

Ethel Smyth

The Prison

Beethoven

Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt

Brahms

Nänie



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Beethoven

Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt

Ethel Smyth

The Prison

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MEERESSTILLE UND GLÜCKLICHE FAHRT BEETHOVEN

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): *Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt* (Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage), Op. 112 (1814/15)

The years 1813-17 are widely, if misleadingly, regarded as a relatively fallow period in Beethoven's creative life. In the decade up to 1812 he had completed six symphonies (Nos 3-8) as well as the *Choral Fantasy*, Op. 80, which would become the final movement of the 9th. The reasons for an apparent slowing of his compositional momentum are several and various – his increasing deafness led him to become estranged from close friends and associates and to write the deeply introspective entries in the *Tagebuch* (journal) that he began to keep at this time. This was compounded by the worsening of his general health and recurrent abdominal illnesses. The death of his brother Kaspar in 1815 marked the beginning of a decade of emotionally draining legal struggles with Kaspar's widow over custody of their son Karl, his nephew. The Austrian currency devaluation of 1811 had seriously undermined Beethoven's personal finances and the political climate was also in upheaval, following the failure of Napoleon's invasion of Russia and his final defeat at Waterloo. The Congress of Vienna was assembled by the victorious allies in 1814 after his enforced abdication and exile to Elba, in pursuit of restoration of the old European monarchies in a new balance of power that sought to sustain a stable and lasting peace after the chaotic years of war. In celebration of the euphoria and hope of the time Beethoven composed two works, the cantata *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (The Glorious Moment), Op. 136 and an orchestral piece *Wellingtons Sieg* (Wellington's Victory), Op. 91. Both were celebrated in terms of the popular mood of fervent patriotism which accompanied the congress. The critical response was less enthusiastic, however, dismissing both works as shameless concessions to the political moment and far below Beethoven's normal, self-critical standards with verdicts such as 'professional frolics', 'rather bombastic' and 'monument of trivialities'.

Yet Beethoven had always composed with an eye to the popular appeal of his work. From his early years he had regularly produced accessible pieces that were simple in construction and easy to perform, often in the same genres in which he was producing more complex larger-scale works – for example the *Marches for Piano Four Hands*, Op. 45, which he composed alongside the *Funeral March* in the *Eroica* symphony. The fallowness of the 1812-17 period, thus, would seem to have been more an issue of quality rather than quantity in Beethoven's compositions. There was no falling-off in the amount of works produced by Beethoven, but rather an overriding of the aesthetic quality and character of some of them by the strength of his continuing desire for public recognition and financial security.

Nevertheless, it was in this same period that he brought the reconstruction of his work on *Leonore* to magnificent final fruition as *Fidelio*, the reception of which began to cement his reputation as the major composer of his time. Distinct features of his late style also begin to emerge at this time, for example in the A minor Piano Sonata, Op. 101, the two Cello Sonatas, Op. 102, his only song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98 and the beginning of work on the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Op. 106. It is in the aesthetic context of these fully realised and expressive works that his carefully shaped and quite unjustly neglected setting of Goethe's linked poems, *Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt*, should be placed.

Beethoven had already composed incidental music for Goethe's tragedy *Egmont* when he first met the poet whilst on a convalescent holiday at the Treplitz spa in the summer of 1812. The two men spent several hours in conversation, of which

Goethe wrote that, while Beethoven's talent amazed him, 'he is an utterly untamed personality, who is not altogether in the wrong if he finds the world detestable, but he thereby does not make it more enjoyable either for himself or others'. This might be excused, Goethe continues, 'as his hearing is leaving him, which, perhaps, injures the musical part of his nature less than his social.' It seems clear that, for all their mutual admiration, they were incompatible: Beethoven wrote that 'Goethe enjoys the air at court too much, more than is good for a poet'. Each, from these statements, seems opinionated about the other's artistic practice, but more than that, being of different generations, their different careers represented a fundamental change in the social role and status of the creative artist. Goethe still enjoyed the patronage of court society, on which Beethoven realised he could no longer rely after the financial crisis of 1811.

Although it was first performed on Christmas Day 1815 in Vienna at a concert that also included the similarly neglected cantata *Christus am Ölberge*, Op. 85, Beethoven did not publish his setting until 1822, dedicating it to Goethe, to whom he sent a copy. In a subsequent letter, seeking the poet's help in raising subscriptions for the *Missa Solemnis*, he wrote that 'by reason of their contrasting moods these two poems seemed to me very suitable for the expression of this contrast in music. It would afford me much pleasure to know whether I had united my harmony with yours in appropriate fashion.' He received no reply, perhaps because by then Goethe was terminally ill but as likely because Goethe had clear views on setting poetry to music and would not have responded sympathetically to Beethoven's repetitions of lines and multiple iterations of single words. Whereas for

Beethoven's romantic imagination this heightened the expressiveness of both poem and music as the totality of his setting, for the neoclassicist in Goethe, a poem was entire as finally written and became compromised if rendered in any altered form.

For all Goethe's implied disapproval, however, Beethoven's is a faithful realisation of the sense and spirit of the two poems. Despite his never going to sea, his setting shows a clear musical understanding of the dialectical opposition of Goethe's two poems: a calm sea becalms a sailing ship; any voyage under sail, whether prosperous or not, is only possible once wind has arisen. The first part of the work (*Meeresstille*) opens appropriately therefore with an uncanny choral harmony, marked *sostenuto pp*, intimating the terrible, deathly stillness ('Todesstille fürchterlich!') of the water, its

motionless surface, the immense distance ('ungeheuern Weite') over which the anxious sailor observes the absence of movement in air and sea. The stillness is emphasised by dry, plucked notes in the strings and staccato notes in the chorus. An exaggerated stretching through four notes over three bars for all choral parts, *forte*, on 'Weite' is followed by sudden interruption of the close sequencing of the words 'reget keine' for sopranos, tenors and basses as the orchestra extends this strongly dissonant harmony over five octaves. The deliberately elaborated tempo throughout anticipates some of the slow movements of the last of Beethoven's piano sonatas and quartets which define the distinctiveness of his late style.

In complete contrast, *Glückliche Fahrt* opens *allegro vivace* in 6/8 time, with frenetic strings indicating that

the whispering wind has arrived. The chorus announces that the fog is torn, the sky bright and Aeolus, the Greek god and keeper of the winds, releases the fearful bindings. As the sailor begins to move, swiftly ('Geschwinde!') the wind picks up, the waves move and the ship is underway, speeding rapidly towards the sight of land ('Schon seh ich das Land!'). As well as conveying the thrilling speed of a ship under full sail, the sheer orchestral pace and choral exhilaration of Beethoven's setting expresses the intensity of the condensed metre of the poem through its contrast with the unsettling *longueur* of the first part of Goethe's diptych. Drawing on his *Choral Fantasy*, it anticipates the choral movement of the Ninth Symphony and thus well represents the transitional character of Beethoven's work in this period, suggesting clearly that it was anything but fallow.

