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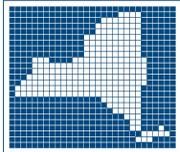
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CERDDORION

VOCAL ENSEMBLE

James John
Artistic Director

PRESENTS

Voices for Today

A Celebration of Poulenc and Britten



FEATURING

The Vox Nova Children's Choir

Emily John, director

AND

Douglas Keilitz, organ

Saturday, June 1, at 8pm
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
199 Carroll Street, Brooklyn

Thursday, June 6, at 8pm
St. Ignatius of Antioch
87th Street & West End Avenue, Manhattan

CERDDORION

SOPRANOS

Samantha Bassler
Elizabeth Hanna
Anna Harmon
Sandi Leibowitz
Cathy Markoff
Jennifer Oates
Jeanette Rodriguez
Ellen Schorr

ALTOS

Susan Glass
Linnea Johnson
Leonore Nelson
Ilse de Veer
Gretta Wren

TENORS

Ben Arendsen
Ralph Bonheim
Michael Klitsch
Rajan Mudambi
Chris Ryan
Grady Sullivan

BASSES

Peter Cobb
Jonathan Miller
Michael Plant
Dean Rainey
Larry Sutter
Ethan Wagner



Vox Nova Children's Choir of the Special Music School

Lucas Amory
Dylan Bedford
Willow Bennison
Amal Biskin
Marie Brogdon

Lena-Marie Demayo-Stoger
Sophia Freed
Darby Glass
Julia Kingston
Nadira Novruzov

Lukas Sanchez
Kayla Sheeger
Luna Simone-Gonzalez
Mikhail Swersey
Connor Tsui



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.

Thanks to Vince Peterson and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for their hospitality.

Thanks also to Ethan Wagner and Myrna Nachman for doubling as rehearsal accompanists this cycle.

Thanks to Jennifer Oates, Emily John, and Michael Plant for their efforts in preparing this program.

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THE PROGRAM

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Exultate Deo (1941)

Salve Regina (1941)

Litanies à la vierge noire (1936)

Douglas Keilitz, organ

Three Lenten motets (from *Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence*, 1939)

Timor et tremor

Vinea mea electa

Tristis est anima mea

Elizabeth Hanna, soprano

❖❖❖ *Intermission* ❖❖❖

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Voices for Today, op. 75

Vox Nova Children's Choir
Emily John, conductor
Douglas Keilitz, organ

Excerpts from *Friday Afternoons*, op. 7

A Tragic Story

Cuckoo!

A New Year Carol

Old Abram Brown

Jazz-Man

Vox Nova Children's Choir
Emily John, conductor
Julia Kingston and Lucas Amory, piano

Rejoice in the Lamb, op. 30

Anna Harmon, soprano; Leonore Nelson, alto;
Chris Ryan, tenor; Michael Plant, bass
Douglas Keilitz, organ

THE ARTISTS

Now in its eighteenth season, **CERDDORION** is one of New York's most highly regarded volunteer choral ensembles. A chamber group of twenty-eight mixed voices, it 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. Cerddorion has also frequently commissioned new works by such composers as Paul Moravec, David Schober, Lisa Bielawa, David Lang, Elliot Z. Levine, Robert Dennis, and Julie Dolphin.

Besides presenting its own varied programs, Cerddorion is frequently invited to perform with other acclaimed artists. In 2011, the men of Cerddorion sang with esteemed French organist Francis Chapelet in the second inaugural recital of the Manton Memorial Organ at the Church of the Ascension in New York. Past collaborations have included 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 performed at the Eastern Divisional 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 is in his third season as Artistic Director of the Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble. He is also 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. Recent professional highlights include guest conducting the Tokyo Oratorio Society in a performance of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Tokyo's Suntory Hall, and an invited performance by the Queens College Choir at the 2012 Eastern Division Conference of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in Providence, Rhode Island.

