



**The
Crossing**
Donald Nally – Conductor

Concert Program

**Tuesday November 8th, 2005
Saint Mark's Church
1625 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA**



The Crossing

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In Concert at Saint Mark's Church, Locust Street, Philadelphia
Tuesday, 8 November 2005, 8pm

Prayer

A Prayer for Peace Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962)

Introit

Thee will I love..... Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Kyrie

The Lamentations of Jeremiah Benjamin C.S. Boyle (b. 1979)

I. Incipit and Aleph

II. Beth

*Beth is written for tonight's performance. It was generously commissioned by Dr. James Snyder,
with the support of the American Music Center and Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

Gloria

Si calmo il mio respiro..... Bruno Bettinelli (1913-2004)

Credo

Bön Thomas Jennefelt (b. 1954)

I would be true Howells

— Intermission —

Sanctus

Welcome Sweet and Sacred Feast, op. 27, no. 3 Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Agnus Dei

Lux aeterna..... Edwin Fissinger (1920-1990)

Anthems and Prayer

The dove descending Jonathan Harvey (b.1939)

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

Seek him that Maketh the Seven Stars Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Benediction

The Gallant Weaver James MacMillan (b. 1959)

— The Ensemble —

Andrew Bidlack; Karen Blanchard; Jennifer Check; Erika Dettra; Jeff Dinsmore; Paul Fogle; Chris Hodges; Daniel Hoy;
Mark Panuccio; Lourin Plant; Susan Polack; Lawrence Reppert; Rebecca Siler; Rebecca Whitlow; Shari Alise Wilson

Donald Nally, Conductor
Scott Dettra, Organ



Notes and Translations

A Prayer for Peace (1989)

Gabriel Jackson (b. 1962)

Priez pour paix, Douce vierge Marie,
Reine des cieux et du monde maîtresse,
Faites prier, par votre courtoisie,
 Saint et Saintes,
et prenez votre adresse vers votre fils,
requérant sa Hautesse,
Qu'il lui-plaise
 son peuple regarder,
Que de son sang a voulu racheter,
en déboutant guerre qui tout devoie.
De prières ne vous vuillez lasser.

Pray for peace, sweet Virgin Mary,
Queen of Heaven and master of earth,
Pray, by your grace,
 Saint and Holy One,
and take your plea to your son,
entreat his Highness,
that he may be pleased
 to look on his people
that with his blood he wished to redeem,
banishing war which disrupts all things.
Please do not weary of our prayers.
—Charles d'Orleans (1391-1465)

We open with a plea. Of his music, Gabriel Jackson writes: "I try to write music that is clean and clear in line, texture and structure; my pieces are made of simple melodies, chords, drones and ostinatos. They are not about conflict and resolution; even when animated, they are essentially contemplative. I like repetition and 'ritualized' structures."

Thee will I love (1970)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Thee will I love, my God and King,
Thee will I sing, my strength and tow'r.
For evermore thee will I trust,
O God, most just of truth and pow'r.

Who all things hast in order placed,
Yea, for thy pleasure hast created.
And on thy throne, unseen, unknown,
Reignest alone in glory seated.

Set in my heart thy love I find;
My wandering mind to thee thou leadest.
My trembling hope, my strong desire
With heavenly fire thou kindly feedest.

Lo, all things fair thy path prepare,
Thy beauty to my spirit calleth,
Thine to remain in joy or pain,
And count it gain whate'er befallerth.

O more and more thy love extend,
My life befriend with heavenly pleasure;
That I may win thy Paradise,
Thy pearl of price thy countless treasure;

Since but in thee I can go free
From earthly care and vain oppression,
This prayer I make for Jesus' sake
That thou me take in thy possession.
—Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

In 870 the Abbey at Medehamstede ('Home in the Meadows'), eighty miles north of London, was destroyed by the conquering Danes. For the Solemn Requiem commemorating the massacre of monks at Mehehamstede – now Peterborough Cathedral – on 9 November 1970, Howells chose Bridges' contemplative poem, itself a musical, technically virtuosic exuberance of assonance and rhythmic subtleties that invites the musical hills and valleys characteristic of Howells' music. The music twists, turns, and remains unsettled until the closing prayer finds a warmth that seems to evade finality – a gift to monks, 1100 years later.



