



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE



WWI



A Prophecy Against Egypt  
Before Action  
In Flanders Fields  
My Boy Jack  
Perhaps  
Voices of the Dead  
The Christmas Truce

by Richard Woods-Rogan  
by Lucy Walker  
by Rajan Lal  
by Ignacio Mañá Mesas  
by Rebekah Sturge  
by Sebastian Blount  
by Oliver Rudland



THE  
PHOENIX SOCIETY

# WWI

## Armistice Centenary Concert



A Prophecy Against Egypt	By Richard Woods-Rogan
Before Action	By Lucy Walker
In Flanders Fields	By Rajan Lal
My Boy Jack	By Ignacio Mañá Mesas
Perhaps	By Rebekah Sturge
Voices of the Dead	By Sebastian Blount
The Christmas Truce	By Oliver Rudland

THE PHOENIX CHOIR & ENSEMBLE

CONDUCTED BY

SAMUEL HUSTON,  
LUCY WALKER  
& OLIVER RUDLAND

Great St Mary's Church,  
The University Church, Cambridge

Sunday 11th November 2018, 8.30pm

## **The Phoenix Music Society**

Senior Associate: Professor Sir Roger Scruton, FBA, FRSL

Senior Musical Associate: Timothy Brown

Senior Treasurer: Dr Alan Howard

President & Artistic Director: Oliver Rudland

Vice-President & Concert Manager: Sebastian Blount

Secretary & Orchestral Manager: Rajan Lal

Social Secretary: Rebekah Sturge

Junior Treasurer: Richard Woods-Rogan

Publicity Officer: Ignacio Mañá Mesas

Conductor-in-Residence 2018/19: Samuel Huston

Choral Director: Lucy Walker

**The Phoenix Music Society** was founded in 2017 at the University of Cambridge by Oliver Rudland, Sebastian Blount, Rajan Lal and Rebekah Sturge to nurture the composition, performance and promotion of new tonal music.

We are a group dedicated to the discussion, creation and performance of tonal music who aim to create an open and viable environment for the creation of music, which is genuinely tonal in nature - rooted in the past, whilst looking to the future. The society takes its lead from thinkers such as the American composer Steve Reich, who has written, 'the reality of cadence to a key or modal center is basic in all the music of the world (Western and non-Western). This reality is also related to the primacy of the intervals of the fifth, fourth, and octave in all the world's music as well as in the physical acoustics of sound. Similarly for the regular rhythmic pulse. Any theory of music that eliminates these realities is doomed to a marginal role in the music of the world.'

So far the society has produced two successful concerts at the Fitzwilliam College Auditorium, Cambridge:

*Musical Fables*, a concert of new orchestral music conducted by Mark Biggins, chorus-master for English National Opera.

*Encounters with Persian, Verse, Art & Music*, an evening of new vocal chamber music and poetry readings with the Ligeti String Quartet.





## **The Phoenix Choir and Ensemble**

**Conducted by**

**Samuel Huston (Conductor-in-Residence)**

**Lucy Walker (Choir Director)**

**Oliver Rudland**

### **THE PHOENIX CHOIR**

#### **Sopranos**

Isabelle Tett (soloist)

Helen Footman, Fronia Cheng, Izzy Mckellar, Emily James, Daisy Widdicombe, Abi Crook, Anna Cooper

#### **Altos**

Sang-Hwa Lee, Sylvie Field, Lara Cosmetatos, Laurence Trowsdale-Stannard, Lorna Price, Constance Ayrton

#### **Tenors**

Sebastian Blount (soloist)

David Bick, Daire Toal, Nick Butler, Max Noble, Oliver Jones, Edan Umrigar

#### **Basses**

Richard Sharman, Benjamin Hartmann, Dillon Whitehead, Jamie Conway, Benedict McConnell, Vivek Haria, James Ward

### **THE PHOENIX ENSEMBLE**

#### **Violins I**

Leora Cohen (leader)

Emily Newlyn

Alice Beardmore

Natascha Kersting

Susanna Alsey

Arpan Sharma

#### **Violin II**

Marco Gasparetto

Marietta D'Almeida

Millie Newis

Lucy Atherton

Ujjawal Kumar

Jacob Fitzgerald

#### **Viola**

Gemma Taylor

Lucy Crocker

Emma Bird

Jonathan Shaw

#### **Violoncello**

Dan Gilchrist

Lotte Hondebrink

Alex Pitzer

John Hutchinson

#### **Double bass**

Alex Jones

James Kiln

Rita Hess

#### **Timpani**

Murray Chapman

#### **Percussion**

Ignacio Mañá Mesas

#### **Piano**

Richard Woods-Rogan

#### **Trumpets**

Mark Simkins,

Martin Dibb-fuller

Owen Aljibar

#### **Organ**

Michael How

## Introduction: In Search of Our Musical Heritage

The First World War ended the old Europe, in which imperial rivalry, held in place by the balance of power, maintained a high culture that was shared by all the great cities of the continent. Music was part of that culture, a common language that connected the nations and the sects across the many religious and political boundaries. And the seismic convulsions that sent young men to their deaths in the trenches were felt in music too. It was at this time that the atonal experiments of Schoenberg shattered the assumptions of the concert-going public, leading to a new conception of the composer and his place in society. In the aftermath of the great disaster, atonality, and its serial offshoot, gradually assumed the posture of a vanguard party, rivalling in music the pretensions of the vanguard parties that were destroying European politics. And then, in the wake of another and even greater disaster, there emerged a dictatorial modernism, centred on Darmstadt in the destroyed country where the second great war began.

There followed a more or less total collapse of confidence in the old tradition. Classical (i.e. concert-hall) music no longer laid claim to the status of a universal language, appealing to an enduring legacy of spiritual values. It became a forum for eccentricity and experiment, and above all for displays of disaffection with the great tradition of tonal harmony. Atonal sound effects replaced harmonic and melodic order, and the gap between popular song and the ordeals of the concert hall became ever wider, as the one declined to cliché and the other cloaked itself in an impenetrable scholasticism. How, in such circumstances, can we find a musical idiom that will permit us to mourn that original disaster, the war that destroyed the old order of Europe, and unleashed the disorder to which we are heirs?

