



ALUMNI OF THE CHOIR OF CLARE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
Graham Ross | conductor



‘SUCH ENDLESS PERFECTNESS’

Hallgrímskirkja, Iceland
Saturday 13 April 2019, 5 p.m.

The Hallgrímskirkja Friends of the Arts Society 37th season

‘Such endless perfectness’

Versa est in luctum Selig sind die Toten	Alonso Lobo (c. 1555–1617) Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)
Factum est silentium Dum transisset Sabbatum I	Richard Dering (c. 1580–1630) John Taverner (c. 1490–1545)
Funeral Ikos How are the mighty fallen	John Taverner (1944–2013) Robert Ramsey (c. 1590–1644)
Magnificat Nunc dimittis	Sigurður Sævarsson (b. 1963) Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
– interval –	
I heard a voice from heaven <i>from Requiem</i> Rest	Herbert Howells (1892–1983) Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
He wishes for the cloths of heaven Abide with me	Howard Skempton (b. 1947) William Henry Monk (1823–89), arr. Graham Ross (b. 1985)
They are at rest Faire is the heaven	Edward Elgar (1857–1934) William Harris (1883–1973)
Lay a garland The long day closes	Robert Pearsall (1852–1929) Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)
Summertime Cheek to cheek	George Gershwin (1898–1937) arr. Graham Ross Irving Berlin (1888–1989) arr. Jim Clements (b. 1983)

Programme note

Our programme this evening explores the music of heaven, and the journey to it. Spanning from soaring Renaissance masterpieces by Lobo, Schütz and Taverner to intimate close-harmony arrangements of Gershwin and Irving Berlin, we include some much-loved part-songs by Vaughan Williams, Pearsall and Sullivan, my own arrangement of *Abide with me*, and William Harris’s stunning evocation of Edmund Spenser’s image of heavenly beauty, *Faire is the heaven*.

Spaniard Alonso Lobo, respected as the equal of Tomás Luis de Victoria during his lifetime, set the funeral motet **Versa est in luctum** in a musical language that is detectably of a later generation than that of Victoria, even though he was seven years younger. The motet is pre-eminent at showing his beauty of the contrapuntal line, but without being afraid to show expression with some angular writing (‘in vocem flentium’, for example). The 1602 print of this six-voice motet described it as being composed for the memorial service of Philip II of Spain, held in 1598. Heinrich Schütz, born thirty years after Lobo, had brought the new Italian style of his teacher Gabrieli back to his native Germany, and was also influenced by the sixteenth century Flemish school. **Selig sind die Toten**, written for the festival of All Souls, is taken from his great collection of German polyphonic writing, the *Geistliche Chor-Musik*, published in Dresden in 1648. It contains contrasting passages of slow moving chordal writing (‘sie ruhen’, ‘they rest’) with more rhythmically incisive sections (‘und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach’, ‘their works follow them’).

Factum est silentium by Englishman Richard Dering sets the Benedictus Antiphon at Lauds on Michaelmas Day. Taken from his 1618 collection of *Cantica sacra*, the motet is scored for six voices, and offers much word-painting. The stillness of the opening chords vividly convey silence in heaven, interrupted by military rhythms depicting the Archangel Michael's battle with the dragon (the powers of darkness). A polyphonic layering of parts portrays the thousands of speaking voices ('milia milium'). **Dum transisset Sabbatum** is a setting of the third respond at Matins on Easter Day. John Taverner composed polyphony to adorn only the choral part of the chant, presented in notes of equal value, here in the baritone part. In doing this, he reversed the hitherto normal procedure for respond settings, perhaps reflecting the fact that at a richly-endowed foundation like Cardinal College (the former name of Christ Church, Oxford, where he was made the first Organist and Master of the Choristers by Cardinal Wolsey) the entire choral body was skilled in the singing of polyphony. The plainsong verse heard after the first polyphonic section describes the rising of the sun in the early morning when Mary Magdalene brought spices to anoint the Lord.

Funeral Ikos, by the 'other' John Tavener, was written in 1981 when the composer was 37. It is a serene setting of a text taken from the Orthodox service for the burial of priests. The words are consolatory in tone, though they do not minimise the reality of death, the gateway to Paradise. As with much of his choral writing, the musical language here has strong Russian influences, drawing parallels with Stravinsky but still remaining distinctively his own. Robert Ramsey graduated as a Bachelor of Music from the University of Cambridge in 1616, where he was organist of Trinity College from 1628 until 1644. The text of his extraordinary anthem **How are the mighty fallen** focuses on the lament over Jonathan, in which the king describes his friend as 'my brother'. Influenced by the emergent music of contemporary Italy, Ramsey treats the text in a highly affective manner; its sound world is far removed from the classicism of sacred liturgical music by his English contemporaries. His use of the English false relation is to extraordinarily modern expressive ends, such as the astonishingly sensuous 'my brother Jonathan'. The boldest gesture is reserved for the third section, where the words 'How are the mighty fallen' are reintroduced with an un-prepared major 7th chord – a startlingly daring dissonance for its time.

