

signum
CLASSICS

FIELDS OF
wonder

CANTUS

FIELDS OF WONDER

Dans la montagne

Jean Cras

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Edwin Morgan Sonnets, Vol. 02 *

Gavin Bryars

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N-400 Erasure Songs *

Melissa Dunphy

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Griffin Candey

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Fields of Wonder *

Margaret Bonds

15	1. Heaven	[1.13]
16	2. Snail	[1.40]
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18	4. Moonlight Night: Carmel	[1.33]
19	5. Snake	[1.58]
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21	7. Birth	[1.56]

Total timings: [1.04.55]

* World Premiere Recordings

Every good story is a journey.

It is impossible to reflect change in a single moment. It can only be measured, felt, and understood by comparing one moment to another, a previous version of yourself to the present. And just as a great story loses its meaning without its beginning, a perfect moment cannot be perfect by itself. It is rendered perfect by what comes before or after.

The multi-movement compositions recorded here, including 16 world-premieres, are all journeys toward a truer self. Perhaps it's a journey of acceptance in a new home or of self-recovery and realization. Perhaps it's one of uncovering a reflection of ourselves within the natural world, unveiling the fragility of masculinity, or even the struggle of accepting the inevitability of death.

These contrasting song cycles share an embrace of change, growth, acceptance and renewal, and through the collective experience of their journeys – great and small, painful and magical – we gain a clearer picture of life and of ourselves.

CANTUS



TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Dans la montagne (In the Mountains)

Jean Cras (1879 - 1932)

Texts by Maurice Boucher (1882 - 1964)

1. L'appel de la cloche

Toit d'église avec deux bras maigres,
Seul dans les champs, à mi-sommet,
Tient une cloche sur le ciel.
Chose, frêle, petite voix
Qui s'égrène dans la lumière :
Un signe d'elle, le long des champs
et des listères,
Sortant des plis de la montagne,
Voici des hommes et des femmes,
Qui remontent par les sentiers,
Un livre lourd entre les doigts,
Et le front chargé de prière.

2. La route

De la crête, parmi les branches,
Une blancheur droite s'élève,
Est-ce la route, tout à l'heure?
Portera t-elle mon poids, mon âme et mon voyage?
Il me semble pourtant
Ce n'est qu'entre deux peupliers le ciel.

1. The Call of the Bell

A church's roof with two lean spires,
Alone in the meadows, mid-summit,
Holds a bell against the sky.
Frail thing, small voice,
Which is shelled out into the light;
A sign from her; along the fields
And their borders,
Emerging from the folds of the mountain,
Here are men and women
Going up the trails,
A heavy book between their fingers,
And a brow full of prayer.

2. The Way

From the treetops, between the branches,
A straight, white way emerges,
Is it the route we're soon to follow?
Will it be able to sustain my weight, my soul and
my journey?
It seems, nevertheless,
That only the heavens are between the two poplars.

3. Un jeune sapin se balance

Un jeune sapin se balance en bordure du ciel
Tête frêle qui se penche,
Branches souples qui se creusent,
Telle une fillette heureuse
Qui tient sa jupe et qui danse.

4. Soir

Les courbes molles des collines
S'apaisent pour les nuits tranquilles.
Demain mûrit dans leur corbeille
Tresse à plat au bord du ciel
Avec du silence et du gris
Et l'ombre est déjà sur nos mains.

5. Nuit

Un mur de maison clôt les assoupis.
Amis, oubliez, dormez votre nuit.
Le jour est de l'autre côté de la terre.

Edwin Morgan Sonnets, Vol. 02

Gavin Bryars (1943 -)

Texts by Edwin Morgan (1920 - 2010)

6. Post-Glacial

The glaciers melt slowly in the sun.
The ice groans as it shrinks back to the pole.
Loud splits and cracks send shudders through

3. A Young Fir Tree Swings

A young fir tree swings at the edge of the sky,
Its frail head inclined,
Supple branches cradling one another,
Like a happy, young girl
Holding her skirt and dancing.

4. Evening

The hills' soft curves
Quieten for the peaceful nights.
Tomorrow ripens in their dales
Braided flat at the edge of the heavens
With silence and gray
And shade is already on our hands.

5. Night

A house wall encloses the dozers.
Friends, forget, sleep your night.
The day is on the other side of the earth.

the shoal
of herring struggling northwards, but they run
steadily on into the unknown roads
and the whole stream of life runs with them.
Brown
islands hump up in the white of land, down
in the valleys a fresh drained greenness loads
fields like a world first seen, and when mild rains

drive back the blizzards, a new world it is
of grain that thrusts its frenzied spikes, and trees
whose roots race under the stamped-out remains
of nomad Grampian fires. Immensities
are mind, not ice, as the bright straths unfreeze.

7. A Golden Age

That must have been a time of happiness.
The air was mild, the Campsie Fells had vines.
Dirigible parties left soft sky-signs
and bursts of fading music. Who could guess
what they might not accomplish, they had seas
in cities, cities in the sea; their domes
and crowded belvederes hung free, their homes
eagle-high or down among whitewashed quays.
And women sauntered often with linked arms
through night streets, or alone, or danced a maze
with friends. Perhaps it did not last. What lasts?
The bougainvillea millenniums
may come and go, but then in thistle days
a strengthened seed outlives the hardest blasts.

