



The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

Gala Concert
Saturday 18 May 2019, 7.30pm
St Pancras Parish Church

“Vast Ocean of Light”: Jonathan Dove at 60

The Epiphoni Consort
Tim Reader *direction*
Benjamin Frost *piano and organ*

pre-concert talk at 7pm by Jonathan Dove

Programme

Choral Music of Jonathan Dove

They Will Rise

In beauty may I walk

Two Sonnets

i. Full many a glorious morning

ii. Care-charmer Sleep

Now

The Darkling Thrush

INTERVAL

Vast Ocean of Light

My Love Is Mine

The Passing of the Year

Notes

Written by Jonathan Dove and edited by Jess Haig

They Will Rise was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of St Peter Westminster for the centenary of the Royal Air Force. The 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force, celebrated in Westminster Abbey, was naturally a formal occasion, but it had a personal connection for me: my mother's older brother was a rear-gunner in the Lancaster bombers, one of the dam-busters, and was lost in action in the Second World War – missing, presumed dead. My mother always kept a photo of him in uniform on display. "They will fly up on wings like eagles" comes from Isaiah 40: 31, one of the Bible texts particularly associated with the RAF.

I wrote *In beauty may I walk* as a leaving-present for Anthony Whitworth Jones, on his departure from Glyndebourne in August 1998. I thought of it as a travel-blessing for a friend and supporter who had been important to me for over a decade: he was running Glyndebourne Touring Opera

when I first went there as Assistant Chorus Master; later on he became General Director of Glyndebourne, and was instrumental in commissioning three community operas, a wind serenade (*Figures in the Garden*), and finally *Flight*, an opera for Glyndebourne Festival. *In beauty may I walk* is a very short thank-you for so much. Its first performance was at Anthony's leaving party, when it was sung by the Glyndebourne Chorus conducted by Andrew Davis.

Two Sonnets was commissioned by The Gabrieli Consort and Players. Paul McCreesh and the group gave some of the most thrilling and memorable concerts in my five-year period as Artistic Director of the Spitalfields Festival, so I was delighted to be asked to write them a new piece. Paul had been thinking about music related to specific times of day, and his original suggestion was a setting of the morning and evening offices. I wanted to find secular counterparts to these texts, hoping to match their beauty and metaphysical gravity. I came across the evening poem first: Samuel Daniel's "Care-charmer Sleep" is the fifty-fourth (and best-known) of the sixty sonnets to Delia which he published in 1592. Looking for a morning sonnet to match it, I naturally turned to Daniel's contemporary, William Shakespeare, whose thirty-third sonnet begins "Full many a glorious morning have I seen". The disposition of voices is based on Byrd's *Great Service*, an arrangement which offers the possibility of rich harmonies and overlapping voices.

Now was written for the wedding of Simon and Wiebke Halsey. The ceremony took place in the Maltings at Snape, with a large number of excellent singers present. Simon asked me to write something in which everyone could take part. As there would be no rehearsal, and not everyone can sight-read, I thought it would be a good idea to write a simple round, in which more voices take part on each repetition. The words are from an Apache song. The translator is unknown.

As an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, my director of studies was Richard Marlow. I didn't sing in the college choir, and regrettably never attended chapel services, so I was unaware until years later what a special choral director he was, and what an extraordinary sound he brought from the choir. When he retired as Director of Music in 2006, I was asked to write a piece for his farewell concert. A former chorister told me that Richard had often said he wanted Thomas Hardy's *The Darkling Thrush* to be read at his funeral. I thought he might enjoy hearing a setting of it while he was still alive, and indeed it was he who conducted the first performance.

