

Saturday 1 March 2025
Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden

Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*



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Cambridge Philharmonic presents

Elgar

The Dream of Gerontius

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus

University of East Anglia Choir

Tom Primrose *conductor*

Paula Muldoon *leader*

Clare Presland *mezzo soprano*

Adam Temple-Smith *tenor*

Armand Rabot *baritone*

Generously supported by the Bill Parker Fund

The Dream of Gerontius

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Part 1

Prelude

Jesu, Maria – I am near to death

Rouse thee, my fainting soul

Sanctus fortis, sanctus Deus

Proficiscere, anima Christiana

Interval

Part 2

I went to sleep

It is a member of that family

But hark! upon my sense comes a fierce hubbub

I see not those false spirits

But hark! a grand mysterious harmony

Thy judgment now is near

I go before my judge

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul

(See page 9 for full text)

Programme notes

By Jeremy Harmer

The trumpet tongue of genius

Novissima hora est (It is the final hour) sings Gerontius as his death approaches at one of the most poignant moments in all classical music, so different from the Edwardian pomp with which Elgar is sometimes (justifiably) associated. A similar mood brings the work to an end some fifty minutes later, in closing passages of gentle consolation.

What is so amazing about *Gerontius*, however, is that this mood is only one aspect of a magnificent work which is not, the composer insisted, a sacred cantata, nor totally religious, but a dramatic saga. This is apparent, according to biographer Michael Kennedy, in recordings of Elgar conducting it in an emotional, almost operatic style. "This is the best of me", the composer wrote at the end of the score, quoting Ruskin, "this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." He confessed to his friend Nicholas Kilburn: "I have written my own heart's blood into the score." Augustus Jaeger, Elgar's editor and confidante (immortalised as Nimrod in the *Enigma Variations*), hailed it as

“the trumpet tongue of genius”, telling Elgar: “since *Parsifal* [Wagner’s last ‘Holy Grail’ opera] nothing of this mystic, religious music has appeared...that displays the same power and beauty as yours.”

Why was Jaeger so enthusiastic, and why is *The Dream of Gerontius* such a favourite with performers and audiences alike? Perhaps because it not only has some of the best choral writing ever put on manuscript paper, an extraordinarily beautiful orchestral score, wonderful tunes, huge climaxes and sublime depth – but also because, as tonight’s conductor Tom Primrose has suggested, it tells a great story.

A man of contradictions

Self-taught, Elgar was resentful of his lower middle-class status and society’s anti-Catholic prejudice. While sometimes thin-skinned and a kind of introverted extrovert, he was also a lover of ‘japes’ and an early enthusiast for the bicycle (he called his Phoebus), as well as an amateur chemist and someone passionately engaged with music, with a talent for friendship. He seems a mass of contradictions; the Edwardian gentleman with a yearning for something undefinable, a bombastic triumphalist who was at the same time capable of great gentleness, and a pillar of the establishment who never quite felt he belonged.

We seem to hear these contradictions in the variety of his compositions. This is the man, after all, who gave us great patriotic anthems such as *Land of Hope and Glory* but also the yearning self-doubt so present in much of his work, and the resigned despair of his later compositions. He could do whimsy and delicacy too, for example in his *String Serenade*, sentimental gorgeousness, as in *Salut D’amour* (a present for his new wife), as well as having the ability to evoke the great space of his beloved Malvern Hills in his *Introduction and Allegro*. He incorporated a shepherd’s tune he heard near Alassio in Italy and inserted it into his *In the South* overture, and he demonstrated that talent for friendship so artfully in his first great success, *The Enigma Variations*.

Early life

The fourth of seven children, Elgar’s father William was a good violinist and organist at the local catholic church in Worcester, a piano tuner who also set up a music shop in that west country city. William’s wife Anne had converted to Catholicism. In those days, as we will see, there was a thread of anti-Catholic prejudice running through the British Establishment. Elgar felt this keenly increasing his sense of inferiority in the class system of the time, and

his awareness that, unlike contemporary composers Charles Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry, he was self-taught rather than university educated. What is amazing about Elgar, however, is that while he had violin and piano lessons, he also taught himself to play the organ by reading about it, and learned a lot about composition by reading essays by such people as Parry in Grove's Musical Dictionary. He soon started giving private music lessons and playing in local bands, as a violinist (at which he excelled), a bassoon player, a violist and a doublebass player. He had a group of friends for whom he wrote what he called 'shed music' because they rehearsed in a shed.

