

MASS of the CHILDREN and other sacred music by JOHN RUTTER

## MASS of the CHILDREN and other sacred music

Mass of the Children was written in late 2002 and early 2003. The occasion of its first performance in February 2003 was a concert in New York's Carnegie Hall involving children's choir, adult choir, soprano and baritone soloists, and orchestra. I had always wanted to write a work combining children's choir with adult performers, not only because I find the sound of children's voices irresistible but also because I wanted to repay a debt. As a boy soprano in my school choir I had been thrilled whenever our choir took part in adult works with children's choir parts, such as the Mahler Third Symphony and the Britten *War Requiem*, and years later I remembered this experience and wanted to write something that would give children a similar opportunity to perform alongside adult professionals.

The text of *Mass of the Children* is that of a standard Latin *Missa brevis* (that is, a Mass not including a *Credo* section) to which several relevant English poetic texts have been added. The first and last of these are taken from Bishop Thomas Ken's renowned morning and evening hymns for the scholars of Winchester College, giving the whole work the framework of a complete day, from waking to sleeping, within which other texts and moods appear like events in that day or landmarks in a life.

The other pieces included in this recording are shorter and all written since the mid-1990s. Look at the world (1996), a simple anthem with a text on the theme of the environment, was written to mark the 70th anniversary of the Council for the Protection of Rural England. To every thing there is a season (1997), originally intended as the finale to a longer work, sets a familiar passage from Ecclesiastes in a song-like style, taking its character from the 'time of peace' referred to in the final line of the text. Wings of the morning (2002), another Old Testament setting, came about as a result of a request from the Durban Serenade Choir for a new choral piece to sing on their first UK tour. The sixty rich Zulu voices of the choir made an inspiring sound at its première in Cambridge. A Clare Benediction (1998), named in honour of my alma mater, Clare College Cambridge, is one of a number of choral blessings I have written over the years, in every case for a person or

institution of special significance to me. **I will sing with the spirit** (1994) is dedicated to another institution, the Royal School of Church Music, who requested a simple anthem to serve as a theme song for their anniversary appeal.

The final three pieces on the album form a group insofar as they are all for choir without orchestra and on a more demanding level chorally. Musica Dei donum (1998), which has an important part for solo flute, is a setting of an anonymous text first set by Lassus in 1594 that speaks of the power of music to draw, to soothe, and to uplift. Originally written for the choir of Clare College, this piece was subsequently included in A Garland for Linda, a cycle of nine choral pieces by different composers in memory of Linda McCartney. I my Best-Beloved's am (2000) was written for the BBC Singers and first performed by them at a concert in Canterbury Cathedral on the theme of the seven sacraments. I was assigned the theme of marriage, and found my text by combining the Latin nuptial responses (sung by the tenors and basses) with a lovely and little-known poem by the Jacobean Francis Quarles (sung by the sopranos and altos). Come down, O Love divine (1998), for double choir, has a curious history. It was commissioned by the Musicians Benevolent Fund for their annual St Cecilia's Day service, a splendid event held (in rotation) in Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, or Westminster Cathedral, with their three choirs joining forces and musicians past and present gathered in a spirit of thanksgiving and celebration. As it turned out, the 1998 service was to be held in Westminster Abbey, which was then in the midst of some rather public unhappiness, the details of which were widely reported at the time and need not be recounted here. I suspect that my choice of texts was influenced by these dramatic events: in particular the invocation 'Veni, Sancte Spiritus'. Like most musicians, I don't relish conflict and confrontation, even when they do not involve me personally, yet out of this particular turmoil came a piece which, I think, speaks with a different voice from any of my others.

JOHN RUTTER

# MASS of the CHILDREN and other sacred music by JOHN RUTTER The Cambridge Singers

Cantate Youth Choir\* (director: Michael Kibblewhite)

City of London Sinfonia

Joanne Lunn\* (soprano) Roderick Williams\* (baritone)

conducted by John Rutter

\*These artists appear in Mass of the Children only.

Total playing time: 79' 00"

Note: words credits are given at the end of each text.

All compositions are by John Rutter.