That is the question that *The Phoenix Music Society* has set out to answer, and this concert of new music by young composers is part of an effort of regeneration that should awaken the sympathy of all music-lovers. In reflecting on the fate of Europe and on the many that died in the great disaster, the pieces in this concert reflect also on the fate of Europe's greatest cultural achievement, which is the musical tradition that continued unbroken until those fateful years of total war. Their search for a language that will do justice to the disaster is also a reaching for the heritage that unites us with those who died.

© Roger Scruton



Sir Roger Scruton is a writer and philosopher who has had a life-long interest in music. Among his many publications are three devoted to the philosophy of music: *The Aesthetics of Music* (1997), *Understanding Music* (2009) and, most recently, *Music as an Art* (2018). He has also written and composed two operas, *The Minister* and *Violet*, both of which have been performed, the second at the Guildhall School of Music in 2004, the first most recently at the University of St Andrews in 2009. His writings on music appear frequently on the website of Future Symphony. His most recent publication is *Souls in the Twilight*, a book of stories.

## THE REVEILLE

### *A Prophecy Against Egypt*

Isaiah 19 (NIV)

set to music by Richard Woods-Rogan

See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud,

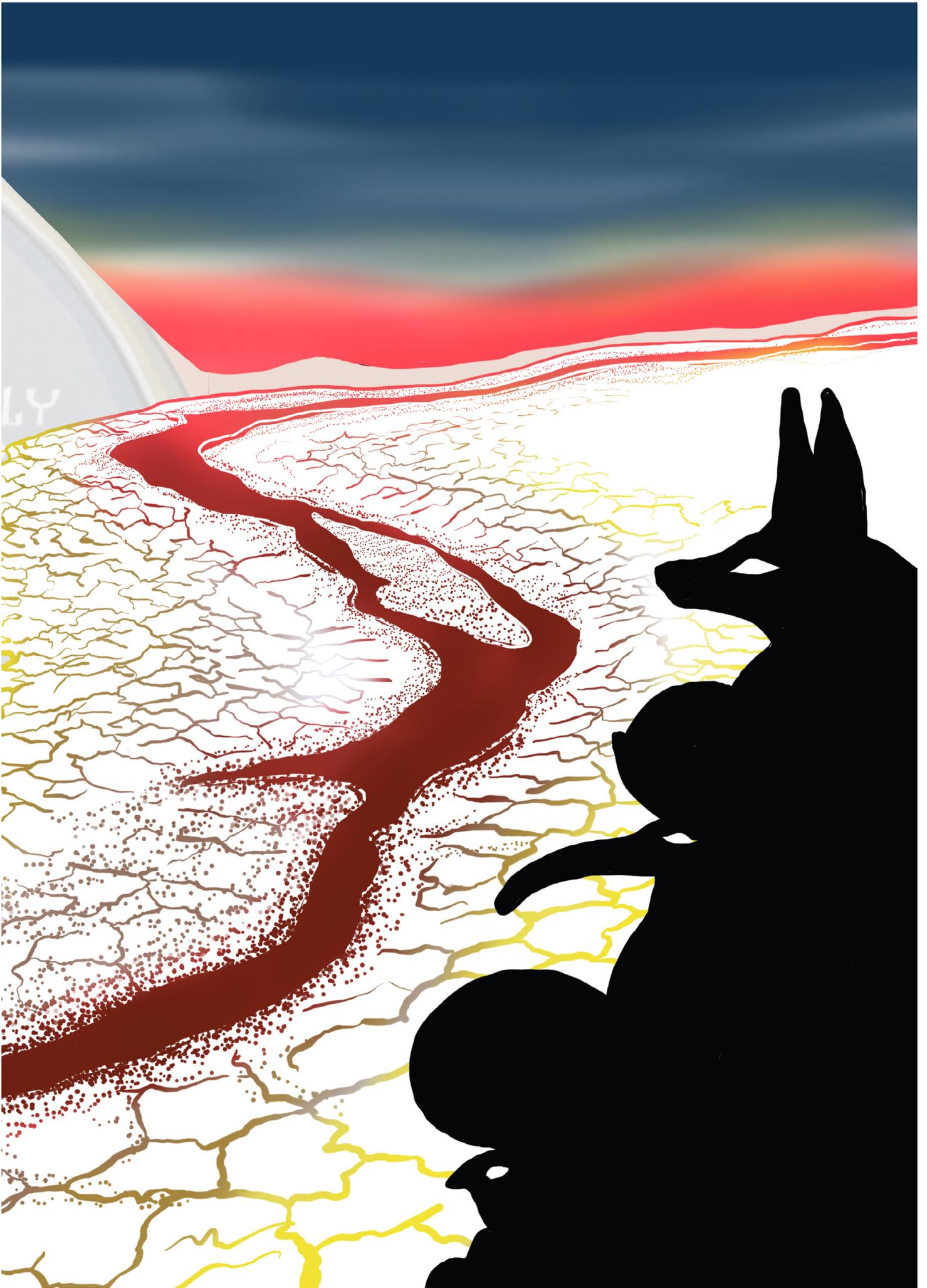
“I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian— brother will fight against brother,  
neighbour against neighbour, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.

The waters of the river will dry up, and the riverbed will be parched and dry.

The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools; the wise counsellors of Pharaoh give  
senseless advice.

Where are your wise men now?”





