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CLASSICS

THERE WAS A CHILD

JONATHAN DOVE

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
CBSO Chorus
CBSO Youth Chorus
CBSO Children's Chorus
Joan Rodgers *soprano*
Toby Spence *tenor*
Simon Halsey *conductor*



THERE WAS A CHILD

JONATHAN DOVE

1	I am the song / Birth	[6.59]
2	Childhood	[4.53]
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CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CBSO CHORUS
CBSO YOUTH CHORUS
CBSO CHILDREN'S CHORUS

JOAN RODGERS SOPRANO
TOBY SPENCE TENOR
SIMON HALSEY CONDUCTOR

www.signumrecords.com

THERE WAS A CHILD

Since my childhood, music – especially choral music – has given my life meaning, so commissioning a piece to celebrate my son Robert's life seemed cathartic – if a little ambitious. Jonathan Dove was the obvious choice of composer for me. I had been struck by his theatre music over the years and in the 1990s worked with him on his first concerto commission; his strong feeling for community connected with my need for this piece to be universal. Robert's father, Richard Van Allan, had been rehearsing Jonathan's first main-stage opera, *Flight*, at Glyndebourne in the summer of 1999. Robert, aged 19, drowned while snorkeling in Thailand on 21 June that year.

Jonathan never knew Robert but we spent much time talking about him, and *There Was a Child* has surpassed all my expectations. Jonathan has completely captured Robert's spirit. He was a warm, kind, thoughtful, bright, gregarious and fearless person who grasped every opportunity that presented itself. His great compassion, true love of mankind and adventurous spirit continue to inspire all of us who knew and loved him.

There Was a Child, a modern oratorio, uses a sequence of poems to trace a young life from



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birth, through childhood to young manhood. Robert would have been delighted that such a joyous piece of music should have been composed to honour him and all the young people who, like him, have been taken from this world too soon.

Rosemary Van Allan (Pickering)

When Rosemary Pickering asked me to write a piece to celebrate the life of her son, we both immediately felt it should involve singing. Singing with other people is one of the most joyful activities I know, so this had to be a choral work. And music celebrating young life should include the sound of children's voices. The idea of mother and son suggested two soloists: soprano and tenor. Accompanying these different voices would be all the colours of the symphony orchestra. The Norfolk and Norwich Festival and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra joined in this commission, of 2009, to create a large-scale piece of communal music-making.

I started looking for words for all these voices to sing. I found poems by Charles Causley and Langston Hughes describing the wonder of birth; by Wordsworth, Keats, Traherne and Emily Dickinson conjuring up different aspects of childhood – naughtiness, carefree playfulness, youthful adventures. My choices were informed by stories Rosie and Richard had told me about their son Robert – particular stories about a unique individual, but which also conjured up archetypal images of youthful liveliness, mischief and outdoor escapades.

Most of the texts are celebratory, but there is no avoiding the terrible moment when a young life is cut short in the middle of adventure. Shakespeare evokes the grief of a mother for her child, and Tichborne sings of death coming too soon. I did not want the piece to end here, and it was important for Rosie to remember all the joy her son's short life brought her. Walt Whitman's poem *There Was a Child went Forth* is a radiant vision of a child absorbing everything around him and connecting with the whole world.

© Jonathan Dove

THERE WAS A CHILD

1 I am the song

I am the song that sings the bird.
I am the leaf that grows the land.
I am the tide that moves the moon.
I am the stream that halts the sand.
I am the cloud that drives the storm.
I am the earth that lights the sun.
I am the fire that strikes the stone.
I am the clay that shapes the hand.
I am the word that speaks the man.

Charles Causley (1917-2003)

Birth

Oh, fields of wonder
Out of which
Stars are born,
And moon and sun
And me as well,
Like stroke
Of lightning
In the night
Some mark
To make

Some word
To tell.

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

2 Childhood

Joy, pleasure, beauty, kindness, glory, love,
Sleep, day, life, light,
Peace, melody, my sight,
My ears and heart did fill, and freely move.
All that I saw did me delight.
The universe was then a world of treasure,
To me an universal world of pleasure.

Thomas Traherne (c.1637-1674)

Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
A naked boy, in one delightful rill,
A little mill-race severed from his stream,
Made one long bathing of a summer's day;
Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
Alternate, all a summer's day, or coursed
Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
Of yellow groundsel; or when crag and hill,
The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
Were bronzed with a deep radiance, stood alone
Beneath the sky, as if I had been born

On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport
A naked savage, in the thunder shower.

