

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Conductor: Dr. HAROLD MAY

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ASSEMBLY HALL,  
ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Sunday, 18th November, 1962  
at 3 p.m.

THE DREAM  
OF GERONTIUS

(ELGAR)

MARJORIE THOMAS (Contralto)

DAVID GALLIVER (Tenor)

NOWAKOWSKI (Bass)

FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(Leader: Ronald Good)

Guest Conductor:

SIR ADRIAN BOULT

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Souvenir Programme and Book of Words - 1/-

*The National Federation of Music Societies, to which this Society is affiliated,  
supports this concert with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain,  
also the Royal Tunbridge Wells Corporation*

## PROGRAMME NOTE

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS is scored for a very large Orchestra, in which the strings are occasionally divided into fifteen, eighteen and twenty parts, and the Chorus is made up of a small Semi-Chorus, 1st and 2nd Choruses and a Chorus of Angelicals for Women's voices only. The score is one of the fullest and most complicated in English music.

In **Part I** Newman sets out to describe the feelings of Gerontius whilst he lies dying, and in **Part II** he sees through his dream, his Soul's transportation to the unseen world, and its reception by the ministering Angel of the Almighty's will. The mysteries that lie 'on the other side' are vividly pictured through the poet's imagination, and the straining eye of a hungering fancy discloses his idea of the 'maybe' of the Soul's future.

Edward Elgar's attention was attracted to this great poem, which required a mystic, a dreamer of dreams, to do justice to such a subject. Such a man was Elgar, and in this work he succeeds in creating the atmosphere so essential to transmit to an audience the inner meaning of the poem.

The Oratorio commences with a Wagner-like Orchestral Prelude, followed by the impressive entry of Gerontius 'Jesu, Maria, I am near to death, and Thou art calling me.' Then the Semi-Chorus, 'Kyrie Eleison;' the full Chorus, 'Holy Mary, pray for him . . . ,' 'Be merciful . . . save him in the day of doom;' followed by Gerontius' great Solo, 'Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus . . . Firmly I believe and truly, God is three and God is one . . . ' The Chorus again, 'Rescue him, O Lord in this his evil hour.' The chanting of the Priest, 'Go forth upon thy journey Christian Soul . . . ,' followed by the Full Chorus, 'Go in the name of Angels and Archangels . . . ' and 'may thy place today be the Holy Mount of Sion, through Christ our Lord.'

**Part II** opens with a short Orchestral introduction of great serenity, setting the mood for the Soul of Gerontius 'I went to sleep, and now I am refreshed . . . I hear no more the busy beat of time . . . nor does one moment differ from the next . . . ' A duet follows between Gerontius and his Guardian Angel who leads him towards the place of Judgment, outside whose door are Demons, sneering and howling, trying to snatch away the Souls that pass . . . then the hubbub is left behind and far away comes the first Chorus of Angelicals, 'Praise to the Holiest in the height,' at first only Women's Voices, in eight parts, then the whole Chorus in a great Crescendo of praise. The climax of the whole work comes when Gerontius sees God (and we find that it is only for a moment), 'Thy Judgment now is near, for we are come into the veiled presence of our God.' Gerontius meets The Angel of the Agony, 'Jesu, by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee . . . Jesu, spare those Souls which are so dear to Thee,' and we hear in the distance the voices on earth praying, 'Be merciful, be gracious, spare him Lord.' The end is a

wonderful one, with the Guardian Angel bidding Gerontius farewell, 'softly and gently dearly ransomed Soul,' whilst from the distance are heard the Angelicals in their Hymn of Praise, and the other Souls in prayers of entreaty and trust, 'Lord, Thou hast been our refuge in every generation.' Between these crossing currents of Orchestral sound the three Choruses, divided into many parts, sing a seven-fold Amen, the voices swell to a final *forte* and then a quick *diminuendo*, the chord of D major ending a movement presenting a wonderful picture of heavenly peace and serenity, conceived by a Master of music, and a poet. C.W.

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## THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

### I

GERONTIUS	..	..	..	<i>David Galliver</i>
ASSISTANTS	..	..	..	.. <i>Chorus</i>
THE PRIEST	..	..	..	<i>Nowakowski</i>

#### *Gerontius*

JESU, MARIA—I am near to death,  
 And Thou art calling me; I know it now.  
 Not by the token of this faltering breath,  
 This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow,—  
 (Jesu, have mercy! Mary, pray for me!)  
 'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,  
 (Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)  
 That I am going, that I am no more.  
 'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,  
 (Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee,)  
 This emptying out of each constituent  
 And natural force, by which I come to be.  
 Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant  
 Is knocking his dire summons at my door,  
 The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,  
 Has never, never come to me before;

. . . . .

