



SAN FRANCISCO
CHORAL SOCIETY

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
DONA NOBIS PACEM

— — — — —
GJEILO
THE LAKE ISLE & BRONTË

Robert Geary, conductor

with the

California Chamber Symphony

November 15 · 7pm | November 16 · 4pm

Trinity + St. Peter's Episcopal Church

SAN FRANCISCO CHORAL SOCIETY

A premier symphonic chorus, inspiring and enriching people's lives through the joy and power of choral music

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Welcome!

Thank you for being with us as we perform the musical settings of three celebrated poets, Walt Whitman, William Butler Yeats, and Emily Brontë. Ralph Vaughan Williams's profound observations of the pain and consequences of war and the hope that we humans will yet evolve beyond it find their voice in the Civil War poetry of Walt Whitman. Informed by his own experience in WWI, Vaughan Williams composed *Dona nobis pacem* in 1936 as alarm was building with the rise of fascism in Europe.

After intermission, composer Ola Gjeilo memorializes the warmth of the hearth—the contentment of the peaceful life where beans grow and bees buzz in our quiet and idealized valley—with the healing and iconic poem *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* (*The Lake Isle*) by William Butler Yeats. We conclude the concert with Ola Gjeilo's *Brontë*. Commissioned and premièred by the San Francisco Choral Society 2023, Brontë reminds us that we are inseparable from nature in the eight movements of settings of the poetry of Emily Brontë.

We are very happy to share this program with you!

Robert Geary

Artistic Director

THIS CONCERT IS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY THE GENEROSITY OF
ROGER FONG & ERIK KRAMVIK

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

DONA NOBIS PACEM

(1936)

I. Lento (Agnus Dei)

II. Allegro moderato (Beat! Beat! Drums!)

III. Reconciliation. Andantino

IV. Dirge for Two Veterans. Moderato alla marcia

V. L'istesso tempo (The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land)

VI. Poco animato (O man, greatly beloved, fear not!)

Michele Kennedy, *soprano*

Kenneth Goodson, *baritone*

California Chamber Symphony



GJEILO

THE LAKE ISLE

BRONTË

Maxwell Gibbs, *guitar*

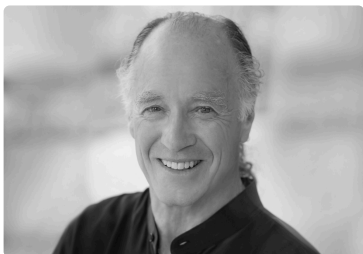
Keisuke Nakagoshi, *piano*

California Chamber Symphony

Robert Geary, conductor



ROBERT GEARY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



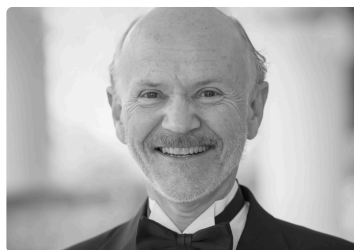
ROBERT GEARY, Artistic Director of the **San Francisco Choral Society** since 1995, has led the San Francisco Choral Society to a robust position as a keeper of the traditional repertoire and an innovative force in the commissioning and performance of new works for chorus and orchestra.

Maestro Geary is also the founding Artistic Director of **Volti**, and is now founding Artistic Director emeritus of the **Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir** and the Golden Gate International Choral Festival. Recipient of numerous awards in Europe and the United States, Geary has conducted first performances of nearly 200 compositions. His dedication to new music has encouraged the careers of several leading composers.

Robert Geary received the **Michael Korn Founders Award** at the National Conference of Chorus America in 2023. The award recognizes "a lifetime of significant contributions to the professional choral art."

BRYAN BAKER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Pianist and conductor Bryan Baker has served as Associate Conductor and Accompanist for the San Francisco Choral Society for more than 25 years. He has played solo concerts, concertos, and chamber music programs across the United States, Europe and South America. Dr. Baker taught on the faculties of the San Francisco State University, Truman



University in Missouri, Arizona State, Foothill College and the College of San Mateo. He maintains an active private studio, and his students have won competitions and appeared in concerts and opera productions in the Bay Area and across the country.