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 with the School of Music's choral ensembles include Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, award winning productions of Argento's *Postcard from Morocco* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Requiems by Mozart and Verdi, "A Night at the Opera" with Queens College alumna Erika Sunnegårdh 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, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity Church Wall Street. Under his direction the Queens College Vocal

For I will consider my Cat Jeffry.

For he is the servant of the Living God, duly and daily serving him.

For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his way.

For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant quickness.

For he knows that God is his Saviour.

For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements.

For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.

For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take occasion to bless Almighty God.

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.

For – this is a true case – Cat takes female mouse – male mouse will not depart, but stands threat'ning and daring.

... If you will let her go, I will engage you, as prodigious a creature as you are.

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.

For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

For the flowers are great blessings.

For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation.

For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary.

For there is a language of flowers.

For the flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour —

For they said, he is besides himself.

For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman smites me with his staff.

For Silly Fellow! Silly fellow! is against me and belongeth neither to me nor to my family.

For I am in twelve HARSHIPS, but he that was born of a virgin shall deliver me out of all.

For H is a spirit and therefore he is God.

For K is king and therefore he is God.

For L is love and therefore he is God.

For M is musick and therefore he is God.

For the instruments are by their rhimes.

For the Shawm rhimes are lawn fawn moon boon and the like.

For the harp rhimes are sing ring string and the like.

For the cymbal rhimes are bell well toll soul and the like.

For the flute rhimes are tooth youth suit mute and the like.

For the Bassoon rhimes are pass class and the like.

For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place beat heat and the like.

For the Clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like.

For the trumpet rhimes are sound bound soar more and the like.

For the TRUMPET of God is a blessed intelligence and so are all the instruments in HEAVEN.

For GOD the father Almighty plays upon the HARP of stupendous magnitude and melody.

For at that time malignity ceases and the devils themselves are at peace.

For this time is perceptible to man by a remarkable stillness and serenity of soul.

Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable,
and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnificent and mighty.



Crash and Clang!
Bash and Bang!

And up in the road the Jazz-Man sprang!
The One-Man-Jazz Band
playing in the street,
Drums with his Elbows,
Cymbals with his Feet,
Pipes with his Mouth,
Accordion with his hand

Jazz-Man

Playing all his instruments
to Beat the Band!

Toot and Tingle!
Hoot and Jingle!
Oh
What a Clatter!
How the tunes all mingle!
Twenty children couldn't
Make as much noise
As The Howling Pandemonium
of the One-Man-Jazz!

Rejoice in the Lamb (1943)

Rev. Walter Hussey commissioned this festival cantata for the fiftieth anniversary of St. Matthew's Church in Northampton. For *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Britten chose a poem ("Jubilate Agno" or "Rejoice in the Lamb") by the eighteenth-century poet Christopher Smart. During his lifetime, Smart was best known for his translations of Alexander Pope and as an author for London-based literary magazines. Smart wrote this poem during his seven years at St. Luke's Hospital, a private asylum for the mentally ill. Britten had been introduced to this long-forgotten text while in the United States, only a few years after the text had been rediscovered. Smart's eccentric yet charming hymn of praise sees God in all things, moving down a chain of creation from God, humans (such as Old Testament figures), beasts (such as Jeoffry the cat), and plant life. The largely sectional work and the dotted rhythms of the "Hallelujah" section show the influence of the songs and choral anthems of the seventeenth-century British composer Henry Purcell.

Jubilate Agno

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; give the glory to the Lord, and the Lamb.
Nations, and languages, and every Creature, in which is the breath of Life.
Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name together.

Christopher Smart

Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, bind a Leopard to the altar and consecrate his spear to the Lord.
Let Ishmael dedicate a Tyger, and give praise for the liberty in which the Lord has let him at large.
Let Balaam appear with an Ass, and bless the Lord his people and his creatures for a reward eternal.
Let Daniel come forth with a Lion, and praise God with all his might through faith in Christ Jesus.
Let Ithamar minister with a Chamois, and bless the name of Him, that cloatheth the naked.
Let Jakim with the Satyr bless God in the dance.
Let David bless with the bear — The beginning of victory to the Lord — To the Lord the perfection of excellence.

