

St
Martin
in
the
Fields

LUMINOUS NIGHT

An Online Concert

Available to watch as many times as you like from 5.00pm on Friday 13 January until 5.00pm on Tuesday 16 March.

St Martin's Voices

St Martin's Players

Andrew Earis Director

St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square London WC2N 4JJ
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www.smitf.org



LUMINOUS NIGHT

PROGRAMME

Chanson de Matin – Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

The Blue Bird – Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

My Spirit Sang All Day – Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

The Skaters' Waltz – Émile Waldteufel (1837–1915)

Geistliches Lied – Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Sure on this Shining Night – Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

The Long Day Closes – Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square – Manning Sherwin (1902–1974)
arr. Lizzy Humphries

Movements from The Nutcracker – Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

i. Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy

ii. Trepak: Russian Dance

iii. Dance of the Reed-Flutes

Luminous Night of the Soul – Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

PROGRAMME NOTES

by Sarah Maxted

In our 'Luminous Night' concert, we invite you to be transported, uplifted and inspired through an hour of mood-enriching instrumental and choral music. This musical journey takes us through the course of the day, from dawn to dusk and beyond into the luminous reveries of night-time.

Our programme begins at daybreak with gentle rays of morning sunshine, as immortalised in Edward Elgar's ***Chanson de Matin*** (*Morning Song*). It was first published in 1899, shrewdly titled in French in order to be commercially appealing as a companion piece to Elgar's earlier *Chanson de Nuit*. However, its popular appeal has endured and secured a place in the canon alongside Elgar's more earnest orchestral endeavours like the *Enigma Variations*, completed the same year. Originally composed for violin and piano, *Chanson de Matin* combines a sense of Victorian parlour domesticity with a more expansive feeling of open air and fresh morning dew. The opening theme is delicate and demure, developing into a darker chromatic middle section, which then intertwines beautifully around a jubilant reprise of the original melody.

In his part-song ***The Blue Bird***, Charles Villiers Stanford works like a landscape artist to evoke the natural beauty of Mary Coleridge's poem. He paints vastness and timelessness through a texture of elongated choral homophony, whilst the soprano soloist hovers bird-like with the serene repetition of the word 'blue'. The overall effect is of a perfect moment suspended, as the tranquil lake reflects the open sky and passing flight of the bird. Despite being a prolific composer of symphonies, concertos and chamber music, Stanford is principally known today for his extraordinary contributions to British church music. His orchestral and secular works are largely forgotten, making the isolated popularity of this secular part-song all the more remarkable and cherished.

Moving from morning calm to the bustle of day, Gerald Finzi's ***My Spirit Sang All Day*** is an ecstatic outburst of love, wonder and – most importantly – joy, as repeated throughout Robert Bridges' poem. It is a delectable example of expressive and succinct part-song writing and is also likely to be a playful personal dedication, since it was written around the time of Finzi's courtship and marriage with the artist and sculptor Joyce ('Joy') Black.

In Émile Waldteufel's ***The Skaters' Waltz*** (*Les Patineurs Valse*) we are transported to the winter scenery and swirling frivolity of a Parisian ice rink. Waldteufel was born in 1837 into a family of musicians who wrote and performed dance music for the great Society balls and soirées of nineteenth century Paris and beyond. His work brought him to London, where he wrote *The Skaters' Waltz* in 1882. Complete with sleighbells and slippery flourishes, it melds the grandeur of an aristocratic ballroom with the festive gaiety of a busy ice rink.

As the light fades and evening approaches, these next three choral pieces by Brahms, Barber and Sullivan lead us to reflection and solace.

Geistliches Lied (*Sacred Song*) is Johannes Brahms' earliest accompanied choral work, written in 1856 when Brahms was 23, and it was partly intended as a technical exercise using a double canon with the unusual musical interval of a ninth. However, the end result transcends the technical intentions. Setting Paul Flemming's seventeenth century poem about faith and acceptance of God's will, the composition develops the emotional poignancy and consolation of grief that Brahms would later come to master in his extraordinary *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

James Agee's poem ***Sure on this Shining Night*** holds a similar message of spiritual succour, set for choir and shimmering piano accompaniment by American composer Samuel Barber. There is particular comfort to be found in the line of text conveying us to an exquisite shining night, where "All is healed, all is health".

