

A Song of Farewell  
*Music of Mourning & Consolation*

WINGED LION



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A Song of Farewell

*Music of Mourning & Consolation*

GABRIELI CONSORT

PAUL MCCREESH

WINGED  
LION

PROGRAMME	1	DROP, DROP, SLOW TEARS	2.00
		Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) arr. Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)	
	2	A LITANY: DROP, DROP, SLOW TEARS	4.25
		William Walton (1902-1983)	
	3	CHRISTE, QUI LUX ES ET DIES (1)	4.29
		Robert White (c.1538-1574)	
	4	A CHILD'S PRAYER	4.12
		James MacMillan (b.1959)	
	5	IN MANUS TUAS (1)	4.05
		John Sheppard (c.1515-1550)	
	6	INTO THY HANDS	8.14
		Jonathan Dove (b.1959)	

7	FUNERAL SENTENCES	10.16
	Thomas Morley (1557/8-1602)	
8	THEY ARE AT REST	3.31
	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)	
	REQUIEM	
	Herbert Howells (1892-1983)	
9	I SALVATOR MUNDI	2.37
10	II THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD	2.47
11	III REQUIEM AETERNAM (1)	4.53
12	IV I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS	2.59
13	V REQUIEM AETERNAM (2)	5.08
14	VI I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN	5.38
15	LORD, LET ME KNOW MINE END	11.42
	from <i>Songs of Farewell</i> , C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918)	

PROGRAMME 75.56

DROP, DROP,  
SLOW TEARS  
Orlando Gibbons  
and  
*Drop, drop, slow tears,  
And bathe those beauteous feet  
Which brought from Heaven  
The news and Prince of Peace:*

A LITANY  
William Walton  
*Phineas Fletcher*  
(1582-1650)  
*Cease not, wet eyes,  
His mercy to entreat;  
To cry for vengeance  
Sin doth never cease.*

*In your deep floods  
Drown all my faults and fears;  
Nor let His eye  
See sin, but through my tears.*

*Christe, qui lux es et dies,  
Noctis tenebras detegis,  
Lucisque lumen crederis,  
Lumen beatum praedicans.*

*Precamur, sancte Domine,  
Defende nos in hac nocte;  
Sit nobis in te requies,  
Quietam noctem tribue.*

*Ne gravis somnus irruat,  
Nec hostis nos surripiat,  
Nec caro illi consentiens  
Nos tibi reos statuat.*

*Oculi somnum capiant,  
Cor ad te semper vigilet,  
Dextera tua protegat  
Famulos qui te diligunt.*

*Defensor noster aspice,  
Insidiantes reprime,  
Guberna tuos famulos,  
Quos sanguine mercatus es.*

*Christ, who art the light and day,  
You drive away the darkness of night,  
You are called the light of light,  
For you proclaim the blessed light.*

*We beseech you, Holy Lord,  
Protect us this night.  
Let us take our rest in you;  
Grant us a tranquil night.*

*Let our sleep be free from care;  
Let not the enemy snatch us away,  
Nor flesh conspire within him,  
And make us guilty in your sight.*

*Though our eyes be filled with sleep,  
Keep our hearts forever awake to you.  
May your right hand protect  
Your willing servants.*

*You who are our shield, behold;  
Restrain those that lie in wait.  
And guide your servants whom  
You have ransomed with your blood.*

CHRISTE, QUI  
LUX ES ET DIES (1)  
Robert White  
*Office Hymn  
for Compline*

*Memento nostri, Domine,  
In gravi isto corpore:  
Qui es defensor animae,  
Adesto nobis, Domine.*

*Deo Patri sit gloria,  
Ejusque soli Filio:  
Cum Spiritu Paraclito:  
Et nunc et in perpetuum. Amen.*

A CHILD'S PRAYER  
James MacMillan

*Traditional*

*Welcome Jesu,  
Deep in my soul forever stay,  
Joy and love my heart are filling  
On this glad and sacred day.*

IN MANUS TUAS (I)  
John Sheppard

*Psalm 30:6*

*In manus tuas, Domine,  
commendo spiritum meum:  
Redemisti me,  
Domine Deus veritatis.*

*Remember us, O Lord,  
Who bear the burden of this mortal form;  
You who are the defender of the soul,  
Be near us, O Lord.*

*Glory be to God the Father,  
And to his only Son,  
With the Spirit, Comforter,  
Both now and evermore. Amen.*