Hallelujah from the heart of God, and from the hand of the artist inimitable,
and from the echo of the heavenly harp in sweetness magnificent and mighty.

Ensemble recently released its first CD, featuring premiere recordings of partsongs by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn, and the Queens College Choir recorded Bright Sheng's *Two Folksongs from Qinghai*, soon to be released on the Naxos label.

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 recording with jazz trumpeter Michael Mossman. He has given presentations at both divisional and national conventions of the ACDA, and is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator throughout the United States. Dr. John will return to Tokyo in 2013 to conduct Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

As a teacher and scholar, Dr. John has 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 ACDA and will be published soon in revised form as a book by The Edwin Mellen Press. His articles have appeared in *Choral Journal*, *American Choral Review*, and *Chorus America's Research Memorandum Series*. In July 2011, he was appointed Editor of *American Choral Review*, and also serves as a member of ACDA's National Research and Publications Committee.

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.



Under the direction of Emily John, the **VOX NOVA CHOIRS** feature the students in grades 5-8 of the Special Music School in New York City. The choruses focus on performing music from across eras and genres with a special focus on modern works. Recent noteworthy performances include *Panda Chant II* with the Meredith Monk ensemble at the Whitney Museum, *Vox Americana* with guitarist/ composer Joel Harrison in Merkin Concert Hall and sacred works at Trinity Church, Wall Street. Last season, Vox Nova girls and children performed as the Chorus of the Messengers of Peace in the Opera Orchestra New York's production of Wagner's *Rienzi* at Avery Fisher Hall. Vox Nova has performed at Trinity Wall Street Church, St. Malachy's (The Actor's Chapel), NYC Transit Museum, Grand Central Terminal and Merkin Concert Hall. This season featured a collaboration with the Queens College Choir in performances of John Corigliano's *Fern Hill*.



EMILY JOHN is a freelance harpist in the NYC area, performing with regional orchestras, choirs and for private events. Additionally, Ms. John is an active conductor and teacher, currently serving as adjunct lecturer at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College-City University of New

York, and Special Music School at the Kaufman Center. Her publications include a recent article on John Cage as well as an article on harp-choral music entitled, “With Harp and Voice,” (co-authored with her husband, James John), both appearing in Choral Journal of the American Choral Directors Association. Ms. John’s choral compositions and arrangements have been performed by youth, school and community choirs and are available through Pavane Publishers and Cambiata Press.



DOUGLAS KEILITZ is Organist and Choirmaster at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church in New York City. The church worships in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and maintains an all-professional choir.

A native of Long Island, his earliest studies were with Robert Arnold and Robert K. Kennedy. Mr. Keilitz studied at the Mannes College of Music in New York City, where his teachers included William Whitehead and Richard Westenburg. More recently, he studied with Stephen Hamilton. Over his thirty-five year career, he has held various church positions throughout New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Mr. Keilitz is active as a recitalist, performing concerts in many of New York’s landmark churches, including St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, St. Mary the Virgin, the Church of the Transfiguration, and St. Paul’s Chapel. Quoting the Lehigh Valley Chapter AGO newsletter after a performance in Allentown, Pennsylvania: “Douglas Keilitz amazed the listeners with a breathtaking performance of the (Bach) Pièce d’Orgue“...and “His playing was outstanding...”

He has performed in master classes with renowned organists Marie-Claire Alain (filmed by the American Guild of Organists as part of its “Masters Series” DVD collection), Olivier Latry, James David Christie, Charles Callahan, and Martin Jean. An experienced choral director, he has founded several community choruses and is a former director of the Greater Trenton Choral Society. He is also active as an accompanist and vocal coach, and serves in that capacity for several community choruses and synagogues.

Mr. Keilitz has been a member of the Executive Board of the New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, holding the positions of Registrar and Archivist. An elected member of the St. Wilfrid Club (New York City’s organists ‘society’), he is also a member of the Anglican Association of Musicians, the Royal College of Organists, and the Gregorian Society.

