



Tring Choral Society



Conductor: Colin Stevens



ELGAR

The Dream of Gerontius

(Reduced orchestration by David Meacock)

Soloists

Mezzo Soprano: Gaynor Keeble

Tenor: Rob Johnston

Bass: Jimmy Holliday

With The Chamber Choir of St Clement Danes School

Chiltern Orchestral Society

Leader: Janet Hicks

Saturday 6 April 2019 at 7.30pm



The Soloists



GAYNOR KEEBLE (MEZZO-SOPRANO) has sung with all the country's major opera houses and she is a regular visitor to Royal Opera House Covent Garden where roles have included Third Lady (Magic Flute), Annina (La Traviata) and Voice of the Mother (Tales of Hoffmann).

Juliet), Mother and Witch (Hansel and Gretel), Hippolyta (Midsummer Night's Dream) and, for ENO, Katisha (Mikado). For Longborough Festival, she has sung Kostelnicka (Jenufa), Mistress Quickly (Falstaff) and Marcellina (Marriage of Figaro)



On the concert platform, Gaynor's appearances have included performances in a wide variety of works with the UK's leading orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Florence Pike in *Albert Herring*); the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (Mrs Sedley in *Peter Grimes*); London Mozart Players (Mozart's *Requiem*); the Northern Sinfonia (Mendelssohn's *Elijah*), The Philharmonia (Gala Concert); and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*) with conductors such as Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Colin Davis, Nicola Luisotti, Alexander Joel, Dan Ettinger, Julia Jones, Sakari Oramo, and Stuart Bedford.

For Opera North she has sung Marcellina (Marriage of Figaro), Gertrude (Romeo and





The Soloists



ROBERT JOHNSTON (TENOR) studied singing at The Royal Academy of Music, where he graduated with a III honours degree in Music. He was awarded an ARAM by Sir David Lumsden in 1995 for services to the music profession.

Robert has been much in demand as a solo singer and consort singer since leaving The Royal Academy of Music. He was a Vicar-Choral in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral from 1989 – 1997 and he appeared as a member of The Tallis Scholars from 1990 – 1996, performing in over 300 concerts worldwide and recording extensively on TV, Radio and CD. He has also appeared regularly with The Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, The Gabrieli Consort, The English Concert and, from 1997 – 2015, was a full-time member of the BBC Singers.

Robert's solo concerts take him to most of the UK's cathedrals and major concert halls and have included the *Messiah* at The Royal Albert Hall under Sir David Willcocks, Tippett's *Child Of Our Time* at The Symphony Hall Birmingham under Owen Arwell Hughes, *Carmina Burana* and Schnittke's *Fourth Symphony* at The Barbican, *Opera Olio* at The Royal Festival Hall, Mozart's *Requiem* and Haydn's *Stabat Mater* at The Queen Elizabeth Hall, the part of Maintop in *Billy Budd* (concert performances) at The Bridgewater Hall, and various concerts including Britten's *St Nicolas* at St John's Smith Square. He made his debut at the Three Choirs Festival as the Evangelist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* under Joshua Rifkin in 1996 and in 1998 made his debut at the Proms in Kurt Weil's *Propheten*. His repertoire is comprehensive, comfortably

performing works from centuries ago to the present day.

Concert engagements also take him worldwide and have included Elgar's *The Kingdom* in the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Argentina; *The Creation* in Colombo, Sri Lanka; *The Dream of Gerontius* in Cape



Town, South Africa; Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in Tel Aviv, Israel; *Judas Maccabaeus* for the MDR in Leipzig and Halle, Germany; *St Nicolas* in Groningen, Assen, Leeuwarden and Kampen, Holland; Handel's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day* in Padua – Italy; Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *St Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Messiah* and *Jephtha* in Odense, Esbjerg, Aarhus and Aalborg, Denmark; *Elijah* in Kristiansund, Norway and Boulogne, France; *St Matthew Passion* arias in Palma, Majorca; Santiago, Bilbao and the Canary Islands, Spain; Salzburg, Austria; Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya, Japan.



The Soloists



His opera engagements include Second Priest *The Magic Flute* with Gardiner in Parma, Ferrara, Lisbon, Amsterdam and London, Vasek *The Bartered Bride* and the Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* at Aldeburgh, Benedict *Beatrice et Benedict* in Canterbury, Mr Splinters in Aaron Copeland's *The Tender Land* with the BBCSO, and the lead tenor role of Theseus in the first ever recording of Donald Tovey's opera *The Bride of Dionysus* in Belfast with the Ulster Orchestra.