The canticles of Mary and Simeon (the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis respectively) are central to the Anglican liturgy, sung at nearly all Choral Evensong services. Icelandic composer Sigurður Sævarsson composed his setting of the **Magnificat** for me and the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, which we premièred in Cambridge in May 2018. The musical language is slow-moving and contemplative, with slowly evolving triads in a 3-time metre producing a serene and peaceful setting for four-part choir. Gustav Holst's unaccompanied **Nunc dimittis** setting was written in 1915 and remained in manuscript form until 1979 when a published edition appeared, revised by the composer's daughter, Imogen Holst. My first recording as Director of Music at Clare College was a disc of previously-unrecorded choral works by Imogen Holst, recorded in 2011, and which went on to be nominated for a *Gramophone Award*. This Nunc dimittis is scored for soprano and tenor soloists and unaccompanied eight-part choir, written for Richard Terry, then organist of Westminster Cathedral. It was first performed liturgically on Easter Sunday, 1915, after which it was totally forgotten. The first performance of the revised version was given by the BBC Singers in 1974. Holst begins with a slow layering of voices from bottom upwards, and goes on to explore an antiphonal exchange between the upper and lower voices, leading to a thrilling climax.

Herbert Howells's **I heard a voice from heaven** forms the sixth movement of his a cappella *Requiem*, composed in 1932. It sets the English version of the same Revelations text as Schütz's *Selig sind die Toten*, but is scored for larger forces. Howells later re-worked the movement to form part of his great *Hymnus Paradisi*, written after the death of his son Michael. A 17-year old Howells was sat in the audience for the première of Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* in Gloucester Cathedral in 1910, and was very moved by it. Eight years earlier, Vaughan Williams's **Rest** received its first performance at St James's Hall, London in May 1902, at what must have been one of the very first times that a work of his was heard in

public. The music attempts to emulate the Elizabethan madrigal – a cause in which Vaughan Williams was deeply interested, nurturing a life-long love of folk song.

Howard Skempton's reputation as a miniaturist is no better reflected than in his 1999 a cappella choral work **He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven**, a setting of Yeats' famous poem. It starts with simple diatonic harmony that fills out to a radiant C major throughout, with the choir divided into eight parts for a rich, sonorous texture. 'Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams', the poet remarks. Skempton's repetitions of this phrase appear as a kind of mantra, imbued with seemingly sacred overtones and a dream-like harmonic palette. William Henry Monk's famous hymn-tune *Eventide* was supplied for the original nineteenth-century hymnal *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, of which Monk was appointed musical editor in 1857. It was assigned to the text of Henry Francis Lyte's five-stanza **Abide with me**, a prayer to the Lord to stay close 'in life, in death'. It has become one of the most popular hymns, and is performed here in the arrangement I made for the Choir of Clare College in 2016.

Edward Elgar's choral elegy **They are at rest** was commissioned by Sir Walter Parratt for an anthem to be sung on the anniversary of Queen Victoria's death. It sets a text by Cardinal John Henry Newman, first performed at the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore in 1910. Sir William Harris trained at the Royal College of Music, where he became a professor in 1923. He conducted the Oxford Bach Choir for some years before embarking on almost three decades as Organist and Master of the Choristers of St George's Chapel, Windsor. He is remembered chiefly for his church and organ music of which the anthem **Faire is the heaven**, a setting for double choir of a poem by Edmund Spenser, is an outstanding example.

Lay a garland is a setting of a secular text from *The Maid's Tragedy* by the Renaissance playwright Francis Beaumont. In the play, the text is sung by one of the characters, Aspasia, when she realises that her betrothed has been forced into a marriage with the mistress of the king. Robert Pearsall sets the text for eight-part ensemble, developing the use of the suspension to exquisite lengths in this perfectly formed and mournful motet. The combination of Henry Fothergill Chorley and Arthur Sullivan may not resonate widely today, but it counted for much before the more familiar partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan took hold in the 1870s. Their 1868 publication **The long day closes** was a huge success – the work's rich harmonic palette, its sonorous scoring and contemplative reflection on death's hour satisfied both the market demand for popular secular choral compositions and prevailing vogue for decorous expressions of mourning and grief.

