good sense

He'll slave for hire.

Ha! Ha!

And does but aspire

To the heaven above

With sordid aim.

And not from love.

Hal Hal

Soul

I see not those false spirits; shall I see My dearest Master, when I reach His throne?

Angel

Yes, – for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord, One moment; but thou knowest not, my child, What thou dost ask; that sight of the Most Fair Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too

Soul

Thou speakest darkly, Angel! and an awe Falls on me. and a fear lest I be rash.

Angel

There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid-glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified, –
Such that the Masters very wounds were stamped
Upon his flesh; and from the agony
Which thrilled through body and
soul in that embrace,
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love
Doth burn ere it transform. . .

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height, And in the depth be praise:

Angel

. . . Hark to those sounds!

They come of tender beings angelical, Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,

And in the depth be praise;

In all His words most wonderful;

Most sure in all His ways!

To us His elder race He gave

To battle and to win,

Without the chastisement of pain,

Without the soil of sin.

The younger son He willed to be

A marvel in His birth:

Spirit and flesh His parents were;

His home was heaven and earth.

The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,

And sent Him hence afar,

To serve as champion in the field

Of elemental war.

To be His Viceroy in the world

Of matter, and of sense;

Upon the frontier, towards the foe,

A resolute defence.

Angel

We now have passed the gate, and are within The House of Judgment. . .

Soul

The sound is like the rushing of the wind – The summer wind among the lofty pines.

Choir of Angelicals

Glory to Him, Who evermore By truth and justice reigns; Who tears the soul from out its case, And burns away its stains!

Angel

They sing of thy approaching agony, Which thou so eagerly didst question of.

Soul

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear, -

But hark! a grand mysterious harmony: It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound Of many waters.

Angel

And now the threshold, as we traverse it, Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height, And in the depth be praise: In all His words most wonderful; Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame, A second Adam to the fight And to the rescue came.

O Wisest love! that flesh and blood Which did in Adam fail, Should strive afresh against the foe, Should strive and should prevail.

And that a higher gift than grace Should flesh and blood refine, God's Presence and His very Self, And Essence all divine.

O generous love! that He who smote In man for man the foe, The double agony in man For man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height, And in the depth be praise: In all His words most wonderful, Most sure in all His ways!

Angel

Thy judgment now is near, for we are come Into the veilèd presence of our God.

Soul

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel

Who say the 'Subvenite' with the priest.

Hither the echoes come; before the Throne

Stands the great Angel of the Agony,

The same who strengthened Him,

what time He knelt

Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blo

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,

Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood. That Angel best can plead with Him for all Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

Angel of the Agony

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient,
wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them
come to Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall
ever gaze on Thee.

Soul

I go before my Judge. . .

Voices on Earth

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him

Angel

... Praise to His Name!

O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,

Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.

Alleluia! Praise to His Name!

Soul

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.

There, motionless and happy in my pain Lone, not forlorn, –

There will I sing my sad perpetual strain, Until the morn.

There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast, Which ne'er can cease

To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest Of its Sole Peace.

There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:-Take me away,

That sooner I may rise, and go above, And see Him in the truth of everlasting day. Take me away, and in the lowest deep There let me be.

Souls in Purgatory

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation;

Before the hills were born, and the world was, From age to age Thou art God.
Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast said, Come back again, O Lord! how long: and be entreated for Thy servants.

Angel

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul, In my most loving arms I now enfold thee, And o'er the penal waters, as they roll, I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee. And carefully I dip thee in the lake, And thou, without a sob or a resistance, Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take, Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

Angels to whom the willing task is given, Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest; And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven, Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

Farewell, but not forever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.
Farewell! Farewell!
Be brave and patient, brother dear.

Souls in Purgatory

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc. Amen

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest, etc. Amen.





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Saturday 14 July 2012, 7.30pm

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Stephen McNeff: The Chalk Legends

London premiere

inspired by London 2012

with members of Kokoro, Dorset Youth Orchestra,
Ealing Youth Orchestra

and choirs from London schools

Tickets £28 to £10 from the Box Office 0844 847 2405

www.chalklegends.com

Mark Forkgen – Conductor

Mark Forkgen has been Music Director of London Concert Choir since 1996. He is also Music Director of Canticum chamber choir and Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's New Music Group. He has worked with a number of leading orchestras, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia and the Composers' Ensemble, appearing at all the major venues, including the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican and the Royal Albert Hall.



