

Sir Edward Elgar

# The Dream of Gerontius

**Wells Cathedral**

*Saturday 23 March, 7.00pm*

Alexander Hamilton    *conductor*

Daniel Norman            *tenor*  
Katie Bray                 *mezzo-soprano*  
William Drakett          *bass/baritone*

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society  
Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir

Southern Sinfonia

PROGRAMME



## Welcome

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Wells Cathedral for a performance of Edward Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* by The Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, WCOS.

Many of you will be regular supporters of WCOS and some of you will be members of our congregation but to those of you who are here for the first time a special welcome.

The famous scissor arches of the cathedral are a stunning testament to the engineering skills of medieval England. They make an iconic frame for a choir and orchestra and the unique acoustics of this famous cathedral can only be experienced by attending a service or performance.

Enjoy the oratorio and do come again and appreciate the many features of this very special place. I know that WCOS has some exciting plans for next year and beyond and so I hope you will sign up to their mailing list to ensure you are kept informed.

Anne Gell  
Acting Dean of Wells



The Cathedral has a loop system.  
Hearing aids may be switched to the position T.



Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

# THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

*An epic choral work inspired by a poem written  
by Cardinal Newman*

Alexander Hamilton     *conductor*

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*Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society is affiliated to Making Music.*



# THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

## Elgar – The First English Progressivist

Elgar did not regard *The Dream of Gerontius* as an oratorio, possibly because he had adopted a continuous musical style akin to a Wagnerian opera, complete with leitmotifs representing different moods throughout the piece. It is a large musical work for three soloists, a chorus and semi-chorus, and orchestra.

The text is taken from the celebrated poem of Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–90), a British religious leader who was first a prominent member of the Anglican Church and later a cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. The poem was written in 1865, and a copy of it was given to Elgar as a wedding present in 1889. Elgar ruminated over the poem for nearly a decade before embarking on this ambitious composition.

The first performance of *Gerontius* in 1900 was not well received. The choir was taxed by the new musical idiom. The orchestra was inadequately rehearsed and most members of the audience, accustomed to conventional oratorios in the style of Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, were perplexed by the strange format which derived its feeling from the moods of the poem.

Some of the audience were too repelled by the theological content to appreciate the truthfulness with which Elgar had penetrated its psychology. A few discerning members of the audience, one of whom was George Bernard Shaw, recognized the work as a masterpiece and were deeply moved by its beauty and sincerity.

In December 1901 *The Dream of Gerontius* was performed again in Düsseldorf. It was immensely successful, causing Richard Strauss to hail the composer as ‘*the first English progressivist musician, Meister Elgar*’. Several contemporary critics were not afraid to compare *Gerontius*’ handling of a religious theme with Wagner’s *Parsifal*.

Its success in Germany prompted further performances in England. Gradually, English audiences came to appreciate the beauty and poetry of the work, and it is now, with *Messiah* and *Elijah*, among the most popular oratorios in the English musical repertoire.

English oratorio composers had usually made the orchestra subordinate to the voices, but Elgar integrated orchestral and vocal textures (the semi-chorus is very tellingly used to



provide contrasts of choral sonority). Another sign of the composer's late-Romantic, post-Wagnerian musical language is his use of leitmotifs to unify the work. Although there are a large number of these, many appearing first in the orchestral prelude, they do not force themselves on the listener's attention, but carry associations and evoke atmosphere. The composer warns against worrying too much with them: '*... You may be inclined to lay too much stress on the leitmotif plan because I really do it without thought – intuitively, I mean.*'

## Poetic Emotions Inspired the Music

The success of *Gerontius* stems from its sincerity. The orchestral writing is unsurpassed both in design and content, and the composer has demonstrated an unerring sense of beauty. Elgar clearly understood the emotional content of the poem and has brought to the work an exalted grandeur not attained in any of his other works. Elgar explained his conception of *Gerontius* in a letter to his friend Jaeger ('Nimrod' of the *Enigma Variations*):

*"Look here: I imagined Gerontius to be man like us, not a priest or a saint, but a sinner, a repentant one of course, but still no end of a worldly man in his life and now brought to book. Therefore, I've not filled his part with Church tunes and rubbish but a good healthy, full-blooded romantic, remembered worldliness, so to speak."*

The *Dream of Gerontius* cannot be understood apart from its Catholic origins. Elgar and his wife were Catholics, but in his home, as in that of his parents, the practices of his religion were not always observed. He neglected the services of the Catholic Church and probably occasionally questioned its doctrines. But he supported the church and remained a member all his life. Elgar was obviously deeply drawn to Cardinal Newman's poem. He had known it for at least ten years.