From 'The Prelude' by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

3 A Song About Myself

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
He could not quiet be -
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book Full of vowels
And a shirt
With some towels -
A slight cap
For night cap -
A hair brush,
Comb ditto,
New Stockings
For old ones
Would split O!
This Knapsack
Tight at's back
He rivetted close
And followed his Nose
To the North,

To the North,
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
or afraid
Of his Granny-good -
He often would
Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook
And bring home
Miller's thumb
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice

Little Baby's
Little fingers
O he made
'Twas his trade
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle -
A Kettle
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle!

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see -
Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red -
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden

As in England -
So he stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd
He wonder'd,
He stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd.

John Keats (1795-1821)

4 From all the Jails the Boys and Girls

From all the Jails the Boys and Girls
Ecstatically leap -
Beloved only Afternoon
That Prison doesn't keep

They storm the Earth and stun the Air,
A Mob of solid Bliss -
Alas - that Frowns should lie in wait
For such a Foe as this -

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

5 Over the Fence

Over the fence strawberries grow;
Over the fence I could climb
If I tried, I know –
Berries are nice!

Emily Dickinson

6 All shod with steel

– All shod with steel,
We hiss'd along the polish'd ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chace
And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
The pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din,
The precipices rang aloud, and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

From 'The Prelude' by William Wordsworth

7 Romance

When I was but thirteen or so
I went into a golden land,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Took me by the hand.

My father died, my brother too,
They passed like fleeting dreams,
I stood where Popocatapetl
In the sunlight gleams.

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school –
Shining Popocatapetl
The dusty streets did rule.

I walked home with a gold dark boy,
And never a word I'd say,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had taken my speech away:

I gazed entranced upon his face
Fairer than any flower –

O shining Popocatapetl
It was thy magic hour:

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away!

William J. Turner (1889-1946)

8 New Worlds

I saw new Worlds beneath the Water lie,
New People; yea, another Sky
And sun, which seen by Day
Might things more clear display.
Adventure strange! No such in Story we,
New or old, true or feigned, see.
What wondrous things upon the Earth are done
Beneath, and yet above the sun?

From 'On Leaping over the Moon' by Thomas Traherne

High Flight (An Airman's Ecstasy)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the
tumbling mirth

Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of;
Wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sun-lit silence. Hovering there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air;
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with
easy grace,
Where never lark nor even eagle flew;
And while, with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee Jr. (1922-1941)

My tale was heard, and yet it was not told;
My fruit is fall'n, and yet my leaves are green;
My youth is spent, and yet I am not old;
I saw the world, and yet I was not seen:
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun;
And now I live, and now my life is done.

From 'On the Eve of his Execution' by Chidiock Tichborne (1563-1586)

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,

Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.

From 'King John' by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last – far off – at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

From 'In Memoriam' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

9 There Was a Child

There was a child went forth every day.
And the first object he look'd upon,
that object he became.
And that object became part of him
for the day or a certain part of the day,
or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

The early lilacs became part of this child,
And grass and white and red morning-glories,
and white and red clover,

and the song of the phoebe bird,
And the Third-month lambs
and the sow's pink-paint litter,
and the mare's foal and the cow's calf,
And the noisy brood of the barnyard
or by the mire of the pond-side,
And the fish suspending themselves
so curiously below there –
and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads –
all became part of him.

The field-sprouts of Fourth-month
and Fifth-month became part of him,
Winter-grain sprouts and those of the
light-yellow corn,
and the esculent roots of the garden,
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms,
and the commonest weeds by the road,
And the old drunkard staggering home
from the outhouse of the tavern whence
he had lately risen,
And the school-mistress that pass'd
on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd –
and the quarrelsome boys,
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls,
And all the changes of city and country
wherever he went.