MASS OF THE CHILDREN (37' 02")

for soprano and baritone soli, children's choir, adult choir, and orchestra

- 1 1. **Kyrie** (7' 25")
- 2 2. **Gloria** (7' 25")
- 3. Sanctus and Benedictus (7' 08")
- 4. **Agnus Dei** (5' 57")
- 5 5. Finale (Dona nobis pacem) (8' 55")
- Look at the world (4' 33")
- To every thing there is a season (6' 05")
- Wings of the morning (5' 40")
- A Clare Benediction (3' 07")
- I will sing with the spirit (3' 02")

Musica Dei donum (5' 35")

for choir with solo flute

(Flute: Karen Jones)

I my Best-Beloved's am (6' 40")

for unaccompanied choir

(Tenor solo: Simon Wall)

Come down, O Love divine (6' 20")

for unaccompanied double choir

(Soprano solo: Elin Manahan Thomas)

Mass of the Children is published by Oxford University Press (UK and most other countries) and by Hinshaw Music,

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Roderick Williams appears by courtesy of Scottish Opera

The Cambridge Singers

Sopranos: Emily Benson, \*Lucy Crowe, †Grace Davidson, Emma Preston Dunlop, Julia Doyle, Amy Haworth,

†Kirsty Hopkins, Charlotte Mobbs, †Olivia Robinson, Madeleine Shaw, Elin Manahan Thomas,

\*Elizabeth Weisberg

David Bates, †Frances Bourne, †David Clegg, \*Jamie Laing, †Melanie Marshall, Ruth Massey, †Joanna Altos:

Norman, Abigail Smetham, \*Clare Wilkinson

\*Ben Breakwell, Mark Dobell, \*John Harte, Andrew Hewitt, †Alex Jupp, †Kevin Kyle, †Tom Roach, Tenors:

†Christopher Watson, Simon Wall

Basses: Tom Blunt, \*Julian Debreuil, Sam Evans, Christopher Gabbitas, †Alastair Merry, †Adrian Peacock,

Jonathan Saunders, Reuben Thomas, †Stuart Young

\*on tracks 6-12 only ton tracks 1-5 and 13 only

## **Mass of the Children**

#### 1 Kyrie

Children:

Awake my soul, and with the sun Thy daily stage of duty run; Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Redeem thy mis-spent time that's past, Live this day as if 'twere thy last: Improve thy talent with due care; For the great Day thyself prepare.

(Thomas Ken, 1637–1711)

Adults (then children and soloists):

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.

#### 2 Gloria

Children, then adults:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Children:

Glory be to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth.

Adults:

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Soloists:

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Adults:

Quoniam Tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

#### 3 Sanctus and Benedictus

Adults:

Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth,

Hosanna!

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.

Hosanna in excelsis.

Children, then adults and soloists:

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Hosanna!

### 4 Agnus Dei

Adults:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Children:

Little lamb, who made thee?

Dost thou know who made thee?

Gave thee life and bid thee feed,

By the stream and o'er the mead;

Gave thee clothing of delight,

Softest clothing, woolly bright;

Gave thee such a tender voice,

Making all the vales rejoice:

Little lamb, who made thee?

Dost thou know who made thee?

Adults and children:

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;

Little lamb, I'll tell thee:

He is called by thy name,

For he calls himself a Lamb:

He is meek and he is mild,

He became a little child:

I a child and thou a lamb,

We are called by his name.

Little lamb, God bless thee.

Little lamb, God bless thee.

(William Blake, 1757-1827)

Adults:

Miserere nobis.

#### 5 Finale

Baritone soloist:

Lord, open thou mine eyes that I may see thee;

Lord, open thou my lips that I may praise thee;

Lord, open thou my heart that I may love thee,

Serve thee with joy, fear none above thee.

Christ be my sword and shield, my strong defender;

Christ be my light and my Redeemer.

Lord, be with me this day in each endeavour;

Lord, keep my soul with thee now and for ever.

(based on a prayer of Lancelot Andrewes, 1555–1626)

Adults:

Dona nobis pacem.

Soprano soloist:

Christ, be my guide today, my guide tomorrow;

Christ in my days of joy, my days of sorrow;

Christ in the silent hours when I lie sleeping,

Safe in his holy angels' keeping.

Christ be within the hearts of all who love me:

Christ all around, and Christ above me.

Christ in my thought and prayer and my confessing;

Christ, when I go to rest, grant me your blessing.