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The Lamentations of Jeremiah (2003/5)

Benjamin C.S. Boyle (b. 1979)

I. Incipit and Aleph

Incipit lamentatio
Ieremiae prophetae:

Quomodo sedet sola civitas
plena populo:
facta est quasi vidua
domina gentium,
princeps provinciarum
facta est sub tributo.

II. Beth

Plorans ploravit in nocte,
et lacrimae eius in maxillis eius:
non est quie conseletur eam
ex omnibus caris eius:
omnes amici eius
spreverunt eam,
et facti sunt ei inimici.

Ierusalem, Ierusalem,
convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

I. Incipit and Aleph

Here beginneth the lamentation of
Jeremiah the prophet:

How doth the city sit solitary,
that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow!
She that was great among the nations,
and princess among the provinces,
how is she become tributary!

II Beth

She weepeth sore in night,
and her tears are on her cheeks:
among all her lovers
she hath none to comfort her;
all her friends have dealt
treacherously with her,
they are become her enemies.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
return unto the Lord thy God.
—Jeremiah 1:1-2

Several of the singers in The Crossing sang the premiere of Incipit and Aleph as a chamber work in 2003. Following on the success of that experience, we've asked Philadelphia composer Benjamin Boyle to expand the work through Jeremiah's second, Job-like, poem. He met the task with characteristic invention, transforming the "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" call of the first part into a kind of refrain for both verses, thereby giving the listener a dramatic destination.

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Sia calmo il mio respiro (1993)

Bruno Bettinelli (1913-2004)

Sia calmo il mio respiro
mentre il mare singhiozza
sulla riva
l'onda breve.
Sento sul braccio
il soffio carezzevole di maggio
e il tuo tocco lieve.
Immotto resta il cuore
nell'ora
che lenta si raggruma.

My breath is calm
while the sea sobs
on the river
a short wave.
I feel on my arm
the caressing breath of May
and your light touch.
My heart remains still
in the hour
that slowly thickens.

—Anna Eva Gosso

Perhaps better known as the rigorous teacher to Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, and Maurizio Pollini, Bettinelli was nevertheless a prolific composer. His firm resolve that the only way to write was to find the correct form to fit the idea – and therefore eschewing whatever the fashion of the day might be – inspired a wide range of compositional styles. These late works, written in his eightieth year, evoke the memory of Claudio Monteverdi's early 17th-century style, with a mastery of contrapuntal thought serving purely expressive means – the music is lean, economic, and with a sober use of carefully-placed dissonance. Perhaps because of our ear for Renaissance style, the raw nature of this music evokes timelessness – like a living museum. (Note – the beautiful imagery of 'raggruma' – literally 'clotting' is difficult to capture succinctly: perhaps, 'the hour slowly becomes heavy and lifeless.')

Bön (1984)

Thomas Jennefelt (b. 1954)

Lär oss att älska ditt namn,
som man älskar de okända djupen
 hos en annan människa.
Med en kärlek som bränts ren,
som lyder utan att fråga,
tjänar utan att första,
älskar utan att äga.

Teach us to love your name,
as one loves the unknown depths
 of another person
with a love that is burned pure
that obeys without asking,
serves without understand,
loves without owning.

—Karl-Gustaf Hildebrand (1911-2005)

Jennefelt is a leader among Sweden's thriving compositional community. (For some idea of just what is going on in that country of nine million people, visit www.mic.stim.se - the Swedish Music Information Centre and browse 'composers', who apparently all live harmoniously together – jazz, classical, pop.) He is primarily a vocal composer and developed the unique style of creating nonsense texts that provide the sound spectrum he desires for choral works – the chorus, thus, used orchestrally. Bön sounds very much like one of those works, but is a setting of a sort of modern psalm by the Swedish scholar/poet Hildebrand (who, when he wasn't writing poems, psalms and hymns, was composing such epic thrillers as *Swedish Iron in the 17th and 18th Centuries* and *Export Industry before the Industrialization*). The poem lends itself well to Jennefelt's style – a form of minimalism in which a rather Romantic treatment of dynamics and articulation enhance the insistent underlying rhythmic energy.



