



ONDINE

ELGAR

The Dream of Gerontius

Christine Rice | John Findon | Roderick Williams

Helsinki Music Centre Choir

Cambridge University Symphony Chorus

Dominante | Helsinki Chamber Choir

Alumni of the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge

Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra

NICHOLAS COLLON

EDWARD ELGAR (1857–1934)

The Dream of Gerontius, Op. 38 (1899–1900)

For 3 voices, chorus and orchestra

CD 1	Part I	36:04
1	Prelude	9:49
2	<i>Jesu, Maria – I am near to death</i> (Gerontius, Assistants)	5:52
3	<i>Rouse thee, my fainting soul</i> (Gerontius, Assistants)	3:39
4	<i>Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus</i> (Gerontius)	7:07
5	<i>Rescue him, O Lord</i> (Assistants)	3:17
6	<i>Proficiscere, anima Christiana</i> (The Priest, Assistants)	6:16
CD 2	Part II	55:16
1	<i>I went to sleep</i> (Soul of Gerontius)	6:03
2	<i>My work is done</i> (Angel, Soul)	8:01
3	<i>But hark! upon my sense</i> (Soul, Angel, Demons)	5:20
4	<i>I see not those false spirits</i> (Soul, Angel)	3:19
5	<i>Praise to the Holiest</i> (Choir of Angelicals, Angel, Soul)	11:52
6	<i>Thy judgement now is near</i> (Angel, Soul)	3:08
7	<i>Jesu! By that shuddering dread</i> (Angel of the Agony)	3:57
8	<i>I go before my Judge</i> (Soul, Voices on Earth, Angel)	5:55
9	<i>Lord, Thou hast been our refuge</i> (Souls in Purgatory, Angel, Souls, Choir of Angelicals)	7:35

Christine Rice, mezzo–soprano (Angel)

John Findon, tenor (Gerontius, Soul of Gerontius)

Roderick Williams, baritone (The Priest, Angel of the Agony)

Helsinki Music Centre Choir, coach **Nils Schweckendiek**

Cambridge University Symphony Chorus, coach **David Young**

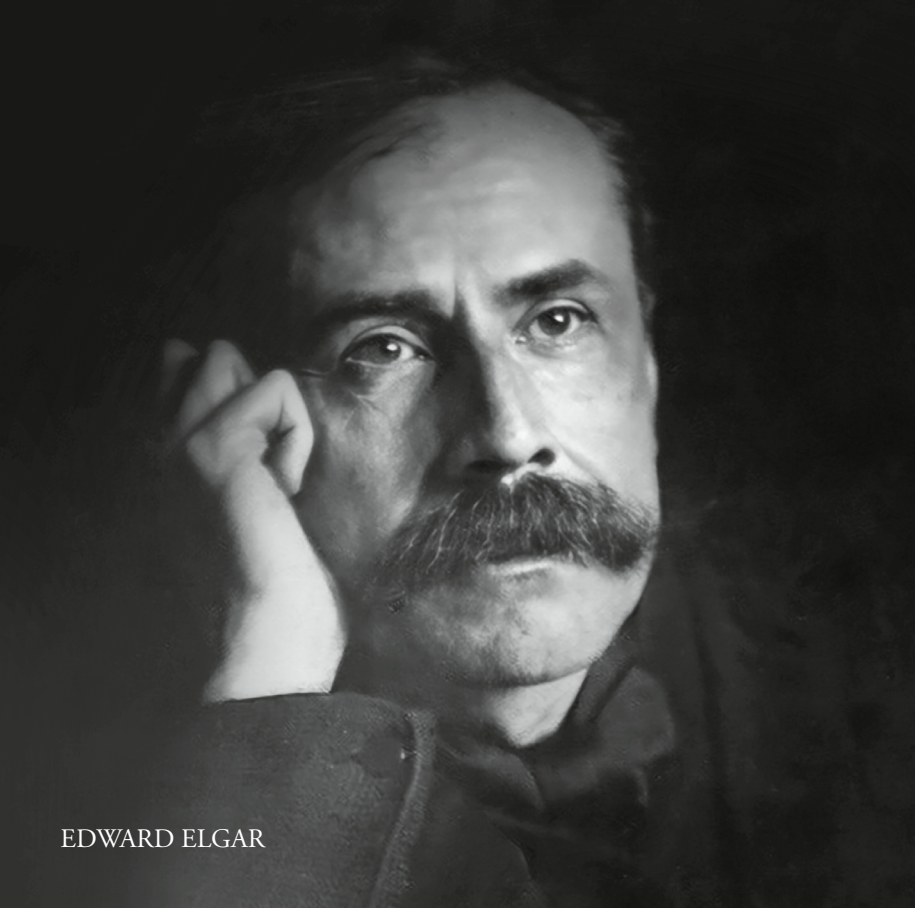
Dominante, coach **Seppo Murto**

Helsinki Chamber Choir, coach **Nils Schweckendiek**

Alumni of the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, coach **Graham Ross**

FINNISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

NICHOLAS COLLON, conductor



EDWARD ELGAR

Edward Elgar (1857–1934): *The Dream of Gerontius*, Op. 38 (1899–1900)

“This is the best of me” wrote Edward Elgar in 1900, as is fairly well known, at the end of the manuscript of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Less well-known is that that was a quote, from the 1865 book, *Sesame and Lillies*, in which the celebrated English philosopher John Ruskin (1819–1900) had detailed his views on the natures of men and women and the duties incumbent on them. The quote runs in full:

This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.

The quotation was prescient, for – after a rather troubled start in life (the premiere in 1900 was ill-prepared and badly sung) – *The Dream of Gerontius* has come to be regarded as one of Elgar’s most enduring works, the finest of his many choral-and-orchestral works, and a cornerstone of the modern English choral tradition. It was his grandest work to date, scored for three vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra, running to almost 100 minutes, the latest in a series of choral-and-orchestral cantatas and ballads that had start with *The Black Knight* in 1889–92 and continued with *The Light of Life* (1896), *Scenes from the Life of Saint Olaf* (1896), *The Banner of Saint George* (1897), and *Caractacus* (1897–98). These were all modestly successful and secured Elgar a publishing contract with Novello and Co., but it was only with the premiere of his purely orchestral “*Enigma*” *Variations* in 1899 that he became a national and – through the championship of the conductor, Hans Richter – international figure.

By this time, Elgar had already been commissioned by the Birmingham Triennial Festival for another large choral work, to be premiered in Birmingham in October 1900. He briefly considered a Biblical subject, *The Apostles* – one that, as a devout Catholic, he had been considering for many years – but in late 1899 he decided on a different, also long-cherished project, *The Dream of Gerontius*. Often described as an oratorio – a term Elgar cordially loathed and never used – *The Dream of Gerontius* is a setting of extracts from the visionary poem of the same title by John Henry Newman (1801–90), by a curious coincidence published in the same year (1865) as Ruskin’s book. The Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) had considered a setting of Newman’s poem in the 1880s but decided

against it. Elgar would produce *The Apostles* for his next Birmingham Festival commission, in 1903.