Elgar got a job as conductor at the Worcester and County Lunatic Asylum in Powick and always claimed that he taught himself most about orchestration from this experience. He then got work as a professional violinist in William Stockley's Orchestra in Birmingham where, for seven years, he claimed to have learned everything about music! It was William Stockley's Orchestra which first programmed his work and he set to work composing with renewed commitment.

Marriage

One of his violin students was a young woman, some eight years older than him, called Alice Roberts, the daughter of a Major-General. Much to everyone's surprise they fell in love and decided to get married. This appalled her family because he was so lower-middle class and not at all the right kind of match for people of their kind. They disinherited her. But their marriage worked and Alice devoted herself to his career, becoming his manager and his main promoter because, as she wrote, "the care of a genius is enough of a life work of any woman," almost certainly not a view that would find much favour today! He had close relationships with other women too, for example Dora Penny (whose stammer he portrayed in his *Dorabella* variation), and Lady Alice Stuart Wortley, his 'Windflower' and almost certainly the person whose soul he enigmatically 'enshrined' in his *Violin Concerto*. In later life he became temporarily infatuated with a young violinist who was working on his violin sonata.

Growing success – the 'Shakespeare of music'

Elgar continued composing, finding moderate fame in and around Worcester and the two other cities of the Three Choirs Festival, Gloucester and Hereford. Cantatas such as *Caractacus* and *The Light of Life* emerged and were modest successes. He spent many fruitless hours traipsing around London trying to find performance opportunities and a publisher.

But eventually a work of his hit the spot – *The Enigma Variations*, portraits of many of his friends in musical form. It completely changed his life and elevated him to the top of the musical world. It was followed by tonight’s work, arguably his greatest, two more big oratorios (*The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*) and two symphonies. The first of these was a triumph but his *Symphony No 2* was less enthusiastically received.

His compositions became increasingly imperial and bombastic, but always with good tunes and amazing orchestration, of which he was a master craftsman. He was knighted by the king and made Master of the King’s Music, reaching the peak of his eminence and popularity. He was one of the first composers to embrace the new recording industry and there are many recordings of him conducting still extant.

Times change, however, and Elgar’s reputation waned. Now a somewhat rudderless widower and appalled by the ravages of the First World War, his last great compositions (*The String Quartet*, *Piano Quintet* and the *Cello Concerto*) display a kind of mournful pathos that only he could bring into being.

“There is music in the air”, Elgar wrote, “music all around us and you simply take as much as you require,” and “the best music is essentially there to provide something to face the world with.”

After his death, Alice Stuart Wortley wrote “Elegies pour in from every side, tributes to his life, his genius, life and character, but he has written his biography as no other man can do. He is our Shakespeare of music...with his love of his country, in music, and its meaning in his own heart and soul.”

The Dream of Gerontius

When Elgar was approached by the committee of The Birmingham Triennial Music Festival to write a big choral work for 1900 he first contemplated writing a piece about St Augustine, but the committee rejected this as ‘too controversial’ – code, perhaps, for ‘too Catholic’. Anti-Catholic prejudice was rampant (if subdued) as the Victorian age was coming to an end. To anyone not versed with the ecumenical infighting of British Christianity it is worth remembering that the hostility between Anglicanism and Catholicism was a constant feature of public life, stretching back to Henry VIII’s power grab centuries before. How surprising, then, that Elgar chose to set Cardinal Newman’s long and very Catholic poem to fulfil the Festival commission. And yet the strangest thing about Newman’s *Dream of Gerontius* is that it was a massively popular work with people from all branches of Christianity.

This was partly because General Gordon, then an imperial hero, had a copy of Newman's poem in his possession, annotated with his own observations, when he was killed at the siege of Khartoum in 1885. Almost immediately, editions of *The Dream of Gerontius*, complete with Gordon's notes, became widely popular. Elgar himself had just such an edition and received yet another as a wedding present.

