

CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

James John
Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Toward Eternity



Sunday, March 13, 2011, 4 P.M.
St. Ann and the Holy Trinity Church
157 Montague Street
Brooklyn, New York

Saturday, March 19, 2011, 8 P.M.
The Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral
263 Mulberry Street
New York, New York

CERDDORION

SOPRANOS

Christi Baine
Judith Cobb
Heather Cooper
Bonny Hart
Amy Litt
Cathy Markoff
Ellen Schorr

ALTOS

Susan Glass
Linnea Johnson
Myrna Nachman
Anne Stone
Melissa Tombro
Gretta Wren

TENORS

Frank Kamai
Michael Klitsch
Jeff Lunden
Andrew Ormson
Peter Platzer
Chris Ryan

BASSES

Sam Baltimore
Peter Cobb
Ian McGullam
Jonathan Miller
Dean Rainey
Bob Rainier
Ron Scheff
Larry Sutter

For further information about Cerddorion,
please visit our website: www.cerddorion.net.

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Ticket sales cover only a small portion
of our ongoing musical and administrative expenses.
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The members of Cerddorion are grateful to Doug Keilitz and the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch for providing rehearsal and performance space for this season.

The Program

Libera Me

Lajos Bárdos
(1899–1986)

Nymphes des Bois

Josquin des Prez
(c. 1445–1521)



Super Flumina Babylonis

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
(c. 1525–1594)

Deep River

Amy Litt, soprano

arr. Robert Fountain
(1917–1996)



Selig sind die Toten

Heinrich Schütz
(1585–1672)

Psalm

Andrew Rindfleisch
(b. 1963)

❖❖❖ *Pause* ❖❖❖

Requiem

Salvator mundi
Psalm 23
Requiem aeternam (1)
Psalm 121
Requiem aeternam (2)

I heard a voice from heaven

Ellen Schorr, soprano

Bonny Hart, soprano

Myrna Nachman, alto

Chris Ryan tenor

Herbert Howells

(1892–1983)



Valiant for Truth

Ralph Vaughan Williams

(1872–1958)

Thank you for remembering to turn off all cell phones and beeping devices, as well as refraining from text messaging during the performance. Please hold your applause until after each set of music is finished.

After tonight's performance, please join us for a festive reception! All are invited.

In memoriam

Cerddorion dedicates the performances of this program to the memory of Johannes Somary (1935–2011)—conductor, organist, and passionate advocate for choral music.

Don't miss the conclusion to our concert season!

With Harp and Voice

Featuring the world premiere of a commissioned work for chorus and harp by David Schober, as well as works by Britten, Hawley, Brahms, Sametz and Bassi

Sunday, June 5, 2011, 4 P.M., at the Oratory Church of St. Boniface, 190 Duffield St., Brooklyn

Saturday, June 11, 2011, 8 P.M., at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church, 552 West End Ave. (entrance on 87th Street), Manhattan

Both programs: General admission \$20. Students/seniors \$10.
For information: 212-260-1498, or visit www.cerddorion.net.

CERDDORION

NOW IN ITS SIXTEENTH SEASON, CERDDORION is one of New York's most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of twenty-eight mixed voices, Cerddorion was founded in 1995 by Susanne Peck and was directed by Kristina Boerger from 2000 through 2009. James John became Cerddorion's artistic director in 2010. The group is known for its eclectic repertoire, encompassing music from the Renaissance to the contemporary. Audiences have come to appreciate the group's interpretive depth and technical excellence in many styles.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. Past collaborations include: the North American premiere of Sir John Tavener's all-night vigil, *The Veil of the Temple*, performed at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall (with Dessoff Choral Consortium and choristers from London's Temple Church); several appearances with the Christopher Caines Dance Company; baroque opera performances with the early music instrumental ensemble Concert Royal; and serving as the resident teaching ensemble for the Dennis Keene Choral Festival in Kent, Connecticut.

In 2006, Cerddorion presented at the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association the works they had commissioned from three New York composers for their tenth anniversary season. September 2007 marked the release on the Tzadik label of *A Handful of World*, Cerddorion's first commercial recording. The CD is dedicated to vocal works by New York composer Lisa Bielawa and includes Cerddorion's performance of Bielawa's *Lamentations for a City*, which was commissioned and first performed by Cerddorion in 2004.