John Newman had been a leading theologian and academic at Oxford University, as well as a priest in the Anglican Church, but was drawn increasingly to Roman Catholicism and in 1845 resigned from Oxford, left the Church of England and was swiftly ordained as a Catholic Priest. After helping found what would become University College Dublin, Newman was made a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII in 1879. (Newman was beatified in 2010 by Benedict XIV and canonised by Pope Francis nine years later.) *The Dream of Gerontius* is the best-known of his various literary works, and his largest poem. Constructed in seven 'phases', it deals with the death-bed vision and prayer of an old, pious man (the name Gerontius – from which the modern Welsh forename Geraint derives – means 'old man'). Elgar grouped the phases unequally into the two parts of his setting, the poem's first phase, corresponding entirely with Elgar's Part One, deals with Gerontius' final moments and death. The composer then compressed the remaining six phases of the poem into the much larger Second Part, dealing with Gerontius' spiritual awakening in the afterlife and his journey towards Judgment.

Elgar prefaced the score with a dedication "To the Greater Glory of God" (A. M. D. G. – "Ad maiorum Dei gloriam") and a quotation from Virgil: *Quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?* with the English translation: "Whence so dyre desire of Light on wretches grow?" He deployed three solo singers for this grand design, representing key characters in Newman's text: a tenor in the title role of Gerontius himself, a bass-baritone for two smaller, separate roles (a priest in Part One, the 'Angel of Agony' in Part Two) and, in the Second Part only, a mezzo-soprano for the crucial role of the Guardian Angel. Accompanying these are a chorus and semi-chorus to represent Gerontius' friends in Part One, demons, angels, and souls in Purgatory, accompanied by a standard orchestra of double woodwind (but with piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet, and contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets – doubling to six for the climax of Part Two – three trombones, tuba, timpani plus three other percussionists, preferably two harps, organ and strings. While the instrumentation may have been traditional for an oratorio-type work, Elgar departed from convention by running the sections together without pause. The only break occurs between Parts One and Two.

The Dream of Gerontius opens with a glowing, mystical Prelude in D minor, in places slightly suggestive of that to Wagner's final opera *Parsifal*, and presents the main thematic material for the entire work. As this closes, the tenor/Gerontius enters, singing of his impending demise (*Jesu, Maria, I am near to death*), and of fear that his sins may condemn him in the afterlife. (Throughout the work, Elgar alternates between lyrical recitative and arias for the many solo sections.) The atmosphere

darkens, though after encouragement from a chorus of Friends, Gerontius briefly revives (*Rouse, thee, my fainting soul*), before sinking back into trepidation (*Sanctis fortis, Sanctus Deus*). His friends plead for Divine intercession (*Rescue him, O Lord*) and Gerontius expires with the prayer “Into thy hands, O Lord”. After a brief pause, the Priest intones the prayer *Proficiscere, anima Christiana* (“Advance, Christian soul”) over the corpse to close Part One in a mood of calm resignation, in D major.

Part Two opens in a wholly different expressive landscape, lighter and brighter in texture, and key F major. After a brief, twenty-six-bar orchestral introduction in triple time, in which a rising four-note melodic cell for the violas is succeeded by a gently lilting theme for muted violins with a counterpoint for cellos, also muted, the Soul of Gerontius awakens in the afterlife (*I went to sleep*), expressing wonder first at his surroundings and then at the arrival of his Guardian Angel (*It is a member of that family*), who will guide the Soul through the remainder of the work. The Soul’s journey is not without incident, enduring two courts of judgment, one demonic (*But hark! Upon my sense comes a fierce hubbub and I see not those false spirits*) culminating in a raucous fugue, one angelical (*But hark! a grand mysterious harmony*); the Soul’s unease deepens as he approaches Judgment (*Thy judgment now is near*). Finally – after being dazzled by a vision of the Risen Christ and the Angel of Agony (who had comforted Christ in Gethsemane, – *I go before my judge*), Gerontius’ soul retreats, realising he is as yet not worthy of Heaven. The Angel conducts Gerontius to Purgatory and the work concludes (*Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul*) with the Angel’s promise to return once Gerontius’ “night of trial is over” with repeated Amens in D major from the chorus.

As mentioned earlier, *The Dream of Gerontius* did not prove an untrammelled success at its premiere, a combination of lack of preparation – conductor Hans Richter only received the score the day before the first orchestral rehearsal – and poor singing by the soloists and chorus (hampered by the unexpected death of the chorus master, Charles Swinnerton Heap, an Elgar champion). Elgar was dismayed, yet the critics and many professional musicians heard enough to realise that it was a work of genius. Two well-prepared performances in Germany conducted by Julius Butts proved that *Gerontius* was a fine work – and mightily impressed Richard Strauss, no less – and the London premiere in 1903 started to secure its reputation at home. And yet the work’s Catholic expression led to it being banned in some Church of England cathedrals even as late as 1930, and it had to be performed with an amended text for several years. But like Gerontius’ Soul, after this period of purgation, *The Dream of Gerontius* ascended to its rightful place as a major work of European art.

Christine Rice's operatic appearances have taken her to the Metropolitan Opera, New York; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Opéra national de Paris; Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich; Deutsche Oper, Berlin; Madrid's Teatro Real; the Opernhaus Zürich and the Glyndebourne and Salzburg Festivals.

Her wide ranging repertoire includes the roles of Brangäne *Tristan und Isolde* and Fricka *Das Rheingold*; Judith in *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*; the title role in *Carmen*; Concepcion *L'heure espagnole*; Giulietta *Les contes d'Hoffmann*; Marguerite *La damnation de Faust*; Hänsel *Hänsel und Gretel*; the title roles in *Gloriana* and *The Rape of Lucretia*; Sister Helen Prejean *Dead Man Walking*; Ježibaba *Rusalka*; La Zia Principessa *Suor Angelica*; Dorabella *Così fan tutte* and Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni*; Penelope *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* and Irene *Theodora*, Ruggiero *Alcina* and the title role in *Ariodante*.

She created the roles of Miranda and Blanca in the world premieres of Adès' *The Tempest* and *The Exterminating Angel*, and Ariadne in Birtwistle's *The Minotaur*.

Christine also has a very busy concert career, appearing throughout the UK, Europe, North America and at the BBC Proms and Edinburgh International and Aldeburgh Festivals working with conductors that include Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Mark Elder, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Andrew Davis, Edward Gardner, Fabio Luisi, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.



British tenor, **John Findon** studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Opera Course. He was a Harewood Artist at English National Opera from 2022–24 and a Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival in 2017.

This 2024/25 season will see John make two house and role debuts; Bacchus *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Opéra de Rouen and Narraboth *Salome* at Teatro di San Carlo. John will also cover the title role of *Peter Grimes* in Deborah Warner's production at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma and return to The Grange Festival in the Summer. Future seasons will see him return to the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English National Opera, Opera North, and Garsington Festival.

Recent highlights include his role debuts as Don Jose *Carmen* at Glyndebourne Festival and title role of *Peter Grimes* at English National Opera. He made his house debut at Bayerische Staatsoper for 1st Armoured man and 2nd Priest *Die Zauberflöte*, a role debut as Steva *Jentifa* at English National Opera, revived the role of Luke *The Handmaid's Tale* at English National Opera, before spending the summer at Glyndebourne Festival for 1st Armed Man/2nd Priest *Die Zauberflöte* and cover Melot *Tristan und Isolde*.