The poem had first appeared in a Jesuit publication in 1865. Newman's old antagonist, the Reverend Charles Kingsley paid tribute to it:

*"I read the Dream with awe and admiration. However utterly I may differ from the entourage in which Newman's present creed surrounds the central idea, I must feel that the central idea is as true as it is noble."*

Whatever one may feel about the quality of Newman's prose-poetry in this work, the poem's central idea has the power to inspire and compel. For *Gerontius* is potentially every one of us.

## Part I

The prelude of *The Dream of Gerontius* presents a succession of themes from key places in the work and sets the atmosphere – '*The weary troubled sleep of a sick man*' – for *Gerontius*' first utterances. The assistants steal in a capella with '*Kyrie eleison*', pouring calm on the dying man's fevered cries. These episodes strongly evoke the ritual of the Catholic Church. '*Sanctus fortis*' is an exultant outburst of faith, which could sound vulgar out of context. Here the somewhat Italianate character of Elgar's solo vocal writing is most obvious.

Part One concludes with a march (the section beginning '*Proficiscere...*') in which the Priest and the Chorus of Assistants send *Gerontius*' soul onwards with



affirmations of faith and praise. At the climax the chorus is in eight parts, with the semi-chorus added. The music proceeds into the far distance, concluding in a mood of utter peace and tranquility.

## Part II

A brief, serene prelude begins the second part with legato strings suggesting the condition of a soul wandering in space. The Soul of Gerontius, released from worldly burdens, awakens to a sensation of utter freedom (*"I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed"*). He feels himself transported upward and senses music (*"And hark! I hear a singing"*).

His Guardian Angel, now beside him, sings *"My work is done, My task o'er."* Gerontius has many questions but asks the Angel why he now no longer fears his forthcoming meeting with God. The Angel explains that it is because his judgment has already begun.

The scene changes abruptly as a chorus of howling demons is heard, thirsting to drag souls down to hell. In a furious crescendo of sound, which explodes in a fugue, the demons roar their threats. The demons depart with derisive laughter and peace returns.

The Angel tells Gerontius that he will have but one brief moment in the awful presence of God. The angelic host sings "Praise to the Holiest in the height" and Gerontius resolutely replies *"My soul is in my hand; I have no fear."* The angelical host repeats the chorus Praise to the Holiest as Gerontius and the Angel cross the threshold, and the music rises to a magnificent climax.

Gerontius now hears very faintly the voices of those he left behind on earth. The Angel of the Agony, who stood by Jesus as he was crucified and who can plead with God for all tormented souls, now makes his plea to God for the Soul of Gerontius. Music of the utmost solemnity and grandeur leads the Soul of Gerontius to the judgment, and as the overwhelming fortissimo chord is heard, the Soul has its brief vision of God.

Blinded by the magnificent vision of God, Gerontius cries out in agony: *"Take me away, and in the lowest deep there let me be."* He expresses a wish to dwell in Purgatory that sooner he may arise and see Him in the truth of everlasting day. The souls in Purgatory sing *"Lord, Thou has been our refuge"* and the Guardian Angel sings the serene, beautiful melody *"Softly and gently, dear-ransomed soul."* The work ends with the angelical host singing again Praise to the Holiest in the height.

On the last page of the manuscript of *The Dream of Gerontius*, Elgar wrote: "*This is the best of me.*" Indeed it is.

Elgar's sweeping, dramatic, and indeed sensuous score opens up space for genuine feeling and for contemplation on our own mortality. What a journey this piece is! And after that journey the Angel sings the most comforting words; "*softly and gently, dearly- ransomed soul. In my most loving arms I now enfold thee.*" The *Dream of Gerontius* is an epic journey into our soul and we are all the richer for it.