The Birmingham committee accepted *Gerontius* as a subject even though previous composers, most notably Dvořák, had failed to make it work. Elgar got going, pulling in themes and sketches which he had, in his usual scattergun approach, intended for other purposes. Gradually the bits and pieces coalesced and the shape of this new, large work began to emerge. He sent off manuscript pages to Augustus Jaeger who reacted with a mixture of awe (as we have seen) and insightful but sometime pointed criticism, which the composer was alternatively thrilled and irritated by. Their long correspondence, however, offers a fascinating insight into the composer/editor relationship.

A challenging first performance

As the first performance approached things were getting pretty urgent, with the two men sending changes and adjustments backwards and forwards. Both of them knew that the music was delivered later than it should have been for a brand new work. There was another problem – the choral writing in *The Dream of Gerontius* is challenging and complex for the singers and the Birmingham Chorus was not in very good shape at the time. Their regular choirmaster, who was in sympathy with Elgar's compositional style, died before rehearsals started and the man who took over was somewhat elderly and was not a fan; nor were the singers, for whom it was all too difficult and incomprehensible. Accounts of the only joint rehearsal include the incident where the composer, unable to contain his frustration with the way things were going, rose to his feet and bellowed: "There is nothing. The whole colour is gone. It is like a ballad in a drawing room." Unsurprisingly this was not popular and the subsequent performance was, in music lore, a disaster.

Or was it? Maybe, like similar myths such as the riotous first performance of *The Rite of Spring* some thirteen years later, the truth is somewhat more nuanced than the lazy shorthand which has been passed down in an almost tabloid way. It is certainly true that it was a ragged performance by today's standards, *Gerontius* was underwhelming, the chorus sometimes a semitone flat – not the triumph Elgar had dreamed of. This was a massive disappointment to him. "I always said God was against art," he wrote to

Jaeger, “... I have allowed my heart to open once – it is now shut against every religious feeling and every soft, gentle impulse forever.” His heart was most assuredly not shut, however, and immediately after Birmingham he went to work on his cheerful London overture *Cockaigne*. Nor were critics as condemnatory as the ‘disaster’ narrative suggests. On the contrary those who had attended wrote about “The most powerful and profound utterance of one of the most individual performers” (Yorkshire Post), “One of the most original works that has emanated from the pen of English musicians” (The Scotsman) and “Extraordinary wealth of colour and rare sensuous charm of his orchestration (The Times). There were Germans in the audience, too, and as a result there were soon successful performances in Germany and it spread over continental Europe, the USA and of course the UK, remaining a staple of the repertoire ever since.

A great story

Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius* tells a great story in a fabulously constructed narrative arc. Notable is his innovatory use of the semi-chorus as a kind of distant echo which at various moments is beautifully ethereal. (Is that where Vaughan Williams first got his inspiration for the ‘echo’ strings in his own breakthrough work *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*?). The three soloists have beautiful melodies to sing, the orchestral writing is lush and layered, and poignant moments, such as the final consolatory fading away, are interspersed with great brass blasts, furiously devilish writing and the ‘great blaze’ (Elgar’s description) of the angelicals *Praise to the holiest* for which he wrote his own tune. To understand how he approached his subject matter it is worth quoting his explanation: “I imagined Gerontius to be a man like us, not a priest or a saint but a sinner, a repentant one of course, but still no end of a worldly man in his life and not brought to book and therefore I’ve not filled his part with church tunes and rubbish but a good full-blooded romantic remembered worldliness so to speak. It is, I imagine, more difficult to tear oneself away from a well-to-do-world than from a cloister.”

Part 1

Part 1 opens with a solemn orchestral prelude, almost symphonic in its construction, previewing many of the themes in the work. We are then in the room where Gerontius lies, mortally ill. ‘Jesu Maria, I am near to death, and Thou art calling me,’ he sings as we meet him first. He is surrounded by friends who pray for him with a gentle *Kyrie*. Gerontius himself prays for mercy and graciousness and boldly affirms his faith (*Sanctus Fortis*). Exhausted, he sinks back dreading ‘that sense of ruin...some bodily form of ill

floats on the wind.' The chorus burst out with 'Rescue him' and proclaim the many who have indeed been rescued. But in the end it is time. 'Novissima hora est' sings Gerontius and the priest and the chorus break into 'Go forth upon thy journey Christian soul', to bid him farewell on his journey.