Previous operatic performances include The Fool *Wozzeck* at Royal Opera House under the baton of Antonio Pappano, Vasek *Bartered Bride*, cover Bacchus *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Florestan *Fidelio* at Garsington Opera. As a Harewood Artist at ENO, John has sung Spoletta *Tosca*, Mime and Loge (cover) *Das Rheingold*, Paul (cover) *Die tote Stadt*, Siegmund (cover) *The Valkyrie*, Innkeeper/Cock *The Cunning Little Vixen*; Peasant *Luisa Miller*, Remendado *Carmen*, Heurtebrise (cover) *Orphée* and Witch *Hansel and Gretel*. As a Jerwood Young Artist, his roles included Borso *Rigoletto*, Melot *Tristan und Isolde*, Florestan (cover) *Fidelio*, Player 2 *Hamlet*, Officer *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Giuseppe (cover) *La traviata* and Finanal's Major-Domo (cover) *Der Rosenkavalier*.



johnfindon.com

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation with a wide repertoire spanning baroque to contemporary. He enjoys relationships with all the major UK and European opera houses also performs regularly with leading conductors and orchestras throughout the UK, Europe, North America and Australia. Festival appearances include the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Aldeburgh and Melbourne. As a recitalist he is in demand around the world and appears regularly at venues including the Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw and Musikverein and at song festivals including Leeds Lieder, Oxford International Song and Ludlow English Song.

Roderick Williams was awarded an OBE in June 2017 and was Artist in Residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020–22, Artist in Residence at the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival and Singer in Residence at Music in the Round. He was also one of the featured soloists at the coronation of King Charles III in 2023.

As a composer he has had works premièred at Wigmore Hall, the Barbican, the Purcell Room and on national radio. In 2016 he won Best Choral Composition at the British Composer Awards and from 2022/23 he holds the position of Composer in Association of the BBC Singers.



The **Helsinki Music Centre Choir** is a highly skilled symphony chorus of approximately 130 singers. It rehearses and performs at the renowned Helsinki Music Centre and collaborates closely with its main resident organizations: the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts, Helsinki. Since 2017, the choir has been artistically led by Professor Nils Schweckendiek. The choir was founded in 2011.

The choir's repertoire is diverse, covering major symphonic choral and orchestral works, while also embracing contemporary music. Its a cappella repertoire comprises music composed for a large choir, and it can adapt to perform as a female or male choir as needed. The repertoire is planned in long-term collaboration with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Sibelius Academy.

The Helsinki Music Centre Choir is performing actively, holding eight to ten concerts annually, primarily at the Helsinki Music Centre concert hall, but also at other festivals and abroad. The choir toured in France in 2023 with the Orchestre de Paris and in the UK in 2024 as guests of the Cambridge University Symphony Chorus. Additionally, the choir has recorded Einojuhani Rautavaara's *Balada* and excerpts from the opera *Rasputin* under the direction of John Storgårds with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra.

www.musiikkitalonkuoro.fi

Cambridge University Symphony Chorus (CUSC) is a choir of approximately 120 members. It performs large-scale choral works, the emphasis being on music of the 19th and 20th centuries. CUSC is made up of undergraduate and postgraduate students, staff, alumni, and members of the wider Cambridge community. David Young took over as Musical Director in 2023, and the soloists are professional artists of the highest order. CUSC enjoys trips and performances abroad, for example, to Florence, Prague, Tallinn, Rome, Lisbon and, most recently, Paris.

Recent works in the choir's repertoire include William Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* in Paris, Handel's *Messiah*, the Verdi and Mozart Requiems, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*.

www.camchorus.uk

Founded in 1975, **Dominante** is the chamber choir of Aalto University and its director since 1981 has been Seppo Murto. It performs both unaccompanied works and large-scale productions for choir and orchestra, both in Finland and on its tours abroad, and engages in partnership with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Finnish Baroque Orchestra and, especially, the Lahti Symphony and Lohja City Orchestra.

Its repertoire has included major works by Bach, Handel and Mozart, Finnish classics and contemporary music, and it has premiered dozens of Finnish works. Dominante has so far released 22 albums, two of which (*Raudan kirous*, 1996 and *Lempeä*, 2008) have been voted in Finland as Choral Record of the Year.

www.dominante.fi

The **Helsinki Chamber Choir** is a professional chamber choir founded in 1962 as the Finnish Radio Chamber Choir and assumed its current name in 2005. Its Artistic Director since 2007 has been Nils Schweckendiek. Its wide-ranging repertoire includes music from the Renaissance to the present day and it has, since 2005, given over 80 premieres and more than 30 first performances in Finland. It engages in partnerships with Finnish and foreign festivals, orchestras and ensembles and has in recent years toured in the United States, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Russia and Scandinavia.

The choir has recorded a wide variety of music both Finnish and other on various labels. In 2017, it won the Finnish Broadcasting Company's Record of the Year award with music by Whittall. Its album *Reconnaissance* of choral music by Kaija Saariaho won both a Grammy and a Finnish Emma Award in 2024.

helsinginkamarikuoro.fi

Since the founding of a mixed voice choir in 1972, the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge has gained an international reputation as one of the world's leading university choirs. In addition to its primary function of leading services three times a week in the College chapel, the Choir keeps an active schedule recording, broadcasting, and performing. Under the direction of Graham Ross, Director of Music since 2010, it has been praised for its consistently 'thrilling' and 'outstanding' performances worldwide. Many alumni of the Choir go on to enjoy distinguish professional musical careers as soloists or members of leading vocal ensembles such as the Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, Tenebrae, Polyphony, and the Tallis Scholars. The **Alumni of the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge** have performed in concert as an a cappella ensemble and alongside Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London Mozart Players, and Britten Sinfonia, with performances in UK, Iceland, Spain, and Finland.

www.clarecollegechoir.com

The **Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra** (FRSO) is the orchestra of the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle), and its mission is to produce and promote Finnish musical culture.

The Radio Orchestra of ten players founded in 1927 grew to symphony orchestra proportions in the 1960s. Its Chief Conductors have been Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Hannu Lintu, and as of autumn 2021 Nicholas Collon.

In addition to the great Classical-Romantic masterpieces, the latest contemporary music is a major item in the repertoire of the FRSO, which each year premieres a number of Yle commissions. Another of the orchestra's tasks is to record all Finnish orchestral music for the Yle archive.

The FRSO has recorded works by Mahler, Bartók, Sibelius, Hakola, Lindberg, Lutoslawski, Saariaho, Sallinen, Kaipainen, Kokkonen and others. It has three times won a Gramophone Award: for its album of Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto in 2006, Bartók Violin Concertos in 2018 and for its album of orchestral works by Lotta Wennäkoski in 2023. Other distinctions have included BBC Music Magazine, Académie Charles Cros, MIDEM Classical awards and GRAMMY nominations in 2020 and 2021. Its album of tone poems and songs by Sibelius won an International Classical Music Award (ICMA) in 2018, and it has been the recipient of a Finnish EMMA award in 2016 and 2019. In 2023, the orchestra was nominated for Gramophone's Orchestra of the Year award.