*Based on programme notes by Ted Wilks, April 1979*

## Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)



Edward Elgar was born on 2 June 1857, in the west of England. His father kept a music shop and was a keen amateur violinist and he began violin lessons at the age of seven. By the age of sixteen he was a proficient enough player to support himself as a freelance violinist and teacher. After his marriage to Alice Roberts in 1889, Elgar attempted to establish himself as a composer in London, but he failed and returned to Malvern two years later.

Elgar kept abreast of contemporary developments on the Continent, not least through visits to Bayreuth and Munich in 1892 and 1893 and began an ambitious series of oratorios that won him growing recognition in the British Midlands. But it was his *Enigma Variations*, performed in London in 1899, that marked his breakthrough as a composer of national importance. His reputation was consolidated a year later with *The Dream of Gerontius*, and he then began two decades of relentless activity. *Gerontius* was followed by two more oratorios – *The Apostles* in 1903 and *The Kingdom* in 1906 – but it was in orchestral music that Elgar's individual genius shone most clearly, with two symphonies (1908 and 1911), a violin concerto (1910), two buoyant concert overtures, *Cockaigne* and *In the South* (1901 and 1904), and four very popular *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* (1901-7; a fifth followed in 1931).

After the completion of his *Cello Concerto* in 1919, Elgar's wife died in 1920, leaving the insecure composer without the moral support he required. A commission from the BBC for a third symphony, instigated by George Bernard Shaw, brought a return of confidence but at the time of Elgar's death, on 23 February 1934, it was only partially complete, in sketch and outline. A realisation of the surviving material by the English composer Anthony Payne (b. 1936), first performed in February 1998, demonstrated that the acuity of Elgar's vision was unimpaired, and the immediate international popularity of the *Third Symphony* has underlined the enduring popular appeal of his music.

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# Alexander Hamilton Conductor



Alexander Hamilton is Acting Director of Music at Wells Cathedral, a position he took up in December 2022, having been Assistant Director of Music since 2020.

In this role, Alexander oversees all aspects of the Cathedral's musical life. He is the principal director of Wells Cathedral Choir and is responsible for the training and care of the Choristers. Alexander is also Artistic Director of Cathedral Commissions and Music Director of Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society. Recent and forthcoming performances as a conductor include Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, *Mass in B minor* and *St John Passion*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and *Messiah*, and John Rutter's *Gloria*, *Magnificat* and

*Requiem*. In May 2023, he curated the Sound of Wells Festival 2023 which featured over 300 musicians from the community; the Festival returns in May 24.

Prior to taking up his appointments in Wells, Alexander held organ scholarships at Westminster Abbey, Trinity College, Cambridge and St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He has studied the organ with Henry Fairs, Ann Elise Smoot, Colin Walsh and Stephen Farr. Alexander read Music as Organ Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he accompanied the choir in its schedule of services, concerts and tours. He has appeared as both accompanist and soloist on a number of critically-acclaimed recordings, including discs of music by Stanford, Finzi, Vaughan Williams, Cecilia McDowall and Owain Park, and also features on a recent album by the internationally-renowned vocal ensemble Voces8.

Alexander won First Prize in the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition in 2015. Recent engagements have included a Bach concert at the St Albans International Organ Festival, and recitals at the London Organ Day, King's College, Cambridge, St Paul's Cathedral, St John's Smith Square and Westminster Abbey. During 2016-17, he was Artistic Director of Bach at Trinity, a year-long recital series surveying the complete organ works of Bach. He has tutored for Creative Oundle for Organists courses and is the principal organ teacher at Wells Cathedral School.





**WELLS CATHEDRAL  
ORATORIO  
SOCIETY**

*Bringing exciting choral music to Somerset*

Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (WCOS) was founded in 1896 and is one of the South West's leading choirs performing the great choral works with some of the UK's finest soloists and professional orchestras in the glorious surroundings of the 'Queen of English Cathedrals'. Our membership is keen to broaden its appeal and to attract younger people both to sing and to enjoy listening to our music. We are engaging with current composers to bring their music to Wells and are collaborating with Wells Cathedral School and other local community groups.