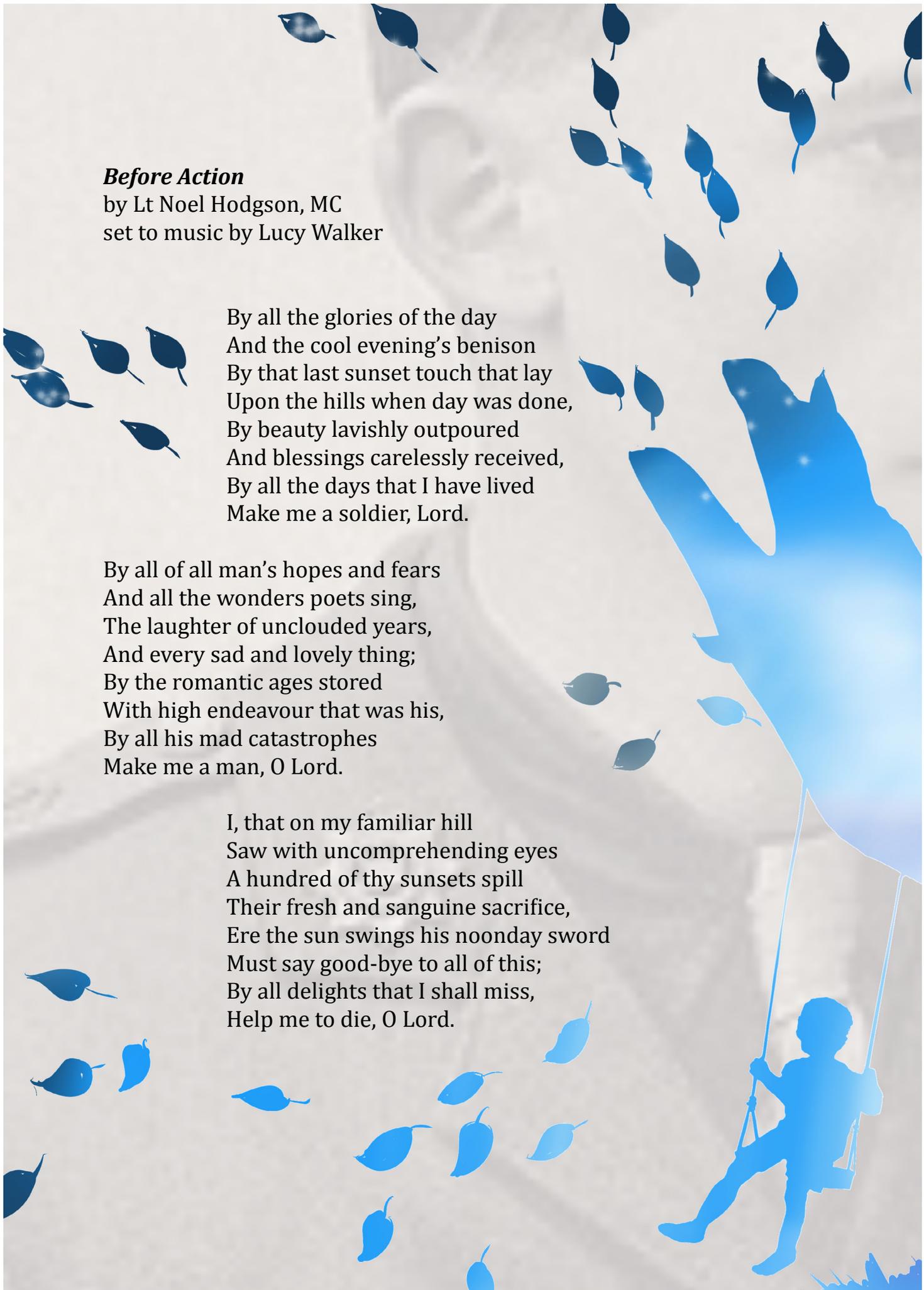
***Before Action***

by Lt Noel Hodgson, MC  
set to music by Lucy Walker

By all the glories of the day  
And the cool evening's benison  
By that last sunset touch that lay  
Upon the hills when day was done,  
By beauty lavishly outpoured  
And blessings carelessly received,  
By all the days that I have lived  
Make me a soldier, Lord.

By all of all man's hopes and fears  
And all the wonders poets sing,  
The laughter of unclouded years,  
And every sad and lovely thing;  
By the romantic ages stored  
With high endeavour that was his,  
By all his mad catastrophes  
Make me a man, O Lord.

I, that on my familiar hill  
Saw with uncomprehending eyes  
A hundred of thy sunsets spill  
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,  
Ere the sun swings his noontday sword  
Must say good-bye to all of this;  
By all delights that I shall miss,  
Help me to die, O Lord.





## *In Flanders Fields*

by John McCrae

set to music by Rajan Lal

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.





***My Boy Jack***

by Rudyard Kipling

set to music by Ignacio Mañá Mesas

“Have you news of my boy Jack? “  
Not this tide.

“When d’you think that he’ll come back?”  
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Has any one else had word of him?”  
Not this tide.  
For what is sunk will hardly swim,  
Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.

“Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?”  
None this tide,  
Nor any tide,  
Except he did not shame his kind,  
Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.

Then hold your head up all the more,  
This tide,  
And every tide;  
Because he was the son you bore,  
And gave to that wind blowing and that tide.