Robert has broadcast regularly on Classic FM and BBC Radio 3, including Vaughan Williams' *Hodie* with the BBCSO. His solo CD recordings include works by Purcell, Schubert and Grainger (*Brigg Fair*) with John Eliot Gardiner; Maintop in Britten's *Billy Budd* with Kent Negano and the Hallé; The Second Priest in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with Gardiner; Marquis Pierre in Kurt Weill's *The Firebrand of Florence* with Sir Andrew Davis and the BBCSO; *Noel* with David Hill and The Bach Choir and Robert

was also a tenor soloist on the award winning CD *The Crown Of Thorns* with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. For television Robert's solo recordings include filming works by Carl Orff for *The South Bank Show*, works by Purcell for the film *England, My England* with Gardiner and he also played the part of the Venetian Opera Singer in the feature film *Dorian Gray*. On a lighter note Robert's voice is often heard on TV and film soundtracks and he has also made recordings or performed live with Elton John, Sting, Dusty Springfield, Mike Oldfield, The Opera Babes, Susan Boyle, Johnny Mathis, Il Divo and Kylie Minogue!

Robert also conducts his own choir, RSVP VOICES, working across the multi-media industries, is a vocal coach and singing teacher and recently helped to set up and rehearse the newly formed Dubai Opera Festival Chorus especially for the 2nd edition of the BBC Dubai Proms in March 2019.

We are very grateful to the following members of The Chamber Choir of St Clement Danes School, under the direction of their Head of Faculty, Anna Stevens, for joining us in this performance and singing the parts of "The Angelicals".

Emilia Bland
Katie Booth
George Casey
Nerissa Cormack-Bryant
Amelia Dancy
Eleanor Frater
Ella Gwynne-Evans

Josie Illingworth-Law
Isla Leach
Holly Leigh
Katie O'Gorman
Elizabeth Ryall
Celine Watson
Jasmine Wood



The Soloists



JIMMY HOLLIDAY (BASS) was born in Birmingham and started singing at the age of seven as a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral. His musical education continued at Radley College, and with The National Youth Choir of Great Britain. After five years singing as a Lay Clerk at Winchester Cathedral, he studied singing at the RCM's International Opera School where he graduated with distinction as the Martin Harris scholar, supported by various awards and scholarships. In his last year at the RCM, Jimmy won further awards including the inaugural Richard Van Allan Award, and the Tenth Hampshire Singer of the Year competition. He followed the RCM with a year's study at The National Opera Studio, London supported by British American Tobacco and The Friends of Covent Garden. He was an Independent Opera Vocal Scholar 2011-2013.

Jimmy is in extremely high demand as a consort singer and regularly works with many of the UK's professional choirs, consorts and vocal ensembles, including Tenebrae, EXAUDI, Ensemble Plus Ultra, Collegium Vocale Ghent, The Sixteen, The BBC Singers, The Gabrieli Consort, The Tallis Scholars and I Fagiolini. He is also a regular on the session circuit, singing on various movies and computer games with London Voices and RSVP Voices. As an Oratorio performer across the UK and Europe, recent highlights include J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with The Dunedin Consort, Verdi's *Requiem* with David Hill and the BSO, Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and *Cantata BWV 158 Der Friede sei mit dir* at The Wigmore Hall with Florilegium, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* at Winchester Cathedral, as well



as regular performances of Handel's *Messiah*, J.S. Bach's *John* and *Matthew Passions* and Haydn's *Creation*.

Jimmy has performed numerous operatic roles including *Bottom* in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Sarastro* in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and *Kecal* in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* at RCM. Since leaving NOS, opera performances include Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Heinrich der Vogler in Wagner's *Lohengrin* for Ostrava Opera, Czech Republic, Billy Jackrabbit in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* for ENO, and Puccini's *La Bohème Colline* for Opera North.



Edward Elgar



EDWARD ELGAR was born on 2 June 1857, in Worcester. His father played the organ and directed the choir in St George's Catholic Church, was a violinist in local orchestras, and ran a music store. This musical ambience was both school and conservatory for young Edward, who received no formal musical education except for a few violin lessons. He served his apprenticeship as a church organist, choirmaster, and director of amateur orchestras - and the band of the county mental institution. The focus of musical activity was the annual choir festival, where distinguished conductors and soloists performed oratorios by Handel and Mendelsohn, as well as newly commissioned works, with the local choir.