In addition to his musical career, Mr. Keilitz is also active as a pipe organ builder, restorer, technician, and curator. He is skilled at cabinet and furniture-grade woodworking, is fond of all things nautical, and enjoys his automobiles and motorcycles.



work *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, and his opera, *Noye’s Fludde*. Writing for children’s voices pervaded Britten’s career, from his use of boys chorus in *War Requiem* to his much beloved *A Ceremony of Carols*, and his contributions to the treble repertory have greatly enhanced the genre.

A Tragic Story

There liv’d a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pigtail wore,
But wonder’d much and sorrow’d more
Because it hung behind him

Then round and round and out and in,
All day the puzzled sage did spin;
In vain – it matter’d not a pin,
The pigtail hung behind him.

He mus’d upon this curious case
And swore he’d change the pigtail’s place,
And have it hanging at his face,
Not dangling there behind him.

And right and left, and round about,
And up and down, and in and out,
He turn’d, but still the pigtail stout
Hung steadily behind him.

Says he, “The mystery I’ve found.
I’ll turn me round,” He turn’d him round
(He turn’d him round, he turn’d him round)
But still it hung behind him

And though his efforts never slack,
And though he twist and twirl and tack,
Alas! Still faithful to his back,
The pigtail hangs behind him.

Cuckoo!

Cuckoo, Cuckoo,
What do you do?
In April I open my bill;
In May, I sing night and day;
In June, I change my tune;

In July, Far far I fly;
In August away
I must...
Cuckoo, cuckoo...

New Year Carol

Here we bring new water
from the well so clear,
For to worship God
with this happy New Year.
Sing levy dew, sing levy dew,
the water and the wine
The seven bright gold wires,
and the bugles that do shine.

Sing levy dew, sing levy dew.
The water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires
And the bugles that do shine.

Sing reign of Fair Maid,
with gold upon her toe,
Open you the West Door
And turn the Old Year go.

Sing reign of Fair maid,
With gold upon her chin,
Open you the East Door,
And let the New Year in.
Sing levy dew, sing levy dew,
The water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires
And the bugles that do shine.

Old Abram Brown

Old Abram Brown is dead and gone,
You’ll never see him more:

He used to wear a long brown coat,
That button’d down before.

PROGRAM NOTES AND TEXTS

A Note From the Artistic Director

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of Francis Poulenc's death and the centennial of Benjamin Britten's birth. The idea for tonight's program grew out of a desire to celebrate these dual anniversaries, and to pair music that is rich in contrasts, yet remarkable in beauty. Despite very different styles, Poulenc and Britten shared an extraordinary affinity for vocal music, and each had a unique gift for choral writing. Poulenc said, "I put the best and the most authentic side of myself into my choral music...I believe that it is truly in this medium that I have contributed something new." Similarly, Britten's choral works are central to his output.

Singing Britten's music as a young boy made a lasting impression on me. He has an almost magical ability to merge text and music into a seamless whole, and the poignancy and sensitivity with which he writes for children's voices is virtually unparalleled. This is one of the reasons I am so pleased to welcome the Vox Nova Children's Chorus from the Special Music School at Kaufman Center to perform with us this evening. What would a tribute to Benjamin Britten be without music for young voices? One of the most important messages of Voices for Today (from which our program takes its name) is that children are our hope for a better world—if only we are able to set them a worthy example. Britten's "small anthology of peace," as he called it, urges and inspires us to do just that.

—James Jobn



At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu
errantis hederas passim cum baccare tellus
mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.
Ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones;
ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores,
occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
occidet ; Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum.

Hinc, ubi iam firmata virum te fecerit aetas,
cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus
mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus.
Non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem;

Robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator.
Nec varios discet mentiri lana colores:
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti
murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto ;
sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.

Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum;
aspice, venturo laetentur ut omnia saeclo!

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem;
matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.

Incipe, parve puer....