The title piece for tonight's concert, *Vast Ocean of Light*, was commissioned by the Musicians Benevolent Fund in the name of Sir Thomas Armstrong. Light, and the idea of light, has always been a source of inspiration for me, and the heavenly bodies often provoke a desire to create some kind of numinous music. I was struck by the immensity of the vision in these lines by Phineas Fletcher, in which he sees light as a manifestation of the divine. He contemplates the mystery of the cosmos in all its immeasurable grandeur, and evokes in us a sense of awe and wonder. Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650) combined metaphysical poetry with church ministry, as did his brother Giles. Phineas, the more prolific poet, spent the second half of his life as rector of Hilgay, Norfolk, while Giles became vicar of Alderton in Suffolk. Their cousin, John Fletcher, is famous for his successful playwriting collaboration with Francis Beaumont.

I wrote *My Love is Mine* as a wedding present for Elizabeth Gorla and Rick Allen. Elizabeth and Rick were married in January 1998, in a Quaker meeting-house which, naturally, had no piano or organ. So I wrote an unaccompanied setting of this text from the Song of Songs, in Miles

Coverdale's translation. I asked Nuala Willis, my friend and collaborator for many years, to sing it at the wedding, because she also had a connection with Elizabeth: three years earlier, Elizabeth had directed Nuala as Mother Fen, a role I wrote for her in a community opera called *In Search of Angels*. The soloist for tonight's performance will be Jess Haig.

The Passing of the Year is a song cycle for double chorus and piano and was commissioned by The London Symphony Chorus in 2000. The seven poems that I have set in this piece make up three 'movements'. The first looks forward to summer, beginning with a line from William Blake ("O Earth, O Earth return!"). "The narrow bud" comes from Blake's "To Autumn", but is a description of summer; the rapid questions of "Answer July" suggest the quickening of the senses, the excitement of everything bursting into life, and summer's triumphant arrival. The second section follows the passing of summer. It begins in sultry heat, with a song from the opening scene of "David and Bethsabe" ("Hot sun, cool fire"): a girl bathing in a spring feels the power and danger of her beauty. The section ends with the sense of mortality that Autumn brings: "Adieu! farewell earth's bliss", from "Summer's Last Will and Testament", heralds the death of summer. The cycle ends in winter, on New Year's Eve, with a passage from Tennyson's "In Memoriam".

This song cycle is dedicated to the memory of my mother, who died too young.

Texts

They Will Rise

Isaiah 40: 31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength;
They will rise, they will soar, they will fly up on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary;
March on and not feel faint.

In Beauty May I Walk

Anonymous

In beauty may I walk, all day long may I walk,
Through returning seasons, may I walk.
Beautifully, joyful!
Beautifully will I possess again, Beautiful birds,
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk,
With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk,
With dew about my feet,
With beauty before me, with beauty behind me,
With beauty above me, with beauty around me.
It is finished beauty.

Full many a glorious morning

William Shakespeare

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.

Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath mask'd him
from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain
when heaven's sun staineth.

Care-charmer Sleep

Samuel Daniel

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:
Relieve my languish, and restore the light,
With dark forgetting of my cares, return;
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventur'd youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,

Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease dreams, th' imagery of our day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

Now

Traditional Apache song, translator unknown

Now you will feel no rain,
for each of you will be a shelter to the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there is no loneliness;
now you are two bodies,

but there is only one life before you.
Go now to your one life before you.
Go now to your dwelling place,
to enter into your days together.
And may your days be good
and long on the earth.

The Darkling Thrush

Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate when Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate the weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh had sought their household fires.
The land's sharp features seemed to be the Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy, the wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth seemed fervourless as I.
At once a voice arose among the bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small, in blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul upon the growing gloom.
So little cause for carolings of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through his happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew and I was unaware.

Vast Ocean of Light

Phineas Fletcher

Vast Ocean of Light, whose rays surround
The Universe, who know'st nor ebb, nor shore,
Who lend'st the Sun his sparkling drop, to store
With overflowing beams Heav'n air, ground,
Whose depths beneath the Ventr none can sound,
Whose heights 'bove Heav'n, and thoughts so lofty soar,
Whose breadth no feet, no lines, no chains, no eyes survey,
Whose length no thoughts can reach, no worlds can bound,
What cloud can mask thy face? Where can thy ray
Find an Eclipse? What night can hide Eternal Day?

