



Choral Contemplations

A series of short concerts which forms part of the Chapel Choir's regular Tuesday schedule throughout semesters one and two. For more information on forthcoming services and concerts, please see www.chapelchoir.org.

Tuesday 9 November 2021, 6pm

Choral Contemplations III: Singing for the Environment

Part of *The Dear Green Bothy*, a cultural programme from the College of Arts at the University of Glasgow hosting creative and cultural responses to climate emergency. www.deargreenbothy.ac.uk

There will come soft rains

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)

Read by Sophie Boyd

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools, singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white,

Robins will wear their feathery fire,
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

They have made it a desolation (first performance)

Commissioned by the College of Arts at the University of Glasgow for *The Dear Green Bothy* programme.

Music: Harold Thalange

Words: Jeremiah 12 : 10-11

“I was commissioned by The Dear Green Bothy to write just one piece for COP26, but what transpired were two pieces responding to different emotions that I personally associate with the climate crisis. “They have made it a desolation ‘tries to portray the anger and seeming-hopelessness of the global catastrophe we have brought ourselves to the brink of. In the text from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the original Hebrew uses the familiar figure of a shepherd as a leader of people, and it is under their lack of care by which the land is made a *shememah* - the potent Hebrew term for a wasteland or wilderness.” (Harold Thalange)

Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard,
they have trampled down my portion,
they have made my pleasant portion
a desolate wilderness.

They have made it a desolation;
desolate, it mourns to me.

The whole land is made desolate,
but no one lays it to heart.

Kyrie – For the beauty of the earth (first concert performance)

Music: Harold Thalange

Words: Folliott S. Pierpoint (1835–1917)

“‘Kyrie - For the beauty of the earth’ pairs a familiar Christian hymn text with the Greek words ‘Lord have mercy’. It was written in response to a request from the BBC to have a piece responding to the idea of hope in the dark time we are in. The *Kyrie* sections were inspired by a theme from the ‘Lament’ from Herbert Howells’ 1914 suite for orchestra *The B’s*, which was dedicated to his good friend Ivor Gurney. While the other text, by Folliott Pierpoint, is an uplifting one, the beauties to which it alludes are, in this piece, treated with dissonance and an ultimate lack of complete harmonic resolution.” (Harold Thalange)

<i>Kyrie eleison,</i>	Lord have mercy upon us,
<i>Christe eleison,</i>	Christ have mercy upon us,
<i>Kyrie eleison.</i>	Lord have mercy upon us.

For the beauty of the Earth
For the beauty of the sky
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise

<i>Kyrie eleison,</i>	Lord have mercy upon us,
<i>Christe eleison,</i>	Christ have mercy upon us,
<i>Kyrie eleison.</i>	Lord have mercy upon us.

Lament

Janet Graham

Played by Kevin Bowyer

Janet Graham’s *Three pieces for Organ*, of which this is the second, we’re written in 1986 and first performed by Kevin Bowyer in St Albans Abbey two years later. The ‘Lament’, quiet throughout, begins and ends with multi-layered passages of complex harmony, while the central section consists of fleeting phrases on high-pitched sounds, like unseen birds rustling in lofty rafters.

Lord, keep us modest

Music: Nico Muhly

Words: Thomas H. Troeger

Lord, keep us modest when we claim by Nico Muhly sets a hymn by the American hymn-writer Thomas H. Troeger, a writer well known for reflecting cultural changes such as the women’s movement, civil rights movement, environmental movement, breakthroughs in science, computers and cosmology in his work. This setting was commissioned by the Eastman School of Music in 2016.

Lord, keep us modest when we claim to know your heart’s desires
Lest we invoke you to inflame belief’s destructive fires,
Let it suffice that we should find the star-stitched quilt of night
a marvel that provokes our mind to seek yet deeper light.

From wonder let more wonder flow at how the atom spins,
How cells are formed, evolve and grow, how life itself begins,
How mass and energy give rise to yearnings in our hearts
That reach beyond the farthest skies for where existence starts.

Then let our yearning hearts become an open door to prayer,
A way to hear your Spirit hum through words and acts of care,
A way to stretch our self-concern beyond our routine course,
A way to live that helps us learn you are life's end and source,

And let these simple prayerful ways dispel the violence bred
When faith is turned from thanks and praise to hatred, fear and dread,
Yet even more may prayer make clear faith's universal claim
You hold the whole creation dear, and love is your true name.