## **Perhaps**

by Vera Brittain

set to music by Rebekah Sturge

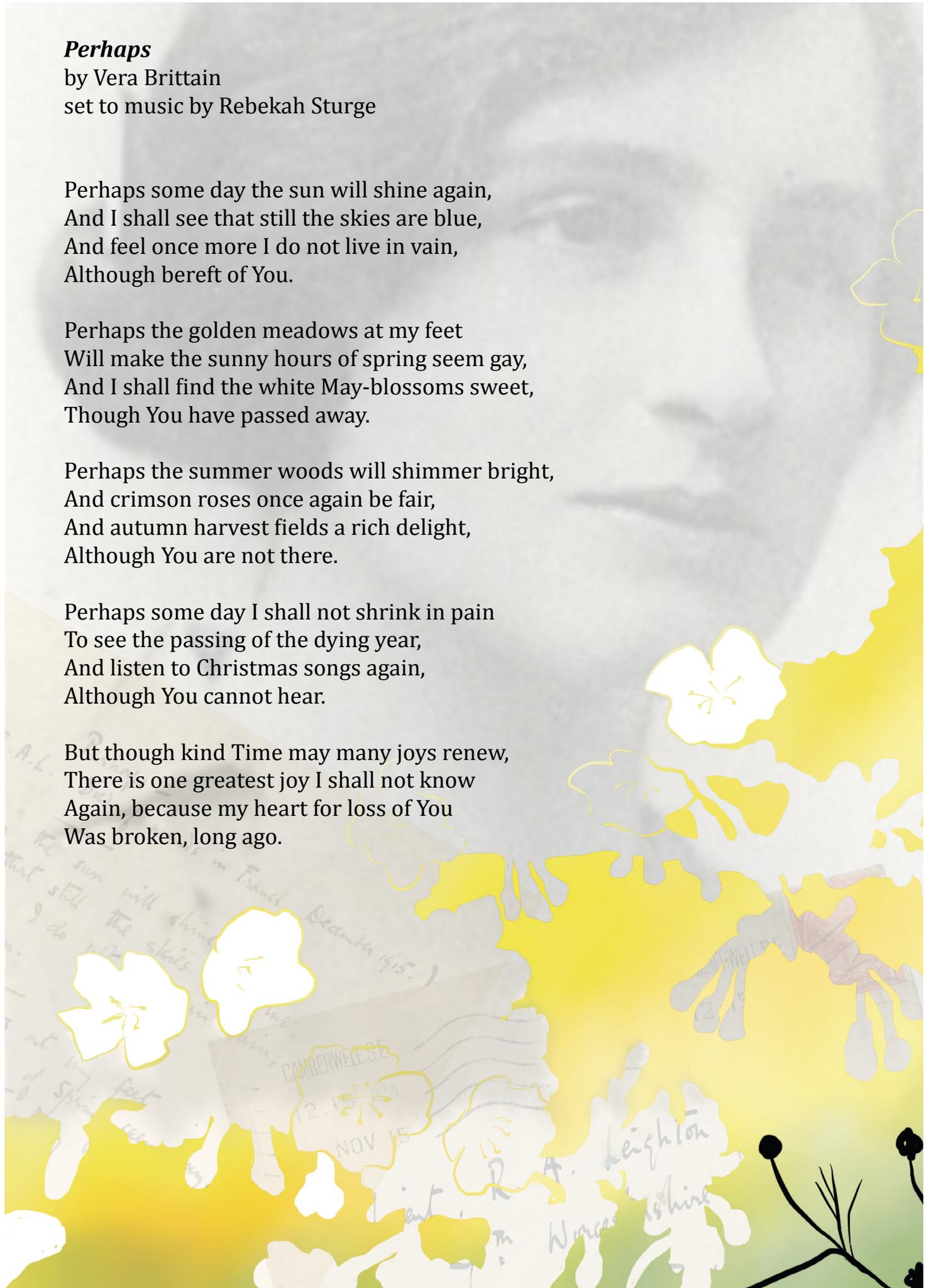
Perhaps some day the sun will shine again,  
And I shall see that still the skies are blue,  
And feel once more I do not live in vain,  
Although bereft of You.

Perhaps the golden meadows at my feet  
Will make the sunny hours of spring seem gay,  
And I shall find the white May-blossoms sweet,  
Though You have passed away.

Perhaps the summer woods will shimmer bright,  
And crimson roses once again be fair,  
And autumn harvest fields a rich delight,  
Although You are not there.

Perhaps some day I shall not shrink in pain  
To see the passing of the dying year,  
And listen to Christmas songs again,  
Although You cannot hear.

But though kind Time may many joys renew,  
There is one greatest joy I shall not know  
Again, because my heart for loss of You  
Was broken, long ago.





# 20 minute interval

free drink with this programme



## *Voices of the Dead*

by Siegfried Sassoon

and with excerpts from the letters of Thomas Blount

set to music by Sebastian Blount

### **Excerpt I.**

“My own Darling,

I am quite well...

Needless to say what pleasure it is writing. I am writing this letter in haste. ... I cannot say where I am but I am in safety.

Darling I would like to be with you. I do miss you. I am anxiously awaiting a letter from you. ...

Remember me to all friends – tell them I will write first opportunity.

Yours ever, sweetheart”

### ***Song-Books of the War***

by Siegfried Sassoon

In fifty years, when peace outshines  
Remembrance of the battle lines,  
Adventurous lads will sigh and cast  
Proud looks upon the plundered past.  
On summer morn or winter's night,  
Their hearts will kindle for the fight,  
Reading a snatch of soldier-song,  
Savage and jaunty, fierce and strong;  
And through the angry marching rhymes  
Of blind regret and haggard mirth,  
They'll envy us the dazzling times  
When sacrifice absolved our earth.

Some ancient man with silver locks  
Will lift his weary face to say:  
'War was a fiend who stopped our clocks  
Although we met him grim and gay.'  
And then he'll speak of Haig's last drive,  
Marvelling that any came alive  
Out of the shambles that men built  
And smashed, to cleanse the world of guilt.  
But the boys, with grin and sidelong glance,  
Will think, 'Poor grandad's day is done.'  
And dream of lads who fought in France  
And lived in time to share the fun.

### **Excerpt II.**

"My dear Sweetheart,  
I feel much happier now I have heard from you ... I am sorry you have been poorly and I hope you are a lot better now. Do not let anything worry you, dear, and cheer up – I shall not be away long according to news.  
Dearie, this time last week the Germans were (sic) in command of this place. Now it is quite safe from them. ...  
I am looking forward to being in England before long ... You cannot realise how I am longing to see you. Yours, ever-loving"