I would be true (1978)

Howells

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those that care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

I would be friend of all, the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving, and forget the gift;
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;
I would look up, and laugh, and love and live.
—Howard Arnold Walter (1883-1918)

What's wrong with this picture? Read the last stanza again. Howells changes the final rhyme of Walter's poem (gift/lift), bringing the work to an ecstatic close with 'live'. (He notably omits Walter's final stanza and therefore the Christian focus of the poem: I would be faithful through each passing moment; /I would be constantly in touch with God; /I would be strong to follow where He leads me; /I would have faith to keep the path Christ trod.) The result is classic Howells: a musical language that feels like it 'wants to become.'

Welcome Sweet and Sacred Feast, op. 27, no. 3 (1953)

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Welcome sweet and sacred feast;
 welcome life!
Dead I was, and deep in trouble;
But grace and blessings came
 with thee so rife,
That they have quicken'd even dry stubble.
Thus souls their bodies animate,
And thus, at first, when things were rude,
Dark, void, and crude
They, by thy Word,
 their beauty had, and date;
All were by thee
And still must be;
Nothing that is, or lives,
But hath his quick'nings, and reprieves
As thy hand opes, or shuts;
Healings and cuts,
Darkness and daylight, life and death
Are but mere leaves turn'd by thy breath.
But that great darkness at thy death
When the veil broke with thy last breath,
Did make us see
The Way to thee.
Was't not enough that
 thou hadst paid the price

And given us eyes
When we had none,
 but thou must also take
Us by the hand
And keep us still awake,
When we would sleep,
Or from thee creep,
Who without thee cannot stand?
Was't not enough to lose thy breath
And blood by an accursed death,
But thou must also leave
To us that did bereave
Thee of them both, these seals the means
That should both cleanse
And keep us so,
Who wrought thy woe?
O rose of Sharon! O the lily
Of the valley!
How art thou now, thy flock to keep,
Become both food,
 and shepherd to thy sheep.
—from The Holy Communion,
Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

Finzi, known today chiefly through his works for chorus and organ, wrote this motet in 1947 when he had finally reached some notoriety as a British composer and was balancing a number of commissions. It shares an opus number with the popular "God is gone up!" and the less-known but equally effective "My lovely one". Here, we hear all the familiar Finzi techniques: melodies that turn around on themselves, dropping motives that set up energetic answers, love duets, and an ending of exquisite invitation, here capturing Vaughan's multi-layered reference to Solomon, after a dazzling array of Old and New Testament allusions (the stubble, the veil) in his metaphysical bacchanal.



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Lux aeterna (1989)

Edwin Fissinger (1920-1990)

Lux aeterna luceat eis dona eis Domini
Cum sanctis tui in aeternum
quia pius es.

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiescant in pace. Amen

Eternal light shine on them, Lord
with your saints forever
because you are merciful.

Eternal rest grant them, Lord,
And perpetual light shine on them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.

—Antiphon and Verse from the
Communion of Missa pro defunctis, c. 9th c.

Fissinger spent the greater part of his choral conducting career in Fargo, North Dakota, where he wrote most of his works for the choir at North Dakota State. From that relatively unlikely partnering comes a volume of choral works rich in texture, ethereal in atmosphere, and honest as an investigation of the expressive possibilities in combinations of voices employed in mostly conventional ways. *Lux aeterna* is about both the desire toward the light, and the never-ending-ness of reaching it.