Cerddorion is a proud member of the New York Choral Consortium.

James John

James John is Associate Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College-CUNY, where he conducts the Queens College Choir, Vocal Ensemble and Choral Society, teaches choral conducting, and serves as advisor to the graduate program in vocal performance.

Under Dr. John's leadership, the choral program at the Aaron Copland School of Music has become recognized as one of the finest collegiate choral programs in the region. Past performances have included an award-winning production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, *Requiems* by Mozart, Verdi, and Brahms, "A Night at the Opera" with Queens College alumna Erika Sunnegardh of the Metropolitan Opera, Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, and world premieres of works by Sidney Boquiren, Leo Kraft, Meg Collins Stoop, and others. His choirs have performed in many of New York's prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall, and St. Patrick's Cathedral. The Vocal Ensemble recently released

its first CD, featuring premiere recordings of partsongs by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn, and the Queens College Choir was selected to perform at the 2010 New York State School of Music Association convention in Rochester, NY.

Dr. John's guest conducting appearances include Avery Fisher Hall's annual Messiah Sing-In, a concert of American choral music with the Virginia Chorale (Virginia's only professional choral ensemble), chorus master for the Queens Symphony, regional honor choirs throughout New York State, and a forthcoming recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States. In September 2011 he will guest conduct the Tokyo Oratorio Society in the Japanese premiere of Theodore Gouvy's Requeim.

Dr. John has also served as Guest Lecturer in conducting at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, and presented seminars on American choral music in Basel and Stockholm. His dissertation on Brahms's Nänie, Op. 82, won the Julius Herford Prize from the American Choral Directors Association and will be published soon in revised form as a book by The Edwin Mellen Press. His articles have appeared in Choral Journal, The American Choral Review, and the American Choral Foundation's Research Memorandum Series. He has served as Project Chair for Research and Scholarship for ACDA's Eastern Division and is currently a member of ACDA's National Research and Publications Committee, as well as a member of the Editorial Board for The American Choral Review. Dr. John received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Conducting from the Eastman School of Music. Prior to his current position at the Aaron Copland School of Music, he served as Director of Choral Activities at Tufts University in Boston, Director of Choral Activities at Nassau Community College in Garden City, NY, and as Dartmouth College's first Conducting Fellow. He received his Master of Arts in Conducting from the Aaron Copland School of Music.

Program Notes

The title, “Toward Eternity,” comes from the final line of Emily Dickinson’s famous poem, “Because I could not stop for death.” Her measured, meditative words are imbued with daring acceptance, and though we are not singing any settings of Dickinson’s poetry, their sentiment seems an appropriate starting point for the variety of choral music you will hear on our program. I have done my best to pair works that share close connections as well as offer sharp contrasts, and as one might expect, each composer responds differently to the subject at hand.

Hungarian composer Lajos Bárdos (1899–1986) had great admiration for Josquin des Prez (c. 1445–1521). His *Libera Me* and Josquin’s *Nymphes des Bois* share a portion of the same Requiem text: “Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis” (“Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them”). Bárdos’s work begins with a dramatic plea for freedom from death and ends with a peaceful vision of eternal light. Josquin’s motet is a moving and tearful lament on the death of Johannes Ockeghem, one of the most famous composers and musicians of the day.

The connection between Palestrina’s setting of Psalm 137, *Super Flumina Babylonis* (“By the waters of Babylon”), written in the mid-16th century, and Robert Fountain’s 20th century arrangement of the spiritual *Deep River* is straightforward: the image central to both works is a river. In the case of *Super Flumina Babylonis*, it is the river Euphrates, on whose banks the exiled Hebrews “sat down and wept” for their homeland. The river Jordan is the focal point of *Deep River*, and though the homeland referred to is metaphorical, the intensity of emotional longing is similar to that expressed in Palestrina’s psalm setting.

American composer Andrew Rindfleisch (b. 1963) had Brahms in mind when he composed *Psalm*, which is based on a fragment of text from the first movement of the *German Requiem*. Brahms, in turn, deeply admired the music of Heinrich Schütz (1581–1672), and the words of Schütz’s motet *Selig sind die Toten* (Revelations 14:13) serve as the text for the *German Requiem*’s final movement. Not coincidentally, the last movement of Herbert Howells’s *Requiem* is based on the same biblical passage (“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord”).