Arthur Sullivan's ***The Long Day Closes*** is perhaps the musical and lyrical epitome of evening, depicting a still and silent place of transition from the toil of day to the repose of night.

The final section of our programme takes us from the quiet of twilight to the deeper magic of night-time, complete with romantic trysts and fairy-tale visions. ***A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*** is a modern romantic classic, written in 1939 with lyrics by Eric Maschwitz and music by Manning Sherwin. It perfectly captures the 'walking-on-air' enchantment of new love and has been popularly recorded by a host of stars including Vera Lynn and Frank Sinatra.

Tchaikovsky's ***The Nutcracker*** occupies a unique position in ballet repertory, beloved by children and adults alike and filled with tunes that bring delight and nostalgia. The ballet tells the fantastical story of the girl Clara who befriends a nutcracker that comes to life on Christmas Eve. Together they embark on a fairy-tale battle to overthrow the Mouse King and enter a magical land of snow, where they are entertained with splendours, sweet treats and dances from all over the world. The instantly recognisable *Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy* makes charming use of the celeste, an instrument Tchaikovsky had discovered in Paris and secretly imported to Russia so that he could use it before his rival composers got the chance. The *Trepak* is a vigorous Russian dance, famously parodied by John Williams in his score for the iconic Christmas film *Home Alone*. The *Dance of the Reed-Flutes* also has modern screen associations thanks to its use in a Cadbury's Fruit and Nut chocolate bar advert in 1977. Interestingly, in its original context in the ballet this dance also goes hand-in-hand with confectionery, as the French word for Reed-Flute is 'mirliton', meaning both a reeded wind instrument and a cream-filled pastry.

Our journey from day to night culminates in Ola Gjeilo's *Luminous Night of the Soul*. Gjeilo was born in Norway in 1978 and moved to the United States to study composition at Juilliard and film music at the University of Southern California. *Luminous Night of the Soul* showcases Gjeilo's cinematic scope, as well as his passions for jazz piano improvisation and choral music on an ambitious scale. It is a standalone sequel to his piece *Dark Night*, which set a sixteenth century poem by the Spanish mystic and philosopher St. John of the Cross. In *Luminous Night of the Soul*, Gjeilo sets one stanza from this original poem, along with a new ode by American poet Charles Anthony Silvestri in praise of the Divine Spirit that inspires all human artistry. Moving through contrasting textures of solo piano, string quartet and eight-part choir, Gjeilo imbues the text with increasing musical intensity to a glorious climax, brimming with brightness and hope.



LUMINOUS NIGHT

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

The Blue Bird

The lake lay blue below the hill,
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue,
A moment, ere the bird had passed
It caught his image as he flew.

Mary Coleridge (1861-1907)

My Spirit Sang All Day

My spirit sang all day,
O my joy.
Nothing my tongue could say,
Only My joy!

My heart an echo caught
O my joy
And spake,
Tell me thy thought,
Hide not thy joy.

My eyes gan peer around,
O my joy
What beauty hast thou found?
Shew us thy joy.

My jealous ears grew whist;
O my joy
Music from heaven is't,
Sent for our joy?

She also came and heard;
O my joy,
What, said she, is this word?
What is thy joy?

And I replied,
O see, O my joy,
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee:
Thou art my joy.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Geistliches Lied

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauern
Mit Trauern,
Sei stille!
Wie Gott es fügt,
So sei vergnügt
Mein Wille.

*Do not let yourself languish
with grief,
Be calm!
As God ordains it,
So be content with it,
My will.*

Was willst du heute sorgen
Auf morgen?
Der Eine
steht allem für;
Der gibt auch dir
das Deine.

*Why would you worry today
About tomorrow?
There is One
who stands for all,
He will also give you
what is yours.*

Sei nur in allem Handel
Ohn Wandel,
Steh feste!
Was Gott beschleußt,
Das ist und heißt
das Beste.
Amen.

