

ELGAR **The Dream of
Gerontius**

Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra

Eastbourne Symphony Chorus
Eastbournian Society Chorus
Renaissance Singers



www.eso.org.uk

**Sunday
24 April
2016**

7.30pm

**St Saviour's Church
South Street
Eastbourne BN21 4UT**

Conductor
Graham Jones

Leader
Lisa Wigmore



Bass
Jozik Kotz



Tenor (Gerontius)
Andrew
Mackenzie-Wicks



Alto
Susan Legg



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Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra

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www.eso.org.uk concertmanager@eso.org.uk 07780 993801

Thirty-sixth season

ESO Summer Concert 2016

Sunday 19 June 7pm St Saviour's Church

Programme to include

Dvořák Cello Concerto

Jamal Aliyev

Winner of the ESO Young Soloist Competition

ESO Autumn Concert 2016

Sunday 9 or 30 October 7pm St Saviour's Church (date tbc)

Programme to include

Glière Horn Concerto

Ben Goldscheider

Finalist in the ESO Young Soloist Competition

Thirty-seventh season

ESO Young Soloist Competition 2017

ESO Young Soloist Competition 1st round,
pm, Birley Centre Sat 14 Jan and Sun 15 Jan 2017

ESO Young Soloist Competition Final,

2pm, Birley Centre Sun 29 Jan 2017

ESO Choral Concert 2017

Saturday 22 April 7.30pm St Saviour's Church

ESO Summer Concert 2017

Sunday 18 June 7pm St Saviour's Church

ESO Autumn Concert 2017

Sunday 22 October 7pm St Saviour's Church (date provisional)

Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra

www.eso.org.uk

The ESO was founded as the Eastbourne Sinfonia in 1979 and the first concert took place in the Town Hall on 27 January 1980. Financially self-supporting and an independent organisation, it registered as a charity in 1987 and, with quality players from Eastbourne and the surrounding area, performs a number of concerts a year. These have included biennial music-from-the-movies concerts (with film clips), concerts for children, an ESO annual young soloist competition winner's concert, and an annual choral concert. A list of concerts and other details can be found on www.eso.org.uk

Eastbourne Symphony Chorus and Eastbournian Society Chorus

The Eastbourne Symphony Chorus welcomes singers who wish to support the orchestra's annual choral concert. The Eastbournian Society brings together current and former Eastbourne College pupils, parents and staff and other friends by providing a programme of events. Both of these choruses comprise many long-standing local singers, some with connections to current and former local singing groups, some with links to Eastbourne College. Many have enjoyed singing in the ESO's annual choral concert for more than 30 years. The singers rehearse weekly from January until the choral concert. We are delighted as ever to welcome some singers from other local choirs too, in particular the Renaissance Singers who form the semi-chorus for tonight's concert. The orchestra, singers and soloists rehearse all together once, on the afternoon of the choral concert.

We anticipate that the ten-minute interval (which will start after Part One) will start at about 8.15pm and that the concert will finish at about 9.30pm. Refreshments are not provided in the interval; we hope that you will understand their absence due to a lack of space. The church hall and vestry are being used as dressing rooms and the side aisles are being used to accommodate the pews removed to make space for the orchestra. Also, keen not to interfere in any way with the regular Sunday routine of St Saviour's, we were able to gain access to the church only after 12.30pm today, since when our focus has been to set up the staging and hold the dress rehearsal, the first opportunity when the players, singers and soloist can rehearse together.

Our thanks to St Saviour's PCC who have allowed us to reconfigure the nave and chancel to accommodate some 80 singers and 70 players.

Many will know that Sally Bishop passed away recently. Sally was a great supporter of the orchestra from its beginning in 1980, and her violinist husband John was one of the first players. Sally later became a co-ordinator for the ESO Friends and was a regular singer in our choral concerts. The ESO has often made sensitive references asking that supporters might think of the ESO when making out their wills, and Sally did just this. The ESO committee is keen to thank Sally's family and friends for the bequest made and feels that it would be highly appropriate to use it to help in the production of this concert.

