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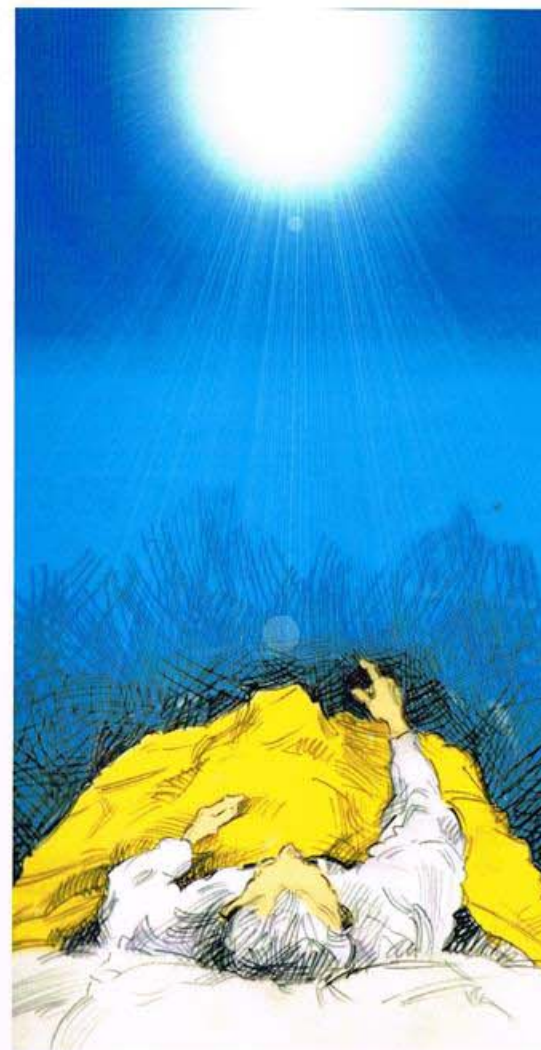
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Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

Programme typeset by Neil Moore



Saturday 17 May 2014 7.30 pm  
St John the Evangelist Church,  
South Parade, Bath

## Elgar The Dream of Gerontius

Bath Cantata Group  
Bradford on Avon Choral Society  
Noctis Chamber Choir  
Vox8 Chamber Choir

Bath Gerontius Orchestra

Neil Moore *conductor*

Penelope Davies *mezzo-soprano*  
Rupert Bevan *tenor*  
Richard Fitzsimmons *bass-baritone*

# Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

## The Dream of Gerontius, Op. 38 (1900)

Text by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

Today *The Dream of Gerontius* is a national treasure. That is both a blessing and a curse. The mere suggestion of 'heritage' status is enough to condemn it in some eyes. During the anti-nationalistic, modernist 1960s and 1970s it was fashionable to dismiss *Gerontius* as a more-or-less conventional expression of late-Victorian piety – a product of the English obsession with oratorio that Wagner found so culturally deadening on his visits to this country.

Yet there are many features of *The Dream of Gerontius* that set it apart. For one thing, the English oratorio tradition, rooted as it was in the great religious choral works of Handel and Mendelssohn, was thoroughly Protestant. *Gerontius*, however, is Catholic to its core – so much so that at its first performance, just over a century ago, its subject matter was viewed in some quarters with suspicion verging on paranoia. The text, by the Roman Catholic convert, Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, is full of the kind of doctrine that had been thrown out by the Protestant churches during the Reformation. The sole human character, the dying Gerontius (the name derives from the Greek *geron*, meaning 'old man'), prays for assistance to the Virgin Mother of God and other saints (Protestant churches reject the notion of any intercessor between God and Man apart from Christ himself); and after his soul-searing encounter with God at the climax of Part 2 Gerontius doesn't pass straight into heaven, but is committed to Purgatory for a long, and almost certainly painful process of purification. When *Gerontius* was proposed for

performance at the 1902 Three Choirs Festival, the Bishop of Worcester objected, and he received over a hundred letters of support. Performance in the Cathedral was permitted only after the text had itself been purged of 'popish' elements: the words 'Jesus', 'Lord' or 'Saviour' were substituted for 'Mary'; 'souls' for 'souls in purgatory'; 'prayers' for 'Masses', and so on. It may seem faintly bizarre now, but in early 20th-century England these were still acutely sensitive issues.