My Love Is Mine

text from The Song of Songs, translated by Miles Coverdale

O stand up, my love, my dove, my beautiful, and come
Winter is past, and the rain is away and gone
The flowers are come up in the field, the twisting time is come,
the vines bear blossoms, and have a sweet scent
Up thou north wind, come thou south wind, blow upon my garden,
that the smell thereof may be carried on ev'ry side
Yea, that my beloved may come into my garden
and eat of the fruits and apples that grow therein.
My love is mine and I am his,
My love is mine which feedeth among the lilies
until the day break and the shadows be gone.
O stand up, my love, my dove, my beautiful and come
out of the caverns of the rocks, out of the holes of the wall:
O let me see thy countenance and hear thy voice
For sweet is thy voice and fair thy face.
My love is mine and I am his,
My love is mine which feedeth among the lilies
until the day break and the shadows be gone.

The Passing of the Year: Invocation

from "Introduction to the Songs of Experience", William Blake

O Earth, O Earth, return!

The Passing of the Year: The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun

from "Poetical Sketches to Autumn", William Blake

The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hang round the brows of Morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest Eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.
The spirits of the air live in the smells
Of fruit; and Joy, with pinions light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singing in the trees.

The Passing of the Year: Answer July

Emily Dickinson

Answer July -
Where is the Bee -
Where is the Blush -
Where is the Hay?

Nay - said the May -
Show me the Snow -
Show me the Bells -
Show me the Jay!

Ah, said July -
Where is the Seed -
Where is the Bud -
Where is the May -
Answer Thee - Me -

Quibbled the Jay -
Where be the Maize -
Where be the Haze -
Where be the Bur?
Here - said the Year -

The Passing of the Year: Hot sun, cool fire

George Peele

Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair;
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me:
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
Make not my glad cause, cause of [my] mourning.

Let not my beauty's fire
Inflame unstaied desire,
Nor pierce any bright eye
That wandereth lightly.

The Passing of the Year: Ah, Sun-flower!

William Blake

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun,
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done.

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

The Passing of the Year: Adieu! Farewell earth's bliss!

from "In Time of Plague", Thomas Nashe

Farewell Adieu, farewell earth's bliss,
This world uncertain is;
Fond are life's lustful joys;
Death proves them all but toys;
None from his darts can fly;
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade.
All things to end are made,
The plague full swift goes by:
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

The Passing of the Year: Ring out, wild bells

"In Memoriam", Alfred Lord Tennyson

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Biographies

The Epiphoni Consort

Soprano

Sapphire Armitage* Emily Benson Zoe Bonner* Harriet Flower**
Catherine Langston** Emma Morgan** Helen Price Milly Taylor* Pippa Wright

Alto

Rose Dixon** Milette Gillow** Jess Haig
Jenny McPherson* Anna Moses** Charly Oakley** Abaigh Wheatley*

Tenor

Richard Holdsworth** Tim Lintern* Christopher Palmer*
Christopher Pelmore* Mark Williams* Greg Windle**

Bass

Jon Bannister** Alexander Brett Adrian Collister* Graham Kirk*
Tim Reader* Matthew Shoults** Matthew Swann*

* *"Two Sonnets" consort*

** *"Now" consort*

Benefactors of The Epiphoni Consort

Adrian Collister, Morgan Simes, Rufus Stilgoe

The Epiphoni Consort was founded in 2014 by Tim Reader to fill a gap between the amateur and professional tiers of London's choral circuit. Its membership is made up of singers who perform to a professional standard but have other full-time careers. The group has won awards in Tenebrae's prestigious Locus Iste Competition and in the London International A Cappella Choir Competition, and has appeared on television on the BBC 4 documentary *The Joy of Rachmaninov* and the BBC 2 documentary *Terry Pratchett: Back In Black*, singing Tallis's forty-part motet *Spem in alium*.