A look back at the ESO choral concert

The ESO annual choral concert was established in 1983 with some 50 singers from the town and surrounding area and took place in St Saviour's Church. In 1987 (until 2014), singers from Eastbourne College Choral Society (which had existed in various formats since 1871) joined this ever-growing number of singers and, with over 300 singers and the 70-strong ESO, the venue became the Congress Theatre with Verdi's Requiem, followed by Orff's Carmina Burana in 1988 and so on (including Gerontius in 1994). In 1999 and with some 130 in the chorus, the concert moved to Chichester Cathedral.

The Chichester Cathedral venue (1999 to 2009) saw firstly Elgar's Gerontius, then Verdi's Requiem, Mozart's Requiem, Duruflé's Requiem, Puccini's Messa di Gloria, Rutter's Magnificat, Berlioz's Te Deum, Rutter's Mass of the Children, Dvorak's Mass in D, Poulenc's Gloria, Ledger's Requiem (Thanksgiving for Life) and Haydn's Creation.

The ESO choral concert returned to Eastbourne and St Saviour's Church in 2010 for a performance of Fauré's Requiem. In 2011, Puccini's Messa di Gloria was the main choral work and in 2012 there was a programme of British music to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee: Britten's National Anthem, Elgar's Cockaigne Overture, Handel's The King Shall Rejoice, Elgar's Give Unto the Lord and Rutter's Mass of the Children in which the chorus was joined by singers from St Andrew's Prep. In 2013, the programme was Jongen's Alleluiah for organ and orchestra, Handel's Zadok the Priest, Finzi's Dies Natalis and Berlioz's Te Deum. In 2014 some 160 singers joined the ESO to sing Verdi's Requiem, and in 2015 Haydn's Creation was performed.

A list of all ESO concerts since its inception can be found on www.eso.org.uk where progress is also being made in archiving posters, programmes and reviews.

Graham Jones retired as Director of Music (after 21 years) at the College in 2012, having been appointed in 1976. He continues to be the Musical Director of the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra and is delighted again to be working with such a large group of musicians with links to the town and the surrounding areas, as well as to Eastbourne College through the Eastbournian Society of which he himself is a member.

Graham Jones (ESO Musical Director, Conductor)



Graham Jones succeeded John Walker as Director of Music at Eastbourne College in 1991, having been appointed Assistant Director of Music in 1976. Brought up in Holt, Norfolk, he was educated at Gresham's School and Durham University where he was an organ scholar of Hatfield College, with responsibility for the Chapel Choir and College musical events. He was still at school when he first conducted an orchestra and gained further experience at university in workshops with Sir David Willcocks and Roger Norrington. During his time in Eastbourne he has been responsible for the Eastbourne Tudor

Singers (1978–1988) and co-founded the Eastbourne Sinfonia (1979), now the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra. He retired from the College in 2012.

As Musical Director of the ESO (then called the Eastbourne Sinfonia) from its inception and first concert in January 1980 he has been responsible for many of the orchestra's initiatives including the now nationally recognised annual young soloist competition (now in its 29th year) for which he is chairman of the adjudicating panel. Though his own particular interest lies in the romantic field, ESO programmes have included the standard orchestral repertoire as well as some works commissioned especially for the Orchestra. He has worked with some of the country's leading soloists including Sarah Connolly, Simon Deller, Simon Hewitt Jones, Neil Jenkins, Freddie Kempf, Mark Le Brocq, Anthony Marwood, Martin Roscoe, Patricia Rozario and John York, one of the Orchestra's patrons, as well as, for example, the Barbican Piano Trio. His previous College work with younger musicians and his current work with the ESO where he is always keen to find opportunities for young people to make and learn to appreciate music are part of his wish to encourage music in the community and make it accessible. This has led to initiatives like the biennial music-from-the-movies concert (with film clips) (working with Adam Faith, Hubert Gregg, Robin Gregory and Brian Murphy). Johnny Morris narrated one of the Orchestra's first children's concerts and Denis Quilley was the narrator in the Mari Markus Gomori series of concerts for children, which have also featured percussionist Alisdair Molloy. He enjoys listening to musicians at all levels, especially when adjudicating competitions.