FRSO concerts are broadcast live on the Yle Arena and Radio 1 channels, and later on the same evening on the Yle Teema TV channel. Recordings of the concerts are also shown on Yle TV 1.

www.yle.fi/rso

British conductor **Nicholas Collon** is recognized for his elegant conducting style, searching musical intellect and inspirational music-making. He is Founder and Principal Conductor of Aurora Orchestra and has been Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony since 2021 (renewed until 2028). He was Chief Conductor of the Residentie Orkest in Den Haag (latterly also Artistic Advisor) 2016–2021, and was Principal Guest of the Gürzenich Orchester from 2017–2022.

With the Finnish Radio Symphony he has toured to the BBC Proms, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and to Germany and Estonia. Their expanding discography together for Ondine includes acclaimed discs of Sibelius, Lutoslawski, Adès and Wennäkoski (winning the 2023 Gramophone Award for Best Contemporary Recording), with Richard Strauss, Elgar, Holst, and more Sibelius to come. Their 2024/25 concert season includes Messiaen's Turangalila-Symphonie and Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps as part of a Paris theme, and works by Finnish-American composer Lara Poe. Every concert is broadcast live on Finnish National TV.

Collon leads the Aurora Orchestra at the BBC Proms every year in their hugely popular memorised performances, this year Beethoven's 9th Symphony, televised live. Aurora are Resident at Kings Place and at the Southbank Centre where they have reinvented the concert format with their 'Orchestral Theatre' Series. This season they tour to major German cities, and continue to appear regularly at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Cologne Philharmonic, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and festivals such as Bremen, Rheingau, Schleswig Holstein and Gstaad. They have recorded for Warner, winning the Echo Klassik Award for 'Klassik Ohne Grenzen' in 2015, and latterly for Deutsche Grammophon.

Collon debuted with the Dresden Staatskapelle in Spring 2024, and in 24/25 makes his first appearances with the San Francisco Symphony, Munich Philharmonic and WDR Symphony, and returns to the DSO Berlin. He regularly conducts orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic (appearing at the BBC Proms with them in his second televised Prom this year), City of Birmingham Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Danish National Symphony, Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Dresden Philharmonic, and has also guested with Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Minnesota Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Vienna Radio Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, and Chamber Orchestra of Europe among many others.

Collon has conducted over 250 new works, including the UK or world premieres of works by Unsuk Chin, Brett Dean, Phillip Glass, Colin Matthews, Anna Meredith, Nico Muhly, Olivier Messiaen, Krzysztof Penderecki, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Judith Weir, and Du Yun. Opera productions have included Peter Grimes and Don Giovanni for Oper Koeln, Magic Flute at English National Opera, Jonathan Harvey's Wagner Dream at Welsh National Opera, Rape of Lucretia for Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and Turn of the Screw at the Aldeburgh Festival with Aurora Orchestra. Born in London, Nicholas is a violist, pianist and organist by training, and studied as Organ Scholar at Clare College, Cambridge.

www.nicholascollon.co.uk

Edward Elgar (1857–1934): Gerontiuksen uni op. 38 (1899–1900)

”Tämä on parastani”, kirjoitti Edward Elgar vuonna 1900 *Gerontiuksen uni* -teoksen käsikirjoituksen loppuun, kuten yleisesti tiedetään. Vähemmän tunnettua on, että toteamus on sitaatti vuonna 1865 julkaistusta kirjasta *Sesame and Lillies* [Seesamia ja liljoja], jossa kuuluisa englantilainen filosofi John Ruskin (1819–1900) kuvailee käsitteisiään miesten ja naisten luonteista ja heidän velvollisuuksistaan. Koko virke kuuluu seuraavasti:

Tämä on parastani; mitä muuhun tulee, niin söin ja join ja nukuin ja rakastin ja vihasin kuten kuka tahansa; elämäni oli kuin usvaa ja olematon; mutta tämän nähtyäni tiesin, että tämä jos mikä minun aikaansaannoksistani on muistiini painamisen arvoinen.

Sitaatti oli enteellinen, sillä – huolimatta epäsuotuisasta alkutaipaleestaan, sillä kantaesitys vuonna 1900 oli huonosti harjoitettu ja kelvottomasti laulettu – *Gerontiuksen unta* pidetään yleisesti eräänä Elgarin merkittävimmistä teoksista, hänen hienoimpana sävellyksenään kuorolle ja orkesterille ja uuden ajan englantilaisen kuoroperinteen eräänä kulmakivenä. Se oli Elgarin siihen asti suurimuotoisin teos: se on sävelletty kolmelle laulusolistille, kuorolle ja orkesterille ja on kestoltaan lähes 100 minuuttia. Se huipensi sarjan kuorolle ja orkesterille sävellettyjä kantaatteja ja balladeja, joista ensimmäinen oli *The Black Knight* [Musta ritari] (1889–92) ja jota seurasivat *The Light of Life* [Elämän valo] (1896), *Scenes from the Life of Saint Olaf* [Kohtauksia Pyhän Olavin elämästä] (1897) ja *Caractacus* (1897–98). Kaikki nämä saavuttivat kohtalaista menestystä, ja niiden ansiosta Elgar sai sopimuksen Novello and Co. -kustantamon kanssa, mutta vasta orkesteriteos ”*Enigma*”-muunnelmat nosti hänet kansalliseen maineeseen ja – kapellimestari Hans Richterin tehdessä työtä hänen musiikkinsa edistämiseksi – kansainvälisestikin huomattavaksi säveltäjäksi.

Tähän mennessä Elgar oli saanut tilauksen Birmingham Triennial Festivalilta uuden suurimuotoisen kuoroiteoksen säveltämiseksi. Tämä oli tarkoitus kantaesittää Birminghamissa lokakuussa 1900. Elgar harkitsi hetken aikaa raamatullista aihetta otsikolla *Apostolit* – hartaana katolisena hän oli suunnitellut tätä useita vuosia – mutta loppuvuodesta 1899 hän kääntyi toisen niin ikään kauan hautomansa projektin puoleen. *Gerontiuksen unta* sanotaan usein oratorioksi (termi, jota Elgar vieroksui eikä koskaan itse käyttänyt); sen tekstinä on otteita John Henry Newmanin (1801–1890)

samannimisestä ilmestyksenomaisesta runoelmasta. On outo yhteensattuma, että Newmanin runo julkaistiin samana vuonna kuin Ruskinin edellä mainittu kirja (1865). Böömiläinen säveltäjä Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) oli harkinnut Newmanin runoon perustuvaa sävellystä 1880-luvulla mutta ei lopulta ollut tarttunut aiheeseen. Elgar toteutti *Apostolit*-teoksen Birminghamin festivaalin seuraavana tilausteoksena vuonna 1903.