*Into your hands, O Lord,  
I commend my spirit:  
You have redeemed me,  
O Lord God of truth.*

*Into thy hands  
O Lord and Father  
We commend our souls  
and our bodies  
Our parents  
and our homes  
friends and kindred.*

*Into thy hands  
O Lord and Father  
We commend our benefactors  
and brethren departed.*

*Into thy hands  
O Lord and Father  
We commend all thy people  
faithfully believing,  
and all who need  
thy pity and protection.*

*Enlighten us  
with thy holy grace  
and suffer us  
never more to be  
separated from thee.*

*Lord Jesus Christ  
mercifully grant me  
that the rest of my pilgrimage  
may be directed according to thy will,  
that the rest of my life  
may be completed in thee  
and my soul may deserve to enjoy thee  
who art eternal life  
for ever.*

INTO THY HANDS  
Jonathan Dove  
*A setting of two prayers  
of St Edmund of  
Abingdon (1175-1240)*

FUNERAL SENTENCES

Thomas Morley

From The Order for the Burial of the Dead,  
The Book of Common Prayer, 1559

The Priest and Clerks, meeting the corpse at the entrance of the churchyard  
and going before it, either into the church or towards the grave, shall sing:

*St John 11:25-26*

*I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me,  
yea, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth  
in me shall never die.*

*Job 19:25-27*

*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the  
earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see  
God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

*Timothy 6:7, Job 1:21*

*We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.  
The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.*

When they come to the grave, while the corpse is made ready to be laid  
into the earth, the Priests and Clerks shall sing:

*Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery.  
He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower: he fleeth as it were a shadow, and  
never continueth in one stay.*

*Job 19:1-2*

*In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee,  
O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased? Yet, O Lord God most holy,  
O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the  
bitter pains of eternal death.*

*The Book of Common  
Prayer, 1559*

*Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts: Shut not thy merciful ears unto our  
pray'rs, but spare us, Lord most holy. O God most mighty, O holy and merciful  
Saviour, thou most worthy judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any  
pains of death, to fall from thee.*

*The Book of Common  
Prayer, 1559*

*I heard a voice from heav'n saying unto me: Write, from henceforth blessed are  
the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their  
labours.*

*Revelation 14:13*

*Amen.*

THEY ARE AT REST

Edward Elgar  
Cardinal John  
Henry Newman  
(1801-1890)

*They are at rest;  
We may not stir the heav'n of their repose  
By rude invoking voice, or prayer address  
In waywardness to those  
Who in the mountain grots of Eden lie,  
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.  
  
And soothing sounds  
Blend with the neighb'ring waters as they glide;  
Posted along the haunted garden's bounds,  
Angelic forms abide,  
Echoing, as words of watch, o'er lawn and grove  
The verses of that hymn which Seraphs chant above.  
They are at rest.*

REQUIEM  
Herbert Howells

I SALVATOR MUNDI

*O Saviour of the world,  
Who by thy cross and thy precious  
Blood hast redeemed us,  
Save us and help us,  
We humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

II PSALM 23

*The Lord is my shepherd:  
therefore can I lack nothing.  
He shall feed me in a green pasture:  
and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.  
He shall convert my soul:  
and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
thy rod and thy staff comfort me.  
Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me:  
thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.  
But thy loving kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

III REQUIEM AETERNAM (1)

<i>Requiem aeternam dona eis,</i>	<i>Grant them eternal rest,</i>
<i>Et lux perpetua luceat eis.</i>	<i>and let perpetual light shine on them.</i>
<i>Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.</i>	<i>Grant them eternal rest, Lord.</i>



IV PSALM 121

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills:*

*from whence cometh my help.*

*My help cometh even from the Lord:*

*who hath made heav'n and earth.*

*He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:*

*and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.*

*Behold, he that keepeth Israel:*

*shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord himself is thy keeper:*

*he is thy defence upon thy right hand;*

*So that the sun shall not burn thee by day:*

*neither the moon by night.*

*The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:*

*yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.*

*The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in:*

*from this time forth and for evermore.*

V REQUIEM AETERNAM (2)