His own parents – they became part of him.
The mother at home quietly placing the dishes
on the supper-table,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly,
mean, anger'd, unjust,
The blow, the quick loud word, the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company,
the furniture – the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gain say'd –
the sense of what is real –
the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of day-time and the doubts
of night-time –
the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears so is so,
or is it all flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets –
if they are not flashes and specks what are they?
Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves –
the huge crossing at the ferries,
The village on the highland seen from afar
at sunset,
the river between,
Shadows, aureola and mist,
the light falling on roofs and gables of white or
brown two miles off,
The schooner near by sleepily dropping down
the tide,
The hurrying tumbling waves,

quick-broken crests, slapping,
The strata of colour'd clouds,
The horizon's edge,
These became part of that child who went forth
every day, and who now goes,
and will always go forth every day.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

JONATHAN DOVE



© Andrew Palmer

Born in 1959 to architect parents, Jonathan Dove's early musical experience came from playing the piano, organ and viola. Later he studied composition with Robin Holloway at Cambridge and, after graduation, worked as a freelance accompanist, répétiteur, animateur and arranger. His early professional experience gave him a deep understanding of singers and the complex mechanics of the opera house. Opera and the voice have been priorities in

Dove's output throughout his subsequent career. Starting with his breakthrough opera *Flight*, commissioned by Glyndebourne in 1998, Dove has gone on to write over 20 operatic works. *Flight*, a rare example of a successful modern comic opera, has been produced and broadcast many times in Europe, the USA and Australia. More recently, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, premiered by Opera North at Christmas 2007 achieves another rare feat in contemporary opera, being a successful full-length symphonically-conceived entertainment for a family audience. It too has been produced across the world.

Dove's innate understanding of the individual voice is exemplified in his large and varied choral and song output. His carol *The Three Kings* was commissioned for the famous Nine Lessons and Carols service at King's College, Cambridge. His *Missa Brevis* commissioned by the Cathedral Organists' Association was premiered by the Choir of Wells Cathedral in 2009 and has subsequently been performed in services all over the UK. A set of Canticles for Wells was composed in 2012 along with a moving setting of a Mark Strand poem for tenor Mark Padmore. Larger-scale works with chorus include *Köthener Messe* and the epic and moving *There Was a Child*. Dove's confident optimism has made him the natural choice as the

composer for big occasions. In 2010 *A Song of Joys* for chorus and orchestra opened the festivities at the Last Night of the Proms.

A sure sense of dramatic narrative also informs Dove's orchestral and instrumental music. *Stargazer*, a concerto for trombone and orchestra commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra and premiered by them with Ian Bousfield and Michael Tilson Thomas, has been described by Dove as an opera for the solo instrument. In *The Magic Flute Dances*, a flute concerto, Dove imagines the life of Mozart's eponymous instrument once the opera has ended.

Throughout his career Dove has made a serious commitment to community development through innovative musical projects. *Tobias and the Angel*, a 70-minute opera written in 1999, brings together children, community choirs, and professional singers and musicians in a vivid and moving retelling of the Book of Tobit. His 2012 opera *Life is a Dream* written for Birmingham Opera was performed by professionals and community choruses in a disused Birmingham warehouse, and a church opera involving community singers *The Walk from the Garden* was premiered at Salisbury Cathedral as part of the 2012 Salisbury International Arts Festival.

Dove has been honoured with several awards, including the Ivor Novello Award for Classical Music in 2008.

JOAN RODGERS



© Rose Daniel

Joan Rodgers studied at the University of Liverpool and the Royal Northern College of Music. In 1981 she won the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Scholarship.

Joan Rodgers made her professional debut in 1982 as Pamina in a new production of *Die Zauberflöte*

at the Festival of Aix en Provence, following which she rapidly established herself throughout Europe. International operatic engagements have included Paris (Pamina and Zerlina with Barenboim and Ponnelle, Mélisande, Susanna, and Donna Elvira with Solti); Munich (Ginevra in *Ariadante*); Florence (Susanna with Mehta); Vienna (*Mitridate* with Harnoncourt), Zurich, Lyon, Turin, Brussels (Countess, Fiordiligi, and Hero in *Beatrice et Benedict*), Geneva, Frankfurt and Oviedo (Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*), Netherlands Opera (Countess in *Figaro* and Blanche *Dialogues des Carmélites*), and The Metropolitan Opera, New York (Pamina). In the UK Joan Rodgers has performed at all the major opera companies including in the highly acclaimed performances of the Governess and Duchess in Thomas Adès' *Powder Her Face* at the Royal Opera House.