An accomplished conductor, he is Artistic Director of Masterworks Chorale, and Director of Music at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, and founder and director of the chamber choir Serenade. A frequent guest conductor in the Bay Area, he often leads choral clinics, and judges choral competitions.

MICHELE KENNEDY – SOPRANO

Praised by The Washington Post as “an excellent and engaging” soprano possessing “a graceful tonal clarity that is a wonder to hear” (SF Chronicle), soprano Michele Kennedy is a versatile specialist in early and contemporary music. She is a winner of the 2023 American Prize in Voice.

Michele’s recent solo highlights include Bach’s St. John Passion with the San Francisco Symphony & SF Bach Choir, Gabriel and Eve in Haydn’s *Die Schöpfung* with Washington Bach Consort, Handel’s *Messiah* with NYC’s Trinity Wall Street, Poulenc’s *Gloria* with Bach Society of Saint Louis, Smith Moore’s *MLK Oratorio* at UC Berkeley, her Carnegie Hall debut with The Hollywood Film Orchestra, Bach’s Magnificat with the Portland Baroque Orchestra and SF Choral Society for Bach’s beloved Mass in B Minor.



A lifelong champion of new works, Michele has sung premieres with Experiments in Opera, Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, Seraphic Fire, The Crossing, and The New York Philharmonic. She is thrilled to join Lorelei Ensemble in a world premiere tour of Julia Wolfe’s *Her Story* culminating with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, and for the release of her first featured solo album with AGAVE, called *In Her Hands*, featuring trailblazing female composers from Barbara Strozzi and Clara Schumann to Florence Price and Margaret Bonds.

Michele completed her musical studies at Yale University, Yale School of Music, and NYU. Please find more at www.michele-kennedy.com.

KENNETH GOODSON – BARITONE



Ken Goodson appears as a baritone oratorio soloist throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. He has collaborated with the San Francisco Choral Society for more than 25 years in varied repertoire including War Requiem (Britten), Deutsches Requiem (Brahms), and Petite Messe Solennelle (Rossini). Other appearances include Carmina Burana (Orff) with Masterworks Chorale and works of Bach, Brahms, Mozart, and Schubert with Schola Cantorum. He has appeared with Stanford University ensembles for many years in repertoire including Sea Symphony, Sancta Civitas, and Five Mystical Songs (all Vaughan Williams), Songs of

Milarepa (Glass), and Elijah (Mendelssohn). Goodson teaches at Stanford, where he chaired the Mechanical Engineering Department and now serves as the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs. Goodson’s musical studies included voice fellowships at Tanglewood and Banff and a year in Berlin with legendary baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

MAXWELL GIBBS – GUITAR

Max Gibbs is a San Francisco based Guitarist and Multi-Instrumentalist. Originally from Monterey California, Max began playing the guitar at age 13. He moved to San Francisco to study classical guitar at San Francisco State with renowned classical guitarist Lawrence Ferrara. Max has performed in numerous university recitals and local concerts throughout the Bay Area, gaining recognition for both his technical skill and expressive style as a performer. During his time at San Francisco State he sang bass with the university's chamber choir and developed a love for choral music. After graduating he began singing with the San Francisco Choral society in January of this year. In addition to his classical studies Max also plays bass for a local punk band.



KEISUKE NAKAGOSHI – PIANO

Pianist Keisuke Nakagoshi studied with Emanuel Ax, Gilbert Kalish, Menahem Pressler, and Paul Hersh and has performed on concert stages across the US, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Hollywood Bowl. In 2009, Mr. Nakagoshi and Swiss pianist Eva-Maria Zimmermann formed the piano duo ZOFO, and their first CD was nominated for a Grammy award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble. He made his solo debut with the San Francisco Symphony performing Ingvar Lidholm's Poesis with Herbert Blomstedt conducting. Mr. Nakagoshi is currently Pianist-in-Residence at the San Francisco

Conservatory of Music and serves as pianist on the production team for Opera Parallèle and West Edge Opera, and he is also a member of San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

SOPRANOS

Sydney Barada
Jennifer Benson
Kenya Bonitto
Devi Brown
Claire Byrnes
Marta Calvet Mirabent
Françoise Chanut
Carlin Chi*
Helen Couture Rodriguez
Kat Cunico
Rita Freimanis