### **Soprano**

Nancy Akrill  
Ali Ballamy  
Debbie Bettles  
Joanna Birkett  
Stefanie Bongs  
Pam Booth  
Maureen Boylan  
Hilda Breakspear  
Kate Brown  
Denise Bush  
Ruth Bush  
Barbara Calverley  
Felicity Chapman  
Rosemary Cooke  
Katherine Constable  
Sandra Freeborn  
Sue Gould  
Karen Green  
Susan Hanson  
Becky Hughes  
Dot Hunter  
Carolyn Legg  
Ruth Lickfold  
Catherine Llewelyn-  
Evans  
Della Luetchford  
Rosemary Lunn  
Jennie Lunnon  
Rosemary Mann  
Sarah May  
Jan Merritt  
Jane Needle  
Ann Parsons  
Mo Pickford  
Gill Round  
Frances Rowe  
Janet Saxon  
Maggie St Quintin  
Christine Tudor

Lynn Waldron  
Jan Weaver  
Claire Webster  
Jessica Wharton  
Lucy Williams

### **Alto**

Jenny Abraham  
Christine Barker  
Iona Bastin  
Caroline Blyth  
Vivienne Burgess  
Louise Burton  
Liz Carey  
Chris Chapman  
Polly Corbishley  
Gill Cumming  
Sue Curragh  
Gill Deamer  
Joan Dovey  
Robin Duijs  
Wendy Gregory  
Shelley Gudgin  
Faith Guest  
Elizabeth Hand  
Jenny Harrow  
Catherine Hay  
Jenny Henderson  
Frannie Hewitt  
Lynne Jarman  
Madeleine Jennings  
Deborah Jonas  
Amanda Karpinski  
Sian Landers  
Sophie Laurie  
Jessica Leach  
Alex Lemanski  
Jennifer MacKenzie  
Pippa Mains  
Liz Metcalfe

Muriel Mitcheson  
Mary Newman  
Caroline Nicholls  
Claire Pennack  
Kathy Pinches  
Janet Ravenscroft  
Arlene Roberts  
Sheila Ruffle  
Janet Rundle  
Celia Smith  
Carole Spencer  
Sue Stoughton-  
Harris  
Celia Townend  
Fleur-Louise Turner  
Sue Wells  
Olivia Wilkinson  
Jo Wright  
Christine Young

### **Tenor**

Peter Beange  
Simon Birkett  
Dan Briggs  
Ian Bynoe  
Chris Chapman  
Richard Garstang  
Martin Godfrey  
Alex Jenkins  
Peter Lawrence  
Nigel Lloyd  
Martin Lovell  
Michael Lovering  
Carol Moreton  
Chris Morley  
Chris Ray  
Stacey Williams

### **Bass**

David Abels  
Nick Allan  
Patrick Aspinall  
Chris Boddie  
Michael Calverley  
John Castree  
Peter Dunkin  
Peter Farrell  
Adrian Grey  
Joey Hardin  
Michael Harris  
Richard Henderson  
Christian Hughes  
Andrew Hunt  
Tony Iveson  
Chris Jenkins  
John King  
Michael Leach  
Brian Marshall  
Richard Needle  
Roger Parsons  
Paul Reynolds  
Lukas Russell  
Robert Smallcombe

# The Libretto

## Part 1

### Gerontius

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

### Assistants

Kyrie eleison, 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 -----

## 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,  
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 world were made,  
Millions of ages back, have stood around  
The throne of God.  
I will address him,  
Mighty One, my Lord,  
My Guardian Spirit all hail!

### Angel

All hail, my child!  
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 of 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  
passed.  
Also, because already in thy soul  
The judgement is begun.  
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray  
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy  
lot.  
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul  
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,  
And heaven begun.  
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.  
Hist to their cry!

## Soul

How sour and how uncouth a  
dissonance!

