

Towards the Light

Music for Passiontide

Joyful Company of Singers

Conducted by Peter Broadbent
and Olivia Tait

Kate Risdon - flute Fergus Black - piano

Thursday 31st March 2022 at 7pm
St Gabriel's Pimlico, London SW1



JOYFUL COMPANY OF SINGERS

President

Brian Kay

Vice Presidents

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Judith Bingham OBE

Dame Laura Cox DBE

Stephen Connock MBE

Cecilia McDowall

Roxanna Panufnik

John Rutter CBE

Giles Swayne

Gabriel Woolf



The Friends of JCS

The coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone and hit amateur singing particularly. We send a huge 'thank you' to all our Friends who have continued to support the choir through this very difficult period.

Friends support us both with donations and as audience members. Friends also support our Youth Fund which provides a bursary for a young conductor to work with us and be coached by our founder-director, Peter Broadbent, one of Britain's leading choral conductors. Our latest Junior Conducting Fellow, Olivia Tait, will conduct some of tonight's programme.

We warmly invite new Friends to enjoy the Scheme's improved benefits for all who donate regularly a minimum £5 monthly/£60 annually – larger amounts are most welcome, of course!!

Friends' benefits include:

- 10% discount on unlimited tickets to JCS own-promotion events
- Pre-concert 'Meet the Musicians' talks and complimentary Friends' receptions at all JCS own-promotion concerts
- Participation in JCS 'Come and Sing' days at discounted rates
- A password-protected Friends page on the JCS website offering choir news and free downloads of JCS copyright audio recordings.
- A free copy of our 'Sing Joyfully' CD
- Discounts on new JCS recordings and archive CDs from our stocks

To join the Friends, please use the contact form on www.jcos.co.uk or send an email to friends@jcos.co.uk.

The JCS is indebted to our current Friends:

Amanda Abbitt

Kevin Bailey

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Jenny Ball

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Anne Broadbent

Christine Broadbent

Francesca Caine

Philip Caine

Cathryn Caunt

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Jonathan Lane

Alexandra Loewe

Andy Mackinder

Yvette Miller

Helen Morton

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Isabel Nisbet

Bruce O'Brien

Nigel Richards

Louisa Roberts

Howard Simmons

Janet Stephen

Joanna Thompson

Christopher Williams

Sally Zimmermann

...and others who prefer
to remain anonymous

Programme

Amicus meus osculi; Eram quasi agnus

Matins of Maundy Thursday - Tomás Luis da Victoria

Tenebrae factae sunt

Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence - Francis Poulenc

Tenebrae factae sunt; Tradiderunt me

Matins of Good Friday - Tomás Luis da Victoria

Tristis est anima mea

Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence - Francis Poulenc

Cathryn Caunt (Soprano) Conducted by Olivia Tait

Trois mouvements pour Flûte & Piano

Jehan Ariste Alain

1. *Andante* 2. *Allegro con Grazia* 3. *Allegro Vivace*

Kate Risdon (Flute) & Fergus Black (Piano)

Deus, Deus meus

Psalm 62 vv.1-8 - Roxanna Panufnik

Sarah Maria Intriery (Soprano) Conducted by Olivia Tait

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Miserere mei Deus

Psalm 50 - James MacMillan

Nicola Roberts (Soprano) Alexandra Loewe (Mezzo)

Nick King (Tenor) Andy Mackinder (Baritone)

Sonatina for Flute & Piano

Malcolm Arnold

1. *Allegro* 2. *Andante* 3. *Allegretto*

Kate Risdon (Flute) & Fergus Black (Piano)

Timor et tremor; Vinea me electa

Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence - Francis Poulenc

O vos omnes; Ecce quomodo moritur

Matins of Holy Saturday - Tomás Luis da Victoria

Programme Notes

The works in this programme of Passiontide Music include choral music of the late Renaissance interspersed with music by 20th century and contemporary composers.

The offices of *Tenebrae* (Darkness) specially celebrated in the three days leading up to Easter were a combination of Matins and Lauds, starting in the early evening and finishing in the dark. The Responsories were sung before some of the Psalms chanted during the services. The Tenebrae services were removed by the liturgical reforms instituted by Pius XII in the 1950's, but they were clearly important to clergy and people alike in the 16th Century when the great Spanish composer **Tomás Luis da Victoria** wrote these passionate and intense settings. There are 18 motets, of which we will be performing six.

The *Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence* were written just before the war by **Francis Poulenc**, much of whose choral music was inspired by his Catholicism. Three of the motets are taken from the Tenebrae responsories, including *Tenebrae factae sunt*, which was the first he wrote and dedicated to the influential teacher and composer Nadia Boulanger. The text of *Timor et tremor* combines verses from two psalms, a text also set by Lassus.