As to the music, Elgar was a Wagnerian, and for many English concert-goers in 1900, Wagner's was still difficult, morally questionable modern music. Wagner himself would no doubt have approved of the echoes of his *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal* in Elgar's score, and also of Elgar's boldness in attempting to portray Gerontius's journey after death and encounter with the Almighty. But for many Anglo-Saxons all this would have been unpalatable. Some of it was too much even for the experienced Birmingham Festival Choir: the 'Demons' Chorus' and much of the semi-chorus writing came over poorly at the Birmingham premiere (accusations of sabotage were levelled at certain male members of the choir). The experience prompted one of Elgar's most bitter outbursts: 'I always said God was against art ... I allowed my heart to open once – it is now shut against every religious feeling and every soft, gentle impulse for ever'.

But the work's fortunes soon began to change – significantly when *The Dream of Gerontius* was first heard

in Germany. After the 1901 German premiere, Richard Strauss – the leading modernist figure of the age, and, for many, Wagner's direct heir – publicly toasted Elgar as 'the first English progressive'. Elgar's close friend and musical confidant August Jaeger (the 'Nimrod' of the Enigma Variations) was also struck by the work's Wagnerian character and ambitions. While Elgar was still working on the score he wrote: 'Since *Parsifal* nothing of this mystic, religious kind of music has appeared to my knowledge that displays the same power and beauty as yours. Like Wagner you seem to grow with your greater, more difficult subject and I am now most curious and anxious to know how you will deal with that part of the poem where the Soul goes within the presence of the almighty. There is a subject for you!'

It is striking that Jaeger should have been both 'curious and anxious' to see how Elgar would deal with the climax of the poem. He knew his friend well, and knew particularly that Elgar's confidence could fail him at crucial points in the creative process. His anxiety turned out to be prescient. 'Please remember that none of the "action" takes place in the presence of God', Elgar replied to Jaeger. 'I would not have tried that neither did Newman. The Soul says "I go before my God" – but we don't – we stand outside.' Fortunately for us, Jaeger was unimpressed with Elgar's first effort: 'I have tried and tried and tried, but it seems to me the weakest page of the work! Do re-write it!', Jaeger urged. 'It seems mere whining to me and not at all impressive.' At first Elgar held out, but it seems that amid all the self-doubt, an inner voice was telling him that Jaeger was right. So Elgar struck out to express the inexpressible, and the result is perhaps the most original moment in the whole score – a passage that reminds us that there are times when, as the poet Robert Browning put it, 'a man's reach should exceed his grasp'. As Gerontius goes to be 'consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God', there is an awe-inspiring crescendo; then the full orchestra,

with organ and four percussionists, delivers a lacerating *Parsifal*-like discord – but only for a split second: Elgar marks it *ffz-p*. The effect is like a blinding flash of light, infinitesimally brief, but leaving the spectator reeling. Now we understand why Gerontius cries 'Take me away' – the music has made that quite clear.

Elgar learnt another crucial lesson from Wagner. Before the advent of Wagnerian music drama, operas and oratorios tended to be arranged in 'numbers': arias, duets, ensembles, choruses – all more or less detachable from the larger dramatic context. Wagner found a way of making dramatic works evolve continuously, like huge symphonies. Elgar achieves something very similar in *The Dream of Gerontius*. Some sections – such as the Angel's beautiful lullaby 'Softly and gently' at the end of Part 2 – can be performed separately, with the help of a little musical surgery; but there are details (for instance recollections of earlier themes) which only make complete sense if this music is heard in its proper context. This sense of sustained symphonic current is essential to the work's message. Early in Part 2, Gerontius's disembodied soul describes how 'a uniform and gentle pressure tells me I am not self-moving, but borne forward on my way.' Elgar conveys the sense of that 'uniform and gentle pressure' through the way the music of Part 2 flows continuously towards its climax and conclusion. We too feel that we are 'borne forward', through the Demons' Chorus, through the magnificent choral hymn 'Praise to the Holiest in the height', to the agonising yet transfiguring encounter with God, and finally to the Angel's lullaby.