Part 2

Part 2 opens with superbly delicate orchestral writing, a kind of rarified atmosphere which Gerontius, when he wakes, describes as an 'inexpressive lightness'. He meets the Angel and they share the only duet in the piece, before Gerontius' 'serenest joy' is interrupted by the grotesque nastiness of a chorus of devils in a passage of complex and virtuosic writing. They fade into the distance and the Angel comes back to tell our protagonist that for one moment he will meet God, though the experience will pierce him. As they approach, they hear the first strains of the Angelicals singing 'Praise to the holiest in the heights and in the depths be praise', which Gerontius describes as 'like the rushing of the wind – the summer wind – among the lofty pines'; they then build to the climax of the work in Elgar's 'great blaze'. Now they approach the judgement. A new angel (of the Agony) intercedes for Gerontius' soul, the music builds in tension and excitement until finally, in a great symbolic crash, he is face to face with God. 'Take me away,' he says in shock and is sent away to purgatory. 'Alleluia' sings the angel, and the chorus back on Earth sing 'Lord thou has been our refuge.' Finally the Angel comes back and 'softly and gently' tells Gerontius that she will visit him again on the morrow, the semi-chorus quietly echo 'Praise to the Holiest', a gentle orchestral melody brings healing balm and the chorus intone 'Amen.' It is over.

What else to listen to: *Symphony No 1, The Kingdom, The Violin Concerto, Piano Quintet*

Text (by Cardinal John Henry Newman)

PART 1

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, Christe eleison, 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.

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,

Save him from a final fall;

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 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.
Mary, 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 multiform 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

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.

PART 2

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. For
evermore.

My Father gave
In charge to me 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 wondrous beings, who,
Ere the world 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 judgement 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 passed.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgement 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 senses
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear
Could I be frightened.

Angel

We are now arrived
Close on the judgement-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,
Ha! Ha!
When life is o'er.
Virtue and vice,
A knave's pretence.
'Tis all the same;
Ha! ha!
Dread of hell-fire,
Of the venomous flame,
A coward's plea.
Give him his price,
Saint though he be,
Ha! ha!
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.
Ha! ha!

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 Master's 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 Judgement ...

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 gen'rous 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 judgement now is near, for we
are come
Into the veiled presence of our God.

Soul

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel

It is the voice of friends around thy
bed,
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 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.

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, ye sons of Adam.
Come back, 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 for ever 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.

Souls

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc.
Amen.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest, etc. Amen.

William Edward Parker (Bill) 1929-2023

This concert is funded by a generous legacy from choir member Bill Parker, a long-term supporter of Cambridge Philharmonic.



Aged nine, Bill Parker started playing the organ at his local Methodist Chapel, though he couldn't reach the pedals. He received encouragement from his piano teacher mother and his grandfather, and had a good singing voice. Born into a railway family at Deeping St James, Lincolnshire, Bill was to co-author several books of railway memories in later life. As his father was promoted, the family moved to

Doncaster, Peterborough and Stairfoot, where the stationmaster's house was on the platform. Bill remembered his sister Ann having her tonsils taken out on the dining room table.

Bill left school in 1945 to join the railway in the District Operating Superintendent's Office of LNER. In 1947, he began National Service and rose to Staff Sergeant. He was posted to the Royal Army Service Corps and, in the the Suez Canal Zone, worked on road transport management. He sang in the garrison church choir and had organ lessons from a prisoner of war, Willi, an organist at Cologne Cathedral. Each lesson cost twenty cigarettes and Bill took over when Willi was repatriated. For the consecration of a new church, the choir travelled across the desert in a lorry, dressed in cassocks and surplices, and armed with loaded Sten guns, due to troubles from desert-based Egyptians.

Returning in 1949, Bill became station master at Dodworth and Silkstone where he coped with a pile-up of two freight trains and the death of a signalman in a signal box, which Bill immediately took over. He regularly went to Sheffield City Hall to hear the Hallé Orchestra, chatting after concerts at Midland station with Sir John Barbirolli and some orchestra members. In 1951, he discovered the Thaliens Operatic Society, and a young lady called Barbara Seller. They played major roles



in many productions including *Oklahoma!* in which Bill played his namesake, William Parker!

He married Barbara in 1956 and became the organist at Digswell church. Barbara and Bill's daughter Caroline was born in 1959 with severe disabilities, and a great sense of humour – the family was known as the BBC.