The dove descending (1975)

Jonathan Harvey (b.1939)

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

Who then devised the torment?
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

—from “The Little Gidding”
in *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot (1888–1965)

Harvey is a composer of enormous complexity who has, as have so many such composers recently (Bettinelli, and Penderecki, for examples), refined his craft down to the essentials, condensing a formerly tortuously labyrinthine style into a language that balances harmonic formulas unique to each work with modern concepts of atmospheric music. Specifically, here, he employs ‘plains of sound’ – first in the juxtaposition of two ‘choirs’ with conflicting harmonies (the one focused on the devisor of the torment: Love), then as a static chanting while the organ takes on a rising series of triads. (Is it what rises from the ashes?) Eliot’s imagery combines the Acts account of Pentecost (fire) with Luke’s account of Jesus’ baptism (dove), perhaps as a way of reaching the essential Luke passage: “I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”) Harvey’s sonic interpretation may indeed capture a larger Eliot ideal, reaching beyond the actual fire from the sky during London’s long blitzkrieg bombings (obviously on Eliot’s mind in 1942), toward the more Eastern thoughts of Kerakleitos quoted as an epigraph to his *Quartets*: “The way up and the way down are the same.” This is masterfully captured in Harvey’s version of the popular contemporary composition technique of creating endings that have the feeling of ‘not ending’.



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He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven (2000)

Howard Skempton (b. 1947)

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

—from *The Wind Among the Reeds*, W.B. Yeats (1865–1939)

In a way, describing Skempton's music is a lot like talking about Messiaen; though the two are worlds apart aurally, they share a concentration on strict, repetitive structures, and a concern with the sound materials themselves rather than expansion and/or development. This style works well for Yeats' poem; so strong on it's own, it requires music that simply lifts it airborne and allows it to hover.

Seek him that Maketh the Seven Stars (1998)

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

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

—Amos 5:8, Psalm 139

Jonathan Dove is one of the popular guys on the British circuit, following on the 1998 success of his opera *Flight* at Glyndebourne. His is a simple, entirely tonal language, and begs the questions of exactly 'where music is going' today, if not backward. Are Dove's tonal sounds old sounds newly-used, post-pop music sounds taking a rightful place in the so-called legitimate world, familiar sounds used today as gestures to invoke particular responses, or simply the result of someone doodling at the piano? Whatever the answer, the music has a driving energy, a simple clarity, and a joy that – at least in the listening – buries the questions.



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The Gallant Weaver (1997)

James MacMillan (b. 1959)

Where Cart rins rowin to the sea
By monie a flower and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me -
He is a gallant weaver!
O, I had woovers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine,
And I was fear'd my heart wad tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign'd my
 tocher-band
To gie the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And give it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers
While corn grows green
 in summer showers,
I love my gallant weaver.

Translation from Scottish:

Where Cart runs rolling to the sea
By many a flower and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me -
He is a gallant weaver!
O, I had woovers eight or nine,
They gave me rings and ribbons fine,
And I was afraid my heart would be lost,
And I gave it to the weaver.

My daddy signed my
 dowry deed of settlement
To give the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I will add my hand,
And give it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
While bees delight in opening flowers
While corn grows green
 in summer showers,
I love my gallant weaver.
—Robert Burns (1759-1796)

We could ask the same question of MacMillan's music as of Dove's, though perhaps not here where the genre is an original folk tune, arranged. MacMillan has risen to be Britain's most famous and sought-after composer. And, yet, he is still known in Scotland first and foremost as an antagonist who speaks out against the historical persecution of Catholics that, he claims, lies at the root of most of Scotland's problems (and, according to JM, is grotesquely institutionalized in soccer). It is not necessary to know this to enjoy MacMillan's music; though he seldom wanders (as he does here) from Catholic themes; it is all captivating, original stuff on its own. But it does make his music more poignant when you recognize the Scottish drone crouching beneath a folk-like melody, or the sanguine Scotch harmonies moving almost without desire under a lament that is itself full of the little snaps and ornaments characteristic of Scottish singing. MacMillan's music is Celtic poetry, focused on the ideal, fidelity, faith, and, above all, sadness – the joy of being in love with grief.

— Notes by Donald Nally, November 2005

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