That process – slow but inexorable – can be felt at the very beginning of the orchestral Prelude. Clarinets, bassoons and violas introduce a quiet, lamenting theme, at first unaccompanied, then continuing against a slow, heavy tread from double basses and low woodwind. There is a sense, as in all great symphonic themes, that

'something might be made of it' – to borrow a phrase from the composer's wife Alice Elgar. The theme doesn't merely provide the impetus; it's also a melodic seed. The outline of the first four notes (A–G sharp–A–G natural) has an influence on many of the important motifs in *Gerontius* – one doesn't have to be a musical analyst to feel these connections.

The Prelude leads without a break into Gerontius's first words: 'Jesu, Maria – I am near to death ...' The dying man wavers between hope and dread; the sense of musical progress is accordingly more hesitant, less flowing than in Part 2 – the Soul is not yet released from the tormented, failing body. Others voices join with Gerontius: souls on earth and in heaven, praying for his deliverance. There is an impassioned declaration of faith, to the words of the ancient hymn *Sanctus fortis*, more choral prayer than the moment of death: 'and I fain would sleep, the pain has wearied me'. The almost heartbreaking sadness of this passage may be a reflection of the dark, depressive side of Elgar's character. The critic Ernest Newman remembered how, not long after the premiere of *Gerontius*, Alice Elgar 'tactfully steered the conversation away from the topic of suicide that had suddenly arisen; she whispered to me that Edward was always talking of making an end of himself.' Certainly Elgar was a man who, in T. S. Eliot's words, 'was much possessed by death'. His citation of some chilling lines

### Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

Recent events culminating in the beatification of Newman have somewhat overshadowed his prowess as a poet. The *Dream of Gerontius* was written in 1865 when the author was 64 and inspired by the Mediaeval poet Dante Alighieri. Of the many imaginings of the passage of Man from this mortal earth to heaven, *The Dream* is considered to stand on a par with the *Divine Comedy*. Whether or not one agrees with the heady theology that Newman weaves through the poem it is difficult not to be attracted by the sheer force of the sentiments expressed. Indeed two sections, *Firmly I believe and truly* and *Praise to the Holiest* have found their way into the very heart of Christian hymnody. The Soul's avoidance of demons at the Judgement and the wonderful climax upon seeing God which causes him to plead for cleansing in Purgatory is more traditionally Catholic. © Rupert Bevan

from Tennyson's poem *Maud* – the agonised thoughts of a suicide, still conscious in his shallow grave – to explain the nightmare climax of the Second Symphony's Rondo movement are another striking example.

In *The Dream of Gerontius*, however, death marks the beginning, not the end. The words of the Priest ('Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!') mark the Soul's passing into the next world. Then in the significantly longer Part 2 comes the meeting with the Angel, the encounter with demons, the angelic hymn and the spiritual thunderbolt when Gerontius has his split-second encounter with God. With sure dramatic instinct, Elgar reserves the most beautiful of all the melodies in *Gerontius* – the Angel's consoling 'Softly and gently' – for the very end. More than a century after *Gerontius* was barred from entering the Cathedral in Elgar's own home town, this music is now loved both by Christians of many denominations and members of other faiths, as well as by music-lovers with no particular religious belief. The final image of the departed Soul being laid lovingly to rest can still convey a powerful emotional meaning for those with no faith in an afterlife. And even atheists can be moved by Elgar's heartfelt expression of loss and hope in the face of death: 'Farewell, but not for ever'.