Howells’s *Requiem*, completed in the 1930s but withheld by the composer from publication until 1980, is the centerpiece of our program. An extremely personal work with connections to the death of Howells’ nine-year-old son, it has become a cornerstone of the a cappella choral repertoire. The program concludes with a piece by Howells’s friend and older contemporary, Ralph Vaughan Williams, entitled *Valiant for Truth*. Though Vaughan Williams was not at all

religious (he was an atheist in his youth, and later “drifted into a cheerful agnosticism”), the text is taken from *Pilgrim’s Progress*, by John Bunyan, and depicts a moving, dramatic vision of someone “crossing over to the other side.”

~James John

Lajos Bárdos (1899–1986): *Libera Me*

Twentieth-century Hungarian choral music has its roots in the Romantic Era. However, it developed into an entirely independent Hungarian vocal style and became internationally well known through the works of Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and Lajos Bárdos. Bárdos, the youngest of the three, was a composer, conductor, and teacher who followed in the footsteps of Kodály and Bartók by writing choral music influenced by both Renaissance polyphony and Hungarian folk music. He was instrumental in raising the level of choral singing and conducting throughout Eastern Europe. Written in 1933, *Libera Me* is a typical example of his sacred style. One can hear, in the motet’s slow middle section, Bárdos’s use of the traditional *Dies Irae* plainchant.

~Susan Glass

Libera me Domine de morte aeterna, in die illa
tremenda,
quando caeli movendi sunt et terra,
dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego et timeo, dum
discussio venerit, atque ventura ira.
Quando caeli movendi sunt et terra.
Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae dies
magna et amara valde.
Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.
Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux
perpetua luceat eis.

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal on that
fearful day,
when the heavens and the earth shall be moved,
when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
I am made to tremble, and I fear, till the judgment
be upon us, and the coming wrath.
When the heavens and the earth shall be moved.
That day, day of wrath, calamity, and misery, day
of great and exceeding bitterness,
When Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them.

Josquin des Prez (c. 1445–1521): *Nymphes des Bois*

Josquin des Prez was one of the greatest composers in music history. Born in France, near the Belgian border, and subsequently traveling to Italy, where he reached artistic maturity, he returned to France at the end of his career. Both a singer and a composer, he left a large number of works, including 18 masses, 100 motets, and 70 secular chansons. Stylistically, Josquin serves as a bridge between the Middle Ages and later periods. He was especially praised by his contemporaries for the care he took to suit his music to the underlying text, a quality abundantly evident in *Nymphes des Bois*.

Composed c. 1495 as a lament on the death of Johannes Ockeghem, the great composer of the preceding generation, the original manuscript of *Nymphes des Bois* is symbolically written in black notes, consistent with its mournful purpose. It is an early example of “eye music,” where the manuscript visually communicates something to the performer that is both unseen and unheard by the audience. The piece is for five voices and it is composed in two sections.

The first and longest section recalls the contrapuntal, imitative style of Ockeghem. The tenors sing the Introit in Latin (“Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine et lux perpetua luceat eis”), while the remaining voices sing in French, lamenting Ockeghem’s passing. The second section is written in a chordal style with more clearly defined phrases. The tenors initially are silent, joining the other voices for a final “Requiescat in Pace.” Meanwhile, the treble voices and basses call upon Josquin and his composer contemporaries Antoine Brumel, Pierre de la Rue, and Loyset Compère to don mourning clothes and weep tears for the great father they have all lost.

~*Bob Rainier*

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Nymphes des bois, deesses des fontaines,
Chantres expres de toutes nations,
Changes vos voix tant claires et haultaines
En cris trenchans et lamentations,
Car Atropos tres terrible satrappe
Vostre Ockeghem atrappé en sa trappe,
Vray tresorier de musique et chief doeuivre,
Doct elegant de corps et non point trappe,
Grant domaige est que la terre le couvre.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them.

Wood-nymphs, goddesses of the fountains,
Skilled singers of every nation,
Turn your voices, so clear and lofty,
To piercing cries and lamentation
Because Atropos*, terrible satrap,
Has caught your Ockeghem in her trap,
The true treasurer of music and master,
Learned, handsome and by no means stout.
It is a source of great sorrow that the earth must
cover him.