Seek Him that maketh the Seven Stars

Music: Jonathan Dove

Words: Amos 5:8; Psalm 139

“The theme of light, and star-light in particular, is an endless source of inspiration for composers. I came across these words about light and stars while looking for a text to set as an anthem for the Royal Academy of Arts' annual Service for Artists: I thought these images would have a special meaning for visual artists. The anthem begins with a musical image of the night sky, a repeated organ motif of twinkling stars that sets the choir wondering who made them. The refrain ‘Seek him’ starts in devotional longing but is eventually released into a joyful dance, finally coming to rest in serenity.” (Jonathan Dove)

Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion
and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.
Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the day,
the night is light about me. Amen.

Lied to the flowers

Music: Flor Peeters

Played by Kevin Bowyer

‘Lied to the Flowers’ is a movement from Peeters's *Lied-Symphony* (1950). The other movements are dedicated to the ocean, the desert, the mountains, and the sun.

i. The earth

ii. The innermost house

Music: Bob Chilcott

Words: Chief Seattle (1786–1866); Anon. Aztec

Two movements from *I Share Creation*, Chilcott's short concert setting exploring man's relationship with the earth. The first movement sets a text thought to come from a letter of speech by the Suquamish and Duwamish chief Seattle (or Seathl). The text of the second movement is attributed to a fifteenth-century Nahua (Aztec) poet.

- i. The earth does not belong to man;
Man belongs to the earth.
- ii. They shall not wither, my flowers,
they shall not cease, my songs,
I, the singer lift them up.
They are scattered, they spread about.

Even though on earth my flowers may wither and yellow,
they shall be carried there,

to the innermost house
of the bird with the golden feathers.

Earth Song

Frank Ticheli

“Earth Song is one of only a few works that I have composed without a commission...I knew I had to write the poem myself, partly because it is not just a poem, but a prayer, a plea, a wish – a bid to find inner peace in a world that seems eternally bent on war and hatred. But also, the poem is a steadfast declaration of the power of music to heal. In the end, the speaker in the poem discovers that, through music, he is the embodiment of hope, peace, the song within the Song. Perhaps music has the power not only to nurture inner peace, but also to open hearts and ears in a world that desperately needs love and listening.”

Sing, Be, Live, See.
This dark stormy hour, the wind, it stirs.
The scorched earth cries out in vain:
O war and power, you blind and blur,
The torn heart cries out in pain.
But music and singing have been my refuge,
And music and singing shall be my light.
A light of song shining strong: Allelulia!
Through darkness, pain, and strife,
I'll Sing, Be, Live, See...
Peace.

Upcoming Events:

COP 26 in Glasgow: Prayers with Songs from Taizé

Midday prayers continue for the rest of the week – Wed (Wellington), Thu (Chapel), Fri (Turnbull Hall).

Evening Prayer, Wednesday, 7pm - Sherbrooke Mossspark Church, 240 Nithsdale Rd, G41 5AD

Vigil Prayer, Thursday, 7pm - St Aloysius Church, 25 Rose St, G3 6RE

Sunday 14 November, 10.45am

Remembrance Sunday

Please note that due to covid restrictions, this year's service is not open to the public. We are streaming the service via the Chaplaincy YouTube. <https://youtu.be/FGak-SPfTRg>.

Monday 15 November, 6-8pm

Greening Choirs (Part of The Dear Green Bothy)

We know that choral singing is good for the soul, but is it good for the planet too?

Join community musician and activist Penny Stone for a practical workshop on how we can use community singing and song writing to explore environmental and social justice issues. Open to everyone, no previous singing or song writing experience required. Limited spaces available.

Full details and tickets: <https://deargreenbothy.gla.ac.uk/event/greening-choirs/>

Tuesday 16 November, 6pm

Choral Contemplations IV: *Contrafacta* and *Counterfeit*

Our annual 'small groups' concert, where the choir form smaller ensembles. This year we explore the age-old tradition of reworking, rewriting and recycling musical material.

See www.chapelchoir.org/services-and-events.html for full listings.