



Hampstead Chamber Choir

Musical Director Dominic Brennan



The Sun, 1909 by Edvard Munch

John Stainer

*Like as a ship
I saw the Lord*

Michael Tippett
Five Negro spirituals

Lennox Berkeley
Four poems of St Teresa of Avila

George Dyson
Hierusalem

Maud Millar – soprano
Celia Walser – alto
Hampstead Sinfonietta

Rosslyn Hill Chapel
Saturday 21 March 2015

Programme

John Stainer (1840–1901)

***Like as a ship
I saw the Lord***

Soprano: Maud Millar – Alto: Celia Walser
Tenor: Nick Walser – Bass: Tim Shelton

Michael Tippett (1905–1998)

Five Negro spirituals

- 1. Steal away*
- 2. Nobody knows*
- 3. Go down, Moses*
- 4. By and by*
- 5. Deep river*

Soprano: Maud Millar – Alto: Celia Walser
Tenor: Nick Walser – Bass: Ben Posen, Richard Harris

INTERVAL

Lennox Berkeley (1903–1989)

Four poems of St Teresa of Avila

- 1. If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong*
- 2. Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!*
- 3. Let mine eyes see Thee, sweet Jesus of Nazareth*
- 4. Today a shepherd and our kin*

Alto: Celia Walser

George Dyson (1883–1964)

Hierusalem

Soprano: Maud Millar

Stainer: *Like as a ship / I saw the Lord*

We start the evening with John Stainer's little-known and unpublished madrigal *Like as a ship*, written in 1867 for the Bristol Madrigal Society prize and edited recently by noted Stainer authority Jeremy Dibble. Based on Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti: Sonnet xxxiv*, the text compares the loss of a lover to a ship lost at sea in a storm. Stainer uses the vast expanse of eight voice parts and harmonic devices to bring the text to life. "When as a storm hath dimmed her trusty guide ..." uses shorter notes and cascading, descending lines to imitate waves in a storm. Stainer treats Spenser's alliteration of "darkness and dismay" with accents, evoking the image of a ship directionless or a man yearning for the return of his lover. A new section begins in A major, displaying gentle hope that "My Helice, the lodestar of my life will shine again to clear my cloudy grief". Stainer's masterstroke is then to completely reduce the harmonic rhythm and speed of the final section as the choir quietly sings "Till then I wander careful, comfortless, in secret sorrow, and sad pensiveness".

Our next piece is arguably Stainer's finest anthem, kept alive by Cathedral choirs around the world. *I saw the Lord* is a setting of text from Isaiah generally sung on Trinity Sunday and is the most vivid description of heaven itself to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. Stainer writes for double choir and organ and employs a solo quartet in the final section. The setting of "And the house was filled with smoke ..." reveals the composer's technical skill as imitative entries are imbued with ever more chromatic harmonization.

Tippett: *Five Negro spirituals*

In *A Child of Our Time*, as in a number of his works, Michael Tippett integrated his own style with earlier idioms. In this case he used Handel's *Messiah* as a model, as well as turning to the Bach Passions, substituting spirituals for the original Lutheran Chorales. The work was a reaction to the anti-Semitic *Kristallnacht* destruction of 1938; the incident on which Tippett based his work was the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a seventeen-year-old Polish Jew protesting against the persecution of Polish Jews. The oratorio was an attempt to confront the issue of man's inhumanity to man.

In this version, *Five Negro spirituals*, the five settings are for unaccompanied chorus, with the voices being treated in often colourful fashion. Tippett makes use of four solo or leader voices in a number of different ways. In “Steal away”, for instance, the soprano leader has a descant line, whilst in the third spiritual, “Go down, Moses”, the bass takes the role of narrator. Only in the last, “Deep river”, are all four solo voices used at once, in a response pattern against the main chorus. The settings are continually contrasted, with the rhythmic vitality of “Nobody knows” being followed by the more imposing characteristics of “Go down, Moses”.

Interval

Berkeley: *Four poems of St Teresa of Avila*

We begin our second half with another remarkable work by a 20th century English composer. *Four poems of Saint Teresa of Avila*, for contralto and string orchestra, was composed in 1947 and there are many who consider it Lennox Berkeley’s finest work. It captures the composer’s style perfectly, from his unerring sense of form in shorter works to his melodic invention. Despite the string accompaniment, this is a deeply personal and introverted work, with music in an earnest and sober vein, expressed with a quiet passion and intensity. The first and third of St Teresa’s lyrics are love-songs to God, the first of them a dialogue which (in Arthur Symons’s translations) reads like a divine poem by an English 17th century writer, the other softer and simpler and gentler. The second and fourth poems are shepherd songs.