Acoustres vous dhabis de doeil,
Josquin, Pierrsson, Brumel, Compère,
Et ploures grosses larmes doeil,
Perdu aves vostre bon pere.

Requiescat in pace.
Amen.

Put on the clothes of mourning,
Josquin, Pierre de la Rue, Brumel, Compère,
And weep great tears from your eyes,
For you have lost your good father.

May you rest in peace.
Amen.

*the fate whose role it was to cut the thread of
human life with her shears

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525–1594): *Super Flumina Babylonis*

Text from Psalm 137:1–2

An icon of late Renaissance religious music, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina took his last name from his birth town, near Rome. Active around Rome for his entire career, he served as choirmaster of St. Peter's during the last two decades of his life. His rich compositional output includes over 100 masses, most of which are built on themes from Gregorian chant, 450 motets, 50 spiritual madrigals, and 80 secular madrigals. His musical legacy is overwhelmingly sacred and in the service of the Roman Catholic Church, institutional standard bearer of the Counter-Reformation, which largely occurred during the second half of the 16th century. So close were Palestrina's ties to the Church that he was asked to supervise the revision of the music in the official liturgical books to accord with the changes already made in the texts by order of the Council of Trent. This task was completed by others after his death.

Although his musical style was conservative, his work is artistically compelling and impeccably crafted, capturing the essence of the sober qualities of the Counter-Reformation. The basis of his style is imitative counterpoint, where voice parts flow in continuous rhythm with a new melodic motive for each phrase of text. Harmony is characterized by the avoidance of chromaticism, except where compositional rules dictate otherwise. Rhythms are regular, gently marked. Palestrina's work has been extensively analyzed by generations of scholars, and students to this day use his contrapuntal techniques as a model.

The short, four-voice motet *Super Flumina Babylonis* takes its text from Psalm 137. In this masterpiece, Palestrina vividly expresses the sadness of the Hebrew exiles and treats the five phrases of the Psalm text separately in sequence. The composer's characteristic use of contrapuntal imitation is immediately evident in the first phrase, "Super flumina Babylonis" ("By the waters of Babylon"), where basses state the title subject, followed by altos, sopranos, and then tenors. For the second phrase, "Illic sedimus et flevimus" ("We sat down and wept"), there

is a striking change of character to accord with the sadness of the text. It is driven by a shift to chordal writing, followed in a restatement of the text by a return to imitation. The musical settings for the final three phrases of the Psalm again rely on imitation, with each text repeated two or three times utilizing different musical underpinnings.

~*Bob Rainier*

Super flumina Babylonis,
Illic sedimus et flevimus,
Dum recordaremur tui, Sion.

By the waters of Babylon
we sat down and wept
when we remembered you, O Zion.

In salicibus in medio ejus,
Suspendimus organa nostra.

Among the willows on its banks
we hung up our harps.

Robert Fountain arr. (1917–1996): *Deep River*

Robert Fountain was a legendary choral conductor, spoken of as “one of the three choral Bobs”: Robert Fountain, Robert Page, and Robert Shaw. In his years as Director of Choral Activities at Oberlin College Conservatory of Music (1948–1970) and University of Wisconsin-Madison (1971–1994), he trained and inspired countless singers and conductors. He ended every concert of his UW-Madison Concert Choir with two encores, arrangements of African-American spirituals. His arrangement of *Deep River* demonstrates his rich love and appreciation for this uniquely American music.

~*Chris Ryan*

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

Oh, don't you want to go to that gospel feast,
That promis'd land where all is peace.

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672): *Selig sind die Toten*

Text from Revelations: 14:13

The 17th century German composer Heinrich Schütz was born in Saxony on October 8 in 1585. During his long life—he lived to the ripe old age of 87—he was a prolific composer, creating almost five hundred pieces of music which today are carefully catalogued in the “Schütz Werke Verzeichnis” (SWV). Although forgotten for almost two hundred years, Schütz today is generally regarded as the most important German composer before J.S. Bach and often considered next to Claudio Monteverdi (with whom he might have studied during his second journey to Venice in 1628-1630) the most important composer of the 17th century.