So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.

*Assistants*

Kyrie, eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.  
Holy Mary, pray for him.  
All holy Angels, pray for him.  
Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.

All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him,  
All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.  
All holy Innocents, pray for him.  
All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,  
All holy Hermits, all holy Virgins,  
All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

*Gerontius*

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;  
And through such waning span  
Of life and thought as still has to be trod,  
Prepare to meet thy God.  
And while the storm of that bewilderment  
Is for a season spent,  
And, ere afresh the ruin on me fall  
Use well the interval.

*Assistants*

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.  
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.  
From the sins that are past;  
From Thy frown and Thine ire;  
From the perils of dying;  
From any complying  
With sin, or denying  
His God, or relying  
On self, at the last;  
From the nethermost fire;  
From all that is evil;  
From power of the devil;  
Thy servant deliver,  
For once and for ever.  
By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross  
Rescue him from endless loss;  
By Thy death and burial,  
Save him from a final fall;  
By Thy rising from the tomb,  
By Thy mounting up above,  
By the Spirit's gracious love  
Save him in the day of doom.

*Gerontius*

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
De profundis oro te,

Miserere, Judex meus,  
 Parce mihi, Domine.  
 Firmly I believe and truly  
 God is Three, and God is One;  
 And I next acknowledge duly  
 Manhood taken by the Son.  
 And I trust and hope most fully  
 In that Manhood crucified;  
 And each thought and deed unruly  
 Do to death, as He has died.  
 Simply to His grace and wholly  
 Light and life and strength belong.  
 And I love, supremely, solely,  
 Him the holy, Him the strong.  
 Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
 De profundis oro te,  
 Miserere, Judex meus,  
 Parce mihi, Domine.  
 And I hold in veneration,  
 For the love of Him alone,  
 Holy Church, as His creation,  
 And her teachings, as His own.  
 And I take with joy whatever  
 Now besets me, pain or fear,  
 And with a strong will I sever  
 All the ties which bind me here.  
 Adoration aye be given,  
 With and through the angelic host,  
 To the God of earth and heaven,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
 Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,  
 De profundis oro te,  
 Miserere, Judex meus,  
 Mortis in discrimine,

I can no more; for now it comes again,  
 That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,  
 That masterful negation and collapse  
 Of all that makes me man.

. . . . .  
 . . . . . And, crueller still,  
 A fierce and restless fright begins to fill  
 The mansion of my soul. And, worse and worse,  
 Some bodily form of ill  
 Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse  
 Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps  
 Its hideous wings,  
 And makes me wild with horror and dismay.  
 O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!  
 Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee  
 In Thine own agony . . . . .  
 Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.  
 Mary, pray for me.

*Assistants*

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,  
As of old so many by Thy gracious power:—

· · · · ·  
Noe from the waters in a saving home;  
(Amen.)

· · · · ·  
Job from his multiform and fell distress;  
(Amen.)

· · · · ·  
Moses from the land of bondage and despair  
(Amen.)

· · · · ·  
David from Golia and the wrath of Saul,  
(Amen.)

· · · · · —So, to show Thy power,  
Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

*Gerontius*

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep,  
The pain has wearied me . . . . Into Thy hands,  
O Lord, into Thy hands . . . .

*The Priest and Assistants*

Proficiere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!  
Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!  
Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God  
The Omnipotent Father, Who created thee!  
Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
Son of the living God, Who bled for thee!  
Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, Who  
Hath been poured out on thee! Go, in the name  
Of Angels and Archangels; in the name  
Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name  
Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name  
Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!  
Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets;  
And of Apostles and Evangelists,  
Of Martyrs and Confessors, in the name  
Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name  
Of holy Virgins; and all Saints of God,  
Both men and women, go! Go on thy course;  
And may thy place to-day be found in peace,  
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount of Sion,  
Through the Same, through Christ our Lord.

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*INTERVAL*

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## II

SOUL OF GERONTIUS . . . . .	<i>David Galliver</i>
ANGEL . . . . .	<i>Marjorie Thomas</i>
ANGEL OF THE AGONY . . . . .	<i>Nowakowski</i>
DEMONS, ANGELICALS, AND SOULS . . . . .	<i>Chorus</i>

### *Soul of Gerontius*

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.  
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me  
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense  
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,  
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!  
I hear no more the busy beat of time,  
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;  
Nor does one moment differ from the next.