Paul Filmer

Meeresstille

Tiefe Stille herrscht im Wasser,
Ohne Regung ruht das Meer,
Und bekümmert sieht der Schiffer
Glatte Fläche rings umher
Keine Luft von keiner Seite,
Todesstille fürchterlich.
In der ungeheuern Weite
Reget keine Welle sich.

Glückliche Fahrt

Die Nebel zerreißen,
Auf einmal wirds helle,
Und Aeolus löset
Das ängstliche Band.
Es säuseln die Winde,
Es rührt sich der Schiffer,
Geschwinde! Geschwinde!
Es theilt sich die Welle,
Es naht sich die Ferne,
Schon seh' ich das Land!

Calm Sea

Deep silence rules the water,
Without motion lies the sea,
And worried the sailor observes
Smooth surfaces all around.
No air from any side!
Deadly, terrible stillness!
In the immense distances
Not a single wave stirs.

Prosperous Voyage

The fog is torn,
The sky is bright,
And Aeolus releases
The fearful bindings.
The winds whisper,
The sailor begins to move.
Swiftly! Swiftly!
The waves divide,
The distance nears;
Already I see land!

ETHEL SMYTH

Ethel Smyth was an extraordinary woman who lived an extraordinary life. At a time when the expected destiny for a woman of her background was marriage, she defied the conventions of Victorian femininity to live as she chose: to compose music and to live and travel independently, having intense relationships with (mainly) women, campaigning for the vote, writing memoirs, and more. Smyth was an active and enthusiastic participant in the transformation of women's lives that took place during her lifetime. Between her birth in 1858 and her death in 1944, women won the right to control their property after marriage, to study at university, to enter the professions, to vote. Her struggles to make her mark as a woman composer and her disappearance from the canon after her death also mark the limitations of these changes; it is only in the last couple of decades that her work has reappeared in recordings and concert programmes.

Born into a prosperous military family in 1858, Smyth grew up in Surrey, one of eight children. Her musical gifts were apparent early, encouraged especially by a governess who had studied at the Leipzig Conservatory. The young Ethel decided that she would do the same, and become a composer. Despite family opposition, her father eventually gave way in the face of his daughter's resolve ('I ... determined to make life at home so intolerable that they would have to let me go ... refused to go to church, refused to sing at their dinner parties, refused to go out riding ...', she recalled), and in 1877 at the age of 19 she went to Leipzig. For the next 12 years she would spend much of the year in Leipzig or travelling elsewhere in Europe, coming back to England in the summer. In Leipzig she composed songs, piano pieces and chamber music; the first public performance of her work, a string quintet, took place there in 1884.

These intense and fruitful years of friendships and music were the foundation of her future career,

musically and emotionally. Through her close friendship with the von Herzogenbergs, Heinrich and his wife Lisl (to whom she was passionately attached), Smyth acquired a network of musical and aristocratic connections, including composers like Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Clara Schumann. The Empress Eugénie (widow of the deposed French emperor Napoleon III) became a significant patron and intimate companion. Through the von Herzogenbergs, too, she met Lisl's sister Julia and Julia's husband Henry Brewster, who were living in Venice when Ethel spent the winter of 1882-83 in Italy – another formative encounter, although the attachment that developed between Ethel and Henry eventually led to the breakdown of her relations with Lisl and the von Herzogenberg family. It appears that Henry and Ethel were briefly lovers; she wrote later that 'there had been nothing resembling love-making ... except during that fateful winter of 84-85', but in 1885 they broke off the relationship, and Ethel was cut off also from the rest of the family. 'For seven years', she wrote, 'my life had been inextricably mixed up with the Herzogenbergs' lives, whether musically or humanly'; she described the years that followed as 'the most miserable of my life'.

By the late 1880s Smyth was back in England. Encouraged by Tchaikovsky to write for orchestra, her compositions grew in scale. A serenade and an overture were played at her first public performance in England in 1890. Vocal music also became increasingly significant; over the next 15 years her compositions included a Mass in D (1891) and several operas, notably *Der Wald* (performed in Berlin in 1902, and at the New York Met and London's Royal Opera House in 1903) and *The Wreckers* (1906), alongside songs, comic operas and choral works. Meanwhile Henry Brewster was back on the scene, and wrote the libretto for *The Wreckers*, as well as contributing to other libretti. They had resumed their friendship in 1890, although she rejected his marriage proposal

when his wife died in 1895 on the grounds that marriage would interfere with her composing; it would probably also have interfered with the other passionate affairs she was involved in during these years. It is not clear how many of her intense friendships with women were sexual; despite her openness on many topics, her many volumes of autobiography remain silent on the subject. But as she wrote to Brewster in 1892, 'I wonder why it is so much easier for me to love my own sex more passionately than yours. I can't make it out, for I am a very healthy-minded person'. The word lesbian was not widely used until the twentieth century, but Smyth to herself at least seems to have been clear about her preferences.

In 1910 a new friendship, and with it a new passionate interest, entered her life in the shape of Emmeline Pankhurst, the charismatic leader of the Women's Social and Political Union. Smyth's general support for women's rights acquired a new focus, both in Pankhurst (with whom she developed 'the deepest and closest of friendships') and in the cause. The WSPU had developed a strategy of militant disruption, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of women campaigners, and Smyth felt compelled to join in. 'In the Autumn of 1911', she recalled, 'I realised for the first time what 'Votes for Women' meant, and it seemed to me that all self-respecting women ... were called upon to take action'. Deciding that she could not devote herself simultaneously to political campaigns and artistic creation, she determined to give two years entirely to activism before returning to music. Accordingly, between 1911 and 1913, she was 'swept into the hottest heart of the fight for the Vote', she wrote. Her suffragette anthem, *The March of the Women*, appeared in 1910. In 1912, along with Pankhurst and over a hundred other women, she was arrested for throwing stones at the houses of leading politicians, and spent two months in Holloway Prison. Thomas Beecham recorded a visit to

the prison where he saw the prisoners taking exercise in the yard while Smyth energetically conducted them with her toothbrush from her cell window as they sang *The March of the Women*.

In 1913, Smyth stepped away from militancy and went to Egypt to complete another opera, *The Boatswain's Mate*; but plans for performances of this in Vienna were disrupted by the First World War, and music was once again put aside while she worked as a volunteer radiographer and radiologist in France. By the end of the war she was 60, and increasingly deaf. The eight volumes of autobiography that she published over the next couple of decades were written partly to bring in money, given the difficulty of earning a living as a composer. But they also reflected on the issues facing women in music, and their continuing exclusion from full participation in musical culture. Her memoirs vigorously attacked the structures that blocked women's progression: the male heads of the music academies, the orchestra leaders, the publishers, journalists and reviewers, who refused to take women musicians seriously. As players, performers, teachers or composers, women were systematically excluded from the more prestigious musical institutions, mocked or patronised. She had experienced this herself as a composer, with reviews that praised her virility or deplored her lack of feminine delicacy, and an endless struggle to get her works performed and recognised as part of the repertoire; she urged women musicians to fight back. Smyth did eventually gain a degree of public recognition (she was awarded honorary doctorates by Durham University in 1910, by Oxford in 1926, and St Andrews in 1928; and she was made Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1922); but she was acutely aware that her work was disappearing from the public eye.