Joan Rodgers enjoys an equally successful career as a concert and recital singer and engagements have included regular appearances with conductors such as Mehta, Barenboim, Salonen, Harnoncourt, Bruggen, Eschenbach, Elder, Sir Andrew Davis and Rattle. She has appeared regularly in London with all the leading orchestras and has been a frequent guest at the BBC Proms, including the internationally-televised Last Night

in 1988. Overseas engagements have included tours of the USA and Spain with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen and a nationwide tour of Australia. Her London recitals have attracted the highest critical acclaim and other recent recital engagements have included the Musikverein in Vienna, Paris, Moscow, Budapest and New York.

Joan Rodgers received the RPS award as Singer of the Year for 1997, the 1997 Evening Standard Award for outstanding performance in opera for her performance as the Governess in the Royal Opera's production of *The Turn of the Screw* and an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Liverpool University in July 2005. She was awarded the CBE in the 2001 New Year's Honours List. In 2010 Joan Rodgers took up the post of 'International Chair in Singing' at Royal Northern College of Music.

TOBY SPENCE



© Mitch Jenkins

An honours graduate and choral scholar from New College, Oxford, Toby Spence studied at the Opera School of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

In concert, Toby has sung with the Cleveland Orchestra under Dohnányi, the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic under Rattle, the San Francisco Symphony under Tilson Thomas, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Pappano, the Rotterdam Philharmonic under

Gergiev, the London Symphony Orchestra under Davis, the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Nezet-Seguin, the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Dudamel, and at the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals under Norrington and Mackerras. Toby sang an acclaimed Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River* for the Edinburgh Festival, where he has also appeared in recital. Other recitals include LSO St Luke's, Opéra de Lille and the Wigmore Hall, and he has made numerous recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, BMG, Philips, Collins, Linn Records, Hyperion and EMI.

For the English National Opera, Toby has sung Fenton, Ferrando, Tamino, Candide, Paris (*La Belle Hélène*) and Faust, and for the Royal Opera, Kudryash, Simpleton (*Boris Godunov*), Ferdinand (*The Tempest*), Count Almaviva, Ramiro and Tom Rakewell. He has also sung with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, the Paris Opera, the Monnaie, Brussels, the Netherlands Opera, the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, the San Francisco Opera, the Santa Fe Festival, the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera.

This season, Toby will make his debut with the Vienna State Opera as Ferrando, he sings Lensky (*Eugene Onegin*) and Vere (*Billy Budd*) for ENO and David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) for

the Royal Opera. His future opera engagements include Tom Rakewell for the Theater and der Wien, Don Ottavio and Tito for the Vienna State Opera, Tamino and Tito for the Bavarian State Opera and return visits to the Metropolitan Opera. Concerts and recitals this season include the London Symphony Orchestra under Adès, BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davies, CBSO under Nelsons and the Deutsche Oper under Donald Runnicles. He performs recitals at Opéra de Lille and the Edinburgh Festival.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Andris Nelsons Music Director

Made in Birmingham: Sir Edward Elgar conducted the inaugural concert of the City of Birmingham Orchestra in November 1920. Over the nine decades since, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) has grown into a 90-piece ensemble with a worldwide reputation – but one rooted firmly in the City of Birmingham.

Under the direction of such conductors as Adrian Boult, Andrzej Panufnik and Louis Frémaux, the Orchestra's reputation grew steadily. But it was the 18-year leadership of Sir Simon Rattle that truly put the CBSO – and Birmingham – on the

international musical map. Since his departure in 1998, the CBSO has continued to flourish, first under the baton of Sakari Oramo and since September 2008 under the charismatic young Latvian Andris Nelsons. In autumn 2010 Edward Gardner was appointed principal guest conductor, and former assistant conductor Michael Seal was appointed associate conductor, combining this with a performing career in the CBSO's violin section.

The heart of the CBSO's work is in Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Here, the CBSO plays the broadest possible range of music to the widest possible audience, including symphonic and contemporary classical repertoire, and also lighter music – from Johann Strauss to James Bond – on Friday nights, plus Matinée, Schools and Family concerts.

A Worldwide Reputation: In recent seasons, the Orchestra has also given performances in many of the most prestigious European concert halls and festivals. Plans for 2012 include performances of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, two concerts at the Musikverein in Vienna, and a residency at the Lucerne Festival. It was recently shortlisted for best ensemble in the UK's most prestigious awards for classical music, the 2011 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards.