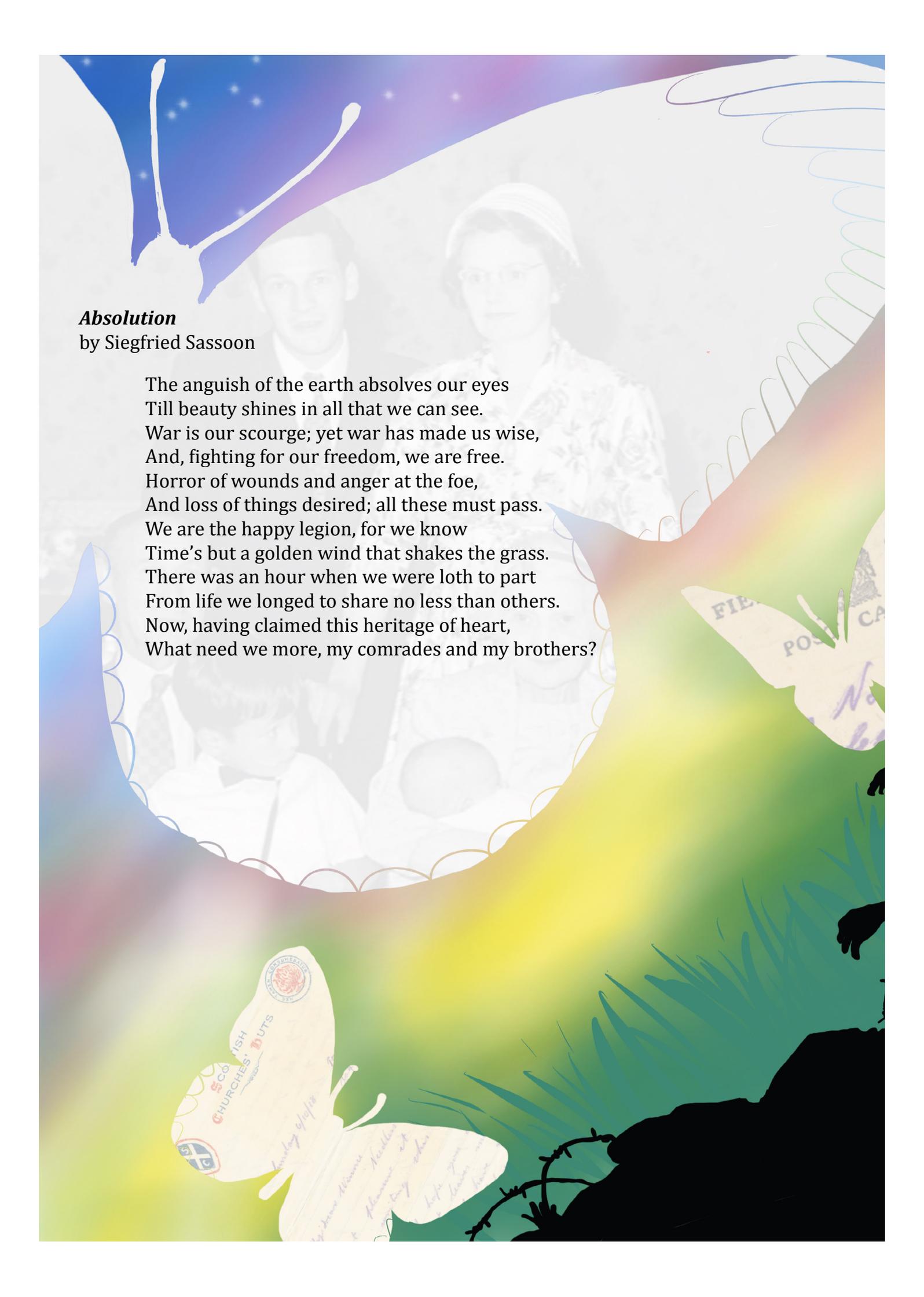
### ***Absolution***

by Siegfried Sassoon

The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes  
Till beauty shines in all that we can see.  
War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,  
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.  
Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,  
And loss of things desired; all these must pass.  
We are the happy legion, for we know  
Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.  
There was an hour when we were loth to part  
From life we longed to share no less than others.  
Now, having claimed this heritage of heart,  
What need we more, my comrades and my brothers?

### **Excerpt III.**

"My Own Darling Girl,  
I have been admitted into hospital sick and am going on well ...  
You are ever in my thoughts ...  
I think the war will end shortly and it is not before time.  
Sweetheart, I did not manage to reach England with my illness but I look forward to be[ing] home for good very soon.  
Darling, I shall always feel I have done my bit towards safeguarding and preserving the homes of England and what I want now is to return as soon as possible to those who I know are anxiously [a]waiting me.  
Remember me to all friends."



***Absolution***

by Siegfried Sassoon

The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes  
Till beauty shines in all that we can see.  
War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,  
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.  
Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,  
And loss of things desired; all these must pass.  
We are the happy legion, for we know  
Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.  
There was an hour when we were loth to part  
From life we longed to share no less than others.  
Now, having claimed this heritage of heart,  
What need we more, my comrades and my brothers?



FIELD  
POST CARD.  
has Norris  
Water

NOTHING the date and not required may added the post card  
[Postage must be pre- added to the  
addressed to the  
has been admitted into hospital  
letter or post card  
and am going on well.

4/10/18  
Blamm

SECRET  
ARD.  
his

Two white eyes in the dark silhouette of a soldier.

Two white eyes in the dark silhouette of a soldier.

Two white eyes in the dark silhouette of a soldier.

Two white eyes in the dark silhouette of a soldier.

## THE LAST POST followed by one minutes silence

### *The Christmas Truce*

by Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate  
set to music by Oliver Rudland

Christmas Eve in the trenches of France,  
the guns were quiet.  
The dead lay still in No Man's Land –  
Freddie, Franz, Friedrich, Frank...  
The moon, like a medal, hung in the clear, cold sky.

Silver frost on barbed wire, strange tinsel,  
sparkled and winked.  
A boy from Stroud stared at a star  
to meet his mother's eyesight there.  
An owl swooped on a rat on the glove of a corpse.

In a copse of trees behind the lines,  
a lone bird sang.  
A soldier-poet noted it down – a robin  
holding his winter ground –  
then silence spread and touched each man like a hand.

Somebody kissed the gold of his ring;  
a few lit pipes;  
most, in their greatcoats, huddled,  
waiting for sleep.  
The liquid mud had hardened at last in the freeze.

But it was Christmas Eve; believe; belief  
thrilled the night air,  
where glittering rime on unburied sons  
treasured their stiff hair.  
The sharp, clean, midwinter smell held memory.

On watch, a rifleman scoured the terrain –  
no sign of life,  
no shadows, shots from snipers,  
nowt to note or report.  
The frozen, foreign fields were acres of pain.

Then flickering flames from the other side  
danced in his eyes,  
as Christmas Trees in their dozens shone,  
candlelit on the parapets,  
and they started to sing, all down the German lines.

Men who would drown in mud, be gassed, or shot,  
or vaporised  
by falling shells, or live to tell,  
heard for the first time then –  
Stille Nacht. Heilige Nacht. Alles schläft, einsam wacht...





Cariad, the song was a sudden bridge  
from man to man;  
a gift to the heart from home,  
a childhood, some place shared...  
When it was done, the British soldiers cheered.

A Scotsman started to bawl The First Noel  
and all joined in,  
till the Germans stood, seeing  
across the divide,  
the sprawled, mute shapes of those who had died.