Bill's work in British Rail took them to live in many places, and finally to Royston, Hertfordshire. Barbara and Bill remained deeply involved in music and sang in the Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus. They loved the Three Choirs Festival, Elgar being a favourite composer. Bill continued to play the organ for church services until he had two strokes in the late 1980s. He continued to conduct until retirement, when he and Barbara were in the Eastern Region Retired Officers Travel In Comfort Association (ERROTICA) which caused amusement at the hotels they booked into.

Bill was called on after the Great Train Robbery, when he asked "Can I have my engine back please?", met The Beatles when *A Hard Day's Night* was filmed, and was summoned by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh when the Royal Train was held up. At later meetings, Barbara would chat to the Queen, who would always ask about Caroline. Bill had a strong bond with his sister Ann and her husband, David. The two couples had many holidays together, and a shared understanding, as both their daughters were similarly disabled. Barbara and Bill campaigned tirelessly for the betterment of facilities for disabled people, and Bill and David greatly supported each other after Caroline and their wives died.

An intelligent man with many accomplishments, who kept friends for decades, Bill was 'a total gentleman', highly respected by all who knew him.

Taken from the eulogy given by his nephew, Christopher Seller, at Bill's Service of Thanksgiving on 17 April 2023.

Clare Presland (mezzo soprano)



Current and future engagements for Clare Presland include PIA in the world premiere of Turnage's *Festen* Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Mrs Sedley *Peter Grimes* Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Page *Salome*, Aksinya/*Female Convict Lady Macbeth of Mtsenk*, *Peter Grimes* Staatsoper Hamburg, Ligeti's *Requiem* London Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Proms, Countess Susanna *Il segreto di Susanna*, revival Opera Holland Park, Dani Howard's one woman show *Yellow Wallpaper* (world premiere) Copenhagen Festival and Opera Nova Festival in

Prague. She was a Chilcott Award winner.

Recent performances include Queen of Hearts in Gerald Barry's *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, a co-production with Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Irish National Opera (released on video), the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's *Combat of Joseph della Reina and the Devil* Wigmore Hall, Aksinya *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* Opera de Lyon, Hermia *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, English National Opera, Hyogo Performing Arts Center in Japan and Hippolyta, Opéra de Lille.

Clare trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Adam Temple-Smith (tenor)



British tenor Adam Temple-Smith began his studies at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. He graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2016 and now studies with Ben Johnson. He was a Young Artist at the National Opera Studio in London, before going on to join the Opernstudio NRW, a collaboration between four internationally-renowned theatres: Oper Dortmund, Aalto-Musiktheater Essen, Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen and Oper Wuppertal.

Adam is now based in Germany and, in recent seasons, has sung Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River*, Sandrino in Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro in Venezia*, Robert

in Hindemith's *Hin und zurück* at the Musiktheater im Revier, Gelsenkirchen, Iago in Rossini's *Otello in Essen*, and First Armed Man and Second Priest *Die Zauberflöte* in Wuppertal. Whilst at the Opernstudio NRW, Adam also sang the roles of Parpignol *La bohème* in Wuppertal, and appeared as tenor soloist in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* in Gelsenkirchen, as well as singing the tenor role in the world premiere of *Kaosmos*, an interactive opera composed by Marc Sinan, with a libretto by Tobias Rausch.

Elsewhere, his roles include Bertrando in Rossini's *L'inganno felice* for West Green House Opera, Misael in Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* at the Southrepps International Festival, First Armed Man and Second Priest *Die Zauberflöte* for Garsington Opera, and Sergeant Lombardi in Stephen Sondheim's *Passion* at the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte Festival in Montepulciano, under the direction of Keith Warner and Roland Böer. Whilst a student, Adam sang Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* for British Youth Opera, and Camille *The Merry Widow*, Lysander *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ferrando *Così fan tutte* for the RNCM. He was also a semi-finalist in the 2019 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, held at Wigmore Hall in London.

His recent and future German appearances have included further performances in *Curlew River*, *Otello*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *La bohème*, Remendado *Carmen*, Herr M in Hindemith's *Neues Vom Tage* and Evangelist in a staging of Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium*.