Programme note © Stephen Johnson

## PART 1

### Prelude

#### Gerontius

Jesu, Maria – I am near to death,  
And Thou, thou art calling me; I know it now.  
Not by the token of this filtering 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, pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.

#### Assistants

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, 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 such 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 multiform 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 ...

#### **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 (use well!)

## **PART 2**

#### **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 wondrous beings, who,  
Ere the worlds 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 wouldst 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 at meeting Him?  
Along my earthly life, the thought of death  
And judgement 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 the bitterness of death is past.  
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 reconpense,  
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 senses  
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. Hark 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;  
Ha! Ha!  
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.  
Ha! Ha!  
Give him his price,  
Saint though he be,  
Ha! ha!  
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!  
(Dispossessed Aside thrust).

**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 Master's 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.

**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 sound  
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 gen'rous 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.  
Alleluia!! Praise to His Name!

**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.

*Please leave a moment of silence before starting your applause, thank you.*

**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, ye sons of Adam.  
Come back, 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 thou 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.

**Souls**

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge, etc. Amen.

**Choir of Angelicals**

Praise to the Holiest, etc. Amen.

Text by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801–90)

## About tonight's performers



### Neil Moore *conductor*

Born in Belfast in 1978 Neil Moore developed a passion for singing at the age of 8 when he joined his local parish church choir. He was inspired by two music teachers at school and went on to The City of Belfast School of Music gaining a grounding in the rudiments of music and orchestral playing (clarinet). Neil read music at The University of Glasgow where he conducted the wind band and orchestra. He also set up the now firmly established Music Club Choir. Whilst in Glasgow he sang tenor with St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. Upon graduating he travelled east to Edinburgh to complete a PGCE and also sang tenor/countertenor with Edinburgh's St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, under Matthew Owens. Following this he entered the classroom for a number of years and also sang with Hereford Cathedral Choir with which he appeared in the Three Choirs Festival, made several broadcasts on television and radio, recorded several CDs and toured the US extensively. During this period he also took a choir

to the final of BBC Choir of the Year in 2008.

Since coming to the Bath area in 2011 Neil has quickly got stuck into its musical life singing with several choirs and directing Beckington Choir, Colerne Military Wives Choir and, since last September, Bath Cantata Group. In 2013 he helped establish one of this evening's choirs – Vox8.



### Penelope Davies *mezzo-soprano*

Penelope Davies' parents provided her first introduction to music as her father played the piano and her mother sang, so music was always part of her growing up. This enjoyable hobby gradually became more and more important and, after leaving school where she had studied both piano and singing, she continued her training at the Birmingham Conservatoire, gaining both ABSM and ARCM diplomas. She had begun making solo appearances at concerts in

the West Midlands, and these continued when she moved to London, singing solos in BBC transmissions from All Saints Margaret Street, where she was a chorister, and taking part in the first staged performance of Bernstein's Mass at the Albert Hall. She married and moved to Somerset, continuing to sing for choral societies, music clubs and with orchestras in the region, and once her two children were at school, returned to study at Bristol University, where she gained an Honours Degree in Music. She now sings regularly all over southwest England, in recitals and concerts, and continues to receive glowing reviews and appreciative comments wherever she performs.



### Rupert Bevan *tenor*

Rupert Bevan, tenor, (b. 1955) is a scion of a large musical family from Somerset. He received his first musical training within his family and performed with his

siblings as the Bevan Family Choir at a number of venues from the age of four. He was a chorister (later Head Chorister) at Westminster Cathedral and at Downside and has held posts as Organist and Choirmaster at a number of churches, most recently at St John the Evangelist, Bath. He is Musical Director of Bradford on Avon Choral Society. He has sung as a soloist in local oratorio performances, as well as in chamber choirs such as the Paragon Singers of Bath and Vox8. Rupert's weekday occupation is that of an environmental scientist and inventor. He is married to Jacquelyn Bevan and has three children.



