

London Concord Singers

Conductor Malcolm Cottle

Thursday, 10 July 2008, 7.30 pm

St. Michael's Church
Chester Square

PROGRAMME

Thompson ~ Alleluia

Whitacre ~ Lux Aurumque

Byrd ~ Beati mundo corde

Parsons ~ Credo quod redemptor meus vivit

Sheppard ~ Verbum caro

Brahms ~ Warum is das Licht gegeben? op. 74, no. 1

Ives ~ Sixty-Seventh Psalm

Whitacre ~ hope, faith, life, love...

⌘ interval ⌘

Ginastera ~ Lamentations of Jeremiah

Parry ~ My soul, there is a country

Hugill ~ Deus in adiutorium

Palestrina ~ Precatus est Moyses

Palestrina ~ Exsultate Deo

Whitacre ~ When David Heard

Randall Thompson (1899–1984) ~ Alleluia + ✓

The son of an English teacher, Thompson remained close to academia all his life. He studied at Harvard and at the American Academy in Rome, where he was much influenced by Renaissance music. At various times during his life he was director of the Curtis Institute of Music and professor at Harvard University. He composed in a wide range of genres, but is best known for his choral compositions.

Alleluia was written for the opening exercises of the newly formed Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood. The work was commissioned by Serge Koussevitsky and the trustees of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in spring 1940 and was premiered by the head of the Center's choral department, G. Wallace Woodworth. Thompson was famously late producing the composition, having been pre-occupied with other commissions; he only delivered the work 45 minutes before the first performance. The performance became a tradition and each year the Center opens with the **Alleluia**. The work is marked *Lento*, as Thompson was concerned that the piece not be seen as joyful. France had just fallen to the Nazis and Thompson later explained that *"The music in my particular Alleluia cannot be made to sound joyous ... here it is comparable to the Book of Job, where it is written, 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"*

Eric Whitacre (born 1970) ~ Lux Aurumque + ✓
Solo Soprano: Rowena Wells

Whitacre trained initially at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he studied choral conducting and composition, the latter with avant garde Ukrainian composer Virko Baley. Whitacre then went on to study at the Julliard School of Music with David Diamond and John Corigliano. He initially became known for his works for concert band and for his choral works.

Whitacre's music is distinctive from his use of particular chords, notably seventh or ninth chords with suspended seconds and fourths. His style can be related to that of fellow American Morten Lauridsen, but in such works as **When David heard**, performed later in this programme, there are also distinct echoes of Arvo Pärt. Like Lauridsen, some of Whitacre's choral works have gained immense popularity both in the USA and around the world. His published works have sold well over 750,000 copies to date.

As part of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain's anniversary celebrations in May 2008, Whitacre was commissioned for a new piece for the choir and the Kings Singers to be performed at the celebratory concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

Lux Aurumque is one of Whitacre's best known and most frequently performed pieces and was commissioned by the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. The text is a poem by Edward Esch, translated into Latin by Charles Anthony Silvestri, who has written the words for a number of Whitacre's choral pieces. Silvestri and the composer became friends whilst both were studying at the University of Nevada.

*Lux calida gravisque,
pura velut aurum;
Et canunt angeli molliter
Modo natum.*

(Charles Anthony Silvestri/Edward Esch)

Light, warm and heavy, just as
pure as gold:
The angels sing gently
As to one new-born.

(Translation: Margaret Jackson-Roberts)

William Byrd (1539–1623) ~ **Beati mundo corde** + ✓

Born in London at the end of 1539 or in early 1540, William Byrd was the foremost composer of the Elizabethan age and among the three or four English composers since the Renaissance who have stood as equals with their continental contemporaries, a master of keyboard music and the madrigal as well as Latin and English church music. He was a chorister in the Chapel Royal under Queen Mary. This was a time when the ornate polyphony of the early Tudor Church was reinstated under composers such as William Mundy, Robert Parsons, Robert White, John Sheppard and Thomas Tallis. Byrd probably studied with Thomas Tallis. He was appointed organist of Lincoln Cathedral in 1563 and to the prestigious post of "Gentleman of Her Majesties Chappell" (where he replaced the recently deceased Robert Parsons). He became co-organist with Tallis in 1569. But little is really known of Byrd during Elizabeth's reign. He remained throughout his life a dedicated Roman Catholic, but he received some forbearance regarding his religion—witness his continuing relationship with his celebrated Protestant mentor, Tallis, and their joint venture as England's sole authorised music publisher.