Armand Rabot (baritone)



Armand Rabot is a British-Sri Lankan baritone from the Northwest of England studying with Ben Johnson. Armand recently won the prestigious Grange Festival Prize and the First Prize, Audience Prize and Language Prize at Hurn Court Opera Singer of the Year Competition. He also won the Junior Kathleen Ferrier Bursary award. This season Armand returns to the Salzburger Festspiele to sing Roucher in *Andrea Chénier* in the Grosses Festspielhaus with Marco Armiliato.

Armand's recent concert appearances include singing at Ann Murray's Lifetime achievement award concert at the National Concert Hall in Dublin, recitals at Liverpool Philharmonic and the Charles Wood Festival, *Elijah* with Birkenhead Choral Society, the Mozart *Requiem* at Liverpool Cathedral and Marple Choral Society, Handel's *Messiah* with the Salford Choral Society, Birkenhead Choral Society and Shrewsbury Cathedral, Brahms *Requiem* and Puccini *Messa Di Gloria* with Formby Choral Society, *The Creation* with Keele Bach Choir, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Streatham Choral Society, Faure *Requiem* at Blackburn Cathedral, Mozart *C minor Mass* with the Amadeus Choir, Saint Saens' *Oratorio de Noel* at Shrewsbury Cathedral and Bach *Cantatas 62,158,32*, *The John Passion* and *The Matthew Passion* with the Liverpool Bach Collective.

Upcoming concerts include *The Dream of Gerontius* at Truro Cathedral, Finzi *By Footpath and Stile* and Barber's *Dover Beach* at The Liverpool Philharmonic with the Liverpool String Quartet, Verdi's *Requiem* with Streatham Choral Society, Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* at Chester Cathedral, Christus in *Johannespassion* with the Liverpool Bach Collective and Mendelssohn's *Paulus* at Wakefield Cathedral.

Previous roles include Der Direktor *Der Spieler* at the Salzburger Festspiele, Littore and Famigliari 3 *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Keeper of the Madhouse *The Rakes Progress* at The Grange Festival, Father *Hänsel und Gretel* (Hampstead Garden Opera), Narumov and cover Surin in The Grange Festival's performance of *Queen of Spades*.

Tom Primrose (conductor)



Tom Primrose is a critically acclaimed British conductor, accompanist and coach, whose performances have won praise for their discipline, grace, and imagination. Recent conducting engagements have included Antony McDonald's critically acclaimed *The Rake's Progress* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Grange Festival and *Die Fledermaus* in Lucerne. Other engagements this season include Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*, again with the BSO. Tom's freelance work takes him all over the world, working at theatres such as Palais Garnier and the Bastille with

Opéra National de Paris, The Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, Norwegian Opera in Oslo, Polish National Opera, Teater an der Wien, Korea National Opera in Seoul, Opéra de Montecarlo, and the Mariinsky Hall in St Petersburg. In the UK he has freelanced in the music departments of the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, the Grange Festival, Shadwell Opera, Opera Holland Park, and a number of others. He has assisted or chorusmastered for a host of esteemed conductors including Alexander Soddy, Susanna Mälkki, David Parry, Richard Egarr, Finnigan Downie Dear, Yan-Pascal Tortelier, Martin Brabbin and Stephen Barlow. In addition to the core operatic repertoire, Tom is sought after in the preparation of twentieth century opera. Recent engagements have included Janáček *The Makropoulos Case*, Britten *Peter Grimes*, Berg *Wozzeck*, Bartok *Bluebeard's Castle*, Knussen *Where the Wild Things Are*.

He has strong connections with East Anglia where he is Artistic Co-Director of the Southrepps Music Festival, works regularly at the University of East Anglia and with the Cambridge Philharmonic, and acted for a time as Assistant Organist and Director of the Girls' Choir at Norwich Cathedral. Tom is an award-winning piano accompanist, and has performed in many of the UK's principal concert halls and festivals, on BBC television and radio, and has collaborated with many of the UK's and Europe's leading singers and instrumentalists.

Tom studied at the University of Oxford with Robert Saxton, and at the Royal Academy of Music with Michael Dussek and Malcolm Martineau.

Paula Muldoon (leader)



Paula Muldoon is a violinist, composer, and software engineer based in Cambridge, UK. The leader of the Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra since 2017 and a Staff Software Engineer at Zopa Bank, she thrives on the intersection of music and programming.