Elgar's earliest works were for his church choir and, in later years, his most important compositions were large oratorios commissioned for choir festivals. Through these performances, he became known throughout England.

His first important orchestral piece was the *Enigma Variations* (1899). There have been many conjectures about the mysterious theme, but its identity has never been determined. Each of the variations is labelled with the initials or nickname of friends of the composer, and each variation is a musical character sketch.

Elgar's choral masterpiece is *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900). Written to a religious poem by Cardinal Newman, it is perhaps the finest English composition of the Victorian era. It is Wagnerian in its use of leitmotifs characterizing the protagonists and situations, the rich, chromatic

harmony, and the masterful orchestral writing.



Other important works by Elgar are the Violin Concerto (1910) and two overtures, *Cockaigne* (1910) and *Falstaff* (1913). His best-known piece is *Pomp and Circumstance No 1* (1901), a concert march in which the patriotic hymn "Land of Hope and Glory" is found. Its honest, brilliant tunes epitomize the optimism of Edwardian England.

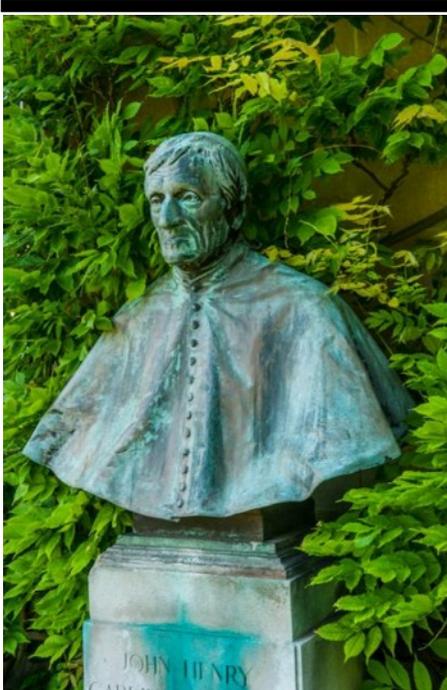
Elgar was knighted in 1904 and named Master of the King's Music in 1924. By the time of his death on 23 February 1934, in Worcester, the younger twentieth-century composers had made his music seem old-fashioned. Later evaluations, however, have been more generous, and Elgar is now regarded as one of this country's truly great composers.



The Dream of Gerontius - a rocky start



This evening will be the first time that Tring Choral Society will have had the pleasure of singing Elgar's masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius*. The work itself, however, was first performed 119 years ago on 3 October at the Birmingham Festival. In a lengthy review at the time, critic Joseph Bennett described the piece as 'possible only to the highest gifts of imagination, feeling and skill.' He was not, though, as enamoured with the performance of it, saying that 'the chorus went all to pieces, and even the orchestra was not free from blemish.' Not having been there, we can't comment, but we are hopeful that the performance this evening will not suffer from any of the shortcomings previously described!



Bust of Cardinal Newman, Trinity College, Oxford

Elgar's reaction, expressed a short time later, was; 'As far as I'm concerned, music in England is dead...I have worked hard for forty years and, at the last, Providence denies me a decent hearing of my work; so I submit – I always said God was against art and I still believe it.'

Apparently, one of the mistakes the Birmingham chorus made is sometimes still made today. They regarded *Gerontius* as oratorio – but it isn't. The title page of the score states, simply but significantly; 'by Cardinal Newman, set to music...by Edward Elgar.' Elgar said that 'There's no word yet invented to describe it.' In fact, it has been described as a curious hybrid, as are Berlioz' *Damnation of Faust* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*.

Since 1914, performances outside English-speaking countries have been rare but, in Britain, it has only been exceeded in popularity (for a choral work) by *Messiah*. Its three solo parts, for mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass, have had some impressive interpreters over the years. The Angel, for instance, will be forever linked in many people's minds with Kathleen Ferrier and Janet Baker, and they have become part of the folklore of English singing in the twentieth century.