## Demons

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

## Angel

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

## Demons

The mind bold  
And independent  
The purpose free,

So we are told,  
Must not think  
To have the ascendant.  
What's a saint?  
One whose breath  
Doth the air taint  
Before his death;  
Ha! Ha! Ha! ha!  
A bundle of bones,  
Which fools adore,  
When life is o'er.  
Ha! ha! Ha! ha!  
Virtue and vice,  
A knave's pretence.  
'Tis all the same;  
Ha! ha! Ha! ha!  
Dread of hell-fire,  
Of the venomous flame, A coward's plea.  
Ha! ha! Ha! ha!  
Give him his price,  
Saint though he be,  
From shrewd good sense  
He'll slave for hire;  
And does but aspire  
To the heaven above With sordid aim,  
And not from love. Ha! ha!

### **Soul**

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

### **Angel**

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

### **Soul**

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

### **Angel**

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

### **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...  
Amen.

### **Choir of Angelicals**

Praise to the Holiest...  
Amen.



# Katie Bray Mezzo-soprano



Winner of the Dame Joan Sutherland Audience Prize at Cardiff Singer of the World 2019, British mezzo-soprano Katie Bray has become known for her magnetic stage presence and gleaming, expressive tone.

Katie Bray graduated as a Karaviotis Scholar from the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music, was awarded the Principal's Prize and won First Prize in the Richard Lewis Singing Competition.

Roles for Opera North have included Hansel *Hansel and Gretel*, Rosina *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Varvara Katya *Kabanova*, Louis XV Chair/Female Cat/Owl *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Lola *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and Nancy *Albert Herring*.

She has also sung with Irish National Opera in the title role, *Griselda*, English National Opera as Daughter Akhnaten and in *The Way Back Home*, Scottish Opera as Lucilla *La Scala di seta*, Welsh National Opera Zerlina, *Don Giovanni*, Opera Holland Park Mallika *Lakmé*, English Touring Opera Zenobia *Radamisto*, Minerva *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and Satirino *La Calisto*, Grimeborn Festival as Charlotte *Werther*, and with Garsington Opera as Zulma *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Zaida *Il turco in Italia*, and most recently Isolier *Le Comte Ory*, for which she received great acclaim. She also recently performed in a staged cabaret of 'songs banned by the Nazis', *Effigies of Wickedness*, at the Gate Theatre, Notting Hill, in collaboration with English National Opera.

Equally at home on the concert platform, Katie Bray has performed in prestigious venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, and the Holywell Music Room and she appears regularly in the London English Song Festival, where she has directed concerts at Wilton's Music Hall, as well as at the Oxford Lieder Festival for which she recorded a disc of Schumann songs with Sholto Kynoch. Other recent highlights include a semi-staged version of Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* with Christopher Glynn and Roderick Williams at Milton Court Concert Hall and Ryedale Festival, and the premiere of new monodrama *Frida* with the East London Music Group.

Katie Bray is particularly noted for baroque repertoire. Highlights include concerts at the Oxford Lieder Festival, Viardot200 Festival, and with the Irish Baroque Orchestra, with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Jac van Steen, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Peter Whelan, *Messiah* for the Hallé Orchestra, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Barbican and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* in Garsington Opera's 2023 Festival. Future plans include Nancy in *Albert Herring* for Opera North; a newly written composition by Freya Waley-Cohen's with Manchester Collective and an appearance at Grange Park Opera in 2024.

# Daniel Norman Tenor



Acclaimed “multi-talented tenor” Daniel Norman (Financial Times) has been praised for his ability to inhabit complex characters and for his powerful and expressive vocal performances. His career-to-date has covered a versatile range of repertoire, from early and baroque music through to contemporary works.

Daniel Norman was a choral scholar at New College Oxford, where he read Engineering. He went on to study in the US and Canada and at the Royal Academy of Music.

Daniel Norman has built an impressive operatic career both in the UK and internationally, working with English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival, Opera Holland Park, Opera North, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, L’Opéra National de Paris, Nederlandse Reisopera, Wexford Festival, the Bayerische

Staatsoper, New Israeli Opera, Bergen National Opera, and Oviedo Opera.

Recent roles have included Basilio *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Opera Holland Park, Monostatos *Die Zauberflöte* for English National Opera, Laca *Jenufa* for Longborough Festival, Moser *Die Meistersinger* for Glyndebourne Festival and Sellem *The Rake’s Progress* for Glyndebourne on Tour.