Though he had personal protection thanks to the patronage of Queen Elizabeth, the authorities increasingly harassed his family and Byrd eventually retired to the country to live under the protection of Catholic Lord Petre. During this period he first produced his 3 mass settings (for 3, 4 and 5 voices). These masses can be seen as gestures of support to the Roman Catholic recusant community. Byrd actually had them printed and his only gesture of caution was to omit the title page.

After the printing of the masses, Byrd went on to an even greater project, two volumes of Gradualia. They were published during the reign of James I, the intent being to provide music for all the mass propers of the Church Year - the first such undertaking since Isaac's Choralis Constantinus about a century earlier. **Beati mundo corde** sets the Communion sentence for the Feast of All Saints. The motet comes from Volume 1 of Gradualia published in 1605.

*Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi
Deum videbunt.*

*Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei
vocabuntur.*

*Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur
propter justitiam, quoniam
ipsorum est regnum caelorum.*

Blessed are the pure in heart: they
shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they
shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that suffer
persecution for justice's sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5: 8-10

Robert Parsons (1535–1572) ~ **Credo quod redemptor meus vivit** + ✓

Little is known about Parsons's life, but in his youth he was probably a choirboy. At least, he went on to become the assistant to Richard Bower, master of the Children Choristers of the Chapel Royal. He was appointed Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1563. He seems to have died as a result of falling into the swollen river Trent at Newark.

Parsons wrote music for both Catholic and Protestant rites; his career as a composer and performer covered the reigns of King Edward VI, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth I. Only ten of his Latin works survive and of these only five survive complete, others are missing at least one part. It is possible that Parsons' tragic death caused his colleagues in the Chapel Royal to view his music as unlucky and this may have led to it dropping out of the repertoire, thus contributing to the poor survival of copies.

This is one of three works written by Parsons associated with burial services. It is not clear whether this dates from the reign of Mary or Elizabeth. Elizabeth did allow some use of Latin in musical settings and stylistically this motet would appear to be Elizabethan. Two of Parsons major Latin pieces from the Elizabethan period, **O bone Jesu** and the **Ave Maria** seem to have subtexts relating to the oppression of Catholics and to Mary Queen of Scots, so commentators have postulated that Parsons may have been a Catholic or at least a sympathiser.

*Credo quod Redemptor meus vivit,
et in novissimo die de terra
surrecturus sum;
et in carne mea videbo Deum
Salvatorem meum*

I know that my redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the
latter day upon the earth:
And in my flesh shall I see God,
my Saviour.

John Sheppard (1515–1559) ~ **Verbum caro** + ✓

Sheppard went to Magdalen College, Oxford in 1543 and by 1552 he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. Our knowledge of his life and death is rather fragmentary; Chapel Royal records show that he was issued liveries (special uniforms) for both the funeral of Queen Mary on 13th December 1558 and the coronation of Elizabeth I on 15th January 1559, but in fact Sheppard died during this piece and was buried on 21st December 1558.

Sheppard's music is testimony to the splendour of Latin Church music during the reign of Queen Mary. Most of it survives in post-Reformation collections. The survival of a set of part-books at Christ Church, Oxford, which were copied at the end of the 16th century, contributes greatly to our knowledge of his output.

Much of Sheppard's best music is devoted to the setting of Office Hymns and Responsories, in which he surrounded the plainchant *cantus firmus* by much vigorous counterpoint. Like most of his Responsories, **Verbum caro** has the *cantus firmus* in the tenor part.

