

The Carice Singers: Cries of London

Tuesday 2nd July 2024 | St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate

Mary Offer One heart, beating whole

Alice Beckwith Three Songs

Robert Crehan THINGS AS...

Luciano Berio Cries of London

Alexander Papp Let there be peace

Effy Efthymiou Crazy Moon

Aníbal Vidal Just A Déjà vu Cariño

The Carice Singers

Sopranos - Sarah Keating, Olive Hugh-Jones

Altos - Anna Semple, Joy Sutcliffe

Tenors - Edward Woodhouse, Sid Naik

Basses - Stuart O'Hara, Thomas Lowen

Conductor - George Parris

The six London premieres you will hear this evening were created for The Carice Singers at the 2023 Cheltenham Music Festival Composer Academy. The pieces took their form in workshops led by course director Daniel Kidane, and were premiered in Cheltenham on 12th and 13th July 2023. Tonight's performance marks the third time that Spitalfields Music has hosted the second premieres of these works, and we welcome all six composers who will give short introductions to their pieces.

Accompanying these premieres is a work by the Italian radical Luciano Berio. Originally created for The King's Singers (and later expanded and rescored for eight solo voices), the work poeticises and brings to life various street cries heard and collected by the composer as he wandered around London markets.

The Carice Singers is one of the most distinctive vocal ensembles in the UK, defined by its engaging approach to choral sound, trailblazing concert programmes and performances of exceptional quality. Established by George Parris in 2011 and naming itself after Elgar's only child, the group curates projects involving British music (including Elgar and his contemporaries), European and especially Nordic-Baltic repertoire, alongside works by today's composers including Arvo Pärt, Kaija Saariaho, Matthew Whittall and Soosan Lolavar. The choir is active in training the next generation of British choral composers at the Cheltenham Music Festival's Composer Academy, the Three Choirs Festival's New Voices Academy and Spitalfields Music. Recent commissions have included Weaving Stars by the Scottish composer Electra Perivolaris and a new work by the Estonian composer Evelin Seppar.

www.thecaricesingers.co.uk

George Parris has degrees in Music from the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and studied Choral Conducting at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki between 2017-2021. Together with his role as Artistic Director of The Carice Singers, he is Principal Conductor of the North Cotswold Chamber Choir and Co-Artistic Director of the Aurore Renaissance Music Festival in Helsinki.

As a singer he has performed many contemporary choral works with the Helsinki Chamber Choir (including Kaija Saariaho's choral works) and has appeared as a soloist alongside the Helsinki and Finnish Baroque Orchestras. He has also been invited to conduct the Croatian Radio Television Choir, Coro Casa da Música in Portugal, and Finland's Key Ensemble, and is currently one of Ex Cathedra's Associate Conductors.

Texts

Mary Offer - One heart, beating whole

What could it be to love another soul
The way deep-searching roots caress the earth;
To sense we're part of one heart, beating whole,
See in unfurling fronds our sacred birth?

Might we hold in our close-cupped, shining hands
Another's grief, the way the moon holds soft
The sun's glow, or, when there one humble lands Blooms
bear their pollen-wearied guests aloft?

And could these hands write songs of life's sweet sound,
With flowers flowing from our fingertips;
And could these feet dance joy into dead ground, Grow
gleaming peace to beam through hate's eclipse?

Only when we eschew man's restless greed
Will we find in our hearts love's nestled seed.

Ella Curry (2023)

Alice Beckwith - Three Songs

I. Psalm 40

I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

II. Cloths of Heaven

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

W. B. Yeats

III. Silver

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers, and sees
Silver fruit on silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,

With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white
breasts peep Of doves in a silver-
feathered sleep;

With silver claws and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

Walter de la Mare

Robert Crehan - THINGS AS...

Things as they are/were.

Luciano Berio - Cries of London

I.

These are the cries of London town
some go up street, some go down.

II.

where are ye fair maids
that have need of our trades?
I sell you a rare confection.
Will you have your face spread
either with white or red?
My drugs are no dregs
for I love the white of eggs
made in rare confection.
Will you buy any fair complexion?

III.

Garlic, good garlic,
the best of all.
It is the only physic
'gainst all the maladies.
It is my chiefest wealth,
good garlic for the cry.

And if you lose your health
my garlic then come buy,
my garlic come to buy.

IV.

These are the cries of London town
some go up street, some go down.

V.

These are the cries of London town
some go up street, some go down.

VI.

Money, penny come to me
I sell old clothes
For one penny, for two pennies old
clothes to sell.
If I had as much money
as much I could tell
I never would cry
old clothes to sell.

VII. Cry of Cries

[Text from above]

Text assembled by the composer, from various street
cries heard in London markets.

Alexander Papp - Let there be peace

Let there be peace
So frowns fly away like albatross
And skeletons foxtrot from cupboards,
So war correspondents become travel show presenters
And magpies bring back lost property,
Children, engagement rings, broken things.

Let there be peace

So storms can go out to sea to be
Angry and return to me calm,
So the broken can rise up and dance in the hospitals.

Let the aged Ethiopian man in the grey block of flats
Peer through his window and see Addis before him,
So his thrilled outstretched arms become frames For
his dreams.

Let there be peace
Let tears evaporate to form clouds, cleanse themselves
And fall into reservoirs of drinking water.
Let harsh memories burst into fireworks that melt In
the dark pupils of a child's eyes

And disappear like shoals of silver darting fish,
And let the waves reach the shore with a

Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

Lemn Sissay

Effy Efthymiou - **Crazed Moon**

Crazed through much child-bearing
The moon is staggering in the sky;
Moonstruck by the despairing
Glances of her wandering eye

Flycatchers of the moon,
Our hands are blenched, our fingers seem
But slender needles of bone;
Blenched by that malicious dream
They are spread wide that each
May rend what comes in reach.

Extract from 'The Crazed Moon' by W.B Yeats

Aníbal Vidal - **Just A Déjà vu Cariño**

Just A Déjà vu Cariño

[Excerpts of Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream Parable and
Descartes' Meditations]

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