Similar concerns recur in her extensive correspondence with

Virginia Woolf, whom she met in 1930; Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) shares Smyth's preoccupation with how women can find an independent artistic voice. Woolf also took Smyth's writing seriously, urging her to be more daring. 'Now why shouldn't you be not only the first woman to write an opera, but equally the first to tell the truths about herself?' she wrote to her in 1940. '... I should like an analysis of your sex life . . . More introspection. More intimacy.' Smyth did not follow this advice, but the correspondence makes clear their mutual respect.

The Prison, Smyth's last substantial composition, was written in 1930, by which time she was almost entirely deaf. The choice of material reverts to a much earlier period in her life, and indeed to an earlier person: it is based on a book written by Henry Brewster in 1891, *The Prison: A Dialogue*. This was shortly after the renewal of their friendship, and it seems likely that they discussed the work at the time; but Brewster had died in 1908, more than 20 years before Smyth returned to the text, and her reworking of it as a libretto makes radical changes. In Brewster's book, the central figure is a prisoner awaiting execution for a crime he did not commit; the text consists of the prisoner's diary, which reflects on life and immortality, and a framing sequence of conversations between four philosophically minded friends. Smyth strips out most of this, using a only shortened version of the prisoner's diary as libretto, and splitting the prisoner's monologue into a three-part conversation: the Prisoner, the Soul and the mysterious Voices. These parts variously question, reassure, exhort and explain, until finally the Prisoner is ready to embrace dissolution and immortality as all the voices merge into one.

The text itself evokes the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century European fascination with archaic and exotic cultures. It articulates a general mystical faith in the blurring of the boundaries between life and

death, mortal and immortal, flesh and spirit, which draws occasionally on orientalist accounts of Eastern religion, but more particularly on the idea of ancient Greece – including a section 'in Greek mode' that borrows an ancient Greek melody, the Song of Seikilos. The sound of the last trumpet as death calls the Prisoner, associated with imperial military procedures and rituals, perhaps sits oddly alongside this evocation of exotic mysticism, archaic rites and the illusory nature of the self; but it also signifies a move towards freedom: the release from duty and the end of the day. And while the libretto suggests that the prison we live in is our inability to transcend the self and our misguided concepts of death, for Smyth perhaps it also evokes other forms of imprisonment: in Holloway, in social conventions, in her loss of hearing.

When Brewster died, Smyth was with him, holding his hand. As she described it in 1933:

When H.B. was dying, the death stupor, as so often happens, yielded for a moment. At the very last he suddenly opened his eyes wide ... So wondering, so confident, so glad was the look, that one could almost fancy the Prisoner's desire was fulfilled – that he saw those banners, heard that music.

The symbolic end to the day – the banners and the music that come towards the end of the libretto – sets the prisoner free.

Smyth died at home in Surrey in 1944, at the age of 86; her Mass in D had been broadcast on the radio the previous year, but it would be the 1990s before new recordings and performances of her compositions reappeared.

Kate Hodgkin

THE PRISON SMYTH

Ethel Smyth (1858-1944): *The Prison. Symphony for Soprano and Bass-Baritone Soli, Chorus and Orchestra, 1930* - Some notes on the music.

Widely travelled though she was, Smyth did not visit Greece until 1925. She prepared for her six-week 'journey into antiquity' by studying the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, Plato's *Phaedrus* and Euripides' tragedy *Hippolytus*, as well as re-reading her beloved late friend Harry Brewster's *The Prison: a Dialogue* which she later adapted as the text of her symphony. In a foreword to the score, she summarises it thus:

"a group of friends discuss a manuscript supposed to have been left behind by some unknown prisoner.

The whole is the record of a struggle to escape from the bonds of self (the Prison), and the extracts here set to music are taken from the Prisoner's last utterances".

Brewster's work takes the form of a Platonic dialogue - the structure used by Plato in *Phaedrus* - between the prisoner and his soul. Each reader voices a different philosophical position - supernaturalist, Christian, Positivist, Neoplatonist (which was Brewster's own perspective) - as they discuss the philosophical issues raised by the text. The prisoner, in solitary confinement, discusses with his soul how best to prepare for the imminent end of his earthly, material life. Through concentrated contemplation and moral commitment, he seeks to 'disband' himself, thereby releasing his whole being - mind, body and soul - from the imprisoning constraints of self.

Smyth wisely removed much of the rather turgid discussion in Brewster's text, whilst retaining the central structure of earnest exchanges

between prisoner and soul, voiced by the bass-baritone and soprano soloists. The chorus of voices, who represent both the inner life of the self and the ethereality of the soul, act as both prompt and echoing commentary at key moments, as in a classical Greek drama. Smyth prefaced the score with what are reputedly the final words of Plotinus, the second-century BCE Neoplatonist idealist metaphysician who argued similarly for complete relinquishment of the self from the soul: "I am striving to release that which is divine within us, and to merge it in the universally divine".

In a programme note for the first performance, Smyth wrote that by terming the work a symphony she did not intend to connote a specific orchestral form of composition but rather the classical Greek sense of a concordance of sweet sounds. This explains its complex, eccentric organisation which resembles neither that of a sacred sinfonia or a choral symphony. The music contains echoes of her own earlier compositions and those of her key musical influences: its thematic density is suggestive at times of Brahms, whose work she admired; and Mahler, whom she also met. At times the orchestration - particularly the heavy use of brass - reflects her awareness of Wagner and Bruckner. Those of her own earlier works clearly referenced are the *E minor String Quartet*, the *Mass in D* and her operas, *The Wreckers* and *The Boatswain's Mate*, as well as a German chorale, *Schwing dich auf zu deinem Gott*, which she composed in Florence in 1884 when she first met Brewster, and dedicated to him. It appears here arranged as a gentle musical interlude at the opening of the second part of the work under

the title 'Early morning: organ music sounds from the Prison Chapel'. The theme of the work is akin to that of her favourite opera, *Fidelio*, though the prisoner's fate is quite different. Like Beethoven, she was completely deaf when composing her late works though, unlike him, this did not produce from her a late style of radical musical innovation. Instead, *The Prisoner* seems to have been intended to formulate a lasting sense of Smyth's lifelong struggle for personal and artistic identity, as a woman, a composer, a writer and a lover.

Smyth organises the work in two parts, 'Close on Freedom' and 'The Deliverance', each divided into eight titled sections. The first part opens, without introduction, as the forlorn prisoner broods, over low-pitched clarinet and strings, on the constraints which prevent him from going 'out once more amongst the living', though he wonders: 'If I were set free and could speak to men/ What should I have to say?' His soul consoles him: 'Tell them that no man lives in vain./...some small part of our work./...has been tossed aloft/And garnered in forever'. This dialogue suggests from the outset that there will be a resolution of the sustained dramatic tension between self and soul which becomes the narrative trajectory of the work, realising it as the soul guides the prisoner through doubts, fears, self-acceptance and reconciliation with the inevitability of death, into a calm and joyful final state of inner peace.