As we take to the heavenly skies, our programme finishes in America, where the Choir of Clare College maintains many close connections. Numerous musicians from Clare have gone on to take up musical positions there, and the Choir regularly tours to the USA – in the last six years under my direction we have given more than forty performances there across nearly twenty different States. George Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*, written in 1935, with lyrics by DuBose Heyward and Ira Gershwin, remains the only opera by an American composer firmly established in the standard repertory. Gershwin began composing the show's most memorable song, **Summertime**, in December 1933, and he knew a good thing when he heard it – the song appears twice in the opera's first act and reappears in the 2nd and 3rd acts as well. *Summertime* has gone on to become one of the most popular songs ever written. My choral arrangement of it received its first performance in 2016, in which one or two other summer-related songs get thrown into the mix. And so we finish in heaven itself: nobody really knows what kind of celestial resting place we might end up in, but if it's anything like the happiness that Irving Berlin achieves whilst dancing **Cheek to cheek** then we know we'll be in for a good time.

Graham Ross
© April 2019

Biographies

Alumni of the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge

Graham Ross, director

Since the founding of a mixed voice choir in 1972, the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge has gained an international reputation as one of the world's leading university choirs. In addition to its primary function of leading services three times a week in the College chapel, the Choir keeps an active schedule recording, broadcasting, and performing. Under the direction of Graham Ross, Director of Music since 2010, it has been praised for its consistently 'thrilling' and 'outstanding' performances worldwide. Recent engagements include Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE), Mozart's *Requiem* with the Manchester Camerata, Mahler's Symphony No. 8 and the world première of Alexander Raskatov's *Green Mass* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO), Fauré's *Requiem* with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, and concerts worldwide including Notre Dame Cathedral, Library of Congress, and Sydney Opera House. The Choir's 2018/19 schedule includes performances in Westminster Cathedral and St John's Smith Square, and overseas across the USA, Canada, Mexico, Spain, Netherlands and China.

Members of the Choir typically sing for the duration of their undergraduate degrees, and after graduating pursue a wide variety of careers across all sectors and disciplines, often combining these with a continued serious commitment to music making. Many go on to enjoy distinguished professional solo careers. Others sing in leading vocal ensembles such as the Monteverdi Choir, The Sixteen, Tenebrae, Polyphony, and the Tallis Scholars, whilst recent Organ Scholars have taken up positions at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. Many former Clare College Organ and Choral Scholars have established international reputations including Sir Roger Norrington, Ivor Bolton, Richard Egarr, John Rutter, Stephen Farr, Dominic Wheeler, Elin Manahan Thomas, Robin Ticciati and Nicholas Collon.

In 2018 sixteen alumni of the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge joined the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in a performance of Haydn's *Nelson Mass* for Wiltshire Music Club. In 2019 alumni make a return visit to Wiltshire, as well as performances in Iceland's Hallgrímskirkja and Santiago's Iglesia de San Martín Pinario as part of a collaboration with Tenebrae for Martin Randall Travel.

Graham Ross, conductor

Alice Halstead, soprano

Holly Holt, soprano

Henrietta Box, mezzo-soprano

Isaac Jarrett Barnham, countertenor

Laurence Booth-Clibborn, tenor

Alexander Porteous, tenor

Hugo Popplewell, baritone

Joshua Pacey, bass

Graham Ross | conductor



Graham Ross has established an exceptional reputation as a sought-after conductor and composer of a very broad range of repertoire. He is co-founder and Principal Conductor of The Dmitri Ensemble and Director of Music and Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, with whom his performances around the world and his extensive discography have earned consistently high praise. In demand as a regular guest conductor of other ensembles in the UK and abroad, recent collaborations have included London Mozart Players, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra and Aalborg Symfoniorkester. In the 2018/19 season he makes return invitations to Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Salomon Orchestra, Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra, Danish National Vocal Ensemble, and RCM Symphony Orchestra, conducts Britten's *War Requiem* in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Handel's *Saul* in Provence, makes his conducting debuts with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and gives concerts overseas in Canada, USA, Mexico, France, Spain, Italy, China, Denmark and the Netherlands.

