



Piano
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hos C&C

En aften med nyere engelsk musik





Gerald Raphael Finzi (1901-1956)

Dies Natalis, Op. 8 24:05

for tenor solo and string orchestra; first performed in the Wigmore Hall, London, on 26 January 1940

Text: Thomas Traherne (c1636-1674)

English Chamber Orchestra

Christopher Finzi

Thomas Traherne was a little-known seventeenth-century metaphysical poet whose work was forgotten for two centuries. In 1896 an unsigned manuscript of poems was discovered and assigned to Henry Vaughan. However, the scholar Bertram Dobell was struck by the resemblance in style to an obscure book of religious meditation by Traherne published in 1699. By diligent research Dobell established that the newly discovered poems were indeed by Traherne, and he subsequently edited two volumes of his work, published in 1903 and 1910 respectively. Traherne's significance lies in his continuing the line of Anglican mystical poetry after Vaughan, yet little is known about the poet himself. He was born in Hereford circa 1636, gained his BA at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1656 and returned to his native county as rector of Credenhill, a few miles from Hereford. There he became spiritual adviser to Susanna Hopton for whom he wrote his most important prose work, the *Centuries of Meditation*. From 1669 to 1674 he lived in London where he died aged only thirty-seven. Finzi began his setting of Traherne's vision of a child's innocent and unsullied perception of the world in the mid 1920s. The 'Rhapsody', a free adaptation of the opening stanzas of the poet's *Third Century of Meditations*, was composed first, followed by the 'Intrada' and the closing 'Salutation'. As often with Finzi, the work was then laid aside, allowing it to mature and develop in the recesses of his mind. During the next ten years he composed the setting of the poem 'Wonder', but it was a request from the Three Choirs Festival for a work to be performed at the 1939 festival that galvanized him into revising the extant movements and adding the contrasting fast 'The Rapture', subtitled 'Danza'. The finished work, which he called *Dies natalis* (literally, 'Day of birth'), resembled a Baroque cantata in form. The planned premiere was cancelled due to the outbreak of war and the work instead received its first performance at Wigmore Hall on 26 January 1940; Elsie Suddaby was the soprano soloist with Maurice Miles conducting his own string orchestra. Finzi's choice of a purely instrumental movement, 'Intrada', to begin *Dies natalis* creates an image of the unborn child in the womb, and is synonymous too with Traherne's lines, 'An empty book is like an infant's soul, in which anything may be written, it is capable of all things but containeth nothing'. Its musical ideas are shared with the second movement 'Rhapsody': an ingenuous phrase to swaying rhythm and, in the middle section, a stately flowing melody which swells to a heady climax, pregnant with anticipation.

The title 'Rhapsody' should be understood in its seventeenth-century meaning of 'rapturous delight or ecstasy', its text describing the infant's wide-eyed response to the world it has entered. Finzi's setting is composed in the fluid, supple recitative-cum-arioso style of which he was a master and responds to each nuance of the text. This approach reflects his comment to the poet Edmund Blunden in 1952: 'I like the music to grow out of the actual words and not be fitted to them.'

Finzi had two images in mind when composing 'The Rapture': the dancing circle of angels above the oxen-stall of Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity* that hangs in The National Gallery, and the magnificent carved wooden angels in March Church in the Fens which he had visited on holiday in 1927. With these in mind Finzi fashioned this swirling dance of praise, as he recalled in 1939:

There is a great resemblance between the static and the ecstatic. I discovered this one day when I was standing in March Church looking up at the double hammer-beam roof and the row of carved angels—which gave the feeling of a Botticelli Nativity and were static from very ecstasy.

At the movement's climax, to the words 'O how Divine Am I!', the music attains an exultant ecstasy through the jostling clash of G and F naturals in the voice and violins and F sharp in the first cellos.

'Wonder' is set as a tender arioso. Traherne's opening line, 'How like an Angel came I down!', is evoked through a vocal phrase that seems to float in its descent, whilst once again Finzi exploits a harmonic frisson between the voice and second violins on the word 'like' to emphasize the poet's imagery. The climactic phrase 'With Seas of Life, like Wine' is mirrored by Finzi in rich nine-part string writing.



A quality of concord and timelessness characterizes 'The Salutation', in which the soloist's aria is cast in the form of a Bachian chorale prelude. Its arching, soaring melody is quintessential Finzi, and is accompanied by flowing counterpoint in quaver motion over the steady measured tramp of the bass. The violas set the movement in motion and their contrapuntal idea is then shared amongst the other instruments; the verses are interspersed with limpid orchestral flowerings marked by falling sevenths until finally the violas wind the movement to stillness in a mood of rapt wonder.

Eclogue for Piano and Strings Op. 10 11:01

Peter Donohoe (piano)
Northern Sinfonia
Howard Griffiths

A piece that Finzi started writing in the late 1920s, but never got round to finishing. At least, not finishing in the manner he had wanted. The idea originally was to write a grand piano concerto – it's very possible that his Grand Fantasia and Toccata for piano might well have been part of the original plan, too – but, for some reason, it was never to be.

This movement is based on an archaic form of poem that was originally meant to be a conversation between shepherds (although quite how interesting that might have been without music is another matter). In the end, probably knowing that other movements were never going to come, Finzi reworked it so that it could be played on its own. Even then, it didn't see the public light of day until the composer was dead and buried.