The titles of the sections in each Part indicate key stages of this ontological journey, arranged as musical events. They are, understandably, dominated by the bass soloist as the self, the

major protagonist, giving the music a predominantly dark, introspective resonance, contrasted at times by extravagant bursts of percussion, flourishes of wind motifs, harp arpeggios and busy strings. The solos represent the struggle of the self, alternating between the instinctive desire of the opening soliloquy to return to normal human life and the self-absorbed introspection of the concluding section of Part I, where he compares himself to 'a doomed ship/Whose crew...drenched with the brine of oblivion,/Man some new craft...Till its sails, too, hang in rotten shreds'. The contrast is redeemed by the radiant ethereality of many of the soprano solos for the soul, as in the opening section of Part II where she softly declaims, above the dissonances of the orchestra's contrastingly unstable harmonies: 'The struggle is over; the time has come,/The choice is made./Abandon to destruction/The unity of which you are conscious,/Take refuge in the lastingness of its elements'.

The chorus first enters in the second section of Part I, elaborating the soul's reassurance to the self that 'no man lives in vain', with the tenors and basses quietly chanting 'We are full of immortality,/It stirs and glistens in us/under the crust of self/' then joined by sopranos and altos: 'Like a gleam of sirens under the ice' to the confident, hymn-like conclusion: 'And by so much of us as it has touched/Do we escape destruction...'. The choral parts work in parallel harmonies over contrasting orchestral dynamics in a display of Smyth's multifaceted compositional virtuosity, which is not sustained for every choral interjection: in the axiomatic fifth section of Part II, echoing the

prisoner's cry of 'I disband myself they burst into a growing crescendo of 'I set my ineffaceable stamp upon the womb of time'. This is reiterated rhetorically in a semi-fugue of shifting octaves, which suggests a chaos of self-disintegration as much as the presumably intended triumphal disbandment that finally liberates the soul, and reconciles the self to the inevitability of death.

The chorus that follows in the next section is musically redemptive, however. Quietly, the choir sing: 'The laughter we have laughed...mingled with the sound of the syrinx' as the orchestra invokes a faint sound of panpipes in the first of two delightfully archaic ancient Greek melodies that Smyth had noted down in Smyrna. They conclude to a second melody, from Euripides' *Ajax*: 'No hearts but ours shall ever ache and leap/Our passions are the tingling blood of mankind'. The first melody is that of the Song of Seikilos, an epitaph for Seikilos' wife, found inscribed on a tombstone near Ephesus and thought to be the world's oldest notated musical work, dated between the second century BCE and the first century CE. It translates as a reflective exhortation not dissimilar in character to the theme of the symphony's text:

When you are alive, Shine!
Never let your mood decline
Life exists only a short while
And time demands its toll.

This crucial section heralds the conclusion of the work. In the next, the soul gently chides the prisoner: 'For years you have been conning your lesson,/Learning to say "Not me, not mine,/...Now someone says to you:/It is well so far; taste also the death.'

Smyth's title for the penultimate section is 'Death calls him (The Last Post); glorying, he obeys the summons'. He does so, echoed by the chorus, crying 'Let there be banners and music. This is no leavetaking. I am not even going home.' And *The Last Post* does indeed echo the moment of his physical death, melodramatically, but understandable in terms of Smyth's upbringing in a military family. It may, though, have contributed to her friend Virginia Woolf's frank verdict that the music was 'too literary – too stressed – too didactic for my taste'. In the final section, the prisoner and his soul are once more in dialogic duet as in the opening section, but now peacefully and joyfully conjoined, they 'bow down...to the life eternal'. In a ritual epilogue, the prisoner, echoed by his soul and the choral voices, brings the work softly to a close with calm respect for his metamorphosis as 'the thought, the soul, the home' and finally, 'The love...the silence and the song'.

This is not the best of Smyth's work but it stands as a tribute to her love of Brewster and her resolutely strong sense of herself and her considerable abilities as a composer. It exhibits to great effect all the qualities that her friend Thomas Beecham eulogised at her funeral:

"She was a stubborn, indomitable, unconquerable creature; a grand person, a great character, one of the most important people of her time. We think of her with admiration, respect and a great love."

Paul Filmer

Part I
Close on Freedom

The Prisoner

I awoke in the middle of the night
 And heard the sighing of the wind,
 Even so is my life passing away
 A little rustling in the dark,
 A little traceless rustling...

Then a great yearning seized me,
 And I said to myself: 'I would like to
 go out once more among the living!
 Can nothing of it all be of good to others?
 Can I not send them a farewell message...
 Scatter it on leaves to the wind
 Or engrave it in blood on the stones?

If I were set free and could speak to men
 What should I have to say?'

His Soul

Tell them that no man lives in vain,
 That some small part of our work,
 For reasons unknown to us, has been tossed aloft
 And garnered in for ever.
 It was perhaps not our best work,
 Not perhaps a great or a good work;
 Maybe a moment of despair or of joy,
 Of passion or of kindness...
 Perhaps almost nothing,
 A sight, a sound, a dream...
 Perhaps what men call a sin;
 But as a child drops a coin in the moneybox
 His big friend keeps for him
 So we have flung that stray moment into eternity,
 Beyond the sun and the stars.

Voices

We are full of immortality
 It stirs and glistens in us
 Under the crust of self
 Like a gleam of sirens under the ice,
 And any blow which breaks the crust
 Brings us into the company of the eternal ones

Whom to feel is to be as they.
 That blow you surely will strike somehow,
 The film you have spread you will likewise rend,
 You who live and die...

We are full of immortality,
 This hour that is with us now
 Will endure for ever.

It has always been,
 It will not be buried with us;
 It has fallen on us like a drop
 Of the fabulous river
 Whose waters make men invulnerable,
 And by so much of us as it has touched
 Do we escape destruction...
 Surely, surely you will slip into heaven!

The Prisoner

I was alone with the sorrow
 Of my wasted life,
 But now the room is not cheerless any more;
 It is companionable as with the haze
 Of morning and the twitter of swallows...
 Behold! In this very moment
 I am outliving death!
 What is the creed that works this wonder?
 Where is my philosopher's stone?
 My magic pebble...? What is the secret?

His Soul

There is no secret;
 Only something that overwhelms
 And stuns to rest.
 Mighty enough to break away from you,
 Perfect enough to need you no more,
 To shake you off and endure for ever.

But not in you; and only for ever
 Because not in you. It must not be retained,
 It passes and wanders on to others
 Who are waiting in desolation
 As you waited.

The Prisoner

Will it return to me with the same face
 As tonight, sublimely sad?

His Soul

It will perhaps return as a rapture of joy
 That will sweep you away,
 Or as some unwordable storm
 Suddenly hushed to the pipe of a thrush.

Voices

Who are our Saviours?
 There is one here tonight
 Whose name is Sorrow.

Others are elsewhere, under other names,
 Or nameless. They claim no bondage from us

They make no list of chosen souls.
They stroll amid the human throng
Indifferent to whom and what they touch
And whatever they have touched is eternal.