Michelle Gauvin
Kelci Hartz
Catherine Heagerty
Melissa
Kargiannakis
Samantha Kelly
Amy Kelly
Bonnie Landfield
Pamela Ling
Serena Liu
Belle Long

Jessica May
Ally Miley
Abigail Millikan-States
Kit Murphy
Gitanjali Murthy*
Khanh Nham
Elizabeth Rutherford
Jennifer Schwartz
Hannah Steinberg
Morgen Warner
Xin (Cynthia) Wu
Michelle Zheng

ALTOS

V. Emily Applegate
Alice Aronow
Maia Bhaumik
Nicole Curatola
Ruth Dummel
Sue Fleming
Jane Goldsmith
Christina Gumenyuk
Gail Harriman
Lisa Henderson
Susanne Johnson
Rebecca Knoll
Esmé Krummel

Jody Loeffler^
Suzy Maska
Ratu Maulana
Martha McGaw Daniel
Kathy McMahon^
Jessica Meyers
Em Miller
Betsy Morris
Natasha Nogueira
Elizabeth Orbison*
Susan Pace
Hannah Prausnitz-Weinbaum
Naveeno Rehm*

Michelle Ríos
Nancy Roeser
Janet Scott^
Grace Seiberling
Laura Smith
Julene Smith Rhoan
Karin Snowberg
Veronica Soto
Amy Stewart
Kirsten Stewart
Marlena Tang
Amanda Williford
Marion S. Wise
Peili Zhu

TENORS

Milli Beckers
Roger Fong
Rich Gross^
Nancy Lemon*
Jamie Nicolson
Andrew Northrop

Chong Park
Xander Patnoe
Ken Tipton
Bill Chiles
Sam Kagan
Todd Lane
Kent MacMaster

David McGaw
Dieter J. Meyerhoff
Nicholas Moy
Joshua Muldavin
Don Richards
Reuben Schwartz
Pierre Teplitxky

BASSES

Jonathan Cohen*
Maxwell Gibbs
Jerry Godes*
David Hathwell
Chesley Herbert

J.J. Mc Kenna
Matthew Nieder
Paul Nocero
Matt Noneman
Jason Payne

Marc Rossner
Benedikt Strebel
Brandon Tavshanjian
Jason Tiller
Tom Traylor
Ben Wu

California Chamber Symphony

1st Violins

Anthony Chukhlov CM
Eugene Chukhlov
Valery Breshears
Maggie Cai

2nd Violins

Dustin Breshears
Ariel Pawlik-Zwiebel
Oliver Spivey
Wesley Lau

Violas

Patrick Kroboth
Rebecca Reed-Lunn
Olivia Haddick

Cellos

Monica Scott
Starla Breshears
Melissa Lam

Bass

Dave Horn (11/15)
Carlos Valdez (11/16)

Flutes

Leslie Chin

Oboes

Robin May

Clarinets

Roy Zajac

Bassoons

Kris King

Trumpets

Barbara Hull

Horns

Suzanne Chasalow

Trombones

Hall Goff

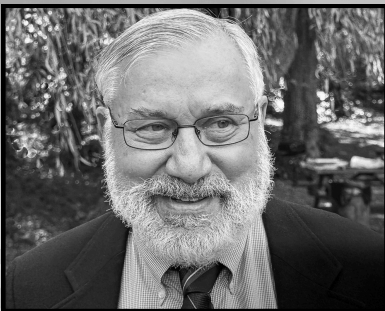
Harp

Vincent Pierce

Timpani &

Percussion

Mika Nakamura
Jimmy Chan



REMEMBERING OUR FRIEND

DAN CHESIR
(6/10/42 – 10/31/25)

HE SANG WITH US 1993-2019.
BARITONE, JEWISH SCHOLAR, GENTLE SOUL.

WE MISS HIM.

Established in 1989, the San Francisco Choral Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the performance of significant, inspiring choral music. To date, we have shared our joy and enthusiasm for choral music with more than 60,000 concertgoers. Our year-round program offers singers the opportunity to perform major choral works with professional orchestras and soloists in front of live audiences. We provide low-cost music instruction to our singers in the form of classes and workshops. We have a student internship program, inviting outstanding local high school and college students to participate with us in the rehearsal and performance experience, at no cost to them. Our auditioned chorus has earned a reputation as one of the most accomplished choruses in the Bay Area.