A specialist in the field of choral and contemporary music, Mark has given the first performances of more than 100 works. These include stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company and an ensemble from the Philharmonia, at the Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. His wide range of conducting also includes performances with Deep Purple for the Henley Festival and recreating Pink Floyd's Atom Heart Mother in the Chelsea Festival.

Mark has been Conductor and Artistic Advisor for highly acclaimed festivals including: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday; Stravinsky, 'A Festival of Britten', 'Music of the Americas', 'Britain since Britten' and 'East meets West'. His recordings with Canticum and Kokoro have been highly recommended by BBC Radio 3 as well as both musical and national press. In Europe he has conducted in Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland and the Czech Republic. He has also given performances of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in Denmark, as well as Handel's Messiah and Israel in Egypt in Siena and at the Viterbo Early Music Festival in Italy.

March 2012 highlights include concerts with Kokoro for the BBC Music Nation weekend, broadcast on Radio 3 and 'Music for Passiontide' with Canticum at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

A champion of Youth Music, Mark was the Conductor of the Scottish Schools Orchestra for ten years and Music Director of Ealing Youth Orchestra for eight years. He is currently Conductor of Dorset Youth Orchestra and Director of Music at Tonbridge School.

Adrian Thompson – Tenor

London-born Adrian Thompson is an artist of extraordinary versatility with a wide-ranging opera, concert and recital repertoire of works from the renaissance to the present day. He trained at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he is now a professor of vocal studies.

Adrian Thompson has performed with all the major British orchestras and ensembles and his overseas engagements have taken him all over the world, working with many distinguished conductors:

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Trevor Pinnock, Harry Christophers, Sir Andrew Davis, Richard Hickox, Sir Colin Davis and Philippe Herreweghe. His recent concert highlights include Janacek's Glagolitic Mass with the Hallé Orchestra/Mark Elder, The Dream of Gerontius with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra/Christopher Seaman and at the Royal Festival Hall, and Britten's War Requiem with London Concert Choir/Mark Forkgen at the Barbican. He is particularly associated with the works of Britten and Elgar and his repertoire also includes Beethoven Ninth Symphony, Verdi's Requiem and Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde as well as the Evangelists of Bach's St John and St Matthew Passions. In the contemporary field he has performed Lutoslawski's Paroles Tisées with Oliver Knussen and The London Sinfonietta, recorded Judith Weir's A Night at the Chinese Opera and given many first performances of works by British and European composers.

His extensive operatic work has taken him to many of Europe's leading opera houses. His many roles include the title role of *Peter Grimes* and Canio/*I Pagliacci* for Oper Frankfurt; Florestan/ *Fidelio* and Scribe/*Khovanshchina* for Welsh National Opera; Valzacchi/*Rosenkavalier* and Monostatos/*Die Zauberflöte* for the Royal Opera House; Gregor/*The Makropoulos Case* and Laca/*Jenufa* for Opera Zuid; Prologue/*The Turn of the Screw* for Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Mime/*Das Rheingold* for Nationale Reisopera. He has also performed Mao/*Nixon in China* for Toronto Opera.

A very experienced recitalist, Adrian Thompson has made many appearances at the Wigmore Hall and at festivals in the UK and Europe with pianists Graham Johnson, Iain Burnside and Roger Vignoles and harpist Ossian Ellis. He has recorded works by Vaughan Williams and Gurney, a volume in the acclaimed Complete Schubert Edition and Janácek's *The Eternal Gospel* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Warlock's *The Curlew Classics* and Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin*. He appears in recordings of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Vaughan Williams' *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Sir John in Love* and in Handel's *Rodelinda*. His discography also includes Britten's *Serenade*, *Les Illuminations* and *Nocturne* and Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*.

Engagements in 2011/2012 include Mime/Siegfried for the Nationale Reisopera, Triquet in the new production of Eugene Onegin for English National Opera, Glagolitic Mass at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, The Dream of Gerontius at Worcester Cathedral, Valzacchi for ENO and School Teacher/The Cunning Little Vixen for Glyndebourne Festival.