One of Sheppard's grandest works is his long Responsory, **Gaude gaude gaude Maria virgo** (from the 2nd Vespers of the Purification). Both this and **Verbum caro** were probably composed during the period 1551–1558 when there was a revival of the use of the Sarum Rite at Queen Mary's court. The Responsories of Tallis and Sheppard may in fact have formed a more or less complete liturgical cycle.

A Responsory was a category of plainchant which served as a postlude to the reading of the lessons at Matins and monastic Vespers, very much like the *Gradual* and *Alleluia* do at Mass. From the early 16th century the English Sarum Rite developed a distinctive use of polyphonic Responsories.

Verbum caro is structured in the form: A B C P1 B C P2 C; Sheppard presents the complete polyphonic setting of the Responsory text (A B C), followed by the plainchant verse (P1), then the middle and final sections of the polyphonic setting are repeated (B C), followed by the plainchant *Gloria Patri* (P2) then by the last section of the polyphonic setting again (C).

*Verbum caro factum est et
habitavit in nobis
Cujus gloriam vidimus quasi
unigeniti a Patre*

Plenum gratiae et veritatis.

In principio erat verbum,

et verbum erat apud

Deum, et Deus erat verbum

*Cujus gloriam vidimus quasi
unigeniti a Patre*

Plenum gratiae et veritatis.

Gloria Patri et Filio et

Spiritui Sancto

Plenum gratiae et veritatis.

The Word was made flesh and
dwelt among us,
and we beheld his glory as of the
only Son of the Father,
Full of grace and truth.

In the beginning was the word,
and the word was with God
and the word was God.

And we beheld his glory as of the
only Son of the Father,
Full of grace and truth.

Gloria be to the Father and to
the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Full of grace and truth.

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) ~

Warum is das Licht gegeben? Opus 74, No. 1 + ✓

Throughout his creative life Johannes Brahms wrote motets and other sacred music for unaccompanied choir, inspired by his studies of Bach and other Baroque and Renaissance composers. Many of his smaller scale choral pieces, both the sacred and the secular ones, were written for the choirs which he directed in Detmold, Hamburg and Vienna.

Warum ist das Licht gegeben? was written in 1877, a period when Brahms had moved to Vienna and accepted post of director of concerts of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. He lived in modest lodgings in *Karlsgasse*, close to the *Musikverein*. The motet premiered in Vienna in December 1878.

Warum ist das Licht gegeben? is one of Brahms's finest *a cappella* works; in the motet, Brahms draws on material originally written for his **Missa Canonica** in 1856 which was itself inspired by late Renaissance music. The free use of archaic elements, the bold melodies and powerful harmonies have resulted in a perfectly complete new creation. It progresses from a despairing lament at the beginning to a quiet resignation at the close. The text was selected by the composer from the Old and New Testaments.

The first movement has a peculiar rondo-like structure, reminiscent of a piece by Johann Hermann Schein from 1623. The ever recurring question, *Warum?* Portrays the doubt which gnaws at the heart of the grief-stricken. The second movement is a canon for 4 voices and the third movement is the final chorale.

*Warum? Warum ist das Licht
gegeben dem Mühseligen, und das
Leben den betrübten Herzen?
Warum? Die des Todes warten und
kommt nicht, und grüben ihn wohl
aus dem Verborgenen; die sich fast
freuen und sind fröhlich, daß sie das
Grab bekommen. Warum? Und dem
Manne, deß Weg verborgen ist,
und Gott vor ihm den selben
bedeckt. Warum?*

*Lasset uns unser Herz samt den
Händen aufheben zu Gott im
Himmel.*

*Siehe, wir preisen selig, die erduldet
haben. Die Geduld Hiob habt ihr
gehört, und das Ende des Herrn
habt ihr gesehen; denn der Herr ist
barmherzig und ein Erbarmmer.*