For you, boy, the soil, untilled, shall yield its first
tiny offerings – the rampant ivy, the sweet-scented
baccharis and the lotus mingled with the laughing
acanthus. Unbidden, the goats shall head
homewards, their udders swollen with milk, and the
herds shall not heed the mighty lion. From your
very cradle dainty flowers shall spring forth. Death
shall strike the serpent, and the perfidious poison-
weed shall wither; aromatic spices shall grow wild
on every side.

Then, when the strengthening years have brought
you to manhood, the sailor shall no more put out to
sea, nor barks of pinewood ply their trade. All lands
shall bear all things in plenty. No more shall the soil
endure the harrow, nor the vine the pruning-hook.

The stalwart ploughman shall unyoke his oxen. No
longer shall wool be made to counterfeit divers
colours; the ram in the meadow shall change his
fleece at will – now to a rich glowing purple, now to
a saffron hue; and nature shall clothe the lambs in
crimson.

See the world rocking beneath the weight of the
heavenly vault – see the lands, the wide oceans, and
the immensity of the skies. See how all nature
greet the age to come.

Begin now, child, to know your mother's face and
to smile. For ten months she has suffered great
affliction.

Begin, child...

If you have ears to hear, then bear!

Friday Afternoons (1933-35)

Note by Emily Jobn

In contrast to the later works of Britten featured on the program, *Friday Afternoons* was composed in 1933, when Britten himself was a young man. Written for his brother's preparatory school in Prestatyn, Britten composed a series of twelve songs for piano and children's voices for the singing classes that took place on Friday afternoons. Many of the texts were taken from Tom Tiddler's Ground, an anthology of children's poetry edited by Walter de la Mare. The songs of *Friday Afternoons* are now so iconic that some ("Old Abram Brown" and "New Year Carol") have been absorbed into musical culture to such a degree that they are often treated as folksongs. *Cuckoo* was featured predominantly in the recent film *Moonrise Kingdom*, along with his orchestral

VOICES FOR TODAY: A CELEBRATION OF POULENC AND BRITTEN

Program Notes by Jennifer Oates

Francis Poulenc and Benjamin Britten exemplify the best of choral music in their respective countries: France and Great Britain. Both composers are known for their ability to write for voices, including solo vocal and choral works, and had partnerships (of varying degrees) with singers devoted to their works: Poulenc with his close friend Pierre Bernac, and Britten with his life-partner Peter Pears. Poulenc and Britten performed together and remained friends and supporters of one another throughout their lives. With the exception of *Voices for Today*, the compositions featured in this program were all written during or shortly after World War II and reflect the humanitarian and spiritual views of the composers.



FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

When my sacred and secular choral works are better known, the public will have a more exact image of my personality and they will see that I am not just the frivolous author of such works as *Les Biches* and *Mouvemente perpétuels*.

—Francis Poulenc, *Entretiens avec Claude Rostand*

Just after establishing his career with brash, irreverent works, Poulenc was drafted into military service during World War I. The mid-1930s saw significant changes for Poulenc. Born and raised in a Catholic family, Poulenc had strayed from religion in 1917 when his father died. With the rise of World War II and the tragic death of fellow composer Pierre-Octave Ferroud (who was decapitated in a car accident in August 1936), Poulenc returned to his Catholic roots and began composing sacred choral music, producing four motets, a mass, and three other works between 1936 and 1941.

Exultate Deo and *Salve Regina* (1941)

These motets are the only two sacred choral works Poulenc composed in 1941, during the German occupation of France. Both exemplify his sacred choral musical style, which blends older influences (Gregorian chant, French Renaissance polyphony, and Monteverdi motets) with modern elements (parallel voice leading, thoughtful use of dissonance, judicious use of contrasts, and inventive harmonies, texture, and scoring). Perhaps surprisingly, both feature joyful exuberance, in contrast with the anguished and tormented music of the *Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence* (1938–1939). *Exultate Deo*, in particular, anticipates his *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël* (1951–1952) and opens with a rare (for Poulenc) polyphonic passage. *Salve Regina* combines the calm atmosphere of his first sacred choral work, *Litanies à la Vierge Noire de Rocamadour*, with the more high-spirited style of his secular *Sept Chansons*, seven choral settings of the poetry of Paul Eluard and Guillaume Apollinaire.