Jennifer Johnston – Mezzo Soprano

Born in Liverpool, Jennifer Johnston read Law at Cambridge and practised as a barrister before graduating with Distinction from the Royal College of Music's Opera Course. She was a member of both the National Opera Studio, where she was sponsored by Opera North, and the Britten Pears Young Artists Programme, and continues to study with Lillian Watson. The recipient of numerous awards, she is the first young artist to have received two Susan Chilcott Scholarships, in 2005 and 2007, is a Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist, a BBC New Generation Artist and is also a Trustee of the Young Singers' Welfare Foundation.



During the summer of 2006, she made her debuts at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence (Dido in Dido and Aeneas) and the Salzburg Festival (Carmi/La Betulia Liberata, released on DVD by Deutsche Grammophon). Other operatic engagements have included Dido for Opéra de Lille and in Madrid, Suzuki/Madame Butterfly, Irene/Tamerlano, Mercedes/Carmen and Hansel/Hansel and Gretel, all for Scottish Opera; Giovanna Seymour/Anna Bolena for the Tower of London Festival, Mrs Herring/Albert Herring for the Aldeburgh Festival, and Lucretia/The Rape of Lucretia for the Dartington Festival.

Recent concert and recital engagements include working with Bernard Haitink, Leonard Slatkin, Malcolm Martineau, at the Aldeburgh Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, and with the BBC Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The English Concert and Akademie für Alte Musik. She is a member of the Prince Consort, with whom she has recently had recitals at the Wigmore Hall, including a Stephen Hough world premiere; a residency and recital at the Aldeburgh Festival, and the release of a disc of Brahms and Hough.

Highlights of the 2010-11 season included the title role in *Agrippina* for the Cambridge Handel Opera Group, Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* for Opera North, Mozart's *Coronation Mass* under Cleobury with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony under Setterfield and Verdi's Requiem with London Concert Choir and Mark Forkgen at the Royal Festival Hall. She gave the world premiere of a new song cycle by Cheryl Frances Hoad at the Cambridge Summer Music Festival and at Opera North with Joseph Middleton. She has recorded Britten's song cycle *A Charm of Lullabies* with Malcolm Martineau.

Her engagements in the 2011-12 Season include recordings for BBC Radio 3; Wellgunde (Das Rheingold) and Waltraute (Die Walküre) for Opera North; Elgar's Sea Pictures with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Brabbins; Debussy's Le Martyr de Saint Sebastién with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Fischer; The Dream of Gerontius with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Hill; Mahler 2 with the Hallé and Hill; Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the RPO; Mozart's Requiem and Solemn Vespers with Crouch End Festival Chorus; and Handel's Messiah with Florilegium, Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Van Zweden, and numerous solo recitals.

Brindley Sherratt – Bass

Born in Lancashire, Brindley Sherratt studied at the Royal Academy of Music, of which he is now a Fellow.

At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden his roles have included Gremin (Eugene Onegin), Sparafucile (Rigoletto) and Ramfis (Aida) and in Salzburg he has sung Balducci (Benvenuto Cellini) with Gergiev, Hobson (Peter Grimes) with Rattle and Bartolo (Le nozze di Figaro) on tour to Japan. At the Glyndebourne Festival he has appeared as Rocco (Fidelio), Il Commendatore (Don Giovanni) and



Superintendent Budd (Albert Herring). A favourite at the English National Opera, his many roles there have included Sarastro (Die Zauberflöte), Pimen (Boris Godunov) and Fiesco (Simon Boccanegra).

Other operatic engagements have included Sarastro at the Hamburg State Opera and for the Opéra de Bordeaux; Pimen for the Opéra de Nice; Rocco in Seville; Il Commendatore and Claudio (Agrippina) in Santa Fe; Pogner (Die Meistersinger von Nürnburg), Gremin and Sarastro at the Welsh National Opera and Fasolt (Das Rheingold) and Filippo (Don Carlo) for Opera North.