John Newman oli huomattava teologi ja akateemikko, joka loi uraa Oxfordin yliopistossa ja oli myös pappi anglikaanisessa kirkossa. Katolisuus kuitenkin veti häntä puoleensa, ja vuonna 1845 hän erosi virastaan Oxfordissa ja jätti Englannin kirkon, ja pian tämän jälkeen hänet vihittiin katoliseksi papiksi. Hän oli mukana perustamassa oppilaitosta, josta sittemmin tuli University College Dublin, ja paavi Leo XIII nimitti hänet kardinaaliksi vuonna 1879. (Paavi Benediktus XVI julisti Newmanin autuaaksi vuonna 2010, ja paavi Fransiskus julisti hänet pyhimykseksi yhdeksän vuotta myöhemmin.) *Gerontiuksen uni* on Newmanin kirjallisen tuotannon tunnetuin teksti ja hänen laajin runoelmansa. Sen rakenteena on seitsemän ”vaihetta”, joissa käydään läpi vanhan, hurskaan miehen kuolinvuoteellaan näkemät näyt ja lausumat rukoukset (nimi Gerontius tarkoittaa kirjaimellisesti ”vanha mies”). Elgar jakoi nämä vaiheet kahteen eripituisen osaan: ensimmäinen vaihe, joka muodostaa Elgarin teoksen koko 1. osan, käsittää Gerontiuksen viimeiset hetket ja kuoleman. Loput kuusi vaihetta on tiivistetty huomattavasti laajempaan 2. osaan, jossa Gerontius käy läpi kuolemanjälkeisen hengellisen kehityksen matkalla kohti viimeistä tuomiota.

Elgar kirjoitti partituurin alkuun omistuksen ”Jumalan suuremmaksi kunniaksi (A.M.D.G. – Ad maiorum Dei gloriam)” ja lisäsi tähän Vergilius-sitaatin: *Quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?* [Mistä surkimuksille syntyy moinen kaipuu valoon?] Elgar jakoi soolo-osuudet kolmelle laulajalle, jotka edustavat Newmanin runon avainhahmoja: tenori on Gerontius itse, bassobaritoni tekee kaksoisroolin Pappina 1. osassa ja Tuskan Enkelinä 2. osassa, ja mezzosopraano esiintyy vain 2. osassa Suojelusenkelin keskeisessä roolissa. Näiden lisäksi on pieni kuoro ja suuri kuoro, jotka edustavat Gerontiuksen ystäviä 1. osassa ja kiirastulen demoneja, enkeleitä ja kärsiviä sieluja 2. osassa. Orkesterissa on kahdet puupuhaltimet (sivusoittimina myös pikkolo, englannintorvi, bassoklarinetti ja kontrafagotti), neljä käyrätorvea, kolme trumpettia (2. osan huippukohdassa kuusi), kolme pasuunaa, tuuba, patarummut, kolme muuta lyömäsoittajaa, harppu tai mielellään kaksi, urut ja jouset. Tällainen orkestrointi on varsin perinteinen oratorion tapaisessa teoksessa, mutta epätavallista oli, että Elgar ei jakanut teosta pienempiin osiin tai numeroihin, vaan musiikki jatkuu keskeytyksettä. Ainoa pidempi tauko on 1. ja 2. osien välissä.

Gerontiuksen uni alkaa hohtavan salaperäisellä preludilla d-mollissa, josta tulee paikoitelleen mieleen Wagnerin viimeinen ooppera *Parsifal*. Tässä esitellään koko teoksen temaattinen materiaali. Preludin loppuessa tenori (Gerontius) laulaa lähestyvistä kuolemastaan (*Jesu, Maria, I am near to death* [Jeesus, Maria, olen kuolemaisillani]) ja pelkää, että hänet tuomitaan kuoleman jälkeen syntiensä tähden. Soolo-osuiksissa vuorottelevat lyyriset resitatiivit ja aariat. Tunnelma synkkenee, vaikka ystäviensä rohkaisemana Gerontius hetkeksi virkistyy (*Rouse thee, my fainting soul* [Nouse, heikkenevä sieluni]) vajoetakseen jälleen pelon valtaan (*Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus* [Pyhä Väkevä, Pyhä Jumala]). Hänen ystävänsä rukoilevat Jumalan väliintuloa (*Rescue him, O Lord* [Pelasta hänet, oi Herra]), ja Gerontius kuolee rukoiltuaan ”sinun käsiisi minä annan henkeni”. Lyhyen tauon jälkeen pappi lausuu rukouksen *Proficiscere, anima Christiana* [Käy eteenpäin, kristitty sielu], ja 1. osa päättyy luottavaisen luopumisen tunnelmaan D-duurissa.

Maisema on täysin toisenlainen 2. osan alussa. Satsi on kevyempää ja valoisampaa, ja sävellajina on F-duuri. Kolmijakoisessa 26-tahtisessa orkesterijohdannossa esitellään neljän nuotin nouseva aihe alttoviuluilla ja keinuva aihe sordinoiduilla viuluilla, joita niin ikään sordinoidut sellot säestävät. Gerontiuksen sielu herää tuonpuoleisessa (*I went to sleep* [Minä nukahdin]) ja ihmettelee ympäristöään. Samassa saapuu Suojelusenkeli (*It is a member of that family* [Hän on sen perheen jäsen]), joka opastaa sielua teoksen loppuosan ajan. Sielun vaellus ei kuitenkaan ole ongelmaton, sillä hän joutuu läpikäymään kaksi oikeudenkäyntiä, joista ensimmäisen, raivoisaksi fuugaksi yltävän, pitävät demonit (*But hark! Upon my sense comes a fierce hubbub* [Kuule! aisteihini käy hurja meteli] ja *I see not those false spirits* [En näe noita petollisia henkiä]) ja toisen enkelit (*But hark! A grand mysterious harmony* [Kuule! suuri ja salaperäinen soitin]). Sielun hermostus kasvaa hänen lähestyessään viimeistä tuomiota (*Thy judgment now is near* [Tuomiosi aika koittaa]). Lopulta – häikäistyttyään näystä, jossa ilmestyivät ylönoussut Kristus ja tätä Getsemanessa lohduttanut Tuskan Enkeli (*I go before my judge* [Käyn tuomarini eteen] – Gerontiuksen sielu perääntyy, sillä hän ei katso olevansa taivaan arvoinen. Enkeli johdattaa Gerontiuksen kiirastuleen, ja teoksen päättyessä (*Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul* [Hiljaa ja lempeästi, kalliisti lunastettu sielu]) Enkeli lupaa palata, kun Gerontiuksen koettelemusten yö on ohi. Kuoro toistaa aamenta D-duurissa.

Edellä todetusti *Gerontiuksen uni* ei ollut kantaesityksessään mikään erityinen menestys. Teos oli riittämättömästi harjoitettu – kapellimestari Hans Richter sai partituurin vain päivää ennen ensimmäistä orkesteriharjoitusta – ja solistit ja kuoro suoriutuivat heikosti johtuen osittain siitä, että Elgarin musiikin suuri esitaistelija, kuoromestari Charles Swinnerton Heap, kuoli äkillisesti. Elgar oli

pettynyt, mutta kriitikot ja monet ammattimuusikot ymmärsivät heikosta esityksestä huolimatta, että kyseessä oli mestariteos. Julius Buths johti sittemmin kaksi hyvin harjoitettua esitystä Saksassa, ja nämä todistivat *Gerontiuksen unen* huippulaadun; jopa Richard Strauss oli syvästi vaikuttunut. Teoksen Lontoon-ensiesityksestä vuonna 1903 alkoi teoksen voittokulku myös kotimaassaan. Kuitenkin sen katolisen eetosken vuoksi teoksen esittäminen eräissä anglikaanisen kirkon katedraaleissa kiellettiin vielä niinkin myöhään kuin vuonna 1930. Teosta jouduttiin esittämään muokatulla tekstillä vuosikausia. Mutta kuten *Gerontiuksen* sielu, pääsi *Gerontiuksen unikin* kiirastulestaan ja on noussut oikeutetusti erääksi eurooppalaisen säveltaiteen merkkiteokseksi.