The Prisoner

In the faint grey morning I hear
A sound as of distant surf,
I breathe the breath of the ocean,
And it seems to me that I am as a doomed ship

Whose crew – a motley crew of hopes and thoughts
and passions –
Had suddenly recollected that they could not drown,
But will surely re-appear,
And, drenched with the brine of oblivion,
Man some new craft, putting their pride again
In some gallant ship of self,
Till its sails, too, hang in rotten shreds,
And pitiful timbers give way once more.

(He sleeps)

INTERVAL

Part II The Deliverance

Dawn: sound of organ music in the prison chapel.
(The Prisoner awakes)

His Soul and Voices

The struggle is over; the time has come,
The choice is made.
Abandon to destruction
The unity of which you are conscious,
Take refuge in the lastingness of its elements.
Bid farewell for ever to the transient meeting
Of eternal guests, who had gathered here for an hour.
They are taking leave of one another,
Never, perhaps, throughout the course of ages
To meet again – all of them and none but they –
Under the same roof!

The Prisoner and Voices

I hear them overhead moving to depart,
And the sound of their several footfalls
Quivers through me in sweet-bitter shudders; -
I hear the flight of the divine vultures
That bear away my substance shred by shred.
The wind of their wings is as ice on my forehead,
And, from I know not where, wells into my eyes
The tranquil glory of a boundless sunset.

Voices

What are they waiting for, the departing guests?

His Soul

Only for a word that shall set them free...

The Prisoner

Go then, pass on, immortal ones!
Behold. I burst the bonds that pent you up
Within me; I disband myself!

The Prisoner and Voices

I disband myself
And travel on for ever in your scattered paths;
Whereso'er you are there shall I be,
I survive in you! I set my ineffaceable stamp
On the womb of time!

Voices

The laughter we have laughed
Rose in the bulrushes of yore
And mingled with the sound of the syrinx,
The kisses that have wandered to our lips
Will never grow cold;
No hearts but ours shall ever ache and leap,
Our passions are the tingling blood of mankind.

His Soul

For years you have been conning your lesson.
Learning to say 'Not me, not mine',
Ashamed both of sorrow and of joy,
Till they slowly were lifted from within you
And stretched overhead
Endless and unchangeable as the milky way
Whose soft light descends indifferently
On all men, from generation to generation,
Now someone says to you:
'It is well so far; taste also the death.'

The Prisoner

Then let there be banners and music!

His Soul and Voices

Banners and music!

The Prisoner

This is no leavetaking,
I am not even going home.
I thank you, days of hope and pride,
I thank you, lamentable solitude,
And you, shades of those that loved me;
I sorrow with you, grieving ones,
And melt with you, O fond ones;
I triumph with those who vanquish,
I rest with those who are dead!

The Prisoner and His Soul

I/You have nothing that is mine/yours but a name
I bow/Bow down in my/your dream of a day
To the life eternal.

Voices (softly)

The laughter we have laughed

Rose in the bulrushes of yore, etc.
Bow down in your dream of a day
To the life eternal...

Epilogue*Prisoner*

I am the joy and the sorrow –
I am the mirth and the pride –
The love...the silence and the song.

I am the thought...
I am the soul...
I am the home...

Echo (His Soul and Voices)

This is no leavetaking
(Let there be banners and music)
We are not even going home

...the thought...
...the soul...
...the home...

Henry Bennett Brewster (1850-1908)



NÄNIE

BRAHMS

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): *Nänie (Lament)* by Friedrich Schiller, for Chorus and Orchestra op. 82 (1881)



Brahms's romanticism is nowhere more evident than in his recurrent focus on death. Confronting the mortality of friends and family brought about some of his most significant work: Robert Schumann's attempted suicide in 1854 and his death two years afterwards combined with his mother's death a decade later to move him to complete his *German Requiem*; similarly, the death of his friend the painter Anselm Feuerbach, in 1880, led him to compose this setting of Schiller's poem, the most mournful of his works for chorus and orchestra. He dedicated it to Feuerbach's mother, Henriette, in her son's memory, conducting the first performance at a special concert of the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra on 6th December 1881.

'Naenia' was the ritual funeral song of ancient Rome, which Schiller casts in elegiac form as a lament for the fading of beauty and the demise of perfection marked by the tragic fates of mythic heroes - Adonis, Achilles, Eurydice, Paris and Aphrodite are all referred to. Men and Gods alike weep desperately at this loss, though it fails to move the iron heart of stygian Zeus ('nicht die eherne

Brust rührt es des stygischen Zeus'), whose divine indifference to the human condition encapsulates Brahms's theme.

Schiller's poem employs a relatively fluid elegiac structure of distichs, couplets of regularly alternating hexameters and pentameters which Brahms echoes in the loose, fluctuating rhythms and dynamics of his setting. The tempi of the first four distichs are set at a uniform andante in D major with a time signature of 6/4, changing at the fifth couplet to 4/4 *piu sostenuto* in F sharp major, thus marking musically the first of the two major points of narrative articulation in Schiller's text. The second change, back to andante, is for the final couplet.

The initial melody opens the work with an extended oboe solo, lightly punctuated by gentle strings until bassoons and horns modulate a slightly more forceful string accompaniment to the chorus's polyphonic entry, in fugue-like sequence, mourning the death of beauty. Tone and dynamics shift back and forth expressively at the deep betrayals caused by the apparent

callousness of the gods: Zeus recalling Euridice to Hades after Orpheus's forbidden backward glance as he has almost accomplished her rescue and resurrection; Aphrodite's refusal to heal Adonis's fatal wound; Thetis's refusal to save Achilles, allowing him instead to fulfil his destiny, killed by Paris at the gates of Troy. As his mother, however, Thetis mourns him nevertheless, and just as Schiller's account changes character from its litany of divine indifference to express her grief, so Brahms changes tempo and melody, realising the erotic dimensions in Schiller's dark text. He conjures a breath-taking orchestral soundscape for the vision of Thetis ('Aber sie stieg aus dem Meer...') and her sisters, Nereus's daughters, each rising Venus-like from the waves to lament her exalted son ('die Klage hebt an um den verherrlichten Sohn'). Her sadness is elaborated from these particular sorrows into a sustained display of all-encompassing divine lament ('Siehe, da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle') at the passing of beauty and perfection, until Brahms returns to tempo primo for the closing lines.

Schiller's narrative closes with an ambiguity: to be eulogised by the beloved is glorious redemption ('ein Klaglied zu sein im Mund der Geliebten, ist herrlich'); without which one is condemned to sink into the underworld of the dead ('das Gemeine geht klanglos zum Orkus hinab'). Brahms chooses to end his setting on a more positive note however, adapting the verse to offer the prospect of hope beyond despair. *Nänie* closes with a repetition of the first line of the final couplet, before ending calmly, with a gentle crescendo, in soft iterations of 'herrlich, herrlich'.