His future engagements include Narbal (Les Troyens), Sarastro and Sparafucile at Covent Garden; Banco (Macbeth) for the Opéra de Bordeaux; Sarastro at the Netherlands Opera; Pogner at the Opernhaus Zurich; Pimen at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; Claggart (Billy Budd) at the Glyndebourne Festival and his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

In demand on the concert platform he has appeared at the Bregenz, Edinburgh, Lucerne, Salzburg and Three Choirs Festivals and at the BBC Proms. He works regularly with leading orchestras and conductors. Recent engagements have included the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House with Antonio Pappano; the Philharmonia with Sir Andrew Davis and Lorin Maazel; the Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Daniel Harding; the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra with Harry Bicket; the Monteverdi Choir with Sir John Eliot Gardiner; the Ensemble Intercontemporain with Pierre Boulez; the Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Orchestre des Champs-Elysées and Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen with Louis Langrée.

He has recorded the roles of Somnus/Cadmus (Semele) for Chandos; Ubaldo (Donizetti's Imelda de Lambertazzi) for Opera Rara and Rocco (Fidelio) for Glyndebourne Live, as well as Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and John Nelson, and Haydn Masses and Bach Cantatas with the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner.

London Concert Choir

London Concert Choir celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2010. Having begun life as Brompton Choral Society, the choir was relaunched under its new name in 1986. Now with around 150 members of a wide range of ages the choir is notable for the conviction and expressiveness of its performances in an unusually broad musical repertoire. It regularly appears at all the major London concert venues, including the Barbican, Cadogan Hall and St Martin-in-the-Fields, as well as Southbank Centre, and in cathedrals and churches in and around the capital.

The highlight of last season was an exchange with the Augsburg Basilica Choir. This began in March with a joint performance of Verdi's Requiem at the Royal Festival Hall, then in July LCC visited Germany to perform Haydn's Mass in Time of War and Vaughan Williams' Dona Nobis Pacem with the Basilikachor at the Augsburg Peace Festival.

Large-scale choral works in recent seasons have included Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the English Chamber Orchestra and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Two memorable performances of Britten's War Requiem – at the Barbican with Southbank Sinfonia, and in Salisbury Cathedral with Dorset Youth Orchestra – marked the choir's anniversary year.

In earlier seasons the choir has performed choral music from the 16th to the 21st centuries; and Handel's *Coronation Anthems*, Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* and the London premiere of a reconstruction of Mozart's C minor Mass – all with the Counterpoint period instrumental ensemble.

Concert performances of operas and musicals include Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice, Purcell's Dido and Aeneas, Gershwin's Porgy and Bess and Lerner and Loewe's My Fair Lady. LCC has also presented Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert and Orff's Carmina Burana, and appeared in the Star Wars concerts at the O2 Arena. The choir often gives concerts for charity and has commissioned a number of new works over the years.



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Members of London Concert Choir

Soprano

Hannah Baker Gillian Bibby Dagmar Binsted Sarah Burr Jane Cameron Alison Carpenter Eleanor Cowie Sally Davis Gillian Denham Susan Deville Nicola Dixon-Brown **Emily Dresner** Rachel Duffield Serena Ede Frika Emerson Sarah French Lisa Gardner Johanna Goll Jennifer Greenway Emma Heath **Ruth Hobbs** Christine Ingram Lisa lanson lane lovce Caroline Kameen Vickie Kelly Anna Kosićka Katie Lane Susan Logan Susanna Lutman Meaan Maley Elite Marriott Nadine Martin Jessica Metcalfe Jenny Moran Stephanie Moussadis Jeanette Murphy Carolyn Newman Fiona Paterson Katie Pearson Jutta Raftery Arianna Rondos Rachel Rosenberg Ella Salter Rachel Scanlon

Frances Shaw

Martina Steber Philippa Stroud Shereen Taylor-Berger Amy Thomas Terésa Tilden Francesca Walsh lanet Wells Iulie Wilson

Alto

Rachel Armstrona Helen Beddall-Smith Venetia Browne Frances Cave Carvs Cooper Deborah Curle Lizzie Davies Georgina Day Kathleen Dormer Alena Faltova Rebecca Foulkes Anna Garnier Netta Geist Mary Glanville Nancy Goodchild Muriel Hall Jessica Hammett Ioan Herbert Tina Holderried Caroline Holloway Chrina Jarvis Emma Jones* Chris Ioseph Sabine Koellmann Joanna Kramer Meghana Kumar Lorna Lewis Norma MacMillan **Bridget Maidment** Anna Metcalf Sophy Miles Claire Moorcroft* Judith Paterson Rachel Pearson Gillian Perry Katja Pluto