Wherefore is light given to him
that is in misery, and life unto the
bitter in soul; which long for death
but it cometh not; and dig for it
more than for hidden treasures;
which rejoice exceedingly and are
glad, when they can find the
grave? Why is light given to a
man whose way is hid, and whom
God hath hedged in?
(Job 3:20-23)

Let us lift up our heart with our
hands unto God in the heavens
(Lamentations 3:41)

Behold, we count them happy
which endure. Ye have heard of
the patience of Job, and have
seen the end of the Lord; that the
Lord is very pitiful and of tender
mercy. (James 5:11)

*Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin,
in Gottes Willen, getrost ist mir
mein Herz und Sinn, sanft und stille.
Wie Gott mir verheißten hat, der
Tod ist mir Schlaf worden.*

*With peace and joy I go forth in
the will of God, my heart and mind
are comforted, gentle and still. As
God has promised me, death but
becomes sleep to me.
(Martin Luther)*

Charles Ives (1874–1954) ~ Sixty-Seventh Psalm + ✓

Ives had a curious career. He was professionally trained as an organist and composer, but opted to work in insurance for 30 years. Evidently, he was adept at developing pressure selling techniques for use by insurance salesmen. He composed in his spare time, taking a long time to develop works and leaving them unperformed once written. His work lives in its own distinctive world. Ives takes references from the music around him ranging from popular songs, arts songs, European and American musical traditions, but assembles them into his own particular sound world.

He started to publish his works only in the 1920's when he developed a small group of admirers. From this period he concentrated on revising existing works, preparing them for performance rather than writing new works.

Ives seems to have been particularly fascinated with polytonality and polyrhythm. He was evidently much affected when, as a boy, he heard two marching bands playing simultaneously coming from two different directions. The young Ives experimented with bitonal harmonisations, polytonal canons and fugues, and other pieces where he tested the rules of traditional music.

Despite the avant garde nature of many of the techniques that Ives used, his music is rooted in 19th century Romanticism and he made particular use of American hymn tunes. Ives, along with Aaron Copland, may be regarded as one of the first distinctively American composer and whose music attempts to depict the country in all its bewildering multiplicity.

This setting of Psalm 67 is a relatively early work, dating from 1898/9 though it did not receive its first performance until 1937. The Psalm dates from the period of Ives's training at Yale, it belongs to a series of psalm settings that Ives tried out with the singers at the church where he was

organist. These psalm settings remained distinct from Ives's concert music of the time, which was still 19th century in style.

Ives harmonises a simple melody which resembles Anglican chant, but does so using transformations of a 5-note chord which means that the piece constantly sounds bi-tonal.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and show us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us. That thy way may be known upon earth : thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise thee. O let the nations rejoice and be glad : for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God : let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase : and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing. God shall bless us : and all the ends of the world shall fear him.

Eric Whitacre ~ hope, faith, life, love... + ✓

This work comes from Whitacre's three **Songs of Faith**, all setting words by e e cummings. The work has the dedication 'For Hila on her 20th birthday, 1999' and it was commissioned by North Arizona University for their 1999 Centennial Celebration. Each word of the text is set as a musical meditation, quoting Whitacre's various choral works.

Hope, faith, life, love, dream, joy, truth, soul

∞ interval ∞

Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983) ~ Lamentations of Jeremiah + ✓

- i. O vos omnes qui transitis per viam
- ii. Ego vir videns paupertatem meam
- iii. Recordare Domine quid acciderit nobis

The Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera is widely regarded as one of the most important and original South American composer of the 20th century. His attractive output skilfully combines folk Argentine rhythms and colours with modern composing techniques. Exhilarating rhythmic energy, captivating lyricism and hallucinatory atmosphere are some of the characteristics of his musical style.

Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires, the son of Catalanian and Italian immigrants devoted to agriculture, trade, and crafts. Ginastera is pronounced with a Catalanian soft 'g' and means 'clump of broom'.