In “If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong” the questioning of the first section is put strongly while the orchestra, in a motif twisting and turning around B (the key-note), frames a mood of anguished yearning. The anxious dialogue which follows is at a more hurried tempo, while in the final section the original motif returns in the bass.

“Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!” is a musette whose refrain is sung merrily over a drone and an arpeggio ripple, a harmony which the voice generally fills in, displaying a dance-like and lilting style. The third

song is like a gentle berceuse and is followed in the final song by perhaps some of Berkeley's most remarkable writing. The shepherd simplicity of the poem (recalling an English mystery play) is retained in the vocal line (which lies low, and encourages the singer to sound like a boy). Yet the way in which this forthright declamation is set against the accompaniment recalls in some respects a chorale working. And as the song progresses, the accompaniment becomes livelier, more intricate, and takes on dance rhythms, displaying the composer's understated mastery of the mezzo voice in tandem with all the colour a string orchestra has to offer.

Dyson: *Hierusalem*

George Dyson's *Hierusalem* was written in the composer's old age but isn't an old man's music. Remarkably, Dyson's music grew younger as the years advanced and *Hierusalem* has a childlike aura of unsophisticated mysticism. *The Heavenly Jerusalem* was originally a poem of 16th century origin derived both from the *Meditations* of St Augustine and St Peter Damian's *De Gloria Paradisi*. It perceives the Heavenly City much as would a child in the Wordsworthian sense – that is, with eyes unclouded and uncorroded by consciousness, by the curses of civilisation.

As the piece opens, Hierusalem first appears as a mirage (string quartet and tutti strings). The mists disperse as the soprano solo, pentatonically inclined (the pentatonic or five-note scale has ageless connotations of innocence), contrasts the mystic splendour of Hierusalem with the longing to be there. In a later passage the dream-ecstasy is shattered only in the second half of one of the soprano's solos:

*Thy tiles are made of beaten gold –
O God that I were there!*

The solo soprano, in fact, is symbolic of the human longing (one solo voice) for release into heaven (joining the rest of the ensemble). Her burden is always the same ("Thy joys when shall I see?") but her yearning to be in the celestial city grows stronger and more pained throughout the piece.

Dyson displays his mastery of forces in realising the dramatic implications of the text without in any way damaging or deadening its spiritual resonance. His word painting is truly evocative and brings the text to life. For example, a chorus of pilgrims approaches from afar to repeated sighing phrases in the string quartet whilst the precious stones glint and glitter (harp arpeggios and spiky string semiquavers). The flood of life flows through the streets in ever-increasing jubilation as the choir speeds up, crescendos and comes together until finally the gates are flung wide open in a sunburst of sound – harp glissandi, flourishes on the organ and repeated ecstatic cries of “Hierusalem!”

Now the picture begins to glow in rainbow hues (“Thy saints are crowned with glory great”) and as the company of heaven is numbered in terms of child-like candour the music assumes an almost Pre-Raphaelite quality of chastely sensuous sweetness. It is a telling stroke (and typical of Dyson the dramatist) when the soprano’s entreating cries of “Hierusalem” are ringingly echoed through the streets by the heavenly hosts (with full organ, here heard as such for the first and only time). Gradually the mists of the opening close in again through earthy chords with a distinct middle-eastern or otherworldly feel, and the soprano has a last word as she soars up to her top B, then down, to end on a note of quiet rapture.

Conductor

Dominic Brennan graduated with an MA in Music from Durham University in 2010. He studied percussion and timpani under Daniel Ellis and Markus Gruett and studies conducting with Peter Stark.

At Durham Dominic directed a number of prominent ensembles including Hild Bede Chapel Choir, and Durham University Chamber Orchestra. He has been a guest conductor for Sunderland Symphony Orchestra, Durham Sinfonietta, Durham Hill Orchestra, and the Reg Vardy, Lanchester and Starvanger brass bands.

Dominic founded the Cantus Ensemble in 2011 and has taken the choir on tour to sing at Westminster Abbey, Rochester and Worcester Cathedrals, as well as the major Basilicas of Rome and the Vatican. The choir recorded its first album at Abbey Road studios in February

2015. He has won praise for his dynamic programming and the choir is quickly being recognised as one of London's finest emerging ensembles.

Soloists

Maud Millar (soprano) is a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. During her time at Cambridge, work included Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, and Schumann's *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*. On the London concert platform, Maud's work includes Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Berlioz's orchestral song cycle *Les Nuits D'été*, and Stravinsky's *Mass*, with the London Symphony Orchestra under Valery Gergiev.