All night, along the Western Front, they sang,  
the enemies –  
carols, hymns, folk songs, anthems,  
in German, English, French;  
each battalion choired in its grim trench.

So Christmas dawned, wrapped in mist,  
to open itself  
and offer the day like a gift  
for Harry, Hugo, Hermann, Henry, Heinz...  
with whistles, waves, cheers, shouts, laughs.

Frohe Weihnachten, Tommy! Merry Christmas, Fritz!  
A young Berliner,  
brandishing schnapps,  
was the first from his ditch to climb.  
A Shropshire lad ran at him like a rhyme.

Then it was up and over, every man,  
to shake the hand  
of a foe as a friend,  
or slap his back like a brother would;  
exchanging gifts of biscuits, tea, Maconochie's stew,

Tickler's jam...for cognac, sausages, cigars,  
beer, sauerkraut;  
or chase six hares, who jumped  
from a cabbage-patch, or find a ball  
and make of a battleground a football pitch.

I showed him a picture of my wife.  
Ich zeigte ihm  
ein Foto meiner Frau.  
Sie sei schön, sagte er.  
He thought her beautiful, he said.

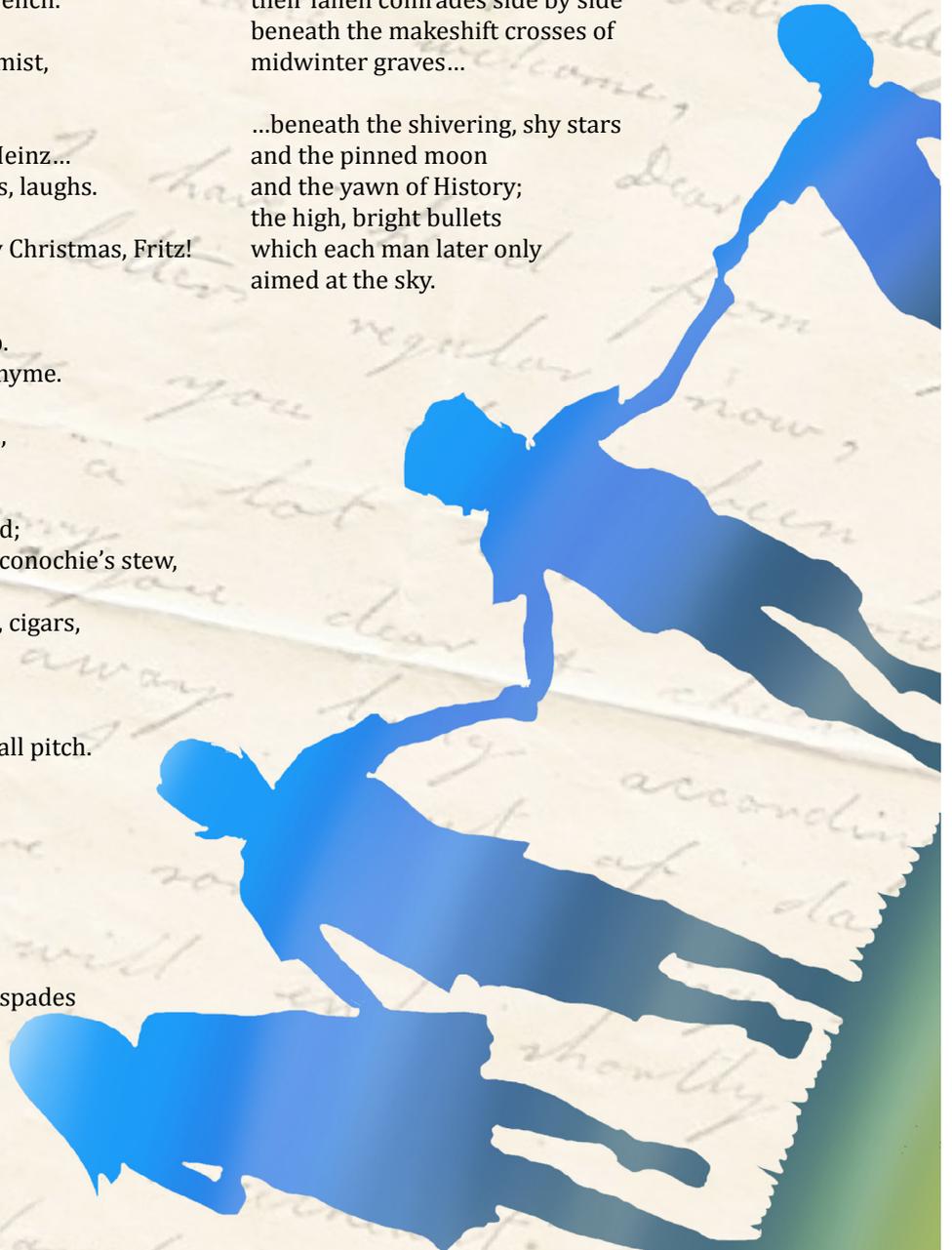
They buried the dead then, hacked spades  
into hard earth  
again and again, till a score of men  
were at rest, identified, blessed.

*The Lord is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in  
green pastures:  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul:  
He leadeth me in the paths of  
righteousness  
for his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in  
the presence of mine enemies:  
thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life:  
and I will dwell in the house of the  
Lord for ever. Amen.*

And all that marvellous, festive day,  
they came and went,  
the officers, the rank and file,  
their fallen comrades side by side  
beneath the makeshift crosses of  
midwinter graves...

...beneath the shivering, shy stars  
and the pinned moon  
and the yawn of History;  
the high, bright bullets  
which each man later only  
aimed at the sky.





## Special Thanks

Our sincerest thanks must go first and foremost to Colin Singer for generously sponsoring this evening's concert.

We are also deeply grateful to:

- Sir Roger Scruton for his kind introductory note.
- Timothy Brown for leading us through the first vocal rehearsal, and for his support and advice.
- Sam Hayes, Emma Dunn and everyone at Great St Mary's for their support, as ever.
- Gonville & Caius College, St John's College and St Catherine's College for the use of the Ruth Mott Room, the Old Divinity School and the Octagon for the purposes of rehearsals.
- Cambridge University Music Society for the loaning of the percussion instruments.
- Richard Woods-Rogan for accompanying the vocal rehearsals at the piano.
- Olly Reeve and everyone at AAV Solutions for supplying the stage for the choir, and especially to Peter Crofts from the Penguin Club for volunteering to help set this up pro bono.
- Daisy Nisbet for designing the poster and illustrating the programme.
- And, last but not least, everyone in the choir, orchestra and organisational team for their time and dedication.