He also appears regularly in contemporary opera and music theatre, with highlights including Mao *Nixon in China* for Opera Boston and at the Fondazione di Arena di Verona; Orpheus the Myth *The Mask of Orpheus* for ENO; Judas in Birtwistle’s *The Last Supper* for the London Sinfonietta and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; and Electrician in the Vienna and Boston premieres of Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, also at the Mariinsky Theatre, and in a film version for Channel 4.

Particularly noted for his performances of the music of Benjamin Britten, roles have included Peter Quint *The Turn of the Screw* (Glyndebourne on Tour); Squeak *Billy Budd* (ENO); Red Whiskers *Billy Budd* (Opera North, Aldeburgh Festival, and Glyndebourne in New York); Bob Boles *Peter Grimes* at the St Endellion Festival; and his role debut in the US as Captain Vere *Billy Budd* for Central City Opera, Colorado.

Concert highlights include *Les Illuminations* with Gianandrea Noseda and the BBC Philharmonic; *Nocturne* with Edward Gardner; St Nicolas at the Gulbenkian in Porto, and with the BBC Concert Orchestra at Lancing College; *War Requiem* for Philharmonia Taiwan, and with Southbank Sinfonia in Coventry Cathedral; and the first official staging of Britten’s *Five Canticles* at Westminster Abbey.

# William Drakett Bass-Baritone



William Drakett studied singing under Prof. Konrad Jarnot at the Robert Schumann Conservatoire in Düsseldorf, following organ and harpsichord studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. His vocal studies have been further enriched by masterclasses with artists including Brigitte Fassbaender, Juliane Banse, Hans Eijsackers, Neal Davies, Eric Schneider, Christianne Stotijn & Henk Neven.

William has performed on the stage in operatic roles including Sharpless (Puccini *Madama Butterfly*), Demetrius (Britten *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Aeneas

(Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*) & Henry Higgins (Loewe *My Fair Lady*) under the baton of conductors including Vladimir Jurowski, Stefano Rabaglia, Duncan Ward, Ernst von Marshall & Thomas Gabrisch at venues such as the Düsseldorf Tonhalle, Cologne Opera & Bavarian State Opera. He is also in demand as a concert soloist in England and Germany in works including *Elijah* (Mendelssohn), *Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), *St. John Passion*, *St. Matthew Passion* & *B Minor Mass* (Bach), *A German Requiem* (Brahms), *Five Mystical Songs* (Vaughan Williams), *Requiem* (Mozart, Fauré & Duruflé) and *In Terra Pax* (Martin).

William has a particular love of the art song repertoire, and enjoys collaborating with pianists including Hans Eijsackers, Benjamin Mead & Reinild Mees. He now lives in Wells where he is a Vicar Choral in the choir of Wells Cathedral. He continues his vocal studies privately with John Evans.

## Southern Sinfonia

Southern Sinfonia's reputation continues to grow as the leading professional chamber orchestra in the South of England. With Sir Roger Norrington as its Patron and Simon Chalk as its Artistic Director/Conductor, the orchestra, established in 1990, is developing its innovative residency at Queen's College in Taunton, Somerset, alongside its other performance relationships. Characterised by the strength and depth of knowledge of its players – from its unique ability to play Baroque instruments at the correct pitch and with informed playing style, to its commitment to contemporary and new music – Southern Sinfonia is in great demand. The orchestra has held residencies at the Corn Exchange, Newbury and the University of Winchester, and has had a long association with Reading University. It performs in venues throughout the UK including London, Wells, Bath, Exeter, Canterbury, Cambridge, Nottingham and Romsey.