Dubravka Polic

Katie Prior Caroline Rawlence Annette Riel Mary Ann Sieghart Tabitha Strvdom Kate Tranter Rachel Vroom Gabriel West Barbara Whent Belinda Whittingham June Williams

Tenor

Charles Black* Richard Black Andrew Bolan Deborah Harper Bono Christopher Boustred David Broad Mark Cheesman Tiarnan Cotter* Adam Csatadi James Derbyshire* lames Ede Fabyan Evans John Galt Harry George* Sebastian Goodman* Nicholas Hall Sam Hansford Richard Holmes Alexander Hume* Carolyn Knight Fli Konvitz Ben Martin Christopher Pelmore* Stephen Rickett Tim Steer Tim Thirlway

Bass

Colin Allies Michael Ashcroft Peter Banks Max Banister-Buffery* Graeme Biggar Alexander Bliss*

Richard Burbury Jim Cameron Daniel Cockayne Bill Cook Henry Cook Alex Cowan* Andrew Cullen Albert Edwards Freddie Eggleton* James Finlay Richard Gillard Nigel Grieve James Grimwood* Christian Haigh* Niael Hartnell Martin Harvey Graham Hick Iulian Hofmann David Ireland Benjamin Jones* Ian Judson Robert Kealev Vincent Kehoe* Stephen Kingston Stefan Klaazen Vilem Kriz Jason Kwan* James Littleton* Simon Livesey Barnaby Lynch* Angus Macdonald Alan Machacek Ian Mackintosh Asher Murphy Michael Pelmore* Christopher Powell-Smith Dai Prichard Simon Retallack Morgan Roberts Anthony Sharp Ryszard Stepaniuk William Tilden Tony Trowles Dai Whittingham

Laurence Williams*

^{*} Tonbridge School

Canticum

Music Director: Mark Forkgen

Canticum is one of the most musically versatile chamber choirs in the country. Now in its 22nd season, it is praised for accomplished performances of major works and for exploring contemporary repertoire. The choir has also commissioned new writing and gives regular first performances.

To celebrate its 21st anniversary season in 2010-11, the choir completed a programme centred on the complete series of Bach motets, taking in works by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler and Schönberg on the way. There was also a critically acclaimed first performance of Geoffrey Burgon's Songs Between the Soul and the Bridegroom and a premiere of Simon Speare's Songs of Belonging, winner of a BBC award.

In 2010, Canticum joined with London Concert Choir to perform Britten's War Requiem at the Barbican and in Salisbury Cathedral and gave an acclaimed concert of choral music from Eastern Europe with Kokoro, featuring the UK premiere of Concertino by Russian composer Rodion Shchedrin. July saw a special invitation to perform in the American Music Festival at St Martin-in-The-Fields, which was followed later in the year by the Simon Speare premiere and by Rachmaninov's Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

Canticum performed the Monteverdi Vespers at St Martin's in 2009 and closed the Chichester Festival with Haydn's *Creation*. Other highlights include BBC Radio 4's Christmas Morning Service, Bach's Mass in B Minor with the Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment at St John's, Smith Square, and the première of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *Step by Circle*, dedicated to Mark Forkgen and recorded live. By way of contrast, the choir opened the 2008 Chelsea Festival, providing choral voices for Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* alongside soloist David Gilmour.

The choir stages regular trips abroad, touring Italy with works including Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* – a performance which opened the Viterbo Early Music Festival to a packed audience.

Canticum's discography includes 'A Hymn to the Virgin', with works by Victoria, Poulenc and Panufnik, 'A Christmas Carol', recorded in aid of the Samaritans, and 'In the Gloom of Whiteness', featuring works by Colin Riley, Fraser Trainer and Keith Roberts. Canticum's most recent recording, 'The Christmas Story', was released in December 2010.