A collection will be made at the end  
for the benefit of the Society

Thank you for your generosity

## Biographies



**Samuel Huston** is currently studying Music at Cambridge's Gonville and Caius College where he is an Academic Scholar. As a conductor, he has worked with Dorian Chamber Orchestra, CDI Orchestra and Gonville and Caius Music Society Orchestra in recent years. His work as Musical Director for Dorian Chamber Orchestra has involved concerts in London and Cambridge with recent highlights including a concert devoted to the music of Gerald Finzi and performances of the Bach double cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* and Josquin's *Missa Pange Lingua*.

Aside from working with *The Phoenix Music Society* on this concert of new music to commemorate the Armistice Centenary, he is working on upcoming concerts at St George Bloomsbury in London and Pembroke College Chapel in Cambridge. As a clarinettist, he is a member of the University's Instrumental Award Scheme and his recent performances as a soloist and in chamber ensembles have included playing at the Fitzwilliam Museum, and in West Road Concert Hall as part of the Cambridge University Lunchtime Concert series. He is also a member of the Gonville and Caius College Choir. Prior to his study in Cambridge, Samuel studied as a music scholar at Highgate School and played with the National Youth Wind Orchestra and Ealing Youth Orchestra.



After gaining scholarships to study at the RCM and RAM, **Leora Cohen** decided to attend Cambridge University, becoming leader of the University Orchestra and an Instrumental Award holder in her first year. In 2017 Leora led both the Chamber and Symphony orchestras at RCMJD as well as the NYOGB, performing with Thomas Ades at the BBC Proms. She also co-led the RCO at the Barbican under Daniele Gatti.

Leora has performed chamber music at the Wigmore Hall, Kings Place and on BBC Radio 3. She made her solo debut at St Johns Smith Square playing Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* in 2016 and has performed numerous other concertos with the orchestra since. This past summer, Leora performed Mozart's third violin concerto with the 2020 orchestra for their inaugural concert in Cambridge and was invited to play three recitals in Duino, Italy. Leora currently studies with Ani Schnarch.



**Richard Woods-Rogan** is a composer and pianist studying music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. Previous works include a choral and orchestral *Magnificat*, performed at the famous Sheldonian theatre in Oxford, and incidental music to productions of Shakespeare's plays *Love's Labours Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Oxford Festival of the Arts. Having started composing at a young age (earliest choral works written at age nine) and winning the composing cup at the Oxford music festival twice in the following years (with piano works), Richard started studying Schillinger's compositional method with the gifted composer Dr. Jeremy Arden.

On the back of this, he achieved his first ensemble performance with a *Romance* for wind sextet at age thirteen performed in the SJE, Oxford. Reaching the final three the following year in a national competition held by the European String Teachers Association with a double bass duet saw a second chamber work performed in public concert. At age fifteen, Richard was fortunate enough to receive assistance and tuition for a choral work from the revered composer Cecilia McDowell (also performed at the SJE). This was followed by an offer to pursue further study at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

Drawn by the freedom to write in 'non-contemporary' styles, or even to use pre-existing compositional theory, this is Richard's first concert with *The Phoenix Music Society*, for whom he is now the junior treasurer.



**Rebekah Sturge** graduated with a first class degree in music from Selwyn College in 2017, and thoroughly enjoyed her time at Cambridge. She sang in Selwyn Choir and played flute, piccolo, saxophones and clarinet in various ensembles and pit bands. In her third year, Beckie was supervised by Oliver Rudland in Advanced Tonal Composition, and has subsequently been delighted to continue to receive his guidance and to participate in the ensuing *Encounters with Persian Verse, Art & Music* concert (May 2018) and now this Remembrance concert.

After graduating, Beckie worked at St Mary's School, Ascot for a year as a Graduate Assistant, and, enjoying it immensely, before deciding to embark on a career in teaching. This year she is working as a Music Teacher at The Tiffin Girls' School in Kingston, whilst completing a PGCE with the University of Roehampton through the GLF Schools' Alliance.

Aside from composing, in her spare time Beckie sings with the auditioned choir of All Saints, Fulham and plays the cello with the Wimbledon Community Orchestra. In September 2018 she organised a charity concert at her local church, which raised £800 for International China Concern.



**Lucy Walker** began studying piano with David Murray at the age of eight, and is currently taught by Sarah Beth Briggs. Since then, she has achieved success in music festivals both locally and nationally, most notably reaching the regional finals of EPTA, held at Bluethner Studios London, and the final thirty of BBC Young Musician in 2014. She was awarded the LRSM diploma in the very same year. In addition to performing as a soloist, Lucy enjoys playing chamber and orchestral music. In 2016 she was invited to play at the Royal Albert Hall with the NYOGB as their orchestral pianist and was thrilled to perform with them both as part of the BBC proms, and on their award-winning 2016 Chandos recording of Holst's *Planets*.

Career highlights so far include performing Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 2017 with the Yarm Festival Orchestra and, most recently, she was delighted to reach the final round of the 2018 Cambridge University Concerto Competition. Lucy looks forward to performing Ravel's 2nd Piano Concerto with the 2020 Orchestra in Cambridge later this year, and to performing with TVYO in Carnegie Hall, NYC, next summer.

Lucy also enjoys composing her own music and has had choral works premiered both at Sage Gateshead and in Cambridge, as well as commissions from the Janacek choir, based in Prague. Lucy currently studies music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where she also holds academic and choral scholarships.



**Rajan Lal** is a second-year undergraduate music student at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He began learning the piano aged six with Nissho Astridge and later David Sams, with original aspirations to a concert performance career. These quickly denatured with the discovery of jazz improvisation at aged ten and the realisation that he could combine this individuality with the rigours of classical training to produce original music for the concert hall. Following finalist appearances in the RPTS duet prize and Kent International piano course competitions as well as the titles of both Mid-Kent and Medway young musician of the year 2016, Rajan said farewell to performing almost entirely and focussed on achieving his academic dream of a place at Cambridge University.