Lisa Wigmore (Leader)

Lisa Wigmore is the Leader of the ESO and is also a member of the adjudication panel for our annual competition. At 15 she was awarded a junior exhibition to the Royal College of Music and continued her studies there under Jack Steadman in the senior department, where she gained her ARCM and GRSM. Since leaving the RCM she has studied under Tina Gruenberg.

Lisa is a well-known violin teacher in Sussex, teaching privately as well as working in the strings department at Eastbourne College. Many of her pupils have been successful in gaining entry to the National Children's Orchestra and some of the major music colleges. She also took part in a masterclass with Yfrah Neaman on behalf of the European String Teachers Association (ESTA).





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Susan Legg (Alto)

Since winning the National Mozart Singing Competition, Susan's flourishing career has taken her to major venues worldwide. Specialising in contemporary song, she has broadcast for BBC Radio 3 and Norwegian Radio.

Legendary mezzo Christa Ludwig described Susan's lyric mezzo as 'a beautiful voice with a fine coloratura'. Susan has given vocal and piano recitals at the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and St John's Smith's Square, and performed at Glyndebourne, Bayreuth, Wexford and Aldeburgh Festivals and the Walton Trust, Ischia. She has sung all Elgar's choral works, Bach's Passions, the Verdi and Mozart Requiems and toured Handel's Messiah in Mexico.

Awards include: National Mozart Singing Competition; Richard Tauber Schubert Society Prize; Tillet Trust's Young Artists Platform; finalist in Kathleen Ferrier Awards and Belvedere International Singing Competition and British representative in the Queen Sonja International Competition.

A CD of Lutoslawski chamber music with pianist Ann Martin-Davis (the first winner of the ESO's annual Young Soloist Competition in 1988) was described as 'beautiful and exquisite' by BBC Music Magazine and led to *Heaven-Haven: The Songs of Peter Pope*, a disc for the Nimbus label.

The duo commissioned song-cycles from Graham Fitkin, Howard Skempton and Gabriel Jackson which they toured in major UK music and poetry festivals. Their project *Mr James' Garden* celebrated music, sculpture and Edward James's surrealist Mexican garden Las Pozas. With specially commissioned Mexican artwork, it premiered in Mexico City with UK performances in Henley and Petworth Festivals.

Susan has recorded soundtracks for film, TV and video games and regularly sings with the BBC Singers. Her voice features on Stephen Baysted's film score *Renoir: Revered and Reviled* which premiered in February 2016 and played in cinemas worldwide.

Susan studied singing with Margaret Kingsley at the RCM and National Opera Studio, and piano with Clifford Benson and Phyllis Sellick.

The ESO is delighted to welcome Susan back to perform with us.





Andrew Mackenzie-Wicks (Tenor)

Andrew Wicks began singing as a chorister at Chichester Cathedral after which he won a music scholarship to Eastbourne College. He studied music at Durham University and singing at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Operatic engagements include Glyndebourne Festival (Cosi, Don Giovanni), English National Opera (Alda, War and Peace), Scottish Opera (A Night at the Chinese Opera), Welsh National Opera (Barber of Seville, Ariadne auf Naxos, Il Ritorno D'Ulisse, Seven Deadly Sins, Fidelio, Jephtha), Opera North (Elixir of Love), Grange Park Opera (Don Giovanni), Opera Northern Ireland (Don Pasquale), Castleward Opera (Cosi), Dublin Opera Theatre Company (Cenerentola), Buxton Festival Opera (Hercules, Maria Padilla, Armide, Veronique, Barber of Bagdad, Saul, Mignon), English Touring Opera (Rake's Progress, Barber of Seville), Chelsea Opera group, Brighton Festival, and Early Music Russia (Boris Godenouw).

He is regularly in demand as an understudy, working on the recent Royal Opera House production of Anna Nicole, and covering the role of Aschenbach in Garsington Opera's acclaimed production of Death in Venice. Future plans include The Golden Dragon for Music Theatre Wales.

His international concert career began with such groups as the King's Consort, Gabrieli Consort and Monteverdi Choir singing Bach, Handel, Mozart and Purcell. He toured Europe and America and performed at the BBC Proms.

His extensive oratorio repertoire now ranges from the baroque through the classical to romantic works such as Gerontius, the Kingdom, the Apostles, Verdi Requiem and Beethoven Missa Solemnis, as well as more contemporary works such as Britten Spring Symphony, War Requiem and St Nicolas.