*Requiem aeternam dona eis,*

*Et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.*

*Grant them eternal rest,*

*and let perpetual light shine on them.*

*Grant them eternal rest, Lord.*

VI I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

*I heard a voice from heav'n, saying unto me:*

*Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord:*

*Even so saith the Spirit; For they rest from their labours.*

*Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days,*

*That I may be certified how long I have to live.*

*Thou hast made my days as it were a span long;*

*And mine age is as nothing, in respect of Thee,*

*And verily, ev'ry man living is altogether vanity.*

*For man walketh in a vain shadow,*

*And disquieteth himself in vain,*

*He heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

*And now, Lord, what is my hope?*

*Truly my hope is even in Thee.*

*Deliver me from all mine offences*

*And make me not a rebuke to the foolish.*

LORD, LET ME  
KNOW MINE END  
C. Hubert H. Parry  
From *Songs of  
Farewell*

*Psalms 39:4-13*

*I became dumb and opened not my mouth  
For it was Thy doing.*

*Take Thy plague away from me,  
I am even consumed by means of Thy heavy hand.*

*When Thou with rebukes does chasten man for sin  
Thou makest his beauty to consume away,  
Like as it were a moth, fretting a garment;  
Ev'ry man therefore is but vanity.*

*Hear my pray'r, O Lord,  
And with Thy ears consider my calling,  
Hold not Thy peace at my tears!  
For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner,  
As all my fathers were.*

*O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength  
Before I go hence and be no more seen.*



## INTERVIEW

Paul McCreesh in conversation with Greg Skidmore, a member of the Gabrieli Consort and a DPhil student in musicology at the University of Oxford.

*A Song of Farewell is not a very cheery title for a concept album – dare I say it! What drew you to this idea?*

Well I hope I am not especially morose, but it's quite amazing just how much wonderful sacred music there is on the subject of death. There's an old saying that '*the devil has the best tunes*' – in fact, I think it's the grim reaper that has them! I was interested in creating a reflective programme, drawing on music from many periods, uniting certain common themes and concepts. Death is a central and inescapable truth, for every generation. Medical advances may yet cause us to redefine longevity, but, thankfully, immortality is beyond our grasp.

*What was your starting point in compiling this programme?*

The work that stood out from an early stage was Howells' sublime and powerful Requiem. This is the major work on this disc and its central point of focus. I also wanted to include a setting of the old Funeral Sentences because of the wonderful text. There are so many beautiful phrases (...*he cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower...* ...*man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live...*) – somehow, the central truths of human existence have never been more eloquently expressed. The elegant simplicity of the Morley setting, sung at royal funerals for many years, allows true reflection on these exquisite words.

*You have subtitled this disc Music of Mourning & Consolation. What, for you, is the relationship between mourning and consolation and how is this represented in the music?*

One might argue that most funeral music has an intrinsic sense of consolation – this is especially so in the English tradition. The music is not primarily concerned with the day of judgement; rather, it's about the passing of time, the transience of our lives, the sense of moving on and the pain of loss; all contrasted with the desire of a visionary afterlife. These are all concepts that have given rise to profoundly expressive words and music.

*Some of the texts also dwell on real sorrow – for instance the Phineas Fletcher text used by Dearmer and Walton. Is there a tension between this and the elements of mourning and consolation?*

In the Christian tradition, there is seemingly constant conflict between the unworthiness of the sinner and the need to attain purification for the afterlife, so these tensions are a central part of belief.

*Why did you include Robert White's Christe, qui lux es et dies and James MacMillan's A Child's Prayer, two pieces that seem less directly concerned with death?*

In a programme such as this there is always a temptation to include music that is not strictly speaking funereal, because the metaphysical connection between evening (or compline) and the end of life is so strong. This beautiful evening hymn was set by many English composers often, as here, in a note for note setting of the chant. Again, the conceit of seeking God's protection from the perils of life's journey, especially at the moment of death, is elegantly expressed. Almost all of James MacMillan's music, including his symphonic repertoire, is deeply influenced by his Catholicism. *A Child's Prayer* was written in response

to the Dunblane massacre which took place on 13th March 1996, when a gunman shot 16 children at a primary school. Whilst the text is suitable for general use, MacMillan writes two separate lines for high voices, an especially poignant representation of children's voices.

*Within the programme, you have clearly paired together some of the works. What is the rationale behind these pairings?*

Some of these pairings were relatively obvious. Percy Dearmer's hymn setting of *Drop, drop, slow tears* – a 17th century poem and 17th century hymn tune cunningly married off in the 20th century – presumably provided the source of inspiration for Walton's expressive setting. Other connections had to be sought out and some emerged by accident! I looked at the beautiful Sheppard settings of *In manus tuas* and realised that they share the title of Jonathan Dove's setting of a reflective medieval prayer. For me, it is interesting to explore the connections that link human beings of all generations: the world can change beyond recognition and yet we can still respond to words written in the 12th century or music written in the 16th century.