He is especially passionate about the resurgence of original tonal composition in academic music circles, writing that: "In the New German school of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, we had perhaps the most colourful sound aesthetic in Western music history. Alongside Mahler, this was the world that drew me to musicianship in the first place and continues to inspire my compositions to this day. Surely with the return of a rich, tonal sound palette, untampered by an obsession with originality, the concert hall can grow into a force to rival the digital!"

Rajan is also extremely proud of his mixed-race heritage and has plans to bring Hindustani classical music into an orchestral setting alongside conducting, film composition and other academic aspirations. This is his third concert with *The Phoenix Music Society*. Previous performances include his tone poem for full Symphony orchestra: *The Transformation of Nebuchadnezzar* written for the society's inaugural *Musical Fables* concert in Lent Term last academic year, as well as his setting of Rumi's *Reality and Appearance* for The Ligeti String quartet, harp and tenor voice. *The Transformation of Nebuchadnezzar* has been requested for re-performance again this year by the 2020 Orchestra on the 26th November. Rajan acts as both society orchestral manager and secretary and frequently conducts his college orchestra and chorus in their termly concerts



**Ignacio Mañá Mesas** is a Spanish saxophonist and composer who is currently based in the UK. He started his musical studies at Cristóbal Halffter Intermediate Level Conservatoire in Ponferrada (Spain) in 2006. He competed successfully in many competitions both as a saxophonist and a composer, winning the First Prize in the *Fac Quod Agis* Composition Competition in 2014, among others, and he was also selected to perform in the Spanish TV musical programme *Pizzicato* in 2013. At school, he composed the soundtracks for several short films. In 2015, he finished his musical studies at Cristóbal Halffter Conservatoire with honours, obtaining the Extraordinary Prize in Castilla y León with the best mark in his region and receiving a nomination for the National Music Award.

He then received an offer and a scholarship from Chetham's School of Music, Manchester to continue his academic and musical studies, where he studied saxophone with Carl Raven and composition with Jeremy Pike for two years. At the school, he also became involved with conducting his own orchestral pieces, offered solo recitals, premiered and conducted his compositions at some prestigious venues, such as the Manchester Mid-day Concert at The Bridgewater Hall (Manchester), the Royal College of Music (London), The Arts Club (London) and The Stoller Hall (Manchester).

Ignacio was highly commended at the BBC Proms Inspire Young Composers' Competition 2017. He received offers and scholarships to continue his musical studies at the University of Cambridge (St John's College), the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, among others. He is currently reading Music at the University of Cambridge (St John's College), where he takes composition lessons with Tim Watts.



**Sebastian Blount** is a recent graduate from Fitzwilliam College. He has a strong background in choral, orchestral and solo performance. Member of the renowned Trinity Boys Choir for eight years and Head Chorister from 2014 to 2015, his experience ranges from performing as a treble at Covent Garden to recording new choral music and touring extensively at home and abroad. He plays a French violin of the Baillie school circa 1870, participating in orchestral ensembles and leading Trinity Symphony Orchestra on its North American tour in 2015. Previously taught by Tim Penrose and Richard Wilberforce (singing), Cristian Persinaru (violin) and Nigel Clayton (piano), he was a regular competition finalist. During his time at the University, he sang with the Gonville and Caius College Choir, and trained under David Lowe.

Sebastian's focus became increasingly centred on composition under the tutelage of Oliver Rudland, and he has been active in *The Phoenix Music Society* events since their inception: his symphonic poem *The Funeral Rites of King Skjöldr*, based on events within *Beowulf*, was performed at the Society's inaugural concert, *Musical Fables*, whilst *Rubáiyát*, his setting of the first Edward FitzGerald translation of Omar Khayyám's inspired poem, was performed at the Phoenix Society's *Encounters with Persian Verse, Art & Music*. It was for these contributions, among others within the Fitzwilliam College Music Society, that Sebastian was awarded the Tony Collinssplatt Cup for Music at the end of his final year.

*Voices of the Dead* takes inspiration from the exchanges between Sebastian's great-grandparents during the Great War, with excerpts from his great-grandfather's letters being included therein. He hopes that his piece will aid in honouring the memory of his great-grandfather and all those alongside whom he fought.



**Oliver Rudland** was born in West Yorkshire in 1983, and is well known for his modern, yet accessible, style of composition.

He began his musical life performing in local brass bands, orchestras and youth opera companies around Leeds. He went on to study composition with Joseph Horowitz and Huw Watkins, piano with Niel Immelman and conducting with Patrick Bailey at the Royal College of Music as a Foundation Scholar, and subsequently at the University of Cambridge, where he now teaches harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and composition.

His orchestral music has been played in masterclasses directed by Sir James MacMillan, Colin Matthews and Mark-Anthony Turnage, and he has had chamber works performed at the Cheltenham International Music Festival, the Southbank Centre, and the DiMenna Center (New York City), as well as at many other venues and festivals across the USA and Europe. In 2008, Geoffrey Webber commissioned *Settings of Innocence and Experience* for the Gonville and Caius College Choir, which was included as an anthem for choral evensong. Oliver was the composer-in-residence with the London Choral Sinfonia, directed by Michael Waldron, from 2015-16, who performed two newly commissioned works at St John's Smith Square, London.

As well as being a composer, Oliver is also a librettist and director. He has been closely involved with the staged production of all three of his operas: *The Nightingale and the Rose* (producer), *The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark* (producer and director), and *Pincher Martin* (director), all of which have been highly acclaimed by both critics and audience members:

'This is an eloquent, succinct opera... In music and design *Pincher Martin* pinched and gripped. This opera deserves to live.' (*The Times*: ★★★★★)

In 2017 Oliver founded *The Phoenix Music Society* with a group of his best and most enterprising composition students at the University of Cambridge, and acts as President and Artistic Director for the society.

Oliver is the director of music at St Dominic's Church, Downham Market, where he plays the organ and directs the joint St Edmund's (Anglican) and St Dominic's (Catholic) Ecumenical Choir.

For more information please visit: [www.oliverrudland.com](http://www.oliverrudland.com)



**THE  
PHOENIX SOCIETY**