He has performed all over the UK and in Beijing, Mexico, Singapore, and St Petersburg.

The ESO is delighted to welcome Andrew back to perform with us.

Jozik Kotz (Bass baritone)

Jozik Kotz was born in Oxford to Polish-Australian parents. After reading music at the University of York and singing as a lay clerk at York Minster, he won a postgraduate scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier, Royal Overseas League and Richard Tauber competitions. In 1993 he was the winner of the South East Arts competition, which led to his debut at the Wigmore Hall.

Jozik has subsequently performed operatic roles for ENO, Royal Opera, Glyndebourne, Opera Factory, Garsington, and Grange Park and in Paris, Vienna, Zurich, Madrid, Antwerp, Aix-en-Provence and Lisbon. He has appeared as a soloist at the Proms, and with the BBC Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia and English Chamber orchestras. His CD recordings include baroque cantatas for Hyperion records, the premieres of Turnage's *The Silver Tassie* and Gavin Bryar's *Dr Ox's Experiment* for Deutsche Gramophon, and the Paray Mass with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, which was nominated for a Grammy award.

As an amateur and conductor Jozik has devised and implemented singing projects for a variety of arts organisations including Youth Music, Making Music, and the education departments of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne and English National Opera. He has also given masterclasses at Kent University, Surrey University and at the Dartington International Summer School.

The ESO is delighted to welcome Jozik back to perform with us.



Eastbourne Symphony Chorus and Eastbornian Society Chorus

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Rehearsal accompanist: Gavin Stevens

| Soprano | Alto | Tenor |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Liz Barker | Jane Allcorn | Ian Clegg |
| Cynthia Baron | Jane Aldred* | John Crawshaw |
| Shirley Barrell* | Jane Bwyne | Vivian Fisher* |
| Anthea Birch | Lynne Chiswick | Paul Frisby* |
| Marilynne Bromley | Helen Cross | David Jeffries |
| Trish Brown | Patricia Culley | Malcolm Jones |
| Jane Cadman* | Wendy Dash | Richard Long |
| Clare Chetwood | Kay Fitzgerald | Mike Stafford |
| Sarah Corin | Jill Graham | Ray Williams |
| Jane Cornford | Elizabeth Graham | |
| Joan Crook | Vicky Henley | Bass |
| Deirdre Daines | Katie Hickman Casey | Kim Adams |
| Elizabeth Farrant | Philippa Kirtley | Robert Ascott |
| Elizabeth Foster* | Rachael Maddock* | Ian Collins* |
| Liz Furlong | Meg Munson | Paul Collins* |
| Hilary Goodwin | Katherine Musson* | Richard Crook |
| Sandra Grusd | Joyce Pickering | Andrew Forrest |
| Ruth Hankins | Jan Purcell* | David George |
| Hilary Hartley | Pam Russell | Hugh Graham |
| Caroline Hunt | Jane Slade | Ed Griffiths |
| Sandra Isted | Jenny Thompson | John Hamilton |
| Susan Kerrison | Tracey Williams | Paul Lucas |
| Jane Kingham* | Marguerita Young | John Patching |
| Caroline Kruger | | Brian Steer* |
| Mary Littlechild | | Chris Thompson |
| Ann Mabey | | John Thornley |
| Joanne Martyr | | Alan Williams |
| Janet McGowan* | | |
| Mary Mercer | | |
| Nicky Moray | | |
| Philippa Muggridge | | |
| Pamela Powell | | |
| Mary Reilly | | |
| Jacqueline Sheridan* | | |
| Yvonne Simnick | | |
| Caroline Thompson | | |
| Sue White | | |
| Margaret Whitehead | | |
| Val Winslade | | |

*Renaissance Singers
(semi-chorus)

Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra

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| | | |
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List updated 21 March 2016

The Dream of Gerontius **Ad Maiorem Deo Gloriam**

‘To the greater glory of God.’ So Elgar dedicated the score with words often used by Bach. This was followed by a quotation from John Ruskin: ‘This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was as the vapour and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worthy of your memory.’ Elgar instinctively knew what he was writing. It is ‘from my insidest inside’ he confided to a friend. ‘You will find Gerontius far beyond anything I’ve done... I have written my own blood into the score.’