*When performing or listening to a sacred programme such as this what, if anything, is incumbent on the performer or the listener in terms of their relationship with Christianity?*

I can only answer this in terms of how I personally relate to this music, in the context of my own beliefs. I was baptised into the Catholic tradition but would struggle to profess any particular religious conviction. However, I do think that

there is something at the heart of religion – perhaps more than anything the quest for the ultimately unknowable – which I find deeply attractive. This is possibly why so many people are still drawn to religion, in spite of so much scientific evidence questioning the validity of theism. It is almost as if the desire for an afterlife is enough to persuade us to set aside the more rational scientific arguments.

*How does this inform your approach to performing these works?*

I am constantly imploring singers not to be frightened of expressing the emotions of the text: to sing not just with an understanding of the literal meaning of the words, but also with an appreciation of their sense within a religious or spiritual context. Of course there is also a danger, when working with professional singers, that they fail to relate to some of these texts through over-familiarity. I want to challenge people to think differently about music.

*Do you find that the 20th century music here is more personal or intimate than the earlier repertoire? Or would you reject that claim?*

That's a very interesting idea. Firstly, one must bear in mind that we perform the earlier repertoire as concert music, whereas in fact it is all music written for the ritual of worship, so we are listening to it entirely out of context. Secondly, of course we know so much more about the more recent composers and their lives, so the personal resonances are that much more apparent. The 20th century works here are often quite personal to the composers – Parry wrote the Songs of Farewell towards the end of his life, for example, presumably in response to his

advancing years; Howells' Requiem, though written three years before his son died, was withheld from publication until long after Michael's death and was clearly a deeply personal work which became inextricably linked with his terrible loss.

*Do you think we feel a greater sense of connection to the more recent composers because we know so much more about them, whereas we know so little about someone like Robert White? Does this affect our relationship with the music?*

It has to really, doesn't it? The tragedy of Michael's death was the barometer by which all Howells' emotional experiences were measured, as I'm sure they would be for any human being in such circumstances. Knowing background like this can surely only serve to heighten our experience of the music. At the other end of the spectrum, it amazes me that (to my knowledge) we don't know the name of a single architect of a Gothic cathedral. That sense of anonymity in the creation of art (if it was even regarded as art) is intriguing. The culture of attaching a sense of personal fulfilment to the creation of art only surfaces properly in the Baroque period, and reaches its zenith in the 19th century. In earlier times artists were craftsmen: an exquisite medieval chalice doesn't have an artist's initials on the bottom. A composer of sacred music might have had an emotional connection with the idea of death or religious fervour, but it is more than likely that composing was just something he did, much as the cobbler made shoes. Essentially, this is functional music that we nostalgically imbue with an emotional content.

*As someone who grew up drawn to early music I have a little trouble with the idea – much though we know it to be historically verifiable – that early musicians were more craftsmen than artists. If this is indeed the case, how then do we find a legitimacy to the emotional connection that we have with that music? Do you have to manufacture it?*

Sometimes, yes. I believe that our perception of the best renaissance repertoire would differ wildly from that of John Sheppard or William Byrd. I think we are drawn to particular types of renaissance music – melodic polyphony, dense counterpoint and ethereal beauty. I am not convinced that this is the aesthetic by which contemporaries judged this music. Monteverdi, for instance, claimed that Willaert was one of his most illustrious predecessors. I have tried to make Willaert's music work for me – really, I have – but it just doesn't. It makes me think that there must be something in that music that was important then but which doesn't transfer to most of us today. One thing that I fight against in my performances of early music is the idea that it must always sound ethereal and pretty; all the evidence suggests that the world then was very coloured and very visceral – indeed it was often also very violent. One thing it wasn't was exquisitely pure and beautiful. We look at all old music through the prism of history, with a certain romance for a bygone age. Whilst of course this is doubtless part of the attraction, for me the beauty of so much early music lies in its relative objectivity. It is exactly for this reason that I have always eschewed many over-employed 'modern' tricks, such as changing tempo, pitch, exaggerating dynamics and ironing out

angularities to create that purity so beloved of the English choral tradition. Having said all that, the ‘early’ pieces in this particular programme do seem to express a delicate and restrained beauty.