Maud is becoming recognised as an exponent of contemporary music; in 2013, she was engaged by the LSO to sing Thomas Adès' *Five Eliot Landscapes* under the composer himself, and made her BBC Radio 3 debut singing Oliver Knussen's *Trumpets*. She created the role of "Bottle" in Will Todd's opera *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for Opera Holland Park, and in 2014 premiered Katarzyna Brockochka's one-woman opera *The Young Wife*.

She recently made her debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in a programme of Schumann and Mendelssohn Lieder under Peter Schreier, and performed Britten's *Cabaret Songs* at the Barbican Centre. Past operatic roles include Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera Holland Park), Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (Hampstead Garden Opera) and Musetta in *La Bohème* at Cadogan Hall.

Celia Walser (alto) studied piano, clarinet and singing, gaining a BA in music. She has studied singing with Nancy Evans, Pamela Bowden, Neil Howlett and Susannah Self. Celia has performed as soloist with Hampstead Chamber Choir and other groups. In addition she has given a number of solo and duet recitals, among them concerts for the Cheltenham Festival and Chester Zoo, and recitals for several music societies.

Opera roles include Dido and Carmen, and with orchestra she has performed Vivaldi's *Nisi Dominus* and Malcolm Arnold's *Five William Blake Songs*. Recent concerts include Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* and Handel's *Messiah*.

Hampstead Sinfonietta

Violin 1

David O'Leary (Leader)
Julia Rumley
Stephanie McCabe

Violin 2

Andrew Harvey
Julia Rogers
Caitriona Parker

Viola

Charlotte Bonneton
Holly Rouse

Cello

Brian O'Kane
Dave Edmonds

Bass

Mark O'Leary

Harp Olivia Jageurs

Organ Adam Dickson

Hampstead Chamber Choir

Soprano

Helena Beddoe
Ann-Gaëlle Cox
Solrun Fluge Faull
Ros Franey
Lesley Gould
Christina Harrison
Jill Hoffbrand
Susie Lendrum
Kathleen Nuttall
Nicola Pittam
Alison Rooper
Luise Schorn
Susan Seymour
Tricia Thompson
Liz Tucker
Celia Walser

Alto

Muriel Hall
Ruth Hansford
Gwen Hughes
Anne Kollar
Borbála Kovács
Helen Lentge
Liz Mills
Christine Muller
Shirley Shelton

Tenor

Steve Muller
Andrew Tucker
Nick Walser
John Whitehead

Bass

Patrick Casement
Giles de la Mare
Richard Harris
Ben Posen
Tim Shelton
Brian Simpson
Nigel Thorp
Hallam Vernon

Rehearsal accompanist: **Lydia Melleck**

Texts

Like as a ship

Like as a ship, that through the ocean wide
By conduct of some star
doth make her way;
When as a storm hath dim'd her trusty guide
Out of her course doth wander far astray!
So I, whose star,
that wont with her bright ray
Me to direct, with clouds is over-cast,
Do wander now, in darkness and dismay,
Through hidden perils
round about me placed;
Yet hope I well that, when this storm is past,
My Helice, the lodestar of my life,
Will shine again, and look on me at last,
With lovely light to clear my cloudy grief,
Till then I wander careful, comfortless,
In secret sorrow, and sad pensiveness.

I saw the Lord

I saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne,
high and lifted up,
and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphim:
each one had six wings;
with twain he covered his face,
and with twain he covered his feet,
and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another,
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved
at the voice of him that cried,
and the house was filled with smoke.

O Trinity! O Unity!
Be present as we worship Thee,

And with the songs that angels sing
Unite the hymns of praise we bring.
The whole earth is full of his glory.
Amen.

Five spirituals

Steal away

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus;
Steal away, steal away home,
I han't got long to stay here.

My Lord, He calls me,
He calls me by the thunder,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,
I han't got long to stay here.

Green trees a-bending,
Poor sinner stands a-trembling,
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul,
I han't got long to stay here.

Steal away, steal away,
Steal away to Jesus;
Steal away, steal away home,
I han't got long to stay here.

Nobody knows

Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows the trouble I see.
Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows like Jesus.

O brothers, pray for me,
And help me to drive old Satan away.
O mothers, pray for me
And help me to drive old Satan away.

Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows the trouble I see.
Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,
Nobody knows like Jesus.

Go down Moses

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt land;
Tell old Pharaoh, to let my people go.

When Israel was in Egypt land,
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

"Thus spake the Lord", bold Moses said,
Let my people go.
"If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead",
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt land;
Tell old Pharaoh, to let my people go.

By and by

O by and by, by and by,
I'm going to lay down my heavy load.

I know my robe's going to fit me well,
I tried it on at the gates of Hell.
O Hell is deep and a dark despair,
O stop, poor sinner, and don't go there!

O by and by, by and by,
I'm going to lay down my heavy load.

Deep river

Deep river, my home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into camp ground.