SF Choral has presented great choral classics to packed audiences at venues throughout San Francisco, including regular performances at Davies Symphony Hall. We have performed the Brahms, Mozart, Duruflé, and Verdi Requiems and Britten's War Requiem, the Bach B-minor, Mozart C-minor, Haydn Lord Nelson, Bruckner, and Stravinsky Masses, Handel's Messiah and Israel in Egypt, Mendelssohn's Elijah, Monteverdi's and Rachmaninoff's Vespers, Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, and Orff's Carmina Burana. We have sung pieces by living composers, including Morten Lauridsen, Arvo Pärt, Kirke Mechem, and then-living composer Moses Hogan. And we have commissioned and premiered new works by composers Ola Gjeilo, David Lang, Mark Winges, Donald McCullough, Stacy Garrop, Felicia Sandler, Kirstina Rasmussen, and Emma Lou Diemer. We take great joy — and pride — in bringing these great choral works to our Bay Area community.

SF Choral's educational programs, rehearsals, and performances are financed through registration fees, volunteer efforts, individual contributions, employer matching-fund programs, concert ticket sales, program advertising, and contributions from the community at large.

Perpetua Society

"I have been inspired by the joy of singing and hearing the San Francisco Choral Society deliver outstanding performances of choral masterpieces and new commissioned works. Considering the immeasurable enjoyment I have received, how could I not want to give something back in return?"

—John Chapman

John Chapman passed away in the summer of 2014, within days of having performed with the San Francisco Choral Society his favorite piece — Brahms' *A German Requiem*. He, and his passion for choral music, will be sorely missed.

Helen Ishida Abramson

Stanley R. Abramson*

Anonymous

Linda K. Brewer

John Chapman*

Caroline Damsky

Peggy Hinrichs

R. Mackenzie Gordon*

Paul Nocero

Cheryl Thompson*

Ortha Zebroski*

Julia Young

**Deceased*

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NATE WIDELITZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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Songs of Light in Winter's Deep

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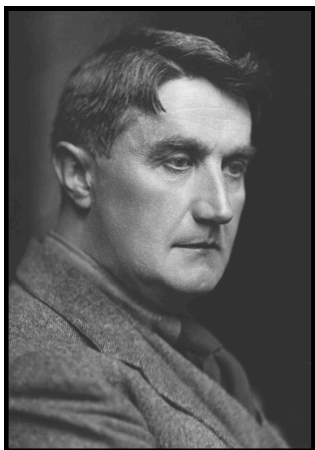
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RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)



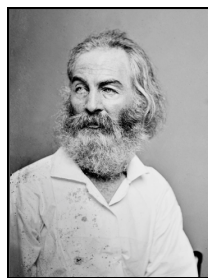
Ralph Vaughan Williams was born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, on 12 October 1872 and died in London on 26 August 1958. He composed the *Dona nobis pacem* on a commission from the Huddersfield Choral Society in 1936. The score calls for soprano and baritone soloists, mixed chorus, and an orchestra consisting of piccolo and two flutes (second doubling second piccolo), two oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, four trumpets, four trombones and tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, organ, and strings.

When Ralph Vaughan Williams was asked by the Huddersfield Choral Society to write a piece in celebration of their centennial in 1937, he produced an eloquent plea for peace in the oratorio, *Dona nobis pacem*. The rise of Nazism and Fascism, the ongoing civil war in Spain, and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia were of immense concern to those like Vaughan Williams who had personally experienced the carnage and destruction of World War I. Vaughan Williams had been caught up in patriotic fervor and enlisted in 1914, even though he was already forty-two and had studied in Germany as a younger man.

He served as an ambulance driver with the medical corps and later as an artillery officer. The experience was a profound personal disillusionment to a man who had hoped to find something noble or heroic in personal combat: he was especially affected by the widespread use of new technology whose sole purpose was mass killing, such as poison gas, aerial bombardment, and automatic weapons.