Alongside regular orchestral concerts and performances with the South of England's most established chamber choirs and choral societies, the orchestra has made a number of high-profile recordings, most recently world premieres of both of the Requiems by Dan Locklair (Convivium) and Carl Rütli (Naxos), and the Bach B Minor Mass and Monteverdi Vespers with Ralph Allwood and the Rodolfus Choir (Signum). In March 2022 the orchestra's recording of the music of Greek composer Elena Pavlea entitled 'The Shape of Freedom' won plaudits from the critics and was incorporated by Apple Music onto one of its playlists garnering further exposure. The orchestra's latest recording of the Requiem by Matthew Coleridge, again with Convivium, was released in early March 2023 to huge critical acclaim and was the prestigious album of the week on Classic FM shortly after launching also making it into the Classic FM 'Hall of Fame' at the first attempt.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Violin</b>	<i>Richard Smith</i> <i>Ivor McGregor</i> <i>Peter Davis</i> <i>Nadine Nagen</i>	<b>Bass</b>	<i>Sandra James</i> <i>Imogen Fernando</i>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Violin</b>	<i>Simon Chalk</i> <i>Igor Baranovsky</i> <i>Rachel Evans</i> <i>Rebecca Stevens</i>	<b>Harp</b> <b>Flute/Piccolo</b> <b>Oboe/Cor Anglais</b> <b>Clarinet</b> <b>Bassoon</b> <b>Horn</b>	<i>Marged Hall</i> <i>Mary Thornloe</i> <i>Louise Braithwaite</i> <i>Neyire Ashworth</i> <i>Sarah Whibley</i> <i>Will Padfield</i> <i>Simon de Souza</i>
<b>Viola</b>	<i>Jonathan Welch</i> <i>Helen Tucker</i> <i>Vanessa McNaught</i>	<b>Trumpet</b> <b>Trombone</b> <b>Timpani</b> <b>Percussion</b> <b>Organ</b>	<i>Andy Holman</i> <i>Jane Salmon</i> <i>Tom Peverelle</i> <i>Tim Farmer</i> <i>David Bednall</i>
<b>Cello</b>	<i>Steve Collisson</i> <i>Claire Constable</i> <i>Stephanie Wilson</i>		

## Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir

The Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir was established in September 2021. The choir sings about thirty services in the Cathedral each year, often undertaking all the services for a weekend when the Cathedral Choir is absent. In addition, it aims to undertake three or four Parish visits each year, typically singing evensong, will sing at three or four weddings and/or funerals, and spend a period in residence in another cathedral during the month of August.

<b>Soprano</b>	<i>Catherine Bailey</i> <i>Kate Hodgkinson</i> <i>Kerri Marshfield</i> <i>Fran Smetten</i> <i>La Vigar</i> <i>Sally Walker</i>	<b>Alto</b>	<i>Charly Dando</i> <i>Julia Dallosso</i> <i>Rebecca Hall</i> <i>Eve Miller</i>
<b>Tenor</b>	<i>Geoff Larbalestier</i> <i>Arnold Wills</i>	<b>Bass</b>	<i>Philip Bevan</i> <i>Mark Groom</i> <i>Ben Potter</i> <i>Geoff Walker</i>



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*Photograph by Laura Waters*

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# Future Events

*Saturday and Sunday 26/27 March 2024*

## **Mozart's Requiem**

WCOS is pleased to support the Wells Cathedral School and its pupils.

Our members enjoyed singing in its Bach Day in February and we are looking forward to giving talented students the opportunity to perform with us in the future.

Wells Cathedral School's next concert is a performance of Mozart's Requiem in Cedars Hall on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March.



*Saturday 22 June 2024*

## **Come & Sing – The Armed Man**



WCOS is once again inviting singers from Somerset and beyond to join us for a day rehearsing and performing in Wells Cathedral. This year, we will be singing excerpts from *The Armed Man*. We are thrilled to announce that Sir Karl Jenkins will be present to provide insights in to one of his most popular and well-loved works.

This event will be followed by a **full WCOS concert performance** of *The Armed Man* under the baton of Sir Karl Jenkins himself on **7 December 2024**.

*Saturday 20 July 2024*

## **WOW Fest – Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony**

WCOS will be leading the choral element of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony, best known for the "Ode to Joy", as part of a project that supports youth orchestras from across UK and Europe and performed in Wells Cathedral. Participation is open to the public with rehearsals on 6/7 July.

Please visit <https://www.wellsyouthmusicfest.co.uk> for more information.





*Photograph by Dimitris Koutroumpas  
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