(based on St Patrick's Breastplate, a 5th-century prayer)

Adults:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Children (at the same time):

Glory to thee, my God, this night

For all the blessings of the light;

Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,

Beneath thy own almighty wings.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,

Praise him, all creatures here below,

Praise him above, ye heavenly host,

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

(Thomas Ken)

All:

Dona nobis pacem.

#### 6 Look at the world

Look at the world, everything all around us: Look at the world, and marvel every day. Look at the world: so many joys and wonders, So many miracles along our way.

Praise to thee, O Lord, for all creation, Give us thankful hearts, that we may see: All the gifts we share, and every blessing, All things come of thee.

Look at the earth bringing forth fruit and flower; Look at the sky, the sunshine and the rain; Look at the hills, look at the trees and mountains, Valley and flowing river, field and plain:

Think of the spring, think of the warmth of summer Bringing the harvest before the winter's cold. Everything grows, everything has a season, Till it is gathered to the Fathers fold:

Every good gift, all that we need and cherish Comes from the Lord in token of his love; We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty; His is the earth, and his the heavens above:

(Words by John Rutter)

To every thing there is a season,

And a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

To every thing there is a season,

And a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

To every thing there is a season,

And a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to love, and a time to hate:

A time of war and a time of peace.

(Ecclesiastes 3, vv. 1–8)

## **8** Wings of the morning

If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, And thy right hand shall hold me. If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and my uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, And art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, But lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Lord, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, And thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; Even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee: But the night shineth as the day.

If I take the wings of the morning, Thou art there, O Lord, thou art there.

(from Psalm 139)

May the Lord show his mercy upon you;

May the light of his presence be your guide:

May he guard you and uphold you;

May his spirit be ever by your side.

When you sleep, may his angels watch over you;

When you wake, may he fill you with his grace:

May you love him and serve him all your days,

Then in heaven may you see his face.

(Words by John Rutter)

## 10 I will sing with the spirit

I will sing with the spirit, alleluia.

And I will sing with the understanding also, alleluia.

(1 Corinthians 14, v. 15)

#### **Musica Dei donum**

Musica Dei donum optimi trahit homines, trahit deos;

Musica truces mollit animos tristesque mentes erigit.

Musica vel ipsas arbores et horridas movet feras.

(Music, the gift of the supreme God, draws men, draws gods;

Music makes savage souls gentle and uplifts sad minds.

Music moves the very trees and wild beasts.)

(Words of unknown authorship, 16th century or earlier)

#### 12 I my Best-Beloved's am

Confirma hoc, Deus,

Quod operatus es in nobis.

A templo sancto tuo quod est in Jerusalem. Kyrie eleison. (Establish, O God, what you have wrought in us. For your temple's sake, which is in Jerusalem. Lord, have mercy.)

Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow My least desires unto the least remove; He's firmly mine by oath, I his by vow; He's mine by faith, and I am his by love; He's mine by water, I am his by wine; Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

Salvos fac servos tuos.

Deus meus, sperantes in te.

Mitte eis, Domine, auxilium de sancto:
Et de Sion tuere eos.
(Save your servants, God, whose hope is in you.
Send them help, Lord, from your sanctuary:
And strengthen them out of Sion.)

He is my altar, I his holy place; I am his guest, and he my living food; I'm his by penitence, he mine by grace; I'm his by purchase, he is mine by blood; He's my supporting elm, and I his vine: Thus I my Best Beloved's am, thus he is mine. Esto eis, Domine, turris fortitudinis:

A facie inimici.

Domine, exaudi orationem meam:

Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

(Be unto them a tower of strength, Lord,

In the face of their enemy.

Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto you.)

He gives me wealth, I give him all my vows; I give him songs, he gives me length of days; With wreaths of grace he crowns my conquering brows; And I his temples with a crown of praise, Which he accepts as an everlasting sign, That I my Best-Beloved's am, that he is mine.

> Latin text: Nuptial responses (Tridentine rite) English text: Francis Quarles (1592–1644)

#### [3] Come down, O Love divine

Come down, O Love divine, Seek thou this soul of mine, And visit it with thine own ardour glowing; O Comforter, draw near; Within my heart appear, And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, Till earthly passions turn To dust and ashes in its heat consuming; And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Veni, Sancte Spiritus.

(English text translated from Bianco da Siena, d. 1434)



Recording session for Mass of the Children.

Photo: David Henderson







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