The oratorio, a precursor of Britten's *War Requiem*, sets parts of Walt Whitman's *Drum Taps*, John Bright's "Angel of Death" speech, and passages from the Bible. Vaughan Williams felt a great affinity for Whitman, who had volunteered in the military hospitals outside Washington during the Civil War. Serving as an unofficial nurse and morale officer, Whitman was profoundly moved by visiting with injured men and writing letters for them, and this shaped much of his poetry.

Dona nobis pacem is divided into six sections which proceed without pause. Part I opens with the soprano solo and chorus calling out the "Agnus Dei" text from the Latin Mass. This movement was deeply influenced (as was Britten's *War Requiem*) by Verdi's *Requiem* and that music seems to hover in the background, especially the soprano's repeated cries of "dona nobis pacem" and Verdi's driving *Dies irae*. As the soloist's last note dies away, you hear the ominous sounds of a battlefield.



Walt Whitman by
Matthew Brady ca. 1867

Trumpet calls and drum beats swell as Part II opens, a setting of Whitman's poem *Beat! Beat! Drums!* The choral writing is economical and martial (mostly in parallel fourths), contrasting with the relentless pounding of the fanfare music which creates a moving, graphic image of the irresistible, inexorable force of war.

Part III opens with a lyrical solo violin obbligato. The text is Whitman's wonderful poem of consolation, *Reconciliation*, sung first by the baritone solo and then by the chorus. The return of the *dona nobis* music for the soprano solo provides a segue into Part IV, a long, magnificent funeral march the composer had written twenty years earlier. This setting of Whitman's *Dirge for Two Veterans* contains some of the most subtle, unsettling contrasts of the entire work. The poem is one of Whitman's most poignant and begins vividly:

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finished Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.

Vaughan Williams' music chillingly matches both Whitman's graphic imagery and sense of contrast. When he describes the son and father, falling simultaneously in the same battle, the outer voices of the chorus softly echo the inner voices. The orchestral music swells to a valiant march, but is followed immediately by the spectral image of a grieving mother bearing silent witness to the proceedings, and suddenly the heroic music rings a little hollow. Although the music was largely written in 1912 it eerily reflects Vaughan Williams' own later experiences.

The baritone soloist begins the final section, his recitative sets an excerpt from a speech made by John Bright, a member of the House of Commons, during the debate on the Crimean War. After another interjection of anguished *dona nobis* music, the chorus enters on a text from Jeremiah, who described the destruction of Judah at the hands of the Babylonians. The text is set in a close canon, as if one can hear both sides in a conflict saying the same words, "We looked for peace, but no good came."

The baritone soloist continues, invoking the words with which the angel comforted the prophet Daniel. The chorus enters quietly with a reassurance of peace, brightening to become a jubilant paean of praise and glory. The larger ensemble fades away as the soprano softly intones *dona nobis pacem*, with the a cappella chorus quietly adding their assent, an ending not of unbridled optimism, but of hope and possibility.

—Laura Stanfield Prichard



OLA GJEILO (B. 1978)



Ola Gjeilo was born in Norway in 1978 and moved to the United States in 2001 to begin his composition studies at the Juilliard School in New York City. He currently lives in Laguna Beach, California. Emily Brontë has been one of Ola Gjeilo's favorite poets ever since he was in high school, and this work is set to extracts from several of her most beautiful poems, including *How Still*, *How Happy* and *High Waving Heather*.

Ola grew up in a musically eclectic home listening to classical, jazz, pop and folk, a broad background he later incorporated into his classical composition studies at The Juilliard School, the Royal College of Music in London, and currently as a New York City-based freelance composer. He is especially inspired by the improvisational art of film composer Thomas Newman, jazz legends Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny, glass artist Dale Chihuly and architect Frank Gehry.

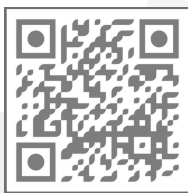
Ola is an exclusive Decca Classics artist, and his Decca albums include *Ola Gjeilo* and *Winter Songs*, also featuring Tenebrae, Voces8 and the Choir of Royal Holloway, and the solo piano album *Night*. The recordings are available on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, and all major platforms.