It seems curious that the greatest work to come out of this country in the 19th century should come not from the established Anglican Church but from John Henry Newman (a convert to Catholicism) and Elgar (a confirmed Catholic). Newman wrote his dramatic poem in 1865 and it seems likely that Elgar first read it in the early 1870s. The association became stronger when, in 1889, he was given the poem as a wedding present. Newman was a master of the English language with a natural, clear and penetrating style. The poem tells of the journey of a man’s soul from judgment to purgatory. The stress is on human sin and the cleansing of the spirit. It is the culminating drama of every human soul and, as such, universal. Elgar knew that the insistence on purgatory might be prejudicial to the work’s success. Indeed, this was why Dvořák had withdrawn from setting the text in 1888. There was certainly hostility from the established Anglican church when early performances were being planned which led to Elgar’s having to remove some Catholic references in the text.

Gerontius is a name derived from the Greek word ‘geron’ meaning ‘old man’ and is a devout Everyman. Elgar describes Gerontius as ‘a man like us, and not a priest or a saint... a worldly man in his life... a good healthy full-blooded romantic... he represents me.’ We follow Gerontius from death to the threshold of eternity. It is a dream because his experiences, though real, are not perceived through bodily senses.

Sir John Barbirolli, one of the greatest interpreters of the work, described it as ‘a work, exulting and exalted, written as only masterpieces can be, in a constant heat of inspiration.’ The influences range from plainsong to Wagner. It was the first English work in which the orchestra is as expressive as the voices: the oboe when Gerontius sings of ‘that manhood crucified’, the strings at ‘the emptying out of each constituent’, the timelessness in the string opening to Part Two, and the harp as the angel sings farewell. Also new is the use of the semi-chorus and the melodic speech rhythms of Gerontius, particularly at the beginning of Part Two, when the soul sings of its liberation from the body. The conversation between the angel and the soul that follows was described by Elgar’s friend Jaeger (pictured within the Enigma Variations as Nimrod) as ‘mystic and heart-moving’. There are massed choral effects, from the snarling demons to the mighty setting of Praise to the Holiest. The moment when Gerontius finally sees God cost Elgar the greatest anxiety. This section was different in the first sketches. Jaeger wrote to him during a long correspondence about the work’s final shape: ‘I wanted you to suggest, in a few gloriously great and effulgent orchestral chords given out by the whole force of the orchestra in its most glorious key, the momentary vision of the Almighty.’ Elgar described it as ‘the one glimpse into the unexpressible.’

Gerontius is, in the words of one of Elgar’s biographers, Michael Kennedy, ‘a spiritual and artistic experience.’ It has a special place in the lives of those who know it. As always in the presence of great art, one feels a sense of humility in approaching the work. It is a privilege to conduct Gerontius again, especially so as this performance is, as was our performance in 1999, in a setting appropriate to the work.

Graham Jones
written Easter 1999
revised Easter 2016

PART ONE

Gerontius

Jesu, Maria - I am near to death,
And Thou art calling me; I know it now.
Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow, -
(Jesu have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)
That I am going, that I am no more,
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee.)
This emptying out of each constituent
And natural force, by which I come to be.
Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
Has never, never come to me before;
So pray for me, my friends, who have not
strength to pray.

Assistants

Kyrie eleison.
Holy Mary, pray for him.
All holy Angels, pray for him.
Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.
All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him.
All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.
All holy Innocents, pray for him.
All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,
All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,
All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;
And through 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

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;

From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying
On self, at the last;
From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.
By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross,
Rescue him from endless loss;
By Thy death and burial,
Save him from a final fall;
By Thy rising from the tomb,
By Thy mounting up above,
By the Spirit's gracious love
Save him in the day of doom.

Gerontius

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.
Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.
And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified;
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.
Simply to His grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong.
And I love, supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.
And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church, as His creation,
And her teachings, as His own.
And I take with joy whatever
Now besets me, pain or fear,
And with a strong will I sever

All the ties which bind me here.
Adoration aye be given,
With and through the angelic host,
To the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis, oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more; for now it comes again,
That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man.