Voices for Today

Texts assembled by Britten, E.M. Forster and Peter Pears

If you have ears to hear, then hear!

(*Jesus Christ*)

The Beloved of the Gods wishes that all people should be unharmed, self-controlled, calm in mind, and gentle.

(*Asoka*)

Love your enemies; do good to those that hate you.

(*Jesus Christ*)

Where is the equal of Love?

Where is the battle he cannot win?

(*Sophocles*)

The strong and mighty topple from their place,

The supple and meek rise above them all.

(*Lao Tzu*)

Force is not a remedy.

(*Bright*)

Justice is a better procurer of peace than war.

(*Penn*)

Dismantle the fort,

Cut down the fleet –

Battle no more shall be!

(*Melville*)

The fruits of the spirit are slower to ripen than intercontinental missiles

(*Camus*)

Burning stakes do not lighten the darkness.

(*Lec*)

Telling lies to the young is wrong. Proving to them that lies are true is wrong.

The young know what you mean.

The young are people.

(*Yertushenko*)

Everything that lives is holy.

(*Blake*)

Give us back a heart, a lasting hope in life.

Innocent peace!

(*Hölderlin*)

Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace.

(*Tennyson*)

How blessed are the peacemakers;

God shall call them his sons.

(*Jesus Christ*)

Silence the raging battle with Heaven's melodies of peace.

(*Hölderlin*)

We have nothing to lose, except everything. So let us go ahead. This is the challenge of our generation.

(*Camus*)

The world's great age begins anew, The golden years return.

(*Shelley*)

If you have ears to hear, then hear!

Eclogue IV

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.
Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna;
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.

Virgil (trans. anon.)

Now the last age prophesied by the Cumaean Sibyl has come to pass, and the great round of the centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin Goddess of Justice returns, and the Golden Age of Saturn. And now a new generation is sent down from heaven above. Do but smile, chaste Goddess of Childbirth, upon the new-born babe, with whose advent the race of iron shall pass and a golden race shall arise. Today your own Apollo reigns.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–1976)

To Benjamin Britten, the ideal of peace is a matter of personal and abiding concern. At the head of his earlier composition (also about war and peace) [War Requiem] he once wrote this stark preamble: “All the artist can do ... is warn”. Today, Benjamin Britten speaks for all of us, with an eloquence we lack, in a medium of which is master.

—U Thant, *Address by the Secretary-General at United Nations Day Concert*, October 24, 1965.

Britten, a lifelong pacifist, extended his visit to the United States when World War II broke out to avoid being tried as a conscientious objector. *Rejoice in the Lamb*, in some ways, marks Britten’s homecoming from his three-year exile in America, with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of St. Matthew’s Church in Northampton. While his best-known plea for peace is his *War Requiem* (1961), *Voices for Today*, commissioned for the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations, reflects Britten’s postwar hopes for lasting global peace.

Voices for Today (1965)

The first half of the work features aphorisms, from antiquity (Ashoka the Great, a Buddhist and emperor from 2nd century B.C.E. India) to 1965 (the Russian poet Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko, who taught for a time at Queens College, the City University of New York). The last half is dedicated to Virgil’s fourth *Eclogue*. These seemingly disparate texts serve as voices from throughout human history calling for peace.

The phrase “If you have ears to hear, then hear!” serves as a structural marker occurring at the beginning, serving as the midpoint between the first and second halves of the work, and closing the work as a coda. The thin textures of the first half keep the text prominent, while the ever-changing voicing suggests the utterances of the different voices of the quotations. The children’s choir first appears with the phrase “the young are people,” then quickly fades away as the remaining English texts are presented. In the second half, the wordless music of the children’s choir floats above the declamation of Virgil’s Latin text from *Eclogue IV*, evoking a sense of the young voices of tomorrow in dialogue with those of the past. The closing portion, which sees the children’s choir utter their only words (“If you have ears to hear, then hear!”), speaks to Britten’s hope of securing peace for the generations to follow.