The only poems by Emily Brontë that were published in her lifetime were included in a slim volume by Brontë and her sisters Charlotte and Anne titled *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846), which sold a mere two copies and received only three unsigned reviews in the months following its publication. The three notices were positive, however, especially with respect to the contributions of Ellis Bell-Emily Brontë. . . . Her first extant poems are from 1836 and display some of the treatments of nature and death she was to concentrate on for the remainder of her life. For example, in "Will the day be bright or cloudy?" and "High waving heather 'neath stormy blasts ending," a poem Stevie Davies calls a "precocious bravura piece," Brontë adapts her close observation of natural phenomena to poems that examine and accept the two-faceted essence of the day's evolution and the changing weather. In "Start not upon the minster wall" she explores the comforting rather than threatening affinity of the living and the dead... Emily Brontë fell ill with consumption in October 1848 and refused all medical help, claiming that even homeopathy "was only another form of quackery." She steadily grew weaker and died on 19 December 1848. She was thirty years old.

FESTIVAL of CAROLS

Saturday, December 20th @ 4pm
Trinity + St. Peter's Episcopal Church

SING
WITH
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dates!*

Rachmaninoff
ALL NIGHT VIGIL

Shchetynsky
SIGNS OF GRACE

ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH
APRIL 24, 25 • 8PM

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Summer
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Chorus

NEW COMMISSION by
& ERIC TUAN

Davies Symphony Hall
August 15, 2026

Dona nobis pacem by Vaughan Williams

I. AGNUS DEI

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

Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Walt Whitman shared with Vaughan Williams not only a firsthand view of the "seething hell" of war but the view that art should be a public act. His monumental Civil War cycles attempted to transfigure an entire nation's response to a conflict where victory could only be achieved through fratricide. In Specimen Days (1892), Whitman gives this fascinating account of the war's opening: "News of the attack on Fort Sumter and the flag at Charleston harbor, S. C., was received in New York City late at night (13th April, 1861) and was immediately sent out in extras of the newspapers. I had been to the opera in Fourteenth Street that night, and after the performance was walking down Broadway toward twelve o'clock, on my way to Brooklyn, when I heard in the distance the loud cries of the newsboys, who came presently tearing and yelling up the street, rushing from side to side even more furiously than usual. I bought an extra and cross'd to the Metropolitan Hotel (Niblo's Garden) [at Broadway and Prince Street] where the great lamps were still brightly blazing, and, with a crowd of others, who gathered impromptu, read the news, which was evidently authentic." During a moonlit stroll, right after he rounded the bend in Broadway in front of Grace Church, the poet's life was changed forever.

II. BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!

Through the windows—through the doors—burst like a ruthless force,

Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,

Into the school where the scholar is studying;

Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride,

Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field, or gathering in his grain,

So fierce you whirl and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets:

Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses?

No sleepers must sleep in those beds;

No bargainers bargain by day—no brokers or speculators—Would they continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?

Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?

Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley—stop for no expostulation;

Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer;

Mind not the old man beseeching the young man;

Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties;

Make even the trestles to shake the dead, where they lie awaiting the hearses,

So strong you thump, O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.

—Walt Whitman

first published in *Drum-Taps* (1865)

III. RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,

Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly,

wash again and ever again this soiled world;

For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,

I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,

Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

—Walt Whitman

first published in *When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd* (1865),
later in *Drum-Taps*

IV. DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finished Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.
Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.
I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-keyed bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.
I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.
For the son is brought with the father,
In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans, son and father, dropped together,
And the double grave awaits them.
Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.
In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumined,
'Tis some mother's large transparent face,
n heaven brighter growing.
O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.
The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

—Walt Whitman
first published in *When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd* (1865),
later in *Drum-Taps*



Vaughan Williams "claimed he was the only man ever to set to music words spoken in the House of Commons." For his maiden speech, he chose lines from the Quaker MP John Bright, one of the foremost progressives in nineteenth-century Britain. He opposed British aid to the slave-owning Confederacy during the U.S. Civil War, argued for reform of the Poor Laws and Britain's rotten electoral system, advocated for Indian independence after the 1857 Sepoy uprising, and throughout his career denounced war—especially optional war—as the creature of a "tax-eating class" of politicians. Bright spoke these words on the floor of the House on February 23, 1855 in rejoinder to Britain's entry into the Crimean War. On hearing them, the silver-tongued orator Benjamin Disraeli wrote, "I would give all that I ever had to have delivered that speech."