At the age of 25 he made his *BBC Proms* and Glyndebourne debuts, with other opera work taking him to Jerusalem, London, Aldeburgh and Provence. He has conducted and recorded world premières of a wide spectrum of composers, including James MacMillan, Judith Bingham, Giles Swayne, Vaughan Williams, Imogen Holst, Nico Muhly, Brett Dean, Lydia Kakabadse and Matthew Martin. Since 2011 he has recorded exclusively for Harmonia Mundi USA, his latest recordings including J. S. Bach Reformation cantatas with the Choir of Clare College and Clare Baroque, and the Shostakovich/Barshai *Chamber Symphonies* with The Dmitri Ensemble.

As a composer commissions have included BBC Concert Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, National Youth Choir of Great Britain, Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra, O Duo, Park Lane Group, and the Solstice Quartet. As an amateur and through outreach work he has conducted projects in Tower Hamlets, Wigmore Hall, English National Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and overseas in Nigeria, Palestine, across Europe and the USA. He is Artistic Director of *Fringe in the Fen*, a music and arts festival in Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Support. He is a regular contributor on BBC Radio. He is Artistic Director of Singers Abroad, providing holiday singing courses for amateur singers.

He studied music at Clare College, Cambridge and conducting at the Royal College of Music, London. He held a conducting scholarship with the London Symphony Chorus, has served as assistant conductor for Vladimir Jurowski, Diego Masson, Sir Roger Norrington and Nicholas Collon, and acted as Chorus Master for Sir Colin Davis, Sir Mark Elder, Ivor Bolton, Edward Gardner, Richard Tognetti and Lars Ulrik Mortensen.

All photographs © Nick Rutter

Texts and translations

Versa est in luctum

[JOB 30: 31; 7: 16]

Versa est in luctum cithara mea,
et organum meum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.

*My harp is turned to mourning
and my organ into the voice of those that weep.
Spare me, Lord, for my days are nothing.*

Selig sind die Toten

[REVELATION 14: 13]

Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herren sterben,
von nun an.
Ja, der Geist spricht:
Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit,
und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit:
that they may rest from their labours;
and their works do follow them.*

~

Factum est silentium

[ANONYMOUS, BENEDICTUS ANTIPHON AT LAUDS ON MICHAELMAS DAY]

Factum est silentium in caelo, dum committeret
bellum draco cum Michaele Archangelo;
audita est vox millia milium dicentium:
salus, honor et virtus omnipotenti Deo.
Alleluia.

*There was silence in heaven, as the dragon joined battle
with the Archangel Michael;
a voice was heard, thousand upon thousandfold, saying:
salvation, honour and virtue to almighty God.
Alleluia.*

Dum transisset Sabbatum

[MARK XVI: 1, 2; THIRD RESPOND AT MATINS ON EASTER SUNDAY]

Dum transisset Sabbatum
Maria Magdalene et Maria Jacobi
et Salome emerunt aromata,
ut venientes ungerent Jesum.
Alleluia.
Et valde mane una Sabbatorum
veniunt ad monumentum,
orto iam sole;
ut venientes ungerent Jesum.
Alleluia.
Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto.
Alleluia.

*When the Sabbath was over
Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James
and Salome bought aromatic oils
intending to go and anoint Jesus.
Alleluia.
And very early on the first day of the week,
they came to the tomb,
just after sunrise;
they came intending to anoint Jesus.
Alleluia.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
Alleluia.*

~

Funeral Ikos

[ISABEL HAPGOOD (1851–1928), TRANSLATED FROM THE ORTHODOX SERVICE FOR THE BURIAL OF PRIESTS]

Why these bitter words of the dying, O brethren, which they utter as they go hence?

I am parted from my brethren.

All my friends do I abandon and go hence.

But whither I go, that understand I not, neither what shall become of me yonder;

only God who hath summoned me knoweth.

But make commemoration of me with the song: Alleluia.

But whither now go the souls?

How dwell they now together there?

This mystery have I desired to learn, but none can impart aright.

Do they call to mind their own people as we do them?

Or have they forgotten all those who mourn them and make the song: Alleluia.

We go forth on the path eternal, and as condemned, with downcast faces,

present ourselves before the only God eternal.

Where then is comeliness?

Where then is wealth?

Where then is the glory of this world?

There shall none of these things aid us, but only to say oft the psalm: Alleluia.

If thou hast shown mercy unto man, O man, that same mercy shall be shown thee there;

and if on an orphan thou hast shown compassion, the same shall there deliver thee from want.

If in this life the naked thou hast clothed, the same shall give thee shelter there, and sing the psalm:

Alleluia.

Youth and the beauty of the body fade at the hour of death, and the tongue then burneth fiercely,

and the parched throat is inflamed.