Ginastera began his music studies at a very early age. When he was twelve he entered the Williams Conservatory. His oeuvre covers all music genres. He composed three operas, five ballets, orchestra works, one harp concerto, two piano concertos, two cello concertos, one violin concerto, two choir works, cantatas, works for piano, voice, organ, flute, guitar, and chamber music. He also composed music for the theatre and for eleven films. His total repertoire contains 55 works, but being perfectionist and meticulous as he was, many of them were withdrawn from his catalogue.

In 1969, finding himself out of sympathy with the prevailing political climate in Argentina (indeed, he was twice ejected from his academic posts because of his protests against the repressive regime), Ginastera left the country, and settled in Geneva, where he stayed until his death.

Ginastera remains a composer who has only ever been sporadically appreciated in Europe. Isolated works have had some success, such as his orchestral **Variaciones concertantes** of 1953. His opera **Bomarzo** did, for instance, receive London performances. But there has been a strong tendency to regard him as a "petit maitre," a sort of Argentinian Bartok. But folklore was only ever the starting point in Ginastera's sonorous music. He sought in the rich rural folk tradition of his country not just thematic materials, but something essential in the folk idiom itself that became generative in his own compositional process. The smooth adoption of the twelve-tone method in the second movement of the **Piano Sonata No.1** (1952)—a technique he used with ingenuity in works like the **Violin Concerto** (1963) and **Don Rodrigo**

(1964)—was followed by experimentation with indeterminacy in compositions up to and including *Milena* (1971). By the time of his late works the folk influences are fully subsumed into a rich and multi-coloured modern idiom.

The **Lamentations of Jeremiah** is one of only three of Ginastera's works for chorus. Composed without commission in 1946, its texts were freely compiled by the composer from the book of Lamentations, and describe the defeat and exile of the Israelites by the Babylonians in the 6th century B.C. The piece also may reflect Ginastera's personal situation at the time, as he had been blacklisted that same year by the Perón government in Argentina, stripped of his teaching position, and forced to seek refuge in the U.S. He stayed until 1947. He then journeyed widely in America and Europe, returning to Argentina in 1955 when Perón was overthrown.

The first movement is a chorus of bitter wailing and then protest to God, with biting harmonies and excited rhythms. In the closing bars the choir screams the name of God three times in rhythmic unison, but no comforting answer is heard. The second movement is a stark contrast, with its long notes and low register, as if the prophet is too exhausted to speak above a whisper. The setting is particularly poignant at the end, where the choir, stripped of the sopranos, once again invokes the name of the Lord, but this time in the lowest possible range and at the softest dynamic. The closing movement turns from anger to acceptance of God's will and omnipotence "from generation to generation." In the final bars, to create a parallel with the other movements, Ginastera returns to an earlier text that ends with the word "Domino" (Lord), and sets that final word symbolically to a triumphant, major chord.

O vos omnes qui transitis per
viam attendite et videte si est
dolor sicut dolor meus quoniam
vindemiavit me ut locutus est
Dominus in die irae furoris sui.

O, all you who pass this way, behold
and see if there be any sorrow like
my sorrow.
For the Lord has afflicted me, as he
said in the day of his raging anger.

Vide Domine quoniam tribulor
conturbatus est venter meus
subversum est cor meum in
memetipsa quoniam amaritudine
plena sum foris interfecit gladius
et domi mors similis est.
Idcirco ego plorans et oculus
meus deducens aquas quia longe
factus est, a me consolator
convertens animam meam: facti
sunt filii mei perditii quoniam
invaluit inimicus. Persequeris in
furore et conteres eos sub coelis
Domine.

Ego vir videns paupertatem
meam in virga indignationis ejus.
Me minavit et adduxit in
tenebras et non in lucem.
Vetustam fecit pellem meam et
carnem meam contrivit ossa
mea. In tenebrosis collocavit me
quasi mortuos sempiternos. Sed
et cum clamavero et rogavero
exclusit orationem meam. Et
dixi: Periit finis meus et spes
mea a Domino.

Recordare Domine quid acciderit
nobis, intueri et respice
obprobrium nostrum. Convertite
nos Domine ad te, et
convertemur innova dies nostros,
sicut a principio. Tu autem
Domine in aeternum permanebis
solum tuum in generationem.