V. THE ANGEL OF DEATH

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old ... to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on.

—John Bright (1811–1889)

Dona nobis pacem.

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land . . . and those that dwell therein . . .

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved . . .

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

—Jeremiah 8:15–22

Adapting biblical poetry as only he could, Vaughan Williams closes the work with images of reunification, renewal and hope—the calm after the storm. The composer follows the baritone soloist's beneficent words with a groundswell of four themes, rising up first from the basses and cellos, then violas, second violins, first violins. The choir takes up each theme in turn, starting with the basses ("Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation"), then the tenors ("And none shall make them afraid"), altos ("Mercy and truth are met together") and finally sopranos ("Truth shall spring out of the earth"), as the listener is literally lifted up out of the depths of war and despair. The gathered voices erupt in acclamation as the orchestra dons its most celebratory colors; festive instruments held in reserve until this moment—chimes, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel—join in the fun. The music drives to an inspiring climax on the words "good-will toward men." The opening supplication for peace is granted in a prayerful valediction from the soprano soloist and a cappella chorus. In Vaughan Williams's hands, the language of music is made every bit as eloquent as the poetic texts that inspired him.

VI. O MAN GREATLY BELOVED

O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

—Daniel 10:19

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former . . .
and in this place will I give peace.

—Haggai 2:9

Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

And none shall make them afraid, neither shall the sword go through their land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them.

Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled;

and let them hear and say, it is the truth.

And it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues.

And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them,

and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me,
so shall your seed and your name remain forever.

—Adapted from Micah 4:3, Leviticus 26:6,

Psalms 85:10 and 118:19, Isaiah 43:9

and 56:18–22, Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace,

good-will toward men.

Dona nobis pacem.

Grant us peace.

THE LAKE ISLE BY W.B. YEATS

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.



EMILY BRONTË (1818–1848)

HIGH WAVING HEATHER I

High waving heather, 'neath stormy blasts bending,
Midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars;
Darkness and glory rejoicingly blending,
Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending,
Man's spirit away from its drear dungeon sending,
Bursting the fetters and breaking the bars.

All down the mountain sides, wild forest lending
One mighty voice to the life-giving wind;
Rivers their banks in the jubilee rending,
Fast through the valleys a reckless course wending,
Wider and deeper their waters extending,
Leaving a desolate desert behind.

THE BLUEBELL

The blue bell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air;
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care.

If chilly then the light should fall
Adown the dreary sky
And gild the dank and darkened wall
With transient brilliancy,

How do I yearn, how do I pine
For the time of flowers to come,
And turn me from that fading shine
To mourn the fields of home.



MONTH AFTER MONTH

Month after month, year after year,
My harp has poured a dreary strain;
At length a livelier note shall cheer,
And pleasure tune its chords again.

What though the stars and fair moonlight
Are quenched in morning dull and grey?
They are but tokens of the night,
And this, my soul, is day.

TO THE BLUEBELL

Sacred watcher, wave thy bells!
Fair hill flower and woodland child!
Dear to me in deep green dells—
Dearest on the mountains wild.

Bluebell, even as all divine
I have seen my darling shine—
Bluebell, even as wan and frail
I have seen my darling fail—
Thou hast found a voice for me,
And soothing words are breathed by thee.

HOW STILL, HOW HAPPY I

How still, how happy! Those are words
That once would scarce agree together;
I loved the plashing of the surge —
The changing heaven, the breezy weather.

HOW STILL, HOW HAPPY II

How still, how happy! now I feel
Where silence dwells is sweeter far
Than laughing mirth's most joyous swell.

HIGH WAVING HEATHER II

Shining and lowering and swelling and dying,
Changing for ever from midnight to noon;
Roaring like thunder, like soft music sighing,
Shadows on shadows advancing and flying,
Lightning-bright flashes the deep gloom defying,
Coming as swiftly and fading as soon.

High waving heather, 'neath stormy blasts bending,
Midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars.



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