Earlier in his career, Schütz was known for his very progressive style, reflecting what he learned in Italy and profoundly influencing the direction taken by music in Germany. Potentially influenced by the long period of musical austerity in Germany caused by the Thirty Years’ War, during which opulent Venetian style productions were not possible, he later developed a more simple, almost ascetic style, marrying Italian emotional expressiveness with German contrapuntal seriousness. One of the last composers to write in a modal style, he often creates intense dissonances caused by the interplay of two or more voices that are dissolved by a strong tonal pull when approaching the end of a phrase.

Heinrich Schütz’s *Selig sind die Toten*, SWV 391, is part of his Op. 11, *Die Geistliche Chormusik*, a collection of twenty-nine motets which he published in 1648 at the height of his creative period. Opposing the then common practice of dedicating works to royalty, he dedicated the piece to the Choir of the city of Leipzig in recognition of their dedication to a high standard of musicianship. Written in the context of the end of the Thirty Years’ War and as a celebration of the first year of peace, Schütz intended his Op. 11 as a reference and teaching collection for composers. In his detailed foreword he voiced his strong conviction that any aspiring composer first has to master the “most difficult form of Contrapunti, namely the style without a Basso Continuo,” in order to prove his worth. Schütz went through a thorough composition process for creating his Op. 11, which is apparent through the systematic progression and self-referencing selection of motets. To this day, these masterpieces represent his most often performed pieces for *a cappella* choirs.

~Peter Platzger

Selig sind die Toten,
Die in dem Herren sterben von nun an.
Ja der Geist spricht:
Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit
Und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Blessed are the dead,
Which die in the Lord, from henceforth.
Yea, says the Spirit,
that they may rest from their labors;
and their works do follow them.

Andrew Rindfleisch (b. 1963): *Psalm*

Text from Psalm 126: 5–6

Andrew Rindfleisch is currently Professor of Music and Head of the Composition Department at Cleveland State University. His work has garnered many prestigious awards, including the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Aaron Copland Award, and the Koussevitzky Foundation Commission from the Library of Congress. He has written a large body of choral music, and received his early training at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he sang under Robert Fountain's direction.

Andrew Rindfleisch says this about his piece: "*Psalm* (a German setting of the biblical Psalm 126) was composed in the summer of 1998 while living in Rome, Italy. The piece was commissioned by Modus Novus, one of the many fine choirs of Cologne, Germany. Having not composed a choral work since 1989, I immersed myself in the choral scores of Johannes Brahms to ignite my ideas for a new piece. Brahms himself had set the same psalm text in his *German Requiem*, but it was the fabric of his late choral motets that proved not just an inspiration for my own piece, but as a kind of point of departure. *Psalm* intends to subtly remind one of Brahms; a piece conceived as a kind of quiet continuation of those rich works."

~ *Chris Ryan*

Die mit Tränen säen werden mit Freuden ernten.
Sie gehen hin und weinen, und tragen edlen
Samen,
und kommen mit Freuden, und bringen ihre
Garben.

Those who sow with tears will harvest with gladness.
They go forth weeping, and bear noble seeds
and return with joy, bringing their harvest.

Herbert Howells (1892–1983): *Requiem*

Herbert Howells was born in Lydney, a small shipping town in Gloucestershire, England. Best known now for his works in the Anglican choral tradition, Howells focused his early career primarily on chamber and orchestral works. From the 1930s onwards Howells steadily built up the corpus of church music that ultimately became the basis of his modern reputation.

As a young man Howells was exposed to many influences that would have a lasting impact on his later career. He was introduced to Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1910 after hearing his *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* performed in Gloucester Cathedral. Vaughan Williams remained a lifelong friend and advisor to Howells, and was responsible for the publication and performance of some of Howells's most important work, including the *Hymnus Paradisi*. From Gloucester, Howells went on to study at the Royal College of Music in London under Charles Villiers Stanford and Henry Wood and was also influenced by Hubert Parry. Later, he spent a period of recuperation from a serious illness assisting Richard Runciman Terry, the first director of music of Westminster Cathedral, in editing and reviving the Latin works of English Tudor composers such as William Byrd and Robert Parsons for the services sung by the newly established Cathedral choir.

Howells's career was spent as a teacher and a writer as well as a composer: for 26 years he was the director of music at St. Paul's Girls School, a post previously held by Gustav Holst; he taught for much of his life at the Royal College of Music; and he held a number of other academic and pedagogic positions.