O chillun! O don't you want to go,
To that gospel feast,
That promised land,
That land where all is peace?

Walk into heaven, and take my seat,
And cast my crown at Jesus' feet, Lord,
I want to cross over into camp ground.

Four poems of St Teresa

If, Lord, Thy love for me is strong

As this which binds me until Thee,
What holds Thee from me Lord so long,
What holds Thee Lord so long from me?
O soul, what then desirest thou?
Lord I would see Thee, who thus chose Thee.
What fears can yet assail Thee now?
All that I fear is but to lose Thee.
Love's whole possession I entreat,
Lord make mine soul Thine own abode,
And I will build a nest so sweet
It may not be too poor for God.
A soul in God hidden from sin,
What more desires for Thee remain,
Save but to love again,
And all on flame with love within,
Love on, and turn to love again.

Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!

Angels they are and the day is dawning.
What is this ding-dong,
Or loud singing is it?
Come Bras, now the day is here.
The shepherdess we'll visit.
Shepherd, shepherd hark that calling!
Angels they are and the day is dawning.
O, is this the Alcade's daughter,
Or some lady come from far?
She is the daughter of God the Father,
And she shines like a star.
Shepherd, shepherd, hark that calling!
Angels they are and the day is dawning.

Let mine eyes see Thee, sweet Jesus of Nazareth

Let mine eyes see Thee, and then see death.
Let them see that can, Roses and Jessamine,
Seeing Thy face most fair,
all blossom are therein.
Flower of seraphin, sweet Jesus of Nazareth,

Let mine eyes see Thee, and then see death.
Nothing I require, where my Jesus is;
Anguish all desire, saving only this;
All my help is His, He only succoureth.
Let mine eyes see Thee, and then see death.

Today a shepherd and our kin

O Gil, to ransom us is sent,
And He is God Omnipotent.
For us hath He cast down the pride
And prison walls of Satanas;
And He is kin of Bras,
Of Manga, also of Llorent.
O, is not God Omnipotent?

If He is God, how then is He
Come hither, and here crucified?
With His sin also died,
Enduring death, tho innocent.
Gil, how is God Omnipotent?

Why, I have seen Him born, pardie,
And of a most sweet Shepherdess.
If He is God, how can He be
With such poor folk as these content?
See'st not He is Omnipotent?

Give over idle par'eyng,
And let us serve Him, you and I,
And since He came on earth to die,
Let us die with Him, too, Llorent,
For He is God Omnipotent.

Hierusalem

Hierusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbour of the saints
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy houses are of ivory
Thy windows crystal clear;
Thy tiles are made of beaten gold,
O God, that I with there!

The vineyards and thy orchards are
Most beautiful and fair,
Full furnished with trees and fruits
Most wonderful and rare;

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound
The flood of life doth flow,
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

Hierusalem. Hierusalem.

Hierusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

Thy saints are crowned with glory great;
They see God face to face;
They triumph still, they still rejoice:
Most happy is their case.

There David stands with harp in hand
As master of the choir;
Ten thousand times that man were blest
That might this music hear.

Our Lady sings Magnificat
With tune surpassing sweet;
And all the Virgins bear their parts,
Sitting about her feet.

Te Deum doth Saint Ambrose sing,
Saint Austin doth the like;
Old Simeon and Zachary
Have not their songs to seek.

There Magdalene hath left her moan,
And cheerfully doth sing
With blessed saints, whose harmony
In every street doth ring.

Hierusalem. Hierusalem.
God grant we yet may share
Thy holy light, thy tuneful song,
Thy bliss beyond compare.

About the choir

For 30 years Hampstead Chamber Choir has offered varied, appealing and challenging programmes, performed and presented to a high standard of musicianship, in a variety of Hampstead venues. Our repertoire ranges from plainchant and a capella polyphony, via classical and romantic masterworks, to contemporary music. Past highlights include Byrd's *Mass for four voices*, Handel's *Messiah*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Frank Martin's *Mass for double choir* and, most recently, Mendelssohn's *Lauda Sion* and *Sechs Sprüche*.

If you sing yourself and might be interested in joining Hampstead chamber choir, you can find all details on our website: www.hampsteadchamberchoir.org. Or come and talk to us tonight! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for news and future events.

Join us for a light-hearted evening of madrigals and part songs at our summer concert on June 20th at St. John's Hampstead. Book your tickets at a discount at www.hampsteadchamberchoir.org

Come and compete in our quiz night! St. Mary's Community Hall, Abbey Road/Priory Road, NW6 4SN, at 7:30 pm on Saturday 25 April 2015. Doors open 7pm. Tickets £13 including a light supper. Advance booking essential: call Tricia at 07957 665192.



Chairperson: Anne Kollar

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