*As attitudes to composition and appreciation of music have developed over the centuries, do you think that people’s thinking about death has also changed?*

I think people in earlier periods were much more pragmatic about death as they would regularly have seen parents, siblings or neighbours die. That is not to say that a grieving mother felt less pain on the death of her child, but that life was accepted as being inherently fragile. As death was always imminent – *media vita in morte sumus* – there was an acceptance of the transience of life and a more passionately held belief in the afterlife. I think perhaps we have lost something of that medieval visceral experience, except for the few people for whom faith is an absolute in their lives.

*Despite this change in attitudes, death remains inescapable. Do you feel as though modern, scientifically-minded man has a better way of approaching death through art and music?*

It occurs to me (in middle age) that the very noise of the world in which we live can dull our senses to such an extent that we can become blind to the realities of emotion. We can live in a fool’s paradise in which we avoid thinking about death until the last possible moment. If I have something of the preacher in me, I would say that maybe we need to be more aware of the passing of time, of the natural world and our fleeting time on earth. If we fail to devote time to

enjoying relationships and nurturing friendships, to having conversations about life and love and to enjoying the beauty of a full moon or the sunrise, then maybe our experience of life is fundamentally lacking. Part of my vision as an artist is to try to live life with a greater connection to the emotional world. Music is a large part of my passion for life, but it’s absolutely about life first and foremost. If I am not now falling into the trap of romanticising the past, I wonder if our renaissance and medieval forebears experienced life with much greater intensity, for all the apparent harshness of their existence. I envy that – maybe I was just born in the wrong century!

*Much of the music on this disc was written within the last 100 years or so. How does that music fit into the picture that you are painting?*

The music may be relatively recent, but very few of the texts are contemporary. I think the very nature of writing music in the 21st century on a medieval text must connect us to that past. That’s what I love about music, and about sacred music in particular. There is something in this music that is both of its time and timeless – a central truth for all time. I’m not sure whether the absolutes of belief are essential: I think that there are truths here that are as relevant to a profound theist as to a deeply cynical agnostic. At the very least there is emotional and spiritual content here which demands discussion, reflection and, I hope, a response within our souls.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### GABRIELI CONSORT

Founded by Paul McCreesh in 1982, Gabrieli Consort & Players are world-renowned interpreters of great choral and instrumental repertoire, spanning from the renaissance to the present day. Always at the forefront of Gabrieli's projects and performances, the Consort has in recent years enjoyed an independent life as an *a cappella* choir with a series of successful recordings encompassing a broad range of repertoire, but particularly focusing on the English choral tradition. Gabrieli are acclaimed for their performances of Handel oratorios and Bach Passions and their past recordings with Deutsche Grammophon have garnered numerous international awards.

Gabrieli are regular visitors to the world's most prestigious concert halls. They are associated artists of the Wratislavia Cantans Festival in Wrocław and have embarked on an exciting partnership with the city's foremost choir, the acclaimed Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, with whom they collaborate on international touring.

Gabrieli are increasingly committed to working with young musicians. In October 2010, the Gabrieli Young Singers' Scheme was launched, establishing partnerships with four leading youth choirs, giving young singers the opportunity to train and perform with Gabrieli's professional musicians.

A Song of Farewell *Music of Mourning & Consolation*







PAUL MCCREESH

Paul McCreesh has established himself at the highest levels in both the period instrument and modern orchestral fields and is recognised for his authoritative and innovative performances on the concert platform and in the opera house. Together with the Gabrieli Consort & Players, of which he is the founder and Artistic Director, he has performed in major concert halls and festivals across the world and built a large and distinguished discography for Deutsche Grammophon.

McCreesh works regularly with major orchestras and choirs, and the larger choral repertoire, such as Britten's *War Requiem*, Brahms' *German Requiem* and Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, features increasingly in his work. He has established a strong reputation in the field of opera, conducting productions of Handel, Gluck and Mozart at leading European opera houses.

McCreesh is passionate about working with young musicians and enjoys established collaborations with Chetham's School of Music and many youth orchestras and choirs, both in the UK and internationally. He has been Artistic Director of the Wratislavia Cantans Festival since 2006 and has been Director of Brinkburn Music (in Northumberland, UK) for many years.



<sup>1</sup> Soloist in MacMillan

<sup>2</sup> Soloist in Howells

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This recording is dedicated to Anthony Henfrey and Ron Haylock, the first two chairmen of Gabrieli, with affection and gratitude for their many years of support.

*Paul McCreesh*