### Richard Fitzsimmons *bass-baritone*

Rick was born and educated in North London and started singing while at school. He settled in the Bath area after studying for an engineering degree at Bath University, and has sung for many years in choirs around Bath and Wells. More recently he has focused on singing in small groups and solo work, and he is a founder member of the singing and

instrumental group Mendip Voices and the recently-formed Vox8 octet. He is also a regular contributor at Blackdowns Early Music Project events in Devon. Recent solo work has included Schütz *Christmas Story* (Herod), de Lalande *De Profundis Clamavi*, Chilcott *Requiem*, Bach Cantata BWV 140 *Wachet auf*, and Britten *Noye's Fludde* (Noah).

### Bath Cantata Group

Founded in 1955 by Beresford King-Smith, the Bath Cantata Group (BCG) is the longest established chamber choir in Bath. The choir has a reputation for tackling a wide range of choral music both ancient and modern. BCG performs two concerts a year in St Stephen's Church, Lansdown which it regards as its 'home' venue.

Over the years, the 40-strong choir has performed hundreds of works, including classic sacred standards like Haydn and Mozart masses. Twentieth century composers such as Benjamin Britten, Lennox Berkeley, Nicolas Maw, Aaron Copland, Bernstein, Poulenc, Stravinsky and Michael Tippett (a former patron and conductor of the group) have featured widely in its programmes. In 2013 Edna Blackwell resigned as musical director after leading the choir for 35 years. Neil Moore was appointed to take on the mantle of Musical Director last September.

### Bradford on Avon Choral Society

Bradford on Avon Choral Society was founded in 1986 as a community choir for the local area. Its members are

enthusiastic amateurs who enjoy being part of the great British tradition of choral singing. Rupert Bevan became Musical Director in 1996 and since then the choir has performed a huge range of choral works. Particular highlights in recent years have been performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, J. S. Bach's *St John Passion* and Brahms' *German Requiem*. The choir has enjoyed two visits to Austria, where they sang in Mozart's mother's church near Salzburg.

### Noctis Chamber Choir

Noctis Chamber Choir is an award-winning chamber choir founded and directed by Francis Faux. The group consists of musicians from around the South West and performs at a wide range of venues all over the country. In 2013, the choir performed with Restoration Rake, Dante Ferrara, at the Bath Fringe Festival and were chosen to sing for a celebrity banquet cooked by three Michelin-starred chefs at the Bath Great Feast in the Abbey. To find out more, visit the choir's website at [www.noctischoir.com](http://www.noctischoir.com).

### Vox8

Vox8 is probably Bath's newest professional vocal octet. Established in 2013 they aim to provide the South West with top-quality concerts in some of the best venues the area has to offer. Repertoire covered so far ranges from Allegri's *Miserere* to The Beatles' *Blackbird*. This evening's conductor, Gerontius and Priest/Angel of Agony are all members!

## Bath Gerontius Orchestra

### First Violins

Matthew Taylor *leader*  
Lorna Osbon  
Sara Stagg  
Uli Bergmann  
Judith Wadsworth  
Tim Robb  
Emma Wakelin  
Nick Mettyear  
Kelly Edwards

### Second Violins

Suzanne Swainson  
Kath Jenkins  
Robert Baker  
Martin Cawte  
Mike Gumbley  
Claire Stobie  
Carys Ottner  
Rosie McNiff

### Violas

Jim Swainson  
Julia Page  
George White  
John Lade  
Lucy White  
John Catchpole

### Cellos

Linda Stocks  
Kathryn Hugh  
Cressida Nash  
Matthew Penrose  
Helen Lunt  
Peter Phelps