Upcoming projects for the 2024-25 season include premieres of her two violin quartets *Ciaccona* and *Waiting*, her string trio *Fenland Miniatures*, and her string quartet, *Adventures of Clive the Martian*, as well as chamber music and orchestral concerts in Cambridge and Ely.

Paula is a former member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and subsequently spent several years living in London and performing worldwide with ensembles including the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with conductors such as Andris Nelsons, Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop and Esa-Pekka Salonen. Highlights of her musical career include guest leading the Xi'an Symphony Orchestra in China, recordings at Abbey Road Studios, and performances at Carnegie Hall.

You can hear Paula play her own piece, *Get Outside*, on Spotify and iTunes and you can purchase her sheet music at her Etsy shop, MusicByPaula. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama (MMus 2012) and the University of Michigan (B.M. 2010), and the New England Conservatory Preparatory School (Violin Certificate, 2005), studying with Detlef Hahn, Aaron Berofsky and Lynn Chang.

While at the University of Michigan, she won the Undergraduate Award for Classics Translation and was a semi-finalist in the prestigious Hopwood writing competition for her novel *The White Birds*. She is also one of WeAreTechWomen's 100 Women in Tech and was named in the Computer Weekly 'Women in Software Power List' in 2019 and 2020. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, crocheting, yoga, cryptic crosswords, gardening, Star Trek, and playing with her cockapoo.

www.paulamuldoon.com

Cambridge Philharmonic Orchestra

Violin 1

Paula Muldoon (leader)
Kate Clow (co leader)
Robert McFall
Christen Lee
Margaret Scourse
Nichola Roe
Tabitha Smith
Anne Hewitt
Sebastian Bechmann
Naomi Hilton
David Favara

Violin 2

Hilary Crooks
Emma Lawrence
Anne McAleer
Stuart Holder
John Byrne
Abigail Tan
Sarah Ridley
Ariane Stoop
Roz Chalmers
Manon Couvignou

Viola

Ruth Donnelly
Mari O'Neill
David Yadin
Edna Murphy
Peter Conlon
Emma McCaughan
Anne-Cecile Dingwall
Jeremy Harmer
Xavier Salazar
Robyn Sorenson

Cello

Angela Bennett
Anna Edwards
Daniel Coldridge
Jess Llewellyn
Isabel Groves
Clare Gilmour
Catherine Wilson
Helen Davies
Helen Hills

Double Bass

Sarah Sharrock
Tony Scholl
Susan Sparrow
Alan Blackwell

Flute

Adrienne Kelly Jackson
Cynthia Lalli

Piccolo

Cynthia Lalli

Oboe

Tom Gillam
Charlotte Ewins

Cor Anglais

Rachael Dunlop

Clarinet

Graham Dolby
David Hayton

Bass Clarinet

Viv Halton

Bassoon

Neil Greenham
Jenny Warburton

Contra Bassoon

Phil Evans

Horn

Caroline Prozesky
Tony Hawkins
Gareth Edwards
Chris Wykes

Trumpets

Alex McLean
Christian Overhead
Lauren Hodge

Trombone

Denise Hayles
Georgia Orwell

Bass Trombone

Gary Davison

Tuba

Robin Norman

Timpani

Dave Ellis

Percussion

Derek Scurll
Lizzie Brightwell
Philip Howie

Harp

Elizabeth Green

Organ

Alex Triggs

Cambridge Philharmonic Chorus

Soprano 1

Jane Cook
Rose Drury
Susan Earnshaw
Agnes Heydtmann
Susie Jones
Eri Latorre- Chimoto
Nicola Lythgoe
Carole MacBrayne
Ros Mitchell
Jan Moore
Penny Mullock
Chessie Nour
Susan Randall
Sheila Rushton
Anne Sales
Pat Sartori
Laura Simmons
Hannah Stephenson
Linda Stollwerck Bolton

Soprano 2

Cathy Ashbee
Rachael Churchill
Gertrud Hill
Suzie McCave
Wren Stella
Sheila Stephens
Diana Sutton
Keren Turton
Catharine Warren

Alto 1

Julie Bergner
Helen Black

Alexandra Bolton
Caroline Courtney
Catherine Dixon
Denise Emery
Elaine Fulton
Christine Hall
Elaine Kinsella
Sarah Marshall-Owen
Christine Miskelly
Masako Narita
Alison Russell
Sarah Upjohn
Alison Vinnicombe
Helen Wheatley
Anne Willitts
Susan Wilson