Paul Filmer

Nänie

Auch das Schöne muß sterben! Das Menschen und Götter bezwinget!
 Nicht die eherne Brust rührt es des stygischen Zeus
 Einmal nur erweichte die Liebe den Schattenbeherrscher,
 Und an der Schwelle noch, streng, rief er zurück sein Geschenk.
 Nicht stillt Aphrodite dem schönen Knaben die Wunde,
 Die in den zierlichen Leib grausam der Eber geritzt.
 Nicht errettet den göttlichen Held die unsterbliche Mutter,
 Wenn er, am skäischen Tor fallend, sein Schicksal erfüllt.
 Aber sie steigt aus dem Meer mit allen Töchtern des Nereus,
 Und die Klage hebt an um den verherrlichten Sohn.
 Siehe, da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle,
 Daß das Schöne vergeht, daß das Vollkommene stirbt.
 Auch ein Klaglied zu sein im Mund der Geliebten ist herrlich;
 Denn das Gemeine geht klanglos zum Orkus hinab.

Even beauty must die! That which subjugates gods and men
 Moves not the steely heart of the Stygian Zeus.
 Only once did love come to soften the Lord of the Shadows,
 And just at the threshold he sternly took back his gift
 Neither can Aphrodite heal the wounds of the beautiful youth
 That the boar had savagely torn in his delicate body.
 Nor can the deathless mother rescue the divine hero
 When, at the Scaean gate now falling, he fulfills his fate.
 But she ascends from the sea with all the daughters of Nereus,
 And she raises a plaint here for her glorious son.
 Behold! The gods weep, all the goddesses weep,
 That the beautiful perishes, that the most perfect passes away.
 But a lament on the lips of loved ones is glorious,
 For the ignoble goes down to Orcus in silence.

Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805)



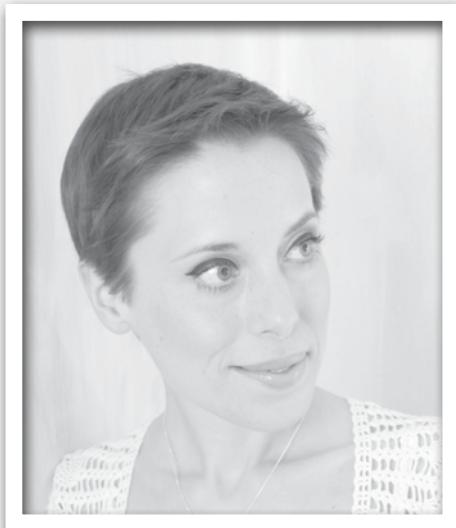
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REBECCA BOTTONE SOPRANO

Rebecca Bottone's recent engagements include the world premieres of Jonathan Dove's opera *Itch* at Opera Holland Park and the UK premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Marx in London!* with Scottish Opera, the world

premiere of *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko* at Grange Opera, Haydn's *Creation* with Zurich Opera and Queen Tye in the Olivier award-winning production of *Akhnaten* at ENO.

Further appearances include First Innocent in the world premiere of Birtwistle's *Minotaur*, *Powder Her Face*, and First Niece *Peter Grimes* (Royal Opera House), Cricket and Parrott in the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (Opera North and Minnesota Opera), Marie in the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright's *Prima Donna* (Manchester International Festival), Amanda in Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre* and Casilda in *The Gondoliers* (English National Opera), Blonde *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Aix-en-Provence Festival) Anne Egerman *A Little Night Music*, Johanna Sweeney *Todd*, Carrie *Carousel* (Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris) and *Pelléas et Mélisande* with WNO.

Concerts with the world's leading orchestras include the Academy of Ancient Music at the Wigmore Hall and the RAI Turin with Christopher Hogwood. Rebecca has sung *Charmeuse* in *Thaïs* under Eschenbach with Renée Fleming and performed with the CBSO, the Hallé and the Manchester Camerata as well as Bach *St John Passion* with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi in Milan, the Tonhalle under Sir Mark Elder and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras.

Recordings include *Cis Albert Herring* EMI, *Eurice Adelaide di Borgogna* and *Cleone Ermione* for Opera Rara, *Amor Orfeo* for La Nuova Musica and Richard Blackford's cantata *Babel* with David Hill. TV appearances include BBC2's documentary *The Genius of Beethoven*, David Starkey's *Music and Monarchy* and Steven Poliakoff's acclaimed film *Capturing Mary*.



ALEX OTTERBURN BARITONE

Alex trained at the Royal Academy of Music shortly before becoming an Emerging Artist at Scottish Opera and then one of English National Opera's Harewood Artists.

His recent concert highlights include *Carmina Burana* with the Oulu Symphony Orchestra under Rumon Gamba, Bernstein's *Arias*

and *Barcarolles* accompanied by James Baillieu and Philip Moore at the Edinburgh International Festival, and a programme including Vaughan Williams and Gurney at the Ludlow English Song Festival with Iain Burnside. He has sung Haydn's *The Seasons*, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Fauré's *Requiem*, and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*. In recent months Alex has recorded *The Call* (Stone Records) accompanied by Malcolm Martineau, the debut release from Barbara Hannigan's Momentum initiative which introduces the next generation of classical artists.

Previous engagements have included Ned Keene *Peter Grimes* (Teatro La Fenice) as well as a number of major roles for English National Opera including Pluto *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Squibby in the world premiere performances of Iain Bell's *Jack the Ripper: The Women of Whitechapel* and Schaubard *La bohème* conducted by Ben Glassberg. For The Grange Festival, he sang

Peter in the world premiere of David Matthew's opera *Anna*, Demetrius *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Pallante *Agrippina*, as well as making his debut as Chip in Antony McDonald's new production of *On the Town* for the Hyogo Performing Arts Centre. A notable role debut was as Eddy in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* which he performed at the Edinburgh International Festival and Brooklyn Academy of Arts as well as Harlequin *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Opera Holland Park and Scottish Opera), *Cascada The Merry Widow* (Opera North) and Marquis d'Obigny *La Traviata* (Scottish Opera).

Alex's recent and future engagements include Ned Keene *Peter Grimes*, Henry Cuffe *Gloriana*, Ernie *It's a Wonderful Life* (English National Opera), *Zweiter Handwerksbursche* in Deborah Warner's production of *Wozzeck* (Royal Opera House), Morales *Carmen*, *Cascada The Merry Widow* and Starveling *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera).



MURRAY HIPKIN CONDUCTOR

Murray Hipkin studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining the Music Staff of English National Opera (1983–1988) and then working for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and, as Musical Director, Opera Brava. Since returning to ENO in 1995, he has appeared in *Mahagonny*, *The Silver Tassie*, Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, *The Rake's Progress* and *Trial by Jury*; as Senior Répétiteur his productions over 35 seasons have included Phyllida Lloyd's *Ring Cycle* and Terry Gilliam's *The Damnation*

of *Faust*; as Assistant Conductor he worked on, most recently, *Sweeney Todd* (with Emma Thompson and Bryn Terfel), *The Barber of Seville*, *Sunset Boulevard* (starring Glenn Close), Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Akhnaten* and *Iolanthe*. In 2013 he played the solo piano in a revival of Deborah Warner's production of Britten's *Death in Venice* (available on DVD). He is currently appearing in *The Magic Flute* and preparing *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*.