See, Lord, I am troubled; my bowels
are disrupted, my heart is turned
within me. For I am full of bitterness:
abroad the sword destroys, and at
home is death.

For that reason I lament, and my eye
pours down water; for the consoler is
taken from me, and my mind whirls
around. My sons are ruined, and the
enemy grows strong.

You persist in fury, and you grind
down those under the heavens.
(Lamentations 1:12, 20, 16; 3:66)

I am the man who sees my
impoverishment by the rod of His
indignation. He has drawn me in and
suspended me in darkness, and not in
light. He has made my skin and my
flesh old; He has broken my bones.
He has put me in dark places, as if
with the eternally dead. But whenever
I cry out and plead, He shuts out my
prayer. And I said: my strength and
hope have perished because of the
Lord. (Lamentations 3: 1-2,4,6,8,18)

Remember, Lord, what has come upon
us; look and consider our disgrace.
Turn us around to you, Lord, and we
will be turned; renew our days as in
the beginning. You, however, O Lord,
will remain forever, your throne
through the generations.
(Lamentations 5:1, 21, 19)

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848–1918) ~

My soul, there is a country

Along with Stanford, Parry made a major contribution to English musical life in the 19th century. He combined the roles of scholar, teacher and composer, with his forceful personality and social position, thus enabling him to exercise a revitalising influence on English musical life at a time when it was at a low.

Parry's early training reveals the low esteem in which music was considered as a career in Victorian England. He received musical tuition whilst he was at Eton and obtained a B.Mus.; but read law and modern history at Oxford, where his musical tuition was limited. He became an underwriter at Lloyds, in accordance with the wishes of his family. He married his childhood sweetheart Lady Maude Herbert, who was the sister of the Earl of Pembroke.

Parry took some lessons with Sterndale Bennett and attempted (and failed) to have lessons with Brahms; finally he took a course of study with Edward Dannreuther. Parry eventually gave up his position at Lloyds in 1877. George Grove encouraged him by engaging him to write for his new *Dictionary of Music*, for which Parry wrote some 100 articles. In 1883 he became Professor of Musical History at the newly founded Royal College of Music. As a teacher he had a profound influence on the following generations of composers, such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, Howells, Bliss and Finzi.

Written towards the end of his life and published 1918, **My soul, there is a country** forms the first of Parry's **Songs of Farewell**. A meditation on heaven, the words by Henry Vaughn speak of a longing for peace and tranquillity. The work is an apt demonstration of Parry's richly emotional style of writing.

*My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars:
There, above noise and danger
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles
And One, born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And, O my soul, awake!
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.*

*If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.
Henry Vaughn (1622-1695)*

Robert Hugill (born 1955) ~ Deus in adjutorium

Solo Tenor: Margaret Jackson-Roberts

I sing regularly in the Latin mass choir at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Cadogan Street, Chelsea so that plainchant and Renaissance polyphony are a regular part of my diet. This motet was written for London Concord Singers for their 2004 concert tour. The motet sets the text of the *Introit* (the plainchant used at the start of the Latin mass) for the 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time which that year fell on 1st August 2004, the date that London Concord Singers were singing mass at Barcelona Cathedral. The choir premiered the motet in London in July 2004.

The motet is part of **Tempus per Annum**, an on-going sequence of motets that I am writing which aim to set all of the *Introit* texts for all the Sundays and major festivals. When complete there will be over 70 motets in the set; currently 35 have been written. The first four motets in the cycle, the four advent motets, were included on the eight: fifteen vocal ensemble's disc of my music, **The Testament of Dr. Cranmer**, which was recently issued on the Divine Arts label. London Concord Singers have also premiered another motet from **Tempus per Annum**, the *Introit* for the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Respice Domine**.