. . . . .  
This silence pours a solitariness  
Into the very essence of my soul;  
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,  
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.

. . . . .  
Another marvel: someone has me fast  
Within his ample palm; . . . . .  
. . . . . A uniform  
And gentle pressure tells me I am not  
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.  
And hark! I hear a singing: yet in sooth  
I cannot of that music rightly say  
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.  
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

### *Angel*

My work is done,  
My task is o'er,  
And so I come,  
Taking it home,  
For the crown is won,  
Alleluia,  
For evermore.  
My Father gave  
In charge of me  
This child of earth  
E'en from its birth,  
To serve and save,  
Alleluia,  
And saved is he.

This child of clay  
To me was given,  
To rear and train  
By sorrow and pain  
In the narrow way,  
Alleluia,  
From earth to heaven.

*Soul*

It is a member of that family  
Of wondrous beings, who, ere the world were made,  
Millions of ages back, have stood around  
The throne of God.

. . . . .

I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,  
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

*Angel*

All hail! my child,  
My child and brother, hail! what wouldest thou?

*Soul*

I would have nothing but to speak with thee  
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee  
Conscious communion; though I fain would know  
A maze of things, were it but meek to ask,  
And not a curiousness.

*Angel*

You cannot now  
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

*Soul*

Then I will speak. I ever had believed  
That on the moment when the struggling soul  
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell  
Under the awful Presence of its God,  
There to be judged and sent to its own place.  
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

*Angel*

Thou art not let; but with extremest speed  
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge.

. . . . .

*Soul*

Dear Angel, say,  
Why have I now no fear of meeting Him?  
Along my earthly life, the thought of death  
And judgment was to me most terrible.

. . . . .

*Angel*

It is because  
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.  
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so  
For thee the bitterness of death is passed.  
Also, because already in thy soul  
The judgment is begun.

. . . . .

*Angel*

A presage falls upon thee, as a ray  
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.  
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul  
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,  
And heaven begun.

*Soul*

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;  
And at this balance of my destiny,  
Now close upon me, I can forward look  
With a serenest joy.

. . . . .

But hark! upon my sense  
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear  
Could I be frightened.

*Angel*

We are now arrived  
Close on the judgment-court; that sullen howl  
Is from the demons who assemble there,

. . . . .

Hungry and wild, to claim their property,  
And gather souls for hell. List to their cry

*Soul*

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

*Demons*

Low-born clods  
Of brute earth,  
They aspire  
To become gods,  
By a new birth,  
And an extra grace,  
And a score of merits,  
As if aught  
Could stand in place  
Of the high thought,  
And the glance of fire  
Of the great spirits,

The powers blest,  
The Lords by right,  
The primal owners,  
Of the proud dwelling  
And realm of light,—  
Dispossessed,  
Aside thrust,  
Chucked down,  
By the sheer might  
Of a despot's will,  
Of a tyrant's frown,  
Who after expelling  
Their hosts, gave,  
Triumphant still,  
and still unjust,  
Each forfeit crown  
To psalm-droners,  
And canting groaners,  
To every slave,  
And pious cheat,  
And crawling knave,  
Who licked the dust  
Under his feet.

*Angel*

It is the restless panting of their being;  
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,  
In a deep hideous purring have their life.  
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

*Demons*

The mind bold  
And independent,  
The purpose free,  
So we are told,  
Must not think  
To have the ascendant.  
What's a saint?  
One whose breath  
Doth the air taint  
Before his death;  
A bundle of bones,  
Which fools adore,  
Ha! Ha!  
When life is o'er.  
Virtue and vice,  
A knave's pretence.  
'Tis all the same;  
Ha! Ha!  
Dread of hell-fire,  
Of a venomous flame,  
A coward's plea.

Give him his price,  
    Saint though he be,  
Ha! Ha!  
    From shrewed good sense  
    He'll slave for hire;  
Ha! Ha!  
    And does but aspire  
To the heaven above  
    With sordid aim,  
And not for love.  
    Ha! Ha!

*Soul*

I see not those false spirits; shall I see  
My dearest Master, when I reach His throne?  
. . . . .

*Angel*

Yes,—for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.  
. . . . .

One moment; but thou knowest not, my child,  
What thou dost ask: that sight of the Most Fair  
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

*Soul*

Thou speakest darkly, Angel! and an awe  
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

*Angel*

There was a mortal, who is now above  
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,  
Was given communion with the Crucified,—  
Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamped  
Upon his flesh; and, from the agony  
Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace,  
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love  
Doth burn ere it transform . . . .