The Orchestra also continues to extend its sizeable discography, working with several leading record labels. Under Sir Simon Rattle and Sakari Oramo, the Orchestra made numerous award-winning recordings: our disc of Saint-Saëns' Piano Concertos with soloist Stephen Hough won both the 2002 Gramophone Record of the Year award, and Gramophone's prestigious Gold Disc 2008 for most popular recording of the past 30 years. In June 2009 the CBSO's first CD with music director Andris Nelsons – an all-Tchaikovsky disc – was released, heralding the start of an ongoing relationship with the German label Orfeo. Four discs have been released so far, featuring music by Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Richard Strauss, and further recordings are due to be released this season.

In the Community: CBSO Centre, the Orchestra's administrative and rehearsal base on Berkley Street, Birmingham, doubles as a small-scale performance venue. It is the base for CBSO Centre Stage, a series of informal chamber music concerts devised and performed by CBSO musicians, and also hosts regular concerts by our internationally-renowned partner organisations Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Jazzlines. Meanwhile, our programme for community engagement co-ordinates an extensive

schedule of work with schools and the local community across the Midlands, reaching upwards of 35,000 young people each year.

Singing Loud: The CBSO's family of four "unpaid professional" choruses play a leading role in amateur music in the Midlands. All are regularly in demand to perform with the CBSO and other leading orchestras and musical groups. The CBSO aims to offer the very best in musical performance and education, flying the flag for the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the UK, and performing the world's greatest music to the widest possible audience. To find out more, explore the season in video and audio, or book tickets online, visit our website: www.cbso.co.uk. You can also follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

CBSO CHORUS

Simon Halsey Chorus Director

The CBSO Chorus was founded in 1973, made its concert debut in 1974 and has since become one of the finest of its kind, performing regularly with the CBSO and in regular demand from a whole host of other world-class orchestras.

Directed by internationally-renowned choral conductor Simon Halsey for over 25 years, the CBSO Chorus is one of the pillars of Birmingham's musical life. It attracts amateur singers from throughout the West Midlands and beyond, who come together as a body of 'unpaid professionals'. The Chorus always relishes the challenge of the large-scale symphonic repertoire, but it also enjoys showing off its versatility, regularly tackling lesser-known, smaller-scale or more-contemporary works.

CBSO Music Director Andris Nelsons has developed a wonderful understanding with the Chorus. Highlights so far include his debut with the Chorus in the spectacular 2008/09 season-opener, Puccini's *La Bohème*, as well as performances of Mahler Symphony No. 2 at Symphony Hall and The Sage Gateshead in May 2009 and the CBSO's widely acclaimed appearance at the 2011 BBC Proms, which was broadcast on BBC2 television and included the Chorus in Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*.

The Chorus is an extremely important cultural ambassador, both for the CBSO and for Birmingham, and its resume of engagements with other orchestras rivals any other symphony chorus in the world.

The CBSO Chorus is a regular visitor to Manchester to perform and record with the BBC Philharmonic. Invitations from foreign orchestras have also allowed the Chorus to travel extensively over the years. Appearances at the Olympic Arts Festival in Sydney in 2000 and the Hong Kong Festival in 2006 are particular highlights, as are the Chorus' two trips to Kuala Lumpur, firstly in 2008 and again in July 2010. The Chorus enjoyed a successful week-long tour to Germany and Holland in May 2011, performing Britten's *War Requiem* in Dortmund, Rotterdam and Eindhoven with the Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra and Jac van Steen. Most recently, the Chorus travelled to Belgium, giving armistice performances of Britten's *War Requiem* in Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra and Martyn Brabbins in November 2011.

The CBSO Chorus also has over 40 recordings to its credit, including five award-winning releases.

CBSO YOUTH CHORUS

Julian Wilkins Conductor

The CBSO Youth Chorus was formed in 1994 with the aim of providing the CBSO with a chorus for the many pieces of symphonic music that require

young people's voices. Open to girls in school years 9 to 13, it is now established as one of the country's leading youth choruses, performing independently as well as with the CBSO and many other prestigious orchestras and choirs.

Having consolidated its renown at choral festivals and competitions across the country, the CBSO Youth Chorus has appeared alongside the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Claudio Abbado, the BBC Philharmonic under Gianandrea Noseda and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Charles Dutoit.