He has conducted *La bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box); Salieri *Falstaff*, Haydn *La vera costanza*, Mozart *Apollo and Hyacinth*, Gluck *Le cinesi* (Bampton Classical Opera), and, for ENO, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers*, *Kismet*, *Carousel* (with Katherine Jenkins and Alfie Boe), *Chess* (with Michael Ball and Alexandra Burke) and *Man of la Mancha* starring Kelsey Grammar and Danielle de Niese. In July 2010 he was Associate Conductor of *The Duchess of Malfi* by Torsten Rasch (ENO/Punchdrunk).

Other highlights include assisting the composer John Adams and conducting on location for the Channel 4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Pierrot Lunaire* with Björk at the Verbier Festival. In September 2012

he assisted John Adams once again on *Nixon in China* at the BBC Proms and the Berlin Philharmonie, and in November 2018 he worked on *Sweeney Todd* for Bergen National Opera. In February 2009 Murray completed an eight-month sabbatical from ENO as Musical Director of *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium, conducting over 170 performances.

Murray has been with NLC since January 2003 and was Musical Director of the Pink Singers, Europe's longest running LGBT+ choir, from 2010 until October 2023. In 2022 he appeared as Music Supervisor and coach in the Sky Arts/ENO/Factory Films reality series *Anyone Can Sing*, and in August 2023 he conducted *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado* and *The Yeoman of the Guard* as Musical Director of the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival at Buxton Opera House and Malvern Theatre. Plans following his redundancy from ENO at the end of this month include *Nixon in China* for the Deutsche Opera in May 2024 and a return to Buxton and Malvern to conduct *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Gondoliers* in August and September.

Murray Hipkin is a member of English National Opera, and appears by permission.

LUCY STEVENS

Lucy Stevens is an actor, classical singer and theatre-maker. She studied acting at Rose Bruford College of Speech & Drama and voice at Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. Lucy has performed in productions at the Old Vic, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Arts Theatre, Liverpool Playhouse, Longborough Festival Opera, Opera Holland Park, Sadler's Wells and The Royal Opera House. Recently Lucy has created new small-scale theatre productions in which song and the spoken word weave seamlessly through text drawn from autobiographical writings. *Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle* celebrates this extraordinary woman's life, weaving her music with the story of her battle to have her work recognised and performed. *Gertrude Lawrence: A lovely way to spend an evening*, *Virginia Woolf: Killing the Angel* and *Kathleen Ferrier: Whattalife!* also written by Lucy, have all toured throughout the UK and internationally and have featured on BBC 2, BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4. In 2020 Lucy recorded *Dame Ethel Smyth - Songs and Ballads* with Elizabeth Marcus and the Berkeley Ensemble conducted by Odaline de la Martinez for Somm Recordings. In 2022 *Virginia Woolf: Killing the Angel* was published by Aurora-Metro Books.

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

The Meridian Sinfonia is a dynamic and highly flexible professional ensemble, drawing on players from both the period instrument and modern orchestral worlds.

The players of the Meridian Sinfonia are highly sought-after throughout the UK and Europe as performers, soloists and teachers. The range of the orchestra encompasses the Renaissance through to the contemporary, having given the first modern revivals of long-lost works and the first performances of contemporary compositions.

The Meridian Sinfonia has had the pleasure of working with North London Chorus, the Chapel Royal at HM Tower of London, the Three Choirs Festival, Waltham Singers, Skolia, Stondon Singers, Worcester Festival Chorus, London Oriana Choir and the Fourth Choir.

NORTH LONDON CHORUS



We are a talented and versatile amateur choir and have established a reputation for performances of a high standard since our first concert in 1977 under the direction of the late Alan Hazeldine. Our musical director since 2003 has been Murray Hipkin, senior répétiteur at English National Opera and, until recently, Musical Director of London's longest running LGBT+ choir, The Pink Singers. Murray's considerable experience of both choral music and opera, together with his enthusiasm and skills as teacher and conductor have enabled NLC to flourish through the development of an exciting and ambitious programme of performances drawn from the choral repertoire of the 16th to 21st centuries, as well as specially commissioned work from contemporary composers.

The choir benefits greatly from working with our vocal coaches Mark Oldfield and Yvette Bonner, and is privileged to have as its patrons the renowned operatic soprano Janis Kelly, Professor and Chair of Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music, and the baroque musicologist and Handel scholar and performer Laurence Cummings OBE, currently Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music. Both have performed with us: in 2015 we were delighted to have Janis perform with us in Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral and Laurence conduct us in a workshop and concert performance of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in London.

We rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley and on additional Wednesdays as concert dates approach. We give public concerts three times a year, usually to a full house at St James Church in Muswell Hill, though we are continuing to explore performing at larger venues in Central London after a successful performance of Brahms' *German Requiem* with the Berlin choir Cantus Domus at Milton Court in the Barbican Centre in 2014. This was the follow-up to our visit to Berlin in 2013 to perform the *War Requiem* with Cantus Domus at the Berliner Konzerthaus. Likewise in 2017 we performed with the Swiss choir Contrapunto at the City

Church of St Jakob, Staffauer in Zurich, in celebration of their 30th anniversary and they, in turn, came to London for a joint concert with us in Shoreditch Town Hall. As a result of these very positive experiences we aim to maintain a reciprocal touring programme with choirs in other countries.

In December 2020, during the Covid lockdown, many members participated in the London Handel Festival's *Messiah Reimagined*, broadcast live on YouTube, as part of the pre-recorded digital choir. For our return to live concerts, the choir performed Britten *Saint Nicolas* in November 2021 in partnership with Finchley Children's Music Group under Grace Rossiter. One of the performances was a special relaxed one in the afternoon, suited to families with children and audience members with special needs. We repeated this successful venture at our July 2023 concert *A Night at the Opera*.

We are a friendly choir and hold social events each year which include a fundraising quiz evening and a weekend workshop. As well as enabling us to work intensively on vocal technique and choral repertoire under expert specialist tuition, the workshop has as one of its highlights an enjoyable and relaxed Saturday evening concert of cabaret-style performances of music, song and humour displaying the considerable variety of our members' talents.

As a registered charity, one of whose aims is the promotion, maintenance and improvement of the public's appreciation of choral music, we have been successful in raising funds to help subsidise our work. Through our own concerts and participation in local events we also support a number of other charities.

We welcome new members and invite interested singers from all voice parts to attend one or two rehearsals prior to auditioning. Details are available at <https://www.northlondonchorus.org/joining/>

JOIN US!

North London Chorus is looking for new members across all voice parts.

- Experience the joy of choral singing
- Develop your skills under the expert guidance of our Musical Director, Murray Hipkin
- Enjoy technical guidance and support from our team of professional vocal coaches,
- Get involved in our regular social activities and opera trips and enjoy our annual residential weekends.
- Help organise our concerts and raise funds.



Whether you are an experienced singer or discovering your voice, come and be part of this friendly, ambitious and well-established group of singers.

Rehearsals take place every Thursday evening in East Finchley and we perform three concerts a year, mostly in Muswell Hill.

Here's what recent members say about us:

'First and foremost, the musical standard of performance is very high'

'From the very first moment, everyone made me feel very relaxed and at ease'

'I have made many new friends through helping in one way or another and have found it a joy to be part of such a wonderful organisation'

Come and try us out before joining – we hope you'll enjoy making music with us.