*Choir of Angelicals*

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:

*Angel*

. . . Hark to those sounds!  
They come of tender beings angelical,  
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

*Choir of Angelicals*

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all His words most wonderful;  
Most sure in all His ways!  
To us His elder race He gave  
To battle and to win,  
Without the chastisement of pain,  
Without the soil of sin.  
The younger son He willed to be  
A marvel in His birth:  
Spirit and flesh His parents were;  
His home was heaven and earth.  
The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,  
And sent Him hence afar,  
To serve as champion in the field  
Of elemental war.  
To be His Viceroy in the world  
Of matter, and of sense;  
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,  
A resolute defence.

*Angel*

We now have passed the gate, and are within  
The House of Judgment . . . .

*Soul*

The sound is like the rushing of the wind—  
The summer wind—among the lofty pines.  
. . . . .

*Choir of Angelicals*

Glory to Him, Who evermore  
By truth and justice reigns;  
Who tears the soul from out its case,  
And burns away its stains!

*Angel*

They sing of thy approaching agony,  
Which thou so eagerly didst question of.

*Soul*

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear,—  
. . . . .

But hark! a grand mysterious harmony:  
It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound  
Of many waters.  
. . . . .

*Angel*

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,  
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

*Choir of Angelicals*

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all His words most wonderful;  
Most sure in all His ways!  
O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.  
O wisest love! that flesh and blood  
Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail;  
And that a higher gift than grace  
Should flesh and blood refine,  
God's presence and His very Self,  
And Essence all divine.  
O generous love! that He Who smote  
In man for man the foe,  
The double agony in man  
For many should undergo;  
And in the garden secretly,  
And on the cross on high,  
Should teach His brethren and inspire  
To suffer and to die.  
Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise:  
In all His words most wonderful;  
Most sure in all His ways!

*Angel*

The judgment now is near, for we are come  
Into the veiled presence of our God.

*Soul*

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

*Angel*

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,  
Who say the "Subvenite" with the priest.  
Hither the echoes come; before the Throne  
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,  
The same who strengthened Him, what time He knelt  
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood.  
That Angel best can plead with Him for all  
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

*Angel of the Agony*

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;  
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;  
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee;  
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;  
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee,  
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;  
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;  
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;  
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;  
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;  
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee,  
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on  
Thee.

*Soul*

I go before my Judge . . . .

*Voices on Earth*

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.  
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.

*Angel*

. . . . Praise to His Name!

O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,  
Consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.

*Soul*

Take me away, and in the lowest deep  
    There let me be,  
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,  
    Told out for me.  
There, motionless and happy in my pain,  
    Lone, not forlorn,—  
There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,  
    Until the morn,  
There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,  
    Which ne'er can cease  
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possess  
    Of its Sole Peace.  
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:—  
    Take me away,  
That sooner I may rise, and go above,  
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

*Souls in Purgatory*

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in every generation;  
Before the hills were born, and the world was, from age  
to age Thou art God.  
Bring us not, Lord, very low: for Thou hast said,  
Come back again, ye sons of Adam.

Come back, O Lord! how long: and be entreated for  
Thy servants.

*Angel*

Softly and gently, dearly-remembered soul,  
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,  
And o'er the penal waters, as they roll,  
I pose thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.  
And carefully I dip thee in the lake,  
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,  
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,  
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.  
Angels, to whom the willing task is given,  
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;  
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,  
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.  
Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,  
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;  
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,  
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

*Souls*

Lord, Thou has been our refuge, &c. Amen.

*Choir of Angelicals*

Praise to the Holiest, &c. Amen.

*Words are printed by courtesy of Novello & Company Limited*

**Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra**

Sunday, 2nd December, 1962, at 3 p.m.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F ... .. *Bach*  
The Fountains of Rome ... .. *Respighi*  
Fantastic Symphony ... .. *Berlioz*

**Lionel Bentley**

**David Mason**

**Wilfred Smith**

**Leonard Brain**

**Conductor: John Hollingsworth**

Tickets: Reserved 7/6, 6/-, 4/6 Unreserved 3/6, 2/6

# Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

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## Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Conductor: Dr. HAROLD MAY

16th December, 1962

### CAROL CONCERT for Choir and Audience

David Mason  
(Trumpet)

Walter Neal and Marjorie Vinnall  
(Pianofortes)

27th March, 1963

### "MISSA SOLENNIS" (Mass in D) (Beethoven)

Iris Bourne (Soprano)

Maureen Lehane (Contralto)

John Mitchinson (Tenor)

Roger Stalman (Bass)