Alto 2

Jane Bower
Margaret Cook
Helen Cross
Elisabeth Crowe
Stephanie Gray
Hilary Jackson
Lynne McClure
Alistar Pearman
Sue Purseglove
Chris Strachan
Joanna Womack
Kate Wootton

Tenor 1

Doug Addy
Pete Alexander
David Griffiths

Jean Harding
Chris Schaefer
Peter Scholten

Tenor 2

Aidan Baker
Jeremy Baumberg
Jonathan Burden
Jack Colley
Ben Hetherington
Adam Higgins
Andy Pierce
Chris Price
Ben Womack

Bass 1

Chris Coffin
Brian Dawson
Andrew Dobson
Matt Freeman
Andrew Hodgson
Lewis Jones
Roger McClure
Mike Ruffle
Martin Scutt

Bass 2

Richard Birkett
Andrew Black
Neil Caplan
Max Field
Tom Wale

University of East Anglia Choir

Soprano 1

Catherine Asbury
Lesley Bingle
Diane Burton
Jennifer Chamberlin
Meg Clibburn

Sally Crockford
Joy Croft
Kerrie Fox
Penelope Geoghegan
Karen Gibbon
Charlotte Jones

Julie Keane
Sarah Kitt
Isobel Leckie
Ho Yu Liu
Maggie Martin
Tessa Pascoe

Alice Penrose
Isobel Primrose
Catherine Rowett
Anne Rutherford
Denise Strains
Utako Takano
Julie Thornton
Cherer Twohig
Kay Warbrick
Rachel Warren
Rosamund Weatherall
Chloe Whitehead
Isabel Whyte

Soprano 2

Helen Adcock
Lei Anifowoshe
Gwyneth Boswell
Helen Colyer
Gina Couzens
Jo Dixon
Joanna Edvi
Anjali Fordington
Caroline Gibbs
Helen Hart
Areeya Hudson
Angelica Khorsand
Sarah Kinsley
Carol McStravick
Claudie Mendes
Elaine Mitchell
Janet Morrison
Cara Moss
Helga Petzel
Anita Pitkethly
Emily Rivers-Day
Elaine Rymarz
Catherine Smith
Rosie Smith
Laura Soar
Vivian Tam
Diana Timms
Charlotte Van Gorp
Ellie Warren
Maisie Werrin

Alto 1

Anne Abbott
Zinta Bangiere
Dorothy Bryant
Judith Chancellor
Sheila Cohen
Felicity Devonshire
Claire Dixon
Canny Dunthorne
Arabella Foulger
Liz Highton
Deborah Hyde
Liz Jones
Liz Kilshaw
Susan Maddock
Susan Morgan
Elizabeth Newman
Beth Reidy
Katy Rice
Diana Rowlandson
Ane Sesma
Rosie Sethia
Elaine Shepherd
Julia Smyth
Mary Anne Sutherland
Ellen Sweet-Escott
Susan Sydney-Smith
Vanessa Trevelyan
Charlotte Turner
Gillian Wood

Alto 2

Rose Baulcombe
Fiona Breckenridge
Gale Carruthers
Hero Chalmers
Frances Clarke
Julia Donat
Célestine Faure
Isabelle Fernandes
Laura Gregory
Oakley Hirst
Clare Lovell
Verity Lyall
Cate Pyke
Maureen Sheppard

Eric Stowe
Jill Thurston
Catherine Waddams
Jenny Walker
Penny Walker
Catherine Whalen
Shiori Yoshimura

Tenor 1

Stuart Anderson
Robert Arnold
Ian Couzens
Russelle Newton
Sasha Savage
Stephen Sendall
Andrew Shiels
Matthew Young

Tenor 2

Harrison Grover
Kevin Hiscock
Simon Snell
Rick Stuart-Sheppard
Mike Thornton
Alexander Walker
Andrew Wilson

Bass 1

Stephen Bould
Ian Farr
Stephen McNair
Andrew Parsons
Roger Timms
Euan Sutherland
Peter Woods

Bass 2

Michael Burton
Ray Hart
Richard Hayhoe
John Morse
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