The 1965 premiere at the United Nation Headquarters, including two concurrent performances in London and Paris, placed *Voices of Today* alongside Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 9, the finale of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, and one of Beethoven’s *Leonore* Overtures. Responses to the initial performances felt that Britten’s music did not match the lofty aims of his text or that the large number of texts undermined the larger message of the work.

Exultate Deo

Exultate Deo, adjutori nostro:
jubilate Deo Jacob.

Sumite psalmum et date tympanum:
psalterium jucundum cum cithara.

Buccinate in neomenia tuba:
insigni die solemnitatis vestrae

Salve Regina

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.

Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Evae,
ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.

Eja, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Psalm 80

Rejoice in God our helper:
sing aloud to the God of Jacob.

Take the psalm and bring hither the timbrel:
the merry harp with the lute.

Blow the trumpet in the new moon,
even on our solemn feast day

Prayer said on the Rosary

Hail, Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope, hail.

To you we call, exiles and children of Eve,
to you we sigh, mourning and weeping
in this vale of tears.

O therefore, our advocate, your
merciful eyes turn toward us;
and Jesus, blessed fruit of your womb,
to us after this exile show.
O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Litanies à la vierge noire (1936)

Hearing the news of Ferroud’s death while vacationing near Rocamadour, the sanctuary of the *Vierge Noire*, Poulenc visited the shrine, where he reflected upon the frailty of life. That evening, he began composing *Trois Litanies à la Vierge Noire de Rocamadour*, a short single-movement work for children’s or women’s voices and organ. The *Litanies* open with an austere, sparse organ prelude exuding calm, with its mixture of organum-like passages and dissonant polyphony. The central portion of the work pleads for God’s pity and peaks at the *fortissimo* appeal “Pray for us.” The end returns to the serene atmosphere of the beginning, though now with richer harmonies and a more resolute and flowing organ accompaniment.

Litanies à la vierge noire

Seigneur, ayez pitié de nous.
Jesus-Christ, ayez pitié de nous.
Jesus-Christ, écoutez-nous.
Jesus-Christ, exaucez-nous.

Dieu le père, créateur, ayez pitié de nous.
Dieu le fils, rédempteur, ayez pitié de nous.
Dieu le Saint-Esprit, sanctificateur, ayez pitié de nous.
Trinité Sainte, qui êtes un seul Dieu, ayez pitié de nous.

Sainte Vierge Marie, priez pour nous.
Vierge, reine et patronne, priez pour nous.
Vierge que Zachée le publicain nous a fait connaître et aimer,
Vierge à qui Zachée ou Saint Amadour éleva ce sanctuaire, priez pour nous.

Reine du sanctuaire,
que consacra Saint Martial,
Et où il célébra ses saints mystères,
Reine, près de laquelle s'agenouilla Saint Louis
Vous demandant le bonheur de la France,
Priez pour nous, priez pour nous.

Reine, à qui Roland consacra son épée, priez pour nous.
Reine, dont la bannière gagne les batailles, priez pour nous.
Reine, dont la main délivrait les captifs, priez pour nous.

Notre-Dame, dont le pèlerinage est enrichi de faveurs spéciaux,
Notre-Dame, que l'impiété et la haine ont voulu souvient détruire,
Notre-Dame, que les peuples visitent comme autrefois, priez pour nous, priez pour nous.

Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du monde, pardonnez-nous.
Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du monde, exaucez-nous.
Agneau de Dieu, qui effacez les péchés du monde, ayez pitié de nous.

Notre-Dame, priez pour nous,
Afin que nous soyons dignes de Jésus-Christ.

Traditional – Adapted by Poulenc

Lord, have pity on us.
Jesus Christ, have pity on us.
Jesus Christ, hear us.
Jesus Christ, grant our prayers.

God the Father, creator, have pity on us.
God the Son, redeemer, have pity on us.
God the Holy Spirit, sanctifier, have pity on us.
Holy Trinity, who are one single God, have pity on us.