Guy Rickards

(Suomennos: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi)

Christine Rice on esiintynyt New Yorkin Metropolitan-oopperassa, Covent Garden Royal Opera Housessa, Pariisin kansallisoopperassa, Baijerin valtionoopperassa, Deutsche Operissa Berliinissä, Madridin Teatro Realissa, Zürichin oopperatalossa sekä Glyndebournen ja Salzburgin oopperafestivaaleilla.

Hänen laaja repertuaarinsa sisältää rooleina Brangänen *Tristan ja Isoldessa*, Frickan *Reininkullassa*, Judithin *Herttua Siniparran linnassa*, Carmenin nimikkoroolin, Concepcionin *L'heure espagnolessa*, Giuliettan *Hoffmannin tarinoissa*, Margueriten *Faustin tuomiossa*, Kertun nimikkoroolin *Hannussa ja Kertussa*, sekä nimikkoroolit *Glorianassa* ja *The Rape of Lucretia* -oopperassa, Helen Prejeanin *Dead Man Walking* -oopperassa, Ježibaban *Rusalkassa*, La Zia Principessan *Suor Angelicassa*, Dorabellan *Così fan tuttessa*, Donna Elviran *Don Giovannissa*, Penelopen *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* -oopperassa, Irenen *Theodorassa*, Ruggieron *Alcinassa* sekä Ariodanten nimikkoroolin.

Rice esiintyi myös Mirandan ja Blancan rooleissa Thomas Adèsin *The Tempestin* ja *The Exterminating Angel* -oopperoiden kantaesityksissä sekä Ariadnen roolissa Birtwistlen *The Minotaur* -oopperassa.

Ricen aktiivinen konserttiura on johtanut esiintymisiin ympäri Eurooppaa, Pohjois-Amerikkaa, BBC Proms -festivaalilla sekä Edinburghin ja Aldeburghin festivaaleilla yhdessä kapellimestarien Antonio Pappanon, Mark Elderin, Simon Rattlen, Andrew Davisin, Edward Gardnerin, Fabio Luisin ja Yannick Nézet-Séguin kanssa.

Brittiläistenori **John Findon** opiskeli Skotlannin kuninkaallisessa konservatoriossa sekä Guildhall musiikki- ja teatterikoulun oopperalinjalla. Englannin kansallisoopperassa hän toimi Harewood Artist-ohjelmassa vuosina 2022–24 sekä oli Glyndenbourne-festivaalin nuorena taiteilijana vuonna 2017.

Kaudella 2024–25 Findon debytoi kahdessa oopperatalossa ja kahdessa roolissa: Bacchuksena *Ariadne auf Naxos* -oopperassa Rouenin oopperassa sekä Narrabothina *Salome*-oopperassa Teatro di San Carlissa. Findon esiintyy myös Peter Grimesin nimikkoroolissa Rooman Teatro dell'Operassa sekä esiintyy Grange-festivaalilla. Lisäksi tulevaisuudessa on luvassa esiintymisiä Covent Gardenin Royal Opera Housessa, Englannin kansallisoopperassa, Opera Northissa sekä Garsington-festivaalilla.

Viime aikojen kohokohtiin ovat kuuluneet myös debyyttiroolit Don Josena *Carmen*-oopperassa Glyndebourne-festivaalilla sekä Peter Grimesin nimikkorooli Englannin kansallisoopperassa. Findon debytoi myös *Taikahuilussa* Baijerin valtioon oopperassa sekä teki roolidebyyttinsä Stevana *Jenifassa* Englannin kansallisoopperassa ja esiintyi useassa roolissa Glyndebourne-festivaalilla.

Findon on myös esiintynyt narrina *Wozzeck*-oopperassa Royal Opera Housessa Antonio Pappanon johdolla, Vasekina *Myyty morsian* -oopperassa sekä Florestanina Fideliossa Garsingtonin oopperassa. Harewood Artist -ohjelmassa Englannin kansallisoopperassa hän on laulanut Spolettan roolissa *Toscassa*, Reininkullassa, Paulin roolissa *Die tote Stadt* -oopperassa, Sigmundina *Valkyyriassa*, laulurooleja *Ovela kettu* -oopperassa, talonpoikana *Luisa Millerissä*, Remendadona *Carmenissa*, Heurtebrisena *Orfeuksessa* sekä noitana *Hannussa ja Kertussa*. Glyndenbourne-festivaalin nuorena taitelijana hänen rooleihin ovat kuuluneet Borso *Rigolettossa*, Melot *Tristan ja Isoldessa*, Florestan *Fideliossa*, Giuseppe *La traviatassa* sekä laulurooleja *Hamletissa*, *Ariadne auf Naxosissa* sekä *Ruusuritarissa*.

johnfindon.com

Roderick Williams kuuluu sukupolvensa arvostetuimpiin baritoneihin, jonka laaja-alainen repertuaari kattaa teoksia barokkimusiikista aina nykymusiikkiin saakka. Williamsilla on läheinen suhde Euroopan tärkeimpiin oopperataloihin ja hän esiintyy säännöllisesti maailman johtavimpien kapellimestareiden ja orkestereiden solistina ympäri Eurooppaa, Pohjois-Amerikkaa ja Australiaa. Lisäksi Williams esiintyy BBC Promseilla sekä Edinburghin, Cheltenhamin, Aldeburghin ja Melbournen musiikkifestivaaleilla. Sooloresitaaleja Williamsilla on ympäri maailmaa, muun muassa Wigmore Hallissa, Amsterdamin Concertgebouwissa, Wienin Musikvereinissa sekä Leedsin, Oxfordin ja Ludlowin laulufestivaaleilla.

Williamsista tuli brittiläisen ritarikunnan jäsen vuonna 2017 ja hän oli Liverpoolin filharmonikkojen artist-in-residence vuosina 2020–22 sekä Aldeburghin festivaalin artist-in-residence vuonna 2023. Williams esiintyi myös solistina kuningas Charles III:n kruunajaisissa vuonna 2023.

Roderick Williams tunnetaan myös säveltäjänä, ja hänen teoksiaan on kantaesitetty Wigmore Hallissa, Barbicanissa, sekä Britannian kansallisilla radiokanavilla. Vuonna 2016 hän voitti Britannian säveltäjäyhdistyksen vuoden kuorosävellys -palkinnon ja kaudesta 2022–23 lähtien hän on myös toiminut BBC Singers -yhtyeen residensisäveltäjänä.