So what is the secret of this masterpiece's grip on listeners over the years? Apart from its obvious and undoubted musical splendours, it's perhaps that it appeals equally to the believer, who seeks and finds consolation in it, and to the doubter, for whom the music's anguish and despair are paramount. It therefore faithfully reflects the personal and religious dichotomy of its composer, who could, in one breath, say; 'This is the best of me' and, in the next, 'God is against art'.



The Dream of Gerontius - the text



PART ONE

Gerontius (tenor)

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 (chorus)

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 (tenor)

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man; and through each 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 (chorus)

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 (tenor)

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 (chorus)

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour, as of old, so many by Thy gracious power:- Noe from the waters in a saving home; (Amen.)

Job from all his multi-form and fell distress; (Amen.)

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

David from Golia and the wrath of Saul; (Amen.)

. . . - So, to show Thy power, rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

Gerontius (tenor)

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

The Priest (bass) and Assistants (chorus)

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!

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

Interval

PART TWO

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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 (contralto)

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 of Gerontius (tenor)

It is a member of that family of wond'rous 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 (contralto)

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

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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 curiosness.

Angel (contralto)

You cannot now cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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 (contralto)

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

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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

Angel (contralto)

It is because then thou didst fear; that now thou dost not fear. Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so for thee 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 of Gerontius (tenor)

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled; And at this balance of my destiny, now close upon me, I can forward look with a serenest joy. But hark! upon my sense comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear could I be frightened.

Angel (contralto)

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. Hark to their cry!

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

Demons (chorus, tenor, bass)

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 (contralto)

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 (chorus, tenor, bass)

The mind bold and independent, the purpose free, so we are told, must not think to have the ascendant. What's a saint? One whose breath doth the air taint before his death; a bundle of bones, which fools adore, when life is o'er. Ha! Ha! Virtue and vice, a knave's pretence. 'Tis all the same, Ha! Ha! Dread of hell-fire, of the venomous flame, a coward's plea. Give him his price, saint though he be, from shrewd good sense he'll slave for hire, Ha! Ha! And does but aspire to the heaven above with sordid aim, and not from love. Ha! Ha!

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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

Angel (contralto)

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 of Gerontius (tenor)

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

Angel (contralto)

There was a mortal, who is now above In the mid-glory: he, when near to die, was given communion with the Crucified, such that the Masters very wounds were stamped upon his flesh; and from the agony which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace, learn that the flame of the everlasting love doth burn ere it transform.

Choir of Angelicals (chorus and semi-chorus)

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

Angel (contralto)

. . . Hark to those sounds! They come of tender beings angelical, least and most childlike of the sons of God.

Choir of Angelicals (chorus and semi-chorus)

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 (contralto)

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

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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

Choir of Angelicals (chorus and semi-chorus)

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

Angel (contralto)

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

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear, - but hark! a grand mysterious harmony: it floods me, like the deep and solemn souls Of many waters.

Angel (contralto)

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

Choir of Angelicals (chorus and semi-chorus)

Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise: in all His words most

wonderful; most sure in all His ways! O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame, a second Adam to the fight And to the rescue came. O Wisest love! that flesh and blood which did in Adam fail, should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail. And that a higher gift than grace should flesh and blood refine, God's presence and His very self, and essence all divine. O generous love! that He who smote in man for man the foe, the double agony in man for man should undergo; and in the garden secretly, and on the cross on high, should teach His brethren and inspire to suffer and to die. Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise: in all His words most wonderful, most sure in all His ways!

Angel (contralto)

Thy judgement now is near, for we are come into the veiled presence of our God.

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel (contralto)

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 (bass)

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 of Gerontius (tenor)

I go before my Judge. . .

Voices on Earth (chorus and semi-chorus)

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
quicken'd, by the glance of God.

Soul of Gerontius (tenor)

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
posses't of its Sole Peace. There will I sing
my absent Lord and Love: take me away,
that sooner I may rise, and go above, and
see Him in the truth of everlasting day.
Take me away, and in the lowest deep
there let me be.

Souls in Purgatory (chorus)

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.

Angel (contralto)

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 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. Farewell! Farewell!

Souls (chorus)

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc. Amen

Choir of Angelicals (chorus and semi-chorus)

Bring us not, Lord very low for Thou hast
said, come back again, ye sons of Adam.
Praise to the Holiest. Come back, O Lord,
how long; and be entreated for Thy
servants. Amen.