The two living composers represented in the programme are also Catholic, and a significant part of each's output is religious music. **Roxanna Panufnik** came to the wider musical public's attention with her *Westminster Mass*, commissioned to celebrate the 75th Birthday of Cardinal Hume in 1998 (and which the JCS performed with the City of London Sinfonia in Wroclaw, Poland in 2001). The motet *Deus, Deus meus* was included at the Cardinal's request, and this imaginative and sensitive setting combines both Latin and English texts, with a Soprano soloist and eight-part choir.

Sir James MacMillan is one of the UK's most performed and respected composers. He has an active involvement in church music, and the series of *Strathclyde motets* are written for a parish church choir, but he has written large scale choral and orchestral works of great

intensity. The *Miserere* setting (Psalm 51) written in 2009 includes typically decorative melodic ideas redolent of Scottish folk music, and a central section of free chant in harmony. It is a powerful and atmospheric work of some complexity but great sincerity.

Peter Broadbent

Sir Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006) was a prolific composer – his output included a number of important works for the flute. Along with the two Concertos, his *Sonatina for Flute and Piano op.19* (1948) is dedicated to flautist Richard Adeney, Arnold's colleague in the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Arnold left his job as Principal trumpet in the same year this work was composed.

There is no room in this work for virtuosity; it is a musical microcosm of a tumultuous psychological struggle all the drama being played out internally. The first movement seems to actively seek self-destruction. The opening melody has a searching quality and never allows itself to truly shine, prevented by Arnold's suppressive dynamic markings. Any possibility for growth is suffocated - crushed by ferocious outbursts of the piano, until the flute can only scream in desperation. Even the recapitulation of the opening melody which might give rise to a more hopeful resolution is stamped out by the piano in the final bar.

After such ferocity, a period of desolation, even of mourning, is to be expected. There is much that is reminiscent of sighing and the tolling of a bell in the hauntingly beautiful second movement, with its desolate melodies and shadowy textures.

And after such internal tumult, in the third movement comes calm, in part because all energy is utterly spent. Too languid for jauntiness, only a shuffling walk is possible; But the persistent calling of the flute encourages an occasional small skip in the step. There is warmth, the hint of a smile and the quiet realisation of the possibility of hope after such a storm.

Violence ... Mourning... Hope... Any resonances with *Passiontide* are likely to be entirely circumstantial in a piece said to be a portrayal of its dedicatee and possibly, coincidentally, of its composer who suffered

serious mental illness ... Until one considers the internal and spiritual dramas unfolding in the minds of the chief protagonists in the story...

When **Jehan Ariste Alain** (1911-1940) - organist, composer and organ builder - installed a four-manual instrument in the living-room of the family home, he could hardly have guessed the legacy to which it would lead. Having absorbed the French Organ School through Guilmant and Vierne, he imparted it to his children. In the ten brief years of Jehan's composing career, he drew on influences as disparate as Debussy and the Impressionist movement, the philosophy, dance and music of the far east, the revival of Baroque music, the inspiration of plain chant and of modal scales and Jazz. With the organ as his chief vehicle, Jehan Alain evoked joy, humour, serenity and above all a profound, mesmeric spirituality. His liturgical settings are a world away from the grandiose scale of those of Widor and his contemporaries. Like Duruflé, his use of Gregorian chant and piquant modal harmonies evokes a deep sense of stillness.

In his *Trois Mouvements Pour Flûte Et Piano* (1934-1935), over lilting chords of subtly shifting harmonies, the hauntingly beautiful arch-shaped phrases of the Andante begin from afar, lengthen, intensify in mood and then fall away.

The Allegretto is a graceful dance, the two instruments weaving a jauntily accented chromatic motif around one another until, dizzy, they drop into a temporary languido interlude. The resumed playful dance ends with mischievous piano figures and a delightful blues chord.

It is possible that the extended piano solo which opens the Toccata-like Allegro Vivace was the inspiration for Alain's devoted younger sister, Marie-Claire to arrange these movements for flute and organ in 1975. Fragments of phrases are thrown back and forth between the instruments and hemiolas form a feature, pitting three-note figures over four-note beats. Having wound the music up to full tension, a fortissimo trill suddenly releases a spring and the movement collapses, but for one final rogue chord – according to Marie-Claire, Jehan loved a practical joke.

Alain's unique contribution to French music was cut tragically short by his death fighting in World War II. The detailed writings and recordings of his beloved younger sister give us a unique insight into this most distinctive composer.

Kate Risdon



Peter Broadbent, the founder conductor of the Joyful Company of Singers, is one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He has conducted the London Mozart Players, Divertimenti Chamber Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Southern Sinfonia, the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Apollo Voices and the BBC Singers, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

Guest engagements outside the UK include concerts with the Debrecen Philharmonic Orchestra and Kodály Chorus in Debrecen (Hungary), a broadcast concert with the National Chamber Choir in Dublin and a European tour with the World Youth Choir.

Peter Broadbent gives workshops and master classes throughout Europe and was the first Director of Training for the Association of British Choral Directors. In 2007 he was presented with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture for his services to Anglo-Hungarian musical relations, and in 2017 was presented with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit. He was awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Years Honours for service to music.