Members of Canticum

Soprano Polly Elder Mary Forkgen Janet Hales Alison Kennedy Ruth Knowles Angela Parry Elizabeth Scott Plummer Susan Porter-Thomas Elizabeth Potter Hicks Anna Power Emily Roberts Hannah Shield

Alto
Charly Denniss
Hannah Emanuel
Amelia Hickman
Philippa Smethurst
Ally Stewart
Claire de Thierry
Jan Trott
Sarah Wilby

Tenor
Edward Allen
Richard Houston
Nick Pyke
Mark Stedman
Phillip Wilson
Jonathan White

Bass
Mike Alban
Michael King
David Knowles
Richard Murray
James Pepler
Simon Scott Plummer
Paul de Thierry
Philip Towler





Music for Passiontide

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Conductor: Mark Forkgen Organ: James Longford

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Southbank Sinfonia

Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra of young professionals recently described by The Times as 'a dashing ensemble who play with exhilarating fizz, exactness and stamina'. Now firmly established as Britain's leading orchestral academy, Southbank Sinfonia provides talented graduate musicians with a much-needed springboard into the profession.

Every year 32 players, each supported by a bursary, undertake an intensive and wide-ranging nine-month programme of performance and professional development. This comprises performances across Britain and Europe involving orchestral repertoire, chamber music, opera, dance and theatre, alongside development sessions embracing teamwork and leadership, and opportunities to be rolemodels, inspiring many younger musicians on London's Southbank and beyond.

A distinctive and integral part of the programme is the orchestra's creative partnerships with leading performing arts organisations including the Royal Opera, National Theatre, BBC Concert Orchestra, Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and acclaimed artists such as Patrons Vladimir Ashkenazy and Sir Thomas Allen. Southbank Sinfonia's work has recently been recognised by the Japan Art Association, who awarded the organisation the coveted Praemium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists.

Southbank Sinfonia receives no public funding and is indebted to its many individual donors, trusts and foundations, and corporate supporters who believe in the potential of its young musicians. If you are inspired by what you hear tonight, you too can make a difference to the journey these young artists will take this year. To find out how you can support the orchestra and discover more about its exciting performances ahead, visit

www.southbanksinfonia.co.uk



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Development Director

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Development Manager

Hannah Horsburgh

Projects Administrator

Southbank Sinfonia

Violin I

Edward McCullagh Barbara Zdziarska Leslie Boulin Raulet Seila Tammisola Edgar Bailey Eslpeth Macleod Judith Choi Castro Robert Simmons Amanda Lake Clare Kennington Jem Muharrem Anna Blackmur

Violin II

Melissa Court
Christopher Rutland
Maria Ryan
Alice Hall
Christiane Eidsten Dahl
Verity Marshall
Alice Higgins
Thomas Leate
Elizabeth Lamberton

Viola

Estefania Manzo Kimberly Jill Harrenstein Lisa Bucknell Jenny Wilkinson Liam Buckley Rebecca Hopkin Joe Ichinose Patricia Ramirez Reinoso

Cello

Arthur Boutillier Ivan Leon Alisa Liubarskaya Joanne Keithley Iain Ward

Bass

Jakub Cywinski Caimin Gilmore Lachlan Radford Anthony Williams Salima Barday Samuel Rice

Flute

Lina Andonovska Mizuki Shindo Kate Walter

Oboe

Jenny Brittlebank Odette Cotton Fraser MacAulay

Clarinet

Katy Ayling Tom Caldecote Romola Smith

Bassoon

Sophie Crawford Ruth Rosales Emma Selby

Horn

Phillippa Slack Nick Ireson Chris Beagles Ed Mills

Trumpet

Russell Jackson Raffaele Chieli Oliver Carev

Trombone/Bass

William Yates Iain Maxwell Rob Collinson

Tuba

Oliver Browne

Timpani/Percussion

Catherine Ring Dan Gresson Karen Hutt Stephen Burke Bex Burch

Harp

Daniel de Fry Rhian Hanson



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London Concert Choir is a lively and friendly choir that welcomes the active involvement of its supporters. We are committed to high standards and constantly strive to raise the level of our performances by holding extra workshops and other special events. We could not afford to do all this without the generosity of our supporters and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

If you would like to help us maintain our position as one of the leading amateur choirs in London by joining us as a Friend, Companion or Patron, please write to:

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Paul Daniel conducts

Paul Daniel conductor and piano

Martinů Sinfonia Concertante (1949) Beethoven Symphony No.6

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