<https://www.northlondonchorus.org/joining/>

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

SOPRANO

Jean Airey	Jenny Cohen	Marta Jansa	Ros Massey	Patricia Whitehead
Gloria Arthur	Debbie Goldman	Susan Kempster	Verity Preest	Rebecca Woolf
Helena Beddoe	Rhona Graham	Amanda Lebus	Jennifer Somerville	
Jenny Bourne Taylor	Katharine Hodgkin	Alison Liney	Judith Suissa	
Michaela Carlowe	Enid Hunt	Ainsley McArthur	Joanne Walker	

ALTO

Anna Armbruster-Evans	Vicky Faure Walker	Jo Hulme	Judith Moser	Julia Tash
Eloise Beckles	Eleanor Flaxen	Mary Instone	Tessa Padel	Pauline Treen
Vivienne Canter	Hélène Gordon	Alice MacKay	Joan Reardon	Catherine Whitehead
Lucy Ellis	Viv Gross	Kathryn Metzenthin	Alison Salisbury	

TENOR

Gary Bilkus	Pasco Fearon	Keith Maiden	Nigel Royden	John Twitchen*
Alan Chandler	Sue Heaney	Jeremy Pratt	Wilhelm Skogstad	

BASS

Marcus Bartlett	Shaun Davies	David Hastings	David Stone	
Josi Clay*	Ronnie Engelbert	Yoav Landau-Pope	Edward Walters*	
Norman Cohen	Paul Filmer	Tim Lutton	Lawrence White*	
John Crouch	Jacob Fitzgerald*	Dan Newman		*Guest performers

Our thanks go to Tim Hooper for leading some of our rehearsals, and Ben Thapa for fixing extra singers.

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

Leader

Eleanor Gilchrist

Violin

Vernon Dean
Roma Tic
Rebecca Dinning
Karen Anstee
Eve Kennedy
Emma Penfold
Annmarie McDade
Alison Wyatt
Valtie Nunn
Danny Lewis

Viola

Charlie Cross
Geoff Irwin
Sharada Mack
Ariane Alexander

Cello

Hannah Lewis
Susie Winkworth
Nick Allen

Double Bass

Cath Ricketts
Kenneth Knussen
Flute
Robert Manasse
Chris Hankin

Piccolo

Caroline Welch

Oboe

Rachel Harwood-White
Jeremy Foster

Cor anglais

Rosalie Watson

Clarinet

Helen Paskin
Lucia Porcedda

Bass Clarinet

James Maltby

Bassoon

Jo Turner
Siping Guo

French Horn

Richard Wainwright
Kate Hainsworth
Julian Faultless
Sarah Johnson

Trumpet

Fraser Tannock
Joe Sharp

Trombone

Phil Dale
Felix Fardell
Andrew Lester

Tuba

Jeff Miller

Timpani

Matthew Turner

Percussion

Oliver Lowe
Lewis Blee

Harp

Ruby Aspinal

Celeste

Catherine Borner

Orchestral Management

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To mark our 40th Anniversary **Friends of North London Chorus** was launched in the summer of 2017, with a performance by our late **Friends of NLC** patron and renowned soprano Sally Silver.

We would be delighted to welcome more **Friends** to the scheme. Donations support and fund special projects, workshops, new commissions and similar activities within our charitable goals, and will also enable us to provide additional support to members in need who would otherwise find it difficult to sing with the choir.

The suggested donation is £40 per year (you are welcome to give more!) and you are warmly invited to join. Membership of Friends of NLC will entitle you to the following:

- Acknowledgement of your generous support in our concert programme (unless you prefer to opt out).
- Complimentary programmes.
- Complimentary interval drink from our range of wine and soft drinks (one per concert).
- Being amongst the first to know about our concerts and events via our mailing list.
- Priority booking for concerts.

If you would like to become a friend of the NLC, please join the scheme via our website

www.northlondonchorus.org/friends

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- 24 Mar 2012 **Handel** *Israel in Egypt*
30 Jun 2012 **Dvorak** *Mass in D*
Howells *An English Mass*
15 Dec 2012 **King** *Out of the Depths*
(First performance)
Mozart *Mass in C Minor*
20 Apr 2013 **J S Bach** *Mass in B Minor*
29 Jun 2013 **Various** *Summertime*
21 Nov 2013 **Britten** *War Requiem*
15 Mar 2014 **Schubert** *Mirjams Siegesgesang*
Korngold *Passover Psalm*
Mendelssohn *Hear My Prayer*
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
14 Jul 2014 **Mendelssohn** *Verleih' und Frieden*
Brahms *Nänie*
Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem*
22 Nov 2014 **Beethoven** *Mass in C*
Haydn *Te Deum*
21 Mar 2015 **Fauré** *Requiem Mass*
Kodály *Missa Brevis*
Liszt *Die Seligkeiten*
16 May 2015 **Britten** *War Requiem*
4 July 2015 **Handel** *Acis and Galatea*
28 Nov 2015 **Bach** *Magnificat*,
Christmas Oratorio Parts 1,2,3
12 Mar 2016 **Mendelssohn** *Elijah*
11 Jun 2016 **Bernstein** *Mass (Choral Suite)*
Whitacre *Five Hebrew Love songs*
Copland *Old American Songs*
20 Nov 2016 **Verdi** *Requiem*
25 Mar 2017 **Dove** *The Passing of the Year*
Brahms *Liebeslieder, Neue*
Liebeslieder
1 Jun 2017 **Mozart** *Requiem*
King *Out of the Depths*
25 Nov 2017 **Mendelssohn** *Die erst Walpurgisnacht*
Vaughan Williams *In Windsor Forest*
Dähler *Byzantium*
17 Mar 2018 **Haydn** *The Creation*
Insanae et vanae curae
14 Jul 2018 **Salieri** *Requiem*
Puccini *Messa di Gloria*
17 Nov 2018 **Britten** *The Company of Heaven*
Haydn *Nelson Mass*
9 Mar 2019 **JS Bach** *St John Passion*
22 Jun 2019 **Rutter** *Magnificat*
Vaughan Williams *Flos campi*
Dyson *Hierusalem*
30 Nov 2019 **Rossini** *Petite Messe Solennelle*
Verdi *Ave Maria, Va pensiero*
27 Nov 2021 **Britten** *St Nicolas*
9 Apr 2022 **Brahms** *Ein deutsches*
Requiem, Geistliches Lied
2 Jul 2022 **Cherubini** *Mass in C minor*
Bach *Cantata 51 Jauchzet Gott*
Mendelssohn *Wie de Hirsch schreit*
3 Dec 2022 **Handel** *Dixit Dominus*
Charpentier *Messe de Minuit pour*
Noël
22 Apr 2023 **Vaughan Williams** *A Sea*
Symphony
22 Jul 2023 **A Night at the Opera** *Arias and*
choruses from favourite operas
and operettas
25 Nov 2023 **Bach** *Magnificat, Gloria in Excelsis*
Deo.
Handel *Laudate pueri*

Please visit www.northlondonchorus.org for the full list dating back to the first concert in 1977

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Murray Hipkin

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Vocal Consultants

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