*Deus in adjutorium meum intende
Domine ad adjuvandum me festina;
confundantur et revereantur inimici
mei, qui quaerunt animam meam.
Avertantur retrorsum et erubescant
qui cogitant mihi mala.*

*Incline unto my aid, O God:
O Lord, make haste to help me:
Let my enemies be confounded
and ashamed, who seek my soul.
Let them be turned backward and
blush for shame, who show evil
desires to me.
(Psalm 69.2-4)*

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/–1594) ~
Precatus est Moyses

Born in about 1525 in the Italian town from which he took his name, Palestrina became a choir boy at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. He worked mainly in Rome until his death in 1594. In 1551 he was appointed maestro di cappella of the Cappella Giulia where, in 1554, he issued his first works.

A prolific composer of masses, motets and other sacred works, as well as madrigals, he was basically conservative. In his sacred music he assimilated and refined his predecessors' polyphonic techniques to produce a 'seamless' texture, with all voices perfectly balanced. The nobility and restraint of his most expressive works established the almost legendary reverence that has long surrounded his name and helped set him up as the classic model of Renaissance polyphony.

Precatus est Moyses is a setting of the Offertory sentence for the 12th Sunday after Pentacost.

*Precatus est Moyses in conspectu
Domini Dei sui, et dixit:
Quare, Domine, irasceris in
populo tuo: parce irae animae
 tuae: memento Abraham,
 Isaac, et Jacob, quibus
 jurasti dare terram
 fluentem lac et mel.
 Et placatus est Dominus de
 malignitate, quam dixit facere
 populo suo.*

*Moses prayed in the sight of the Lord
 his God, and said:
 Why, O Lord, art Thou angry with
 Thy people? Let the anger of Thy soul
 be appeased: remember Abraham,
 Isaac and Jacob, to whom Thou
 swore that Thou wouldst give the
 land flowing with milk and honey.
 And the Lord was appeased from the
 evil which He had threatened to do to
 His people.
 (Exodus 32:11,13,14)*

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina ~ Exsultate Deo

A setting of the joyful opening verses of Psalm 80, this motet for five voices was published in Rome in 1584 in Palestrina's fifth book of motets, *Motettorum quinque vocibus Liber Quintus*. In the music of the motet, Palestrina evokes the meaning of the words, despite his reputation for reserve and balance.

*Exsultate Deo, adjutori nostro:
 jubilate Deo Jacob.*

*Sumite psalmum et date tympanum:
 psalterium jucundum cum cithara.*

*Buccinate in neomenia tuba: insigni
 die solemnitatis vestrae.*

*Rejoice in God our helper: sing
 aloud to the God of Jacob.*

*Take the psalm and bring hither the
 timbrel: the merry harp with the lute.*

*Blow the trumpet in the new moon,
 even on our solemn feast day.*

(Psalm 80:1-3)

Eric Whitacre ~ When David Heard
Solo Tenor: Katie Boot

When David Heard was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for the Arts for the Brigham Young Singers, and is dedicated to Dr. Ronald Staheli. It was premiered in March 1999. Though the work has sections in 11 parts, it is most notable for Whitacre's use of silence and for the simplicity of materials with which he creates such a powerful work.

"As I set out to write 'When David Heard' I decided that my first and most principal musical motive would be silence. The text (one single, devastating sentence) is from the Bible; II Samuel, 18:33... Setting this text was such a lonely experience, and even now just writing these words I am moved to tears. I wrote maybe 200 pages of sketches, trying to find the perfect balance between sound and silence, always simplifying, and by the time I finished a year later I was profoundly changed. Older, I think, and quieted a little. I still have a hard time listening to the recording." – Eric Whitacre

When David heard that Absalom was slain he went up into his chamber over the gate and wept, my son, my son, O Absalom my son, would God I had died for thee! (II Samuel 18:33)

Malcolm Cottle was chorister of St. Paul's Cathedral and sang at the Coronation in 1953. He is currently Musical Director of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Cadogan Street, Chelsea. For over 35 years he was Musical Director of the North London Progressive Synagogue and he is currently Musical Director of Southgate Progressive Synagogue. Malcolm has been Chorus Master of Hatfield Philharmonic Chorus and has worked with New Opera Company, Beaufort Opera and Orpheus Opera. He has been conductor of the London Concord Singers since their founding in 1966.