Musiikkitalon kuoro on korkeatasoinen sinfoniakuoro, johon kuuluu noin 130 laulajaa. Kuoro harjoittelee ja konsertoi maineikkaassa Helsingin Musiikkitalossa ja tekee tiivistä yhteistyötä kaikkien sen päätoimijoiden, Helsingin kaupunginorkesterin, Radion sinfoniaorkesterin ja Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemian kanssa. Kuoron taiteellisena johtajana on toiminut kuoronjohdon professori Nils Schweckendiek vuodesta 2017 lähtien. Kuoro on perustettu vuonna 2011.

Musiikkitalon kuoron ohjelmisto on monipuolinen ja kattaa keskeiset sinfoniset kuoro- ja orkesteriteokset unohtamatta oman aikamme musiikkia. Kuoron a cappella -ohjelmisto muodostuu suurelle kuorolle sävelletystä musiikista. Kuoro pystyy muuntautumaan tarpeen mukaan myös nais- tai mieskuoroksi. Ohjelmistoa suunnitellaan pitkäjänteisesti yhteistyössä Helsingin kaupunginorkesterin, Radion sinfoniaorkesterin sekä Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemian kanssa.

Musiikkitalon kuoro konsertoi aktiivisesti pitään vuosittain kahdeksasta kymmeneen konserttia pääasiassa Musiikkitalon konserttisalissa, mutta myös muilla festivaaleilla ja ulkomailla. Kuoro on vieraillut Ranskassa vuonna 2023 Orchestre de Paris'n sekä Britanniassa vuonna 2024 Cambridge University Symphony Chorusin vieraana. Lisäksi kuoro on levyttänyt Einojuhani Rautavaaran teoksen Balada ja osia oopperasta Rasputin John Storgårdsin johdolla Helsingin kaupunginorkesterin kanssa.

www.musiikkitalonkuoro.fi

Cambridge University Symphony Chorus (Cambridgen yliopiston sinfoniakuoro) on suuri, enimmillään 120 koelaulun kautta valittua laulajaa käsittävä kuoro, joka esittää suurimuotoisia kuoroteoksia pääpainon ollessa 1800- ja 1900-luvun musiikissa. Kuoron laulajina on valmistuneita ja yhä aktiivisia Cambridgen yliopiston opiskelijoita sekä henkilökunnan jäseniä ja myös muita Cambridgen asukkaita. Kuoron johtajana on toiminut vuodesta 2023 lähtien David Young, joka esiintyi aiemmin kuoron vierailevana johtajana, ja myös solisteina esiintyy korkeimman tason ammattilaisia. Kuoro on esiintynyt usein myös ulkomailla, mm. Firenzessä, Prahassa, Tallinnassa, Roomassa, Lissabonissa ja Pariisissa.

Kuluvan ja viime kauden teoksia kuoron ohjelmistossa ovat olleet William Waltonin Belshazzar's Feast Pariisissa Klaus Mäkelän johdolla, Händelin Messiah, Verdin ja Mozartin Requiemit, Mendelssohnin Elias sekä Elgarin Gerontiuksen uni, jonka kuoro esitti ennen Helsinkiä Englannissa Elyn katedraalissa.

www.camchorus.uk

Dominante on Aalto-yliopiston kamarikuoro, joka perustettiin 1975 ja tunnettiin aluksi nimellä Polyteknikkojen kamarikuoro. Suuri osa kuoron yli 60 laulajasta on nykyisiä tai entisiä Aalto-yliopiston tai muiden pääkaupunkiseudun korkeakoulujen opiskelijoita. Kuoron johtajana on toiminut vuodesta 1981 dir. mus. Seppo Murto.

Dominante esittää sekä a cappella -teoksia että suuria kuoro-orkesteriteoksia sekä kotimaassa että ulkomaankiertueilla, jotka ovat vieneet kuoron Euroopan musiikkikeskusten lisäksi joka puolelle maailmaa. Kuoro tekee säännöllistä yhteistyötä Radion sinfoniaorkesterin, Helsingin kaupunginorkesterin, Suomalaisen barokkiorkesterin ja viime vuosina varsinkin Sinfonia Lahden ja Lohjan kaupunginorkesterin kanssa. Ohjelmassa on ollut muun muassa Bachin, Händelin ja Mozartin suuria teoksia.

Dominante on esittänyt suomalaisten klassikoiden kuten Sibeliuksen ja Kuulan lisäksi myös paljon uutta musiikkia ja on kantaesittänyt kymmeniä uusia suomalaisteoksia. Dominantien diskografiaan sisältyy 22 levyä, joista *Raudan kirous* (1996) ja *Lempeä* (2008) on valittu vuoden kuoro-levyiksi.

www.dominante.fi

Helsingin kamarikuoro (HKK) on ammattilaulajista koostuva kamarikuoro, joka aloitti toimintansa 1962 Radion kamarikuorona ja otti nykyisen nimensä käyttöön 2005. Kuoron taiteellisena johtajana on toiminut vuodesta 2007 lähtien Nils Schweckendiek.

HKK:n ohjelmisto ulottuu renessanssista oman aikamme musiikkiin, ja sen ansiolistalla on vuodesta 2005 lähtien yli 80 kantaesitystä ja yli 30 Suomen-ensiesitystä. Kuoro tekee yhteistyötä kotimaisten ja ulkomaisten festivaalien, orkesterien ja yhtyeiden kanssa. Viime vuosina kuoro on esiintynyt kiertueilla Yhdysvalloissa, Iso-Britanniassa, Italiassa, Belgiassa, Venäjällä ja Skandinaviassa. HKK on levyttänyt monipuolisesti kotimaista ja ulkomaista musiikkia eri levy-yhtiöille. Kuoron levytyksiä on ollut sekä Grammy-ehdokkaana (Lindberg) että Emma-ehdokkaana (Haapanen, Auvinen ja Haapamäki, Freeman), ja se on saanut 2017 Ylen Vuoden levy -palkinnon (Whittall). Kuoron Kaija Saariahon kuoromusiikkia sisältävä *Reconnaissance*-levytys voitti Grammin ja Emma-palkinnon vuonna 2024.

helsinginkamarikuoro.fi

Cambridgen Clare College -kuoro perustettiin vuonna 1972 ja kuoro saavutti jo heti perustamisensa jälkeen kansainvälistä arvostusta yhtenä maailman johtavimmista yliopistokuoroista. Kuoron päätehtävänä on johtaa yliopiston kappelin jumalanpalveluksia kolme kertaa viikossa, mutta tämän ohella kuorolla on aktiivinen esiintymisaikataulu, johon kuuluvat myös levytykset sekä radiolähetykset. Kuoron musiikinjohtajana on vuodesta 2010 lähtien toiminut Graham Ross ja hänen johdollaan kuoron esityksiä on kiitetty vuolaasti ympäri maailmaa mielenkiintoisesta ohjelmistosta sekä erinomaisista tulkinnoista. Monet kuoron oppilaista siirtyvät myöhemmin ammatillisiin uriin musiikin parissa joko solisteina tai johtavien vokaaliyhtyeiden, kuten Monteverdi-kuoron, The Sixteen-, Tenebrae-, Polyphony- ja Tallis Scholars -yhtyeiden jäseninä. **Cambridgen Clare College -kuoron oppilaat** ovat esiintyneet konserteissa a cappella -yhtyeenä sekä yhdessä muun muassa Age of Enlightenment, London Mozart Players ja Britten Sinfonia -orkestereiden kanssa Britanniassa, Islannissa, Espanjassa ja Suomessa.

www.clarecollegechoir.com

Radion sinfoniaorkesteri (RSO) on Yleisradion orkesteri, jonka tehtävänä on tuottaa ja edistää suomalaista musiikkikulttuuria. Orkesterin ylikapellimestari on Nicholas Collon.