### Double Basses

Nancy Mendoza  
Charles Roberts  
Alex Proudfoot

### Flutes

Leslie Sheills  
Carole Jenner-Timmis

### Piccolo

Sue Stephens

### Oboes

Simon Naylor  
Ros Pendry

### Cor Anglais

Marc Horobin

### Clarinets

Dave MacKenzie  
Megan Gladwin

### Bass Clarinet

Chris Wilkes

### Bassoons

Martin Gatt  
Roger Birnstingl

### Contrabassoon

Stanley Kaye-Smith

### Horns

Mervyn Stephens  
Tim Greeley  
Francis Haysom  
Stuart Nickless

### Trumpets

Colin Bloch  
Rob Bartlett  
Charlie Matters

### Trombones

David Barnard  
Lyn Harradine

### Bass Trombone

Will Holley

### Tuba

Jo Devine

### Timpani

David Dixon

### Percussion

Cameron Johnson  
Katie Maloney

### Harp

Kate Watt

### Organ

Jacquelyn Bevan

## The Chorus

### Soprano

Pat Astill  
Annette Barker  
Pam Bennett  
Rachel Berger  
Mayveen Blackwell  
Ann Butterfield  
Pat Cadey  
Maggie Champkin  
Sarah Davies  
Lesley Dinsdale  
Wendy Dyke  
Merle Edwards  
Barbara Eichenberger  
Bernadette Evans  
Juliet Godfrey  
Ann Goodwin  
Pat Green  
Cate Le Grice-Mack  
Suzanne Hales  
Valerie Hazelwood  
Katie Leighton

Ruth Lewis  
Emma Lydon  
Cressida Lyon  
Mo Minter  
Jane O'Mara  
Angela Pater  
Penny Pierce  
Margaret Piper  
Marlene Powell  
Rosemary Rees  
Helen Reeves  
Emma Rushe  
Pauline Seath  
Cathy Snowice  
Jane Tabb  
Dizzy Way  
Julie Weymouth  
Pam Wilson  
Jackie Woodhead

**Alto**  
Sue Airey

Janet Broad  
Wendy Brown  
Helen Chalmers  
Aylene Clack  
Judith Dale  
Helen Daniels  
Celia Denee  
Ali Green  
Margaret Harkcom  
Alex Herring  
Ros Hodson  
Angela Howard  
Ceri Humphreys  
Megan Jones  
Ann Kirkpatrick  
Margaret Konigsfeldt  
Brenda Loftus  
Deirdre MacGuire  
Liz Mascal  
Sue Millar  
Frances O'Donohoe  
Angela Onions

Judith Pepler  
Janet Phillips  
Anne Riley  
Helen Shields  
Anna Swain  
Val Trentham  
Pat Veitch  
Jessica Webb  
Jill Wright

### Tenor

John Baxter  
Keith Bennett  
George Champkin  
John Harding  
Peter Hardman  
Mike Hillyer  
Eric Hodson  
Richard Lewis  
Jamie Mason  
Richard Maidment  
Michael Meredith

Baris Yalabik

### Bass

Simon Arnold  
Antony Branfoot  
Richard Brooke  
David Driscoll  
Walter Eglington  
Alun Glyn-Jones  
Martin Greene  
Mike Hales  
Peter Hodgson  
Peter Jennings  
Simon Little  
Brian Mascal  
Jefferey Morris  
Charles Osborne  
Graham Pictor  
James Scott  
Andrew Sillett  
Peter Smith  
Ian Stanes

## Semi Chorus

### Soprano

Julia Draper  
Lisa House  
Claire Miller  
Emma North  
Julia O'Connor

### Alto

Emma Boden  
Felicity Courage  
Colette Henshaw  
Catherine Mitchell

### Tenor

Will Ashworth  
Ciaran O'Keefe  
Philip Styles  
Ashley Turnell

### Bass

Francis Faux  
Michael Longden  
Peter Mosley  
Alexander White

## Chorus Masters & Accompanists

Bath Cantata Group Neil Moore & Jamie Mason  
Bradford on Avon Choral Society Rupert Bevan & Jacquelyn Bevan  
Noctis Chamber Choir Francis Faux  
Vox8 Chamber Choir Neil Moore