*In all your undertakings
Be constant,
Stand firm!
What God ordains
Is and is known to be
best.
Amen.*

Paul Flemming (1609-1640)

Sure on this Shining Night

Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars

James Agee (1909-1955)

The Long Day Closes

No star is o'er the lake,
Its pale watch keeping,
The moon is half awake,
Through gray mist creeping.
The last red leaves fall round
The porch of roses,
The clock hath ceased to sound,
The long day closes.

Sit by the silent hearth
In calm endeavour,
To count the sound of mirth,
Now dumb for ever.
Heed not how hope believes
And fate disposes:
Shadow is round the eaves,
The long day closes.

The lighted windows dim
Are fading slowly.
The fire that was so trim
Now quivers lowly.
Go to the dreamless bed
Where grief reposes,
Thy book of toil is read,
The long day closes.

Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-1872)

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square

When true lovers meet in Mayfair so the legends tell,
Songbirds sing, Winter turns to Spring.
Ev'ry winding street in Mayfair falls beneath spell,
I know such enchantment to be,
'Cause it happened one evening to me.

That certain night, the night we met,
there was magic abroad in the air.
There were angels dining at the Ritz,
and a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

I may be right, I may be wrong,
but I'm perfectly willing to swear,
That as you turned and smiled at me,
a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.

The moon that lingered over London town,
poor puzzled moon, he wore a frown.
How could he know we two were so in love?
the whole darned world seemed upside down.

The streets of town, were paved with stars;
it was such a romantic affair.
And as we kissed and said "good-night",
A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square.
I know 'cause I was there,
That night in Berkeley Square.

Eric Maschwitz (1901-1969)

Luminous Night of the Soul

Long before music was sung by a choir,
Long before silver was shaped in the fire,
Long before poets inspired the heart,
You were the Spirit of all that is art.

You give the potter the feel of the clay;
You give the actor the right part to play;
You give the author a story to tell;
You are the prayer in the sound of a bell.

Praise to all lovers who feel your desire!
Praise to all music which soars to inspire!
Praise to the wonders of Thy artistry
Our Divine Spirit, all glory to Thee.

O guiding night!
O night more lovely than the dawn!
O night that has united
the Lover with his beloved,
transforming the beloved in her Lover.

Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965) & St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)



LUMINOUS NIGHT

PERFORMERS

St Martin's Voices

Soprano Hilary Cronin & Victoria Meteyard

Alto Jess Haig & Sophie Timms

Tenor Thomas Perkins & Will Wright

Bass George Cook & Joshua Pacey

St Martin's Players

Violin I Richard Milone

Violin II HilaryJane Parker

Viola Matthew Quenby

Cello Adrian Bradbury

Double bass Jan Zahourek

Piano Michael Cayton

Andrew Earis Director

St Martin's Voices is an exciting and dynamic professional vocal ensemble, primarily made up of talented past and present choral scholars who come together to sing concerts and special events at St Martin-in-the-Fields and beyond. Recent performances have included Mozart Requiem and Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and Beethoven *Mass in C* with Southbank Sinfonia. St Martin's Voices regularly broadcast on the BBC, including Radio 3 Choral Evensong and BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship and Daily Service. They also make regular national and international tours, including recent performances at Greenbelt Festival and visits to the USA – Minneapolis, Washington DC, New York – and Johannesburg, South Africa.



Andrew Earis is Director of Music at St Martin-in-the-Fields where he oversees the music programme at this busy London church. Andrew is a graduate of the Royal College of Music and Imperial College, London, and holds a PhD from the University of Manchester.

Recent performances include Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Beethoven Mass in C with Southbank Sinfonia. He has given organ recitals in venues including King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Washington National Cathedral, and has performed as soloist in performances of Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony.

In addition to his duties at St Martin's, Andrew is a regular contributor to BBC Radio's religious output as a producer of programmes including Radio 4 Sunday Worship and Radio 3 Choral Evensong.



Our thanks to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, for supporting this concert.

As the impact of COVID-19 continues, we need people like you to keep supporting us and helping the musicians we work with.

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www.smitf.org/donate

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