Radio-orkesteri perustettiin vuonna 1927 kymmenen muusikon voimin. Sinfoniaorkesterin mittoihin se kasvoi 1960-luvulla. RSO:n ylikapellimestareita ovat olleet Toivo Haapanen, Nils-Eric Fougstedt, Paavo Berglund, Okko Kamu, Leif Segerstam, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo ja Hannu Lintu. Suurten klassisromanttisten mestariteosten ohella RSO:n ohjelmisto sisältää runsaasti nykymusiikkia ja orkesteri kantaesittää vuosittain useita Yleisradion tilausteoksia. RSO:n tehtäviin kuuluu myös koko suomalaisen orkesterimusiikin taltiointi kantanauhoille Yleisradion arkistoon.

RSO on levyttänyt mm. Mahlerin, Bartókin, Sibeliuksen, Hakolan, Lindbergin, Saariahon, Sallisen, Kaipaisen ja Kokkosen teoksia. Orkesteri on saanut levytyksistään Gramophone-palkinnon kolmasti – Lindbergin klarinettikonserton levytyksestä 2006, Bartókin viulukonserttojen levytyksestä 2018 sekä Lotta Wennäkosken orkesteriteosten levytyksestä 2023. Muita tunnustuksia ovat mm. BBC Music Magazine Award, Académie Charles Cros ja MIDEM Classical Award. Sibeliuksen sävelrunoja ja lauluja sisältävä levy palkittiin International Classical Music –palkinnolla (ICMA) 2018. Kotimaisen EMMA-palkinnon RSO on saanut 2016 ja 2019. Grammy-ehdokkaana RSO on ollut 2020 ja 2021. Vuonna 2023 arvostettu Gramophone-lehti valitsi Radion sinfoniaorkesterin Vuoden orkesteri (Orchestra of the Year) –palkintoehdokkaaksi.

RSO:n konsertit lähetetään suorina lähetyksinä Yle Areenassa ja Yle Radio 1:ssä sekä samana iltana viivästettynä Yle Teemalla. Konserttien taltiointeja lähetetään Yle TV1:ssä.

www.yle.fi/rso

Brittiläinen **Nicholas Collon** kuuluu nuoremman polven kysytyimpiin ja arvostetuimpiin kapellimestareihin. Hän aloitti elokuussa 2021 kautensa Radion sinfoniaorkesterin yhdeksäntenä ylikapellimestarina ja jatkaa tehtävässään kesään 2028 asti.

Tärkeällä sijalla Collonin ohjelmasuunnittelussa RSO:ssa ovat kausittain vaihtuvat teemat, joita kaudella 2024–25 ovat Pariisi – Valon kaupunki, säveltäjä Lara Poe sekä solistit orkesterin omista riveistä.

Collon on 2004 perustamansa brittiläisen kamariorkesterin Aurora Orchestran ylikapellimestari. Hän on työskennellyt Haagin Residentie-orkesterissa vuodesta 2016 lähtien, ensin jaetussa pääkapellimestarin (principal conductor) virassa Jan Willem de Vriendin kanssa ja 2018–2021 sen ainoana ylikapellimestarina. Syksystä 2017 lähtien hän on ollut myös Kölnin Gürzenich-orkesterin päävierailija.

Collon on vieraillut monien arvostettujen orkesterien johtajana; näitä ovat brittiläisten huippuorkesterien Birminghamin sinfoniaorkesterin ja BBC:n filharmonikkojen lisäksi mm. Zürichin Tonhalle-orkesteri, Ranskan kansallisorkesteri, Dresdenin filharmonikot, Wienin, Tanskan ja Frankfurtin radion sinfoniaorkesterit sekä Minnesotan sinfoniaorkesteri.

Collon johtaa laajaa ohjelmistoa ja on työskennellyt myös oopperakapellimestarina. Hän on johtanut yli 200 uutta teosta, joukossa useita kantaesityksiä ja ensiesityksiä, säveltäjinä mm. Unsuk Chin, Philip Glass, Colin Matthews, Nico Muhly, Olivier Messiaen, Krzysztof Penderecki ja Judith Weir.

Collon levytti kaudella 2023–24 RSO:n kanssa Lindbergin, Sibeliuksen ja Straussin musiikkia. Hänen levytyksistään Aurora Orchestran kanssa tehty Road Trip (Ives, Copland, Adams ja Muhly) voitti 2015 Echo Klassik -palkinnon Klassik ohne Grenzen -sarjassa. Aurora Orchestran ensimmäisenä julkaisuna Deutsche Grammophonille on vuonna 2020 ilmestynyt levy Music of the Spheres (Mozart, Max Richter, Adés, Dowland/Muhly ja Bowie). Hän on lisäksi levyttänyt mm. Haydnia, Ligetiä, Britteniä ja Deliusia sekä Hallé-orkesterin kanssa useita levyjä modernia ohjelmistoa.

nicholascollon.co.uk

SUNG TEXT

CD 1, PART I

1 – Prelude

2

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.

3

Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;

And through each 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.

4

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 ...

The 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 to-day be found in peace,
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
Of Sion; through the Same, through Christ our Lord.

CD 2, PART II

1

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!

2

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,
And saved is he.

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 and brother, hail! what wouldest 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 judgment 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.

Soul

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.

3

But hark! upon my sense
 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;
 A bundle of bones,
 Which fools adore,
 Ha! ha!
 When life is o'er.

.....
 Virtue and vice,
 A knave's pretence.
 'Tis all the same,
 Ha! Ha!
 Dread of hell-fire,
 Of the venomous flame,
 A coward's plea.
 Give him his price,
 Saint though he be,

Ha! ha!

From shrewd good sense
He'll slave for hire,

Ha! Ha!

And does but aspire
To the heaven above
With sordid aim,
And not from love.
Ha! Ha!

4

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 ...

5

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 generous 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!

6

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.

7

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.

8

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 possess
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.

9

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.

.....

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 in every generation.
 Come back, O Lord! how long: and be entreated for
 Thy servants.
 Bring us not, Lord, very low: for thou hast said,
 Come back again, ye sons of Adam.
 Amen.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest, etc.
 Amen.

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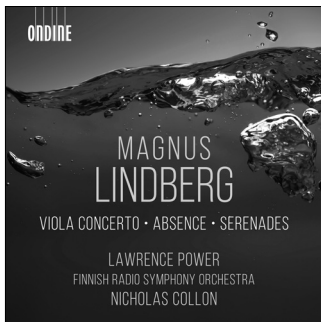
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