He has worked in theatre as Musical Director at Sheffield Playhouse, Nottingham Playhouse, Wyvern Theatre, Swindon and Swan Theatre, Worcester. He currently works at the London Studio Centre for Dance and Drama, for whom he has directed the music for several shows, ranging from 'Show Boat' to 'West Side Story' and 'Hair!' He is also Assistant Musical Director to the Alyth Choral Society.

London Concord Singers was established in 1966 by the conductor, Malcolm Cottle and he has remained the Musical Director ever since. The choir became a registered charity in 1996. The choir rehearses weekly in Central London and gives three main concerts per year with a repertoire ranging widely from Renaissance to Contemporary. Concert programmes tend to concentrate on unaccompanied music and are known for their eclecticism.

London Concord Singers have given a number of world, UK and London premieres of works by composers such as John Rutter, Andrzej Panufnik, Richard Rodney Bennett, John McCabe, Kenneth Leighton and Michael Ball, as well as pieces specially written for the choir. The choir has also given performances of major contemporary pieces such as Alfred Schnittke's Choral Concerto and Malcolm Williamson's Requiem for a Tribe Brother.

In recent years the choir have undertaken a short foreign concert tour each summer; places visited include Rouen, Caen, Ghent, Bruges, Strasbourg and Barcelona. On their 2003 French tour, the choir sang to an audience of 1300 in Rheims Cathedral in a concert which was part of the *Flâneries Musicales d'Été*. In July 2006, the choir travelled to Tallinn, Estonia, and in 2007 they performed in Basel, giving concerts in the Basler Münster as well as singing mass at Mariastein monastery. This year they will be performing in Verona.

London Concord Singers:

- Soprano 1: Alison Cross, Sonia Harle, Maggie Jennings, Andrea Liu, Diana Maynard, Sarah Moyse, Rowena Wells
- Soprano 2: Bozenna Borzyskowska, Merrie Cave, Charlotte De Mille, Victoria Hall, Pia Huber, Sylvia Kalisch
- Alto 1: Gretchen Cummings, Tricia Cottle, Ruth Sanderson
- Alto 2: Caroline Hill, Valerie MacLeod, Jill Tipping, Dorothy Wilkinson
- Tenor 1: Steve Finch, Margaret Jackson-Roberts
- Tenor 2: Katie Boot, Andrew Horsfield, Robert Hugill, Phillip Schöne
- Bass 1: John McLeod, John Penty
- Bass 2: David Firshman, Colin Symes

Programme notes by Robert Hugill.

Singers Wanted

We are always keen for new singers to join the choir. If you are interested, then please speak to one of the singers tonight or contact the Hon. Secretary, Robert Hugill.

Telephone: 020 7374 3600

Email: info@londonconcordingers.org.uk

Join our Mailing List

Just send an email to info@londonconcordingers.org.uk and we will add you to our mailing list, sending you regular information about our concerts. We are happy to send mailings as emails or real leaflets in envelopes, just let us know your name and address.

London Concord Singers
36 Torrens Road, London, SW2 5BT

Dates for your Diary

London Concord Singers Tour to Italy

Saturday, 2nd August, 9.00 pm
Bardolino, Lake Garda, Italy

Sunday, 3rd August, 9.00 pm
St. Thomas's Church
Verona, Italy



Saturday, 15th November 2008, 6.00 pm

St. Augustine's Church
Holborn

**London Concord Singers
St. Peter's Singers**
Conductor – Malcolm Cottle

featuring
Schnittke – Choir Concerto

The first of two joint concerts with St. Peter's Singers from Peterborough.



Thursday, 11th December 2008, 7.30 pm

Grosvenor Chapel
South Audley Street
Mayfair

London Concord Singers
Music for Advent and Christmas