The choir's debut CD, *Sudden Light*, was released on Delphian Records in 2017 to critical acclaim from Gramophone, Choir and Organ Magazine, BBC Radio 3 and BBC Music Magazine. Recent performances have included Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and *Singet dem Herrn* with City of London Sinfonia, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Southbank Sinfonia, and a concert performance of Ravel's ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* with Kensington Symphony Orchestra.

Friends of The Epiphoni Consort

Jon Bannister, Margaret Bremner, Chris Bruerton, William Clark, Charlie Colenutt, Graham Davies, Rose Dixon, Hugo Farne, George & Sheena Haig, Jessica Haig, Alice & Jeremy Hamilton, Russell Keable & George Friend, Janet Low, Eve Olsen, Alec & Pat Pelmore, Richard Pelmore & Portia Light, Polly Robb, Lara Scheidegger, Dinah Shoults, Caroline Taylor, Milly Taylor & Chris Pelmore, Emily West

Tim Reader

Tim Reader is The Epiphoni Consort's Artistic Director. Tim studied singing, accompanying and conducting at the University of Exeter. He juggles dual careers: one in digital consultancy for charities, heritage and arts organisations, and the other as a singer and choral director in London and the surrounding areas.

Tim has conducted The Epiphoni Consort in performances at Westminster Abbey, St Martin-in-the-Fields, St Paul's Cathedral, St John's Smith Square, and for the BBC. He has deputised for the professional choirs of St John's Wood Church and St Paul's Knightsbridge, along with numerous choral societies in the region. He is a member of the Sunday morning choir, comprising eight professional singers, at St John's Wood Church.

Benjamin Frost

Benjamin Frost studied music at Exeter University, graduating with Distinction in performance. He was Organ Scholar at Exeter Cathedral and became an associate of the Royal College of Organists. After University he studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where his tutors included Gordon Back and Graham Johnson, and he trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio. He has worked with the BBC, Lesley Garrett, Nelly Miricioiu, Marianne Cornetti, Sally Matthews, English National Opera and The Opera Group on several productions including *Die Fledermaus*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*, *La Cenerentola*, and *Eugene Onegin*.

In 2015 he accompanied Rebecca Front on Radio 4 for *With Great Pleasure*. In 2017 he was appointed Chorus Accompanist of the London Symphony Chorus. He worked with The BBC Singers on *Moth Requiem* by Birtwhistle, and worked on the premiere of *Belongings* with Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Other recent keyboard performances include the UK premiere of Simon Johnson's *Gloria* with the Waverley Singers, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* at Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of a quartet of pianists, and *Carmina Burana* with The London Symphony Chorus at the Barbican.

Future Performances by The Epiphoni Consort

Saturday 10 – Sunday 11 August 2019

St Paul's Cathedral: Weekend Residency

Epiphoni will deliver the weekend's services, with 6pm Evensong on Saturday, 11.30am Eucharist and 3.15pm Evensong on Sunday

Sunday 20 October 2019, 4.30pm

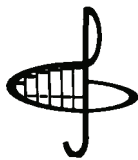
Choral Music by Owain Park

*An informal recital showcasing the music of the choir's upcoming CD recording
St George's Church, Bloomsbury Way, Holborn WC1A 2SA*

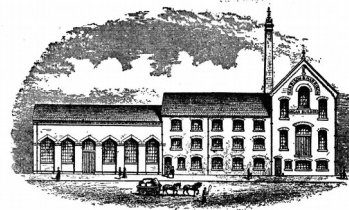
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The London Festival of Contemporary Church Music was founded in 2002 with the aim of showcasing contemporary liturgical music in both service and concert. Now in its eighteenth year, the LFCCM has grown to include more than 70 events, dozens of composers, hundreds of performers and thousands of audience members, both live and online.

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