. . . And, crueller still,

A fierce and restless fright begins to fill
The mansion of my soul. And worse, and worse,
Some bodily form of ill
Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse
Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps
Its hideous wings

And makes me wild with horror and dismay.

O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!

Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee

In Thine own agony . . .

Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.

Mary, pray for me.

Assistants

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,

As of old, so many by Thy gracious power:-

Noe from the waters in a saving home; (Amen.)

Job from all his 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

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep,

The pain has wearied me. . . Into Thy hands,

O Lord, into Thy hands. . . .

The Priest and Assistants

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!

Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God

The Omnipotent Father, Who created thee!

Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Son of the Living God, Who bled for thee!
Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit,
Who Hath been poured out on thee!
Go in the name
Of Angels and Archangels; in the name
Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name
Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!
Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets;
And of Apostles and Evangelists,
Of Martyrs and Confessors, in the name
Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name
Of holy Virgins; and all Saints of God,
Both men and women, go! Go on thy course;
And may thy place today be found in peace,
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
Of Sion: - through the Same, through Christ our Lord.

Interval (ten minutes)

PART TWO

Soul of Gerontius

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
This silence pours a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.
Another marvel: someone has me fast
Within his ample palm; . . .
. . . A uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth I
cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.

Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

Angel

My work is done,
My task is o'er,
And so I come,
Taking it home
For the crown is won,
Alleluia,
For evermore.

My Father gave
In charge to me
This child of earth
E'en from its birth
To serve and save.
Alleluia,
And saved is he.

This child of clay
To me was given,
To rear and train
By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia,
From earth to heaven.

Soul

It is a member of that family
Of 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

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

Soul

I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion; though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

Angel

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

Soul

Then I will speak: I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

Angel

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

Soul

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

Angel

It is because
Then thou didst fear; that now thou dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee bitterness of death is passed.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgement is begun.
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.

Soul

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

Angel

We are now arrived
Close on the judgement-court; that sullen howl
Is from the demons who assemble there,
Hungry and wild, to claim their property,
And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry!

Soul

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

Demons

Low born clods
Of brute earth,
They aspire
To become gods,
By a new birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits,
As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest;
The lords by right,
The primal owners,
Of the proud dwelling
And realm of light, -
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
Chucked down,
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust,
Each forfeit crown
To psalm-droners,
And canting groaners,
To every slave,
And pious cheat,
And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
Under his feet.

Angel

It is the restless panting of their being;
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

Demons

The mind bold
And independent,
The purpose free,
So we are told,
Must not think
To have the ascendant.

What's a saint?
One whose breath
Doth the air taint
Before his death;
A bundle of bones,
Which fools adore,
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

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

Angel

Yes, - for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord,
One moment; but thou knowest not, my child,
What thou dost ask; that sight of the Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

Soul

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

Angel

There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid-glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified, -
Such that the 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

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

Angel

. . . Hark to those sounds!
They come of tender beings angelical,
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.
Choir of Angelicals
Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise;
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!
To us His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.
The younger son He willed to be
A marvel in His birth:
Spirit and flesh His parents were;
His home was heaven and earth.
The eternal blessed His child, and armed,
And sent Him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.
To be His Viceroy in the world
Of matter, and of sense;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,
A resolute defence.

Angel

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

Soul

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



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Choir of Angelicals

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

Angel

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

Soul

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

Angel

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

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!
O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.
O Wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail.
And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all divine.
O 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

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

Soul

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,
Who say the 'Subvenite' with the priest.
Hither the echoes come; before the Throne
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,
The same who strengthened Him, what time He knelt
Lone in the garden shade; bedewed with blood.
That Angel best can plead with Him for all
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

Angel of the Agony

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on Thee.

Soul

I go before my Judge. . .

Voices on Earth

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.

Angel

. . . Praise to His Name!
O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.

Soul

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain
Lone, not forlorn, -

There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn,
There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possess
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

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation;
Before the hills were born, and the world
was, from age to age Thou art God.
Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast
said, Come back again, O Lord! how long:
and be entreated for Thy servants.

Angel

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.
And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.
Angels to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as 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

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc. Amen

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest, etc. Amen.

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