Among a wealth of prestigious engagements in the past few years are two performances and a live recording of James MacMillan's *Quickening* with the BBC Philharmonic and the CBSO, a tour to Gothenburg to sing Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Anders Eliasson's *Canto Del Vagabondo* with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, a performance of Holst's *Savitri* with the CBSO in a special concert celebrating Simon Halsey's 25 years as Chorus Director and performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Havergal Brian's Symphony No. 1 in D minor, 'The Gothic' at the BBC Proms. Most recently they have appeared on Karl Jenkins' new composition *The Peacemakers* recorded for EMI.

CBSO CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Marc Hall Conductor

The CBSO Children's Chorus was formed in 1994 with the aim of providing the CBSO with a chorus for the many pieces of symphonic music that require children's voices. Open to girls and boys in school years 4 to 8, the Children's Chorus provides its members with the opportunity to undertake exciting and challenging repertoire while furthering their musical education.

Having conducted acclaimed performances at both the National Festival of Music for Youth and Llangollen International Eisteddfod, the CBSO Children's Chorus have gone from strength to strength. Highlights in recent years have included a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Sir Simon Rattle, Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with CBSO music director Andris Nelsons, Judith Weir's *Storm*, Faure's *Requiem* and Dove's *There Was a Child* with CBSO Chorus Director Simon Halsey.

SIMON HALSEY
CHORUS DIRECTOR



Simon Halsey is one of the world's leading conductors of choral repertoire, regularly conducting prestigious orchestras and choirs worldwide. Halsey holds the position of Chief Conductor of the Berlin Radio Choir, frequently collaborating with such conductors as Sir Simon Rattle, Claudio Abbado and Marek Janowski. He has been Chorus Director of the CBSO Chorus for over 25 years, and works closely there with

the orchestra's Music Director Andris Nelsons. In 2012 he was announced as Choral Director of the London Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Chorus, working closely with LSO Principal Conductor Valery Gergiev and leading choral strategy across the LSO's performance and education programmes. Simon Halsey also holds the positions of Artistic Director of the Berlin Philharmonic's Youth Choral Programme and Director of the BBC Proms Youth Choir.

Recent projects for Halsey with the Berlin Radio Choir have included performances of Bizet's *Carmen* at the Salzburg Easter Festival 2012 with the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle. He furthermore prepared the choir for Tallis' 40-part motet *Spem in alium* and Antonio Lotti's *Crucifixus*, in a programme with Mahler's Eighth Symphony which concluded Musikfest Berlin, as well as for Jonathan Harvey's grand new work *Weltethos*.

Upcoming projects in the 2012/13 season with the London Symphony Orchestra and London Symphony Chorus include Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* and *Song of the Night* with Valery Gergiev, Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, also with Gergiev, and Mozart's *Requiem* with Sir Colin Davis. Highlights of Simon Halsey's work in

Birmingham include Symphony Hall's 21st-anniversary concerts in June where he will be conducting the CBSO and its Chorus in Elgar's final, deeply personal masterpiece *The Music Makers*. His work in Birmingham is complemented by a new role as Professor and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Birmingham. Simon Halsey held the position of Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Choir from 1997-2008, and the position of Principal Conductor, Choral Programme of the Northern Sinfonia from 2004-2012.

Halsey has worked on countless major recording projects, many of which have won major awards including several Gramophone Awards and Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik. In February 2011 Halsey received his third Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance for the recording of *L'Amour de Loin* by the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho, having previously won a Grammy in both 2008 and 2009 for the Berlin Radio Choir's recordings of works by Brahms and Stravinsky respectively.

In January 2011, Simon Halsey was presented with the prestigious Bundesverdienstkreuz 1. Klasse, Germany's Order of Merit by State Cultural Secretary André Schmitz in Berlin. This is in recognition of outstanding services to choral music in Germany.



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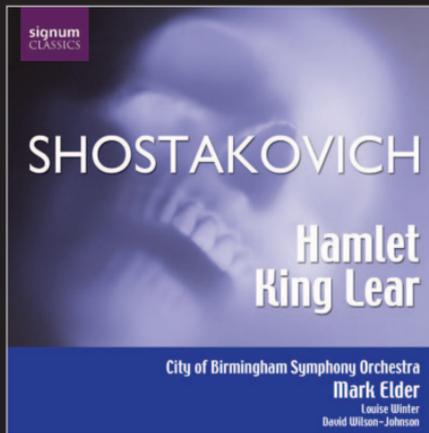
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