Holy Virgin Mary, pray for us.
Virgin, queen and patron, pray for us.
Virgin, whom Zacchaeus the tax-collector made us know and love,
Virgin, to whom Zacchaeus or Saint Amadour raised this sanctuary, pray for us.

Queen of the sanctuary, which Saint Martial consecrated,
And where he celebrated his holy mysteries,
Queen, before whom knelt Saint Louis
Asking of you good fortune for France,
Pray for us, pray for us.

Queen, to whom Roland consecrated his sword, pray for us.
Queen, whose banner won the battles, pray for us.
Queen, whose hand delivered the captives, pray for us.

Our Lady, whose pilgrimage is enriched by special favours,
Our Lady, whom impiety and hate have often wished to destroy,
Our Lady, whom the peoples visit as of old, pray for us, pray for us.

Lamb of God, who wipes out the sins of the world, pardon us.
Lamb of God, who wipes out the sins of the world, grant our prayers.
Lamb of God, who wipes out the sins of the world, have pity on us.

Our Lady, pray for us,
To the end that we may be worthy of Jesus Christ.

Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence (1938–1939)

Poulenc viewed his *Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence*, written at La Touraine (his home in Noizay, an area soon to be under German occupation), as a turning point in his musical career. Building upon the musical style established in the *Litanies*, here the music more dramatically presents the text, makes more use of contrasts, and shows more diverse use of textures. The first motet, “Timor et tremor,” begins alternating between loud pleas for God’s mercy and softer, anguished expressions of despair, only giving way to an unsettled affirmation of faith with the closing words “Let me never be confounded.” “Vinea mea electa” explores Christ’s momentary frustration at his impending crucifixion with soft sections reflecting how Jesus lovingly tended his flock, contrasting with the loud outbursts conveying the tragic price he will pay. The tonally ambiguous ending may indicate Poulenc’s ongoing struggle with spirituality. Opening with a soprano-solo lament, as in the “Agnus Dei” in his *Mass* (1937), “Tristis est anima” sees Christ embrace his fate. The initial occurrence of the text “et ego vadam immolari pro vobis” (“I go forth to die for you”) retains traces of anger and frustration with chromatic sixteenth notes, while short, fleeting notes depict “vos fugam capietis” (“you arise and flee away”). The motet ends with the final appearance of “et ego vadam immolari pro vobis,” serving as a calm lament with the ethereal soprano solo weaving among the *pianissimo* homophonic chords of the chorus.

Timor et tremor

Timor et tremor venerunt super me,
et caligo cecidit super me.
Miserere mei, Domine, miserere,
quoniam in te confidit anima mea.
Exaudi Deus deprecationem meam,
quia refugium meum es tu adjutor fortis;
Domine, invocavi te,
non confundar.

Vinea mea electa

Vinea mea electa, ego te plantavi:
quomodo conversa es in amaritudinem,
ut me crucifigeres et Barabbam dimitteres?
Sepivi te et lapides elegi
ex te, et ædificavit turrum.

Tristis est anima mea

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem;
sustinete hic, et vigilate mecum.
Nunc videbitis turbam, quæ circumdabit me.
Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.
Ecce appropinquat hora,
et Filius hominis tradetur
in manus peccatorum.

from Psalms 55, 57, 61, 71 and 31

Fear and trembling have taken hold of me,
and darkness has descended upon me.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy,
for my soul has trusted in thee.
Hear, O God, my supplication,
for you are my refuge and strength;
O Lord, I have called upon you,
let me never be confounded

Matins response for Good Friday

O vineyard, my chosen one, I planted you:
How have you been changed into bitterness,
that you would crucify me and set Barabbas free?
I build a fence around you and picked the
stones from you, and built a watchtower.

Compline response for Holy Thursday

My soul is sorrowful even unto death;
stay here and watch with me.
Now you shall see the mob that will surround me.
You shall take flight, and I shall go to be sacrificed
for you.
Behold the hour approaches,
and the Son of man will be betrayed
into the hands of sinners.

