



EDWARD ELGAR:

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

WEDNESDAY, 7 MARCH 2012, 7:30PM
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

LONDON CONCERT CHOIR
CANTICUM
SOUTHBANK SINFONIA
MARK FORKGEN CONDUCTOR

ADRIAN THOMPSON TENOR
JENNIFER JOHNSTON MEZZO SOPRANO | BRINDLEY SHERRATT BASS

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ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

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Elgar based his oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* on Cardinal Newman's visionary poem, written in 1865, which depicts a man's death and his journey into the next world. Since its first performance in 1900, *The Dream of Gerontius* has become one of the best-loved and most frequently performed of all Elgar's works.

The oratorio begins as Gerontius lies on his deathbed, surrounded by his friends and sent forth on his journey by the priest. The second half follows his Soul's progress in the afterlife, supported by a guardian angel and encountering demons and angelic beings before coming to Judgment and Purgatory.

Elgar's unique vocal style for the tenor role of Gerontius allows the music to shape itself to the words in a natural and expressive way and the subtle interweaving of the large symphony orchestra with the voices represents a clear break from the traditions of Victorian English choral writing. The whole work is imbued with a passionate intensity of feeling and inspiration: 'It is music of the heart, and appeals to the heart,...' as one critic wrote after the first performance. Indeed Elgar himself felt that he had 'written his own heart's blood' into the score. At the end he added a quotation from Ruskin, 'This is the best of me;...this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.'

London Concert Choir celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010 and now has around 150 singers. Regularly appearing at all the major London concert venues, the choir is notable for its unusually broad repertoire and for the conviction and expressiveness of its performances under its Music Director Mark Forkgen.

'...a performance that was at times very moving – especially with regard to the choral singing, which was consistently quite splendid.'

Verdi Requiem, March 2011, Musical Opinion

For more information about London Concert Choir, visit our website:

www.london-concert-choir.org.uk

London Concert Choir is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England with registered number 3220578 and registered charity number 1057242