Following the unfavorable critical reception of his *Second Piano Concerto* in 1925, Howells' compositional output diminished for a number of years, while he concentrated instead on teaching and other work. During this quiet period, he did, however, compose a *Requiem* for unaccompanied chorus in 1932 or 1933. The piece is thought to have been originally intended for the choir of King's College Cambridge and its then-director, Boris Orr, although it does not seem that it was ever sent there, and following its composition the piece was left unpublished.

A few years later, in 1935, Howells' nine-year-old son, Michael, died. Following this profound loss, Howells said he turned “for release and consolation to the language and terms most personal to him,” explaining that “Music may well have the power beyond any other medium to offer that release and comfort.” He went on to compose the *Hymnus Paradisi*, a vivid and personal testament to the memory of Michael, based on much of the material found in the earlier *Requiem*.

The *Requiem* itself remained unpublished until 1980—almost 50 years after its composition—for what are simply described in the Novello edition as “personal reasons.” The work itself is an

unusual mix of Latin and English texts, taking only the *Requiem aeternam* from the traditional Requiem mass, and adding a selection of other liturgical and devotional texts in English: *Salvator mundi* (“O savior of the world”), Psalm 23 (“The Lord is my shepherd”), Psalm 121 (“I will lift up mine eyes”), and Revelations 14:13 (“I heard a voice from heaven”).

~*Andrew Ormson*

Salvator mundi

O Savior of the world,
Who by thy cross and thy precious blood
hast redeemed us,
save us and help us,
we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd:
therefore can I lack nothing.
He shall feed me in a green pasture:
and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
He shall convert my soul:
and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me:
thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.
But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Requiem aeternam (1)

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

Eternal rest (1)

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord.

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills:
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord:

who hath made heav'n and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel:
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself is thy keeper:
he is thy defense upon thy right hand;
So that the sun shall not burn thee by day:
neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in:
from this time forth and for evermore.
I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills:
from whence cometh my help.

Requiem aeternam (2)

Requiem aeternam dona eis.
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

I heard a voice from heaven

I heard a voice from heav'n,
saying unto me,
Write,
From henceforth blessed are the dead
which die in the Lord:
even so saith the Spirit,
For they rest from their labours.

Eternal rest (2)

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958): *Valiant for Truth*

Text from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*

Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of the most influential and prolific British composers of the first half of the 20th century. Born in 1872, his style is rooted in the rich harmonies and tonal language of late Romanticism. Choral music is an essential aspect of his oeuvre, and throughout his long career he wrote everything from choral-orchestral works such as *Dona Nobis Pacem* and *A Sea Symphony*, to sacred and secular a cappella music, folk-song arrangements, and hymn settings and services for the Anglican Church. He also composed many beautiful songs for solo voice, and several operas, including *Riders to the Sea*, *Sir John in Love*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*. The last of these reflects Vaughan Williams' forty-year fascination with the work of John Bunyan, author of the book by the same name. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (published between 1678 and 1688) is an allegorical journey, reflecting humankind's quest for meaning and spiritual enlightenment. Vaughan Williams' opera had a long period of gestation (from approximately 1910 to 1950), and in its own way provides insight into the composer's evolution from atheist to "cheerful agnostic."

Mr. Valiant-for-Truth is a character that appears toward the end of Bunyan's story. It is unclear exactly what he is meant to represent, though as his name implies, he is someone who—despite many travails—has kept his eye on the mark, and managed to endure with ideals intact. Completed in 1941, Vaughan Williams' motet was written in response to the death of his friend, Dorothy Longman, and is unrelated to the opera. It is a setting of Bunyan's prose description of the moment that Mr. Valiant-for-Truth learns that his death will come soon, the fortitude with which he accepts this news, and the magnificence of his passing.

~James John

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons...; and had this for a token that the summons was true, "That his pitcher was broken at the fountain." When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then, said he, "I am going to my Father's, and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword, I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill, to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought his battles, who now will be my rewarder." When the day that he must go hence, was come, many accompanied him to the riverside, into which, as he went, he said, "Death, where is thy sting?" And as he went down deeper, he said, "Grave, where is thy victory?"

So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

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