He always draws a portrait of the conductor on the drum he hits the hardest.





Chiltern Orchestral Society



Leader; Janet Hicks

Violins; Frances Bigg, Akiko Coulter, Darrell Dunning, Marion Garrett, David Glenister, Ed Hewitt, Keiko Iwatsu-Thiele, Fiona Jacob, David Moore, Roger Neighbour, Lesley Pearce

Violas; Katie Hayes, Steffi Cook, Adrienne Cooke, John Saunders

Cellos; Helen Godbolt, Mary Harris, Herrick Hayes, Caroline Ridout

Bass; Frances Emery, Sudhir Singh
Horn; John Lavelle

Trumpet; Charlie Buchanan

Trombones; Phil Dale, Andy Lester

Tympani; Richard Baron-Tait

Percussion; Anna Stevens, John Stevens

Organ; Jon Lee

Please see www.davidmeacock.com for further information about pianist, conductor and tenor soloist David Meacock, and for details about hiring his reduced orchestration of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (premiered in 1999).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tring Choral Society thanks Beechwood Fine Foods, Tring, for support as our ticket agents.

The piano accompanist for Tring Choral Society rehearsals is Anna Le Hair.

Our thanks go to Roy Mathers for writing and compiling this programme.

We are grateful for the presence of St John Ambulance representatives at this concert.



Tring Choral Society



SOPRANOS

Caitlin Barratt
Celestria Bell
Gillie Bligh
Jane Brown
Corinna Chute
Hilary Colbert
Margaret Collier
Sheena Cormack*
Sophie Dowson
Sally Dussek
Elaine Florsheim
Angela Hale
Anne Hatton
Mary Haywood
Zoe Hill
Kathryn Heath
Katie Hughes
Sue Jones
Christine Keen
Lucy Kibble
Charlotte Mackinder
Harriet Mackinder
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Elina Rantanen
Pam Rush
Rosie Southworth
Helen Stokes
Elizabeth Thompson
Jenny Watkins
Jenny Watt

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Rachel Baldwin
Christine Bass
Janet Briant
Beth Brimmicombe
Charlotte Brown
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Kathy Chantler
Sue Collins
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Katherine Douglas
Margaret Flanigan
Jane Glover
Janet Graves
Nell Gregory
Jenny Hoare
Lorna Lang
Jane Legg
Gill Lerigo
Rhian Nicholls
Elizabeth Norris
Marilyn Pryor
Chris Sivers
Bethan Whittle
Heather Wignall
Jackie Williams
Kate Winterbottom

TENORS

Jenny Brannock Jones
Cliff Brown
Richard Brown
John Deane
*Philip Hayes**
Brian Marston
Jon Reynolds
Chris Smith*
David Wilde
David Williamson
Kate Wittwer
Max Wittwer

BASSES

Robert Allnutt
Mike Bernstein
David Chasey
Dave Clarke
Adrian Collin
David Cormack*
Bob Davies
Paul Doughty
Peter Graves
Richard Grylls
Geoff Harrison
David Hayes
Tony Mackinder
David Morgan
Richard Onslow
John Wignall

* Guest Singer

Singers whose names appear in italics form the semi-chorus



Patrons of Tring Choral Society



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 Mr J Burchell
 Mrs J Cadge
 Mrs A Caloia
 Ms A Caloia
 Mr R Flanigan
 Mr and Mrs R Franklin
 Mr and Mrs J Hawkes
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 Mr C W Hoare
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 Mrs E Marchant

Mr and Mrs I Martin
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 Mr C B J Pearce
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 Mr and Mrs J Stack
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 Mrs J Stevens
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Mendelssohn; Ave Maria

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Did you know?

The poem to which Elgar set the *Dream of Gerontius* was written by the English cardinal and theologian John Henry Newman (1801-1890), who was a leading figure in the Oxford movement. After his conversion to Rome, his qualities of mind and literary style won him a position of respect among English intellectuals and theologians.

If you like what you hear (and see) tonight, and would like to be involved - or simply would like to learn more about Tring Choral Society, its history and present situation, we have a web site that will provide a mine of information.

Our web site contains details of future concerts, rehearsal dates and many other details that are sure to interest friends of our choir.

You can visit us at

www.tringchoral.org.uk



And, of course, new members are always welcome -

please ring the Membership Secretary,
Margaret Collier, on 01296 660406



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