Sir Karl William Pamp Jenkins, CBE (1944 -)

Requiem

Requiem is a classical work by Karl Jenkins, first recorded and performed in 2005. It was premièred at Southwark Cathedral on 2 June 2005, by the West Kazakhstan Philharmonic Orchestra and Adiemus percussion and brass, conducted by the composer. Soloists were Nicole Tibbels (soprano), Clive Bell (shakuhachi), Sam Landman (treble) and Catrin Finch (harp).

In this work, Jenkins interjects movements featuring Japanese death poems in the form of a haiku with those traditionally encountered in a Requiem Mass. At times, the Latin text is sung below the text of the haiku. Oriental instruments are included in the orchestration, such as the shakuhachi, the darabuca, daiko and frame drums.

Introit 6:54
Dies Irae 4:46
In paradisum 5:42



Tolga Kashif (1962-)

The Queen Symphony

Turkish-Cypriot Tolga Kashif was born in London. Before going on to further education, Kashif went to Forest School. His compositional and conducting studies at the Royal College of Music led him subsequently to Bristol University with Derek Bourgeois. He had his professional début with the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, resulting in further collaborations with the City of London Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Northern Sinfonia and the Wren Orchestra. He has been the Music Director of the London Amadeus Choir, which is thought to have influenced the choral elements of Queen Symphony. In 1992 he became the Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra, with whom he has enjoyed many successful orchestral concerts, particularly at the Barbican Arts Centre (formerly Barbican Hall).

Kashif's work overseas has also been highly reputable. He has conducted the Polish National Symphony and the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1989, he worked with the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra abroad in a series of successful concerts held as part of the Istanbul International Festival of the same year. In 1991 he was assigned the position of Permanent Guest Conductor of the Presidential Symphony Orchestra.

Kashif spent two years composing the Queen Symphony. He conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in its debut on Wednesday 6 November 2002. It was performed in the Royal Festival Hall and broadcast on ABC TV to a wide European audience. That night, it received a standing ovation from over two thousand people. This concert was attended by Jer Bulsara (Freddie Mercury's mother), drummer Roger Taylor and guitarist Brian May. They "very much enjoyed it" and they said it was "very moving indeed". After being recorded at Abbey Road Studios in 2002,[3] Queen Symphony was nominated Album of the Year in the 2003 Classical Brit Awards. In 2003 Kashif directed the Northern Sinfonia in UK tours with Lesley Garrett. He conducted the Turkish première of Queen Symphony at the International Izmir Festival. He also directed the piece in Australia in two sold-out performances at the Sydney Opera House with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. These were broadcast on ABC Classic FM. He also conducted a UK tour in 2007.

The Queen Symphony

In 1974, Freddie Mercury said that he would "like people to put their own interpretation" on his own songs, and Kashif did just that. It is a work comprising six movements. It is based on around a dozen well-known melodies from the rock band Queen. These include "Bohemian Rhapsody", "We Will Rock You", "We Are the Champions" and "Who Wants to Live Forever", the latter including a performance by Nicola Loud. Some critics have compared the overall effect with the work of John Williams, notably his Star Wars score. Others have considered the choral elements of the Queen Symphony to be a nod to the rock band's own lavish tendencies, in addition to Kashif's spell as musical director of the London Amadeus Choir. The piece has been performed regularly and in 2004 received US and Dutch premières. The tonal language of the symphony is diverse and draws on much of the Western classical tradition, with Kashif himself listing influences as diverse as medieval music, Romantic music and opera.

There are concertante passages for piano in the second movement, and for violin and cello in the third. Movements.

Adagio misterioso - Allegro con brio - Maestoso - Misterioso - Allegro (Radio Gaga, The Show Must Go On, One Vision, I Was Born To Love You)

Allegretto - Allegro scherzando - Tranquillo (Love Of My Life, Another One Bites The Dust, Killer Queen)

Adagio (Who Wants To Live Forever, Save Me)

Allegro vivo - Moderato cantabile - Cadenza - A tempo primo (Bicycle Race, Save Me)

Andante doloroso - Allegretto - Alla marcia - Moderato risoluto - Pastorale - Maestoso (Bohemian Rhapsody, We Will Rock You, We Are The Champions, Who Wants To Live Forever)

Andante sostenuto (We Are The Champions, Bohemian Rhapsody, Who Wants To Live Forever)



Debbie Wiseman (1963-)

Classic Silver 3:00

New Water Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4KqqfIehpk>

One of the UK's most successful female music ambassadors, Debbie Wiseman was born in London. She studied at Trinity College of Music Junior Department, and then piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama studying piano with James Gibb, and composition with Buxton Orr.

Wiseman is a Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music, and regularly gives lectures to schools and colleges about the art of composing music for picture. In 2008 she composed a new Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra called Different Voices which was premiered by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as part of their 60th birthday celebrations, and the work is now frequently performed by school and youth orchestras across the country.

In 2004 she was awarded an MBE in the 2004 New Year Honours List for services to the film industry and has been awarded Honorary Fellowships at both colleges where she studied, Trinity College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Debbie was admitted to the Degree of Doctor of Music at the University of Sussex in 2015.