Olivia Tait is a London based conductor, recently having graduated with a distinction in her MA Choral Conducting from the Royal Academy of Music, where she held an entrance scholarship and studied under Patrick Russill.



As well as her Junior Fellowship with the Joyful Company of Singers, Olivia is also the St Martin-in-the-Fields Conducting Fellow, where she works with the St Martin's Choral Scholars and Chamber Choir in conducting weekly services. She is also the Genesis Sixteen Conducting Scholar 2020/21 where she receives tutoring from Harry Christophers and Eamonn Dougan in conducting the Genesis Sixteen Choir. Olivia recently received a place on the Jette Parker Women Conductors Course, where she conducted scenes from Verdi's *La Traviata* with the City of London Sinfonia at the Royal Opera House under the tuition of Sian Edwards, Alice Farnham and Jessica Cottis and went on to deputise as chorus master for Opera Holland Park's production of Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

She also participated in the DIMA International Choral Conducting Competition where she was a finalist and received the Gheorge Dima Special Prize.

Kate Risdon is a founder member of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's BSO Resound Ensemble, which became the first disabled-led ensemble to perform at the BBC Proms in 2018 and won the Royal Philharmonic Society Impact Award in 2019. She now combines her work with BSO Resound with a portfolio of teaching and performing. She has worked with the British Paraorchestra, including in conjunction with the Qatar Philharmonic and the South Bank Sinfonia. She was guest soloist in Prague with the Czech Virtuosi Orchestra in 2017, at the invitation of the Czech Blind Union. Other less conventional performances include duets in a pod on the London Eye and improvised flute for Aboriginal "smoking" ceremonies with Forrest Yoga.

Kate is a committed teacher, working privately and with Peterborough Music Hub and Peterborough Centre for Young Musicians. Two of her students are sponsored by the Amber Music Trust, who assist visually impaired young people. She is passionate about promoting Braille music literacy.

Kate studied Music at Dartington College of Arts and graduated from the University of Leeds. She gained Dip. (ABRSM) (teaching) and LRSM (performance) qualifications with distinctions in 2011.

Fergus Black was born in Scotland in 1958. After taking his degree at St. Andrews University, Fergus studied music in the USA at the University of Pennsylvania and at UCLA, before returning to the UK to pursue a career in arts management.

He now devotes his time to performing and teaching piano, organ and singing, both privately and in schools. He has worked with a number of musicians in the Peterborough area and beyond - concerts coming up soon include work with the trumpeter Andy Harris in Sheffield, concerts in Peterborough with viola and viola d'amore, and a children's organ recital for National Organ Day in Stamford. His web site is at www.fergusblackmusic.uk



Kate and Fergus began their collaboration in 1997 and have since given many recitals in the Peterborough area. They have performed several times for the Treasury Music Society in London as well as playing in

locations as diverse as the kitchens of Belvoir Castle and school assembly halls, and entertaining lunchtime customers of Café Nero.

One of Europe's most prominent chamber choirs, the **Joyful Company of Singers** is known for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the 16th Century to the present day, including many first performances. Formed in 1988 by conductor Peter Broadbent, the choir first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1990. Since then it has maintained its profile in the music world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions leading to many invitations to perform. Concert appearances include most of the leading UK festivals and regular concert tours in Europe, broadcasting in many countries as well as on BBC and Classic FM. A discography of over 25 CDs includes Rachmaninov's *All-night Vigil* on Nimbus: '*beautifully characterized and shaped by Peter Broadbent*' (International Record Review).

The JCS has also instituted a Youth Fund to encourage the development of young choral conductors, singers and composers. The first composition competition was won by young Australian composer Chris Williams and in 2016 the JCS co-commissioned the major work *Dancing Star* from Toby Young. In addition, we now welcome Olivia Tait as our fifth funded Junior Conducting Fellow to work with the choir.

Tonight's Singers:

Sopranos: Amanda Abbitt, Felicitas Biskup, Cathryn Caunt, Viktorija Dronseikie, Sarah Intrieri, Olivia Tait, Nicola Roberts, Carrie Beaumont, Margaret Green, Jane Metcalfe, Wendy Norman, Clare Vincent-Silk

Altos: Philippa Gardner, Alexandra Loewe, Debbie Johnstone, Hannah Bale, Denise Fabb, Lorna Perry, Joanna Thompson

Tenors: Nick King, Stephen Mason, Mark Johnstone, Peter Murphy

Basses: Neville Hargreaves, Andy Mackinder, Thomas Spanyol, Peter da Costa, Mark Fenton, Jonathan Lane, David Lowe, Christopher Williams

Our next performances:

Saturday 30th April at 7.30pm

'Symphonies for Voices'

St Endellion Church, Cornwall, PL29 3TP

Monday 2nd May at 3pm

'Stars and Bars! - Music from the American Songbook'

All Saints Church, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 3PN

Tuesday 10th May at 7pm

'Symphonies for Voices'

St Gabriel's Church, Pimlico, London SW1V 2AD



Website www.jcos.co.uk

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