8. The Mirror

There is a mirror only we can see.
It hangs in time and not in space. The day
goes down in it without ember or ray
and the newborn climb through it to be free.
The multitudes of the world cannot know
they are reflected there; like glass they lie

in glass, shadows in shade, they could not cry
in airless wastes but that is where they go.
We cloud it, but it pulses like a gem,
it must have caught a range of energies
from the dead. We breathe again; nothing shows.
Back in space, ubi solitudinem
faciunt pacem appellant*. Ages
drum-tap the flattened homes and slaughtered rows.

*from Agricola by Tacitus: where they make desolation,
they call it peace

N-400 Erasure Sonnets

Melissa Dunphy (1980 -)

Texts by Niina Pollari, Laurel Chen,
and Melissa Dunphy

1. Form N-400 Erasures

Text by Niina Pollari

Do you
Have
awful
association s

Have you been in
total
terror

Yes/No

If you
EVER claim in writing or any other way
to
have no
country
are you
confined

10 **2. N-400 (an erasure)**
Text by Laurel Chen

i.
notice: any immigration
notice: hearing
notice: see
notice: you

ii.
to the immigrant:
homeland is
a process
delayed.

iii.
fingerprints disposable
a number unpermitted
immigrants: are
all of the above

iv.
about the United States:
do not
support
the criminal history

v.
you are what
you have
abandoned

vi.
identify: alien
copy: self

vii.
separate your
open wounds in the
process

viii.
verify:
all has
been destroyed

ix.
naturalization can not capture
your free
can not level

your personal
for political

x.
this application simplified
is persecution of
your own safety
to ensure social security

xi.
reschedule
reschedule
reschedule
a time
time
time
again time
time
date and

time
xii.
resubmit
resubmit
resubmit

xiii.
please

xiv.
you will
never
belong

11 **3. change [y]our Country**
Text by Melissa Dunphy (1980 -)

you Are Home
this IS where you live now
Home
your space
Your Time
Your History

How many have been
persecuted
occupied
arrested
detained charged
Have Been
Failed
lied to
removed, excluded
deported
but you did not
f a l t e r
you
are willing

you
are true
release
re form
prepare
Stand Firm
you
are the best of us
you will breathe
free

Protocol

Griffin Candey (1988 -)
Texts by Aiden Feltkamp, Kaveh Akbar, and Hieu Minh Nguyen

12 1. Self-Made

Text by Aiden Feltkamp

Wrap myself tight:
clean slate for a face,
wrists straight as steel,
voice pitched low, commanding,
hands direct, full of purpose even when uncertain.
Wind myself tight,
modeled after the men
who roam the Earth like machines:
measured, cogs moving fast, but

unfeeling, predictable, and steady
even when uncertain.
This is the protocol.
This is the man I'm not sure I want to be.

13 2. The Men Who Wore Lions

Text by Kaveh Akbar (1989 -)

Over the men's heads, a bird spoke:

The sun is in the mountains;
above it is the moon.
The thing you hoped might save you
had better save you soon.
The men stood, staring at the sky
like desperate plants.

Courage: a long shadow
scattered over the horizon
like salt tossed over a shoulder.

Over their shoulders, the men wore lions.
They wore lions like men wearing lions.
Mane blended into beard,
making the men glow with mannish light.

The men approached the mountain
that had sunshine seeping out its cracks.
When they got close enough,

the mountainlight illuminated
each man's face.
Terrible light.

Inside the core of the sun
inside the core of the mountain
was a single white plant, six
fists high, with its roots growing
straight up in the air.

The men never found it.
The men could only see themselves.

14 3. Prayer for the Uncertain Animal

Text by Hieu Minh Nguyen

All my life, I was taught to make the world
small in my hands, to let it dissolve
like a pill on my tongue,
a mark in the sand.

We think we know what we know cannot change.
We pin our wonder to logic.
We nail our feet to the floor.
We dance on a schedule.
We dream with our eyes closed.
We are so certain it makes us lonely.
We are so certain it makes us scared of the water,
of the worlds that can prove us small.

We map the world to make us feel large at
the center.

Sometimes men will touch a thing
as if they're doing it a favor.
Sometimes men will burn down a city
just to be its savior.
Boys will be boys will be back before dawn.
Boys will be boys will not dance along
to songs they don't know.

Let magic be magic
without looking for the strings.
Let the light shine on everything.
Let us be small among the impossible trees.
Let us dream ourselves small
with our eyes wide open

Fields of Wonder

Margaret Bonds (1913 - 1972)
Texts by Langston Hughes (1901 - 1967)

Due to copyright restrictions, the printing of
texts for Fields of Wonder by Margaret Bonds
was not possible.



ENSEMBLE

Jacob Christopher, *tenor*
Alexander Nishibun, *tenor*
Paul Scholtz, *tenor*
Matthew Shorten, *tenor*
Rod Kelly Hines, *baritone*
Jeremy Wong, *baritone*
Samuel Bohlander-Green, *bass*
Chris Foss, *bass*

The “engaging” (*New Yorker*) men’s vocal ensemble Cantus is widely known for its warmth and blend, innovative programming, and riveting performances of music ranging from the Renaissance to the 21st century. *The Washington Post* has hailed the Cantus sound as having both “exalting finesse” and “expressive power” and refers to the “spontaneous grace” of its music-making. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* called the group nothing short of “exquisite.”

As one of the few full-time professional vocal ensembles in the United States, Cantus has grown in prominence with its distinctive approach to creating music. Working without a conductor, the members of Cantus rehearse and perform as chamber musicians, each contributing to the entirety of the artistic process.

Cantus performs more than 75 concerts each year in national and international touring, as well as in its home of Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Minnesota. The ensemble has performed at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Tanglewood, UCLA, San Francisco Performances, Atlanta’s Spivey Hall, and Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.



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www.cantussings.org

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