The beauty of the eyes is quenched then, the comeliness of the face all altered,

the shapeliness of the neck destroyed; and the other parts have become numb nor often say: Alleluia.

With ecstasy are we inflamed if we but hear that there is light eternal yonder;

that there is paradise, wherein every soul of righteous ones rejoiceth.

Let us all, also, enter into Christ, that all we may cry aloud thus unto God: Alleluia.

How are the mighty fallen

[2 SAMUEL 1: 25–27]

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle, O Jonathan.

Thou wast slain in thy high places.

O Jonathan, woe is me for thee, O Jonathan, my brother, very kind hast thou been to me.

Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war destroyed.

Magnificat

[LUKE 1: 46–55]

Magnificat anima mea Dominum:
et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam
me dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:
et sanctum nomen eius.
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies:
timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Deposuit potentes de sede:
et exaltavit humiles.
Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum:
recordatus misericordiae suae.
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros:
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Gloria Patri et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord:
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden:
for behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me:
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him:
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered
the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy
hath holpen his servant Israel:
As he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed, for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.*

Nunc dimittis

[LUKE 2: 29–32]

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace.
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum.
Lumen ad revelationem gentium,
et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat, nunc, et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.*

~

I heard a voice from heaven

[REVELATION 14: 13]

I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me:
‘Write; from henceforth
blessed are the dead which die in the
Lord’:
ev’n so, saith the Spirit;
for they rest from their labours.

Rest

[CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–94)]

O Earth lie heavily upon her eyes; seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth.
Lie close around her, leave no room for mirth with its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies, hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
of all that irked her from her hour of birth; with stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noon-day holdeth her, silence more musical than any song;
even her very heart hath ceased to stir; until the morning of Eternity her rest shall not begin nor end,
but be, and when she wakes she will not think it long.

~

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

[WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–1939)]

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
enwrought with gold 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.

Abide with me

[HENRY FRANCIS LYTE (1792–1847)]

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

~

They are at rest

[JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801–90)]

They are at rest;
we may not stir the heav'n of their repose
by rude invoking voice, or prayer address
in waywardness to those
who in the mountain grotts of Eden lie,
and hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.

And soothing sounds

blend with the neighb'ring waters as they glide;
posted along the haunted garden's bounds,
angelic forms abide,
echoing, as words of watch, o'er lawn and grove
the verses of that hymns
which Seraphs chant above.

Faire is the heaven

[EDMUND SPENSER (1552–99)]

Faire is the heaven where happy soules have place
in full enjoyment of felicitie;
Whence they do still behold the glorious face
of the Divine, Eternall Majestic;

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
which all with golden wings are overdight.
And those eternall burning Seraphins
which from their faces dart out fiery light;

Yet fairer than they both and much more bright
be the Angels and Archangels
which attend on God's owne person
without rest or end.

These then in faire each other farre excelling
as to the Highest they approach more neare,
yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling.

Fairer than all the rest which there appeare
though all their beauties joynd together were;
how then can mortal tongue hope to expresse
the image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

~

Lay a garland

[EDMUND SPENSER (1552–99)]

Lay a garland on her hearse of dismal yew.
Maidens, willow branches wear, say she died true.
Her love was false, but she was firm.
Upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

The long day closes

[HENRY FOTHERGILL CHORLEY (1808–72)]

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.

~

Summertime

[EDWIN DUBOSE HEYWARD (1885–1940)]

Summertime, and the livin' is easy,
fish are jumpin', and the cotton is high.
Oh, Your daddy's rich and your mamma's good lookin'
so hush little baby, don't you cry.

One of these mornings you're going to rise up singing,
then you'll spread your wings and you'll take to the sky.
But until that morning there's a'nothing can harm yo
with your daddy and mammy standing by.

Summertime, and the livin' is easy,
fish are jumpin', and the cotton is high.
Your daddy's rich and your mamma's good lookin'
so hush little baby, don't you cry.

Check to check

[IRVING BERLIN (1888–1989)]

Heaven, I'm in heaven,
and my heart beats so that I can hardly speak.
And I seem to find the happiness I seek
when we're out together dancing cheek to cheek.
Heaven, I'm in heaven,
and the cares that hung around me through the week
seem to vanish like a gambler's lucky streak
when we're out together dancing cheek to cheek.
Oh I love to climb a mountain
and reach the highest peak,
but it doesn't thrill me half as much
as dancing cheek to cheek.
Oh I love to go out fishing
in a river or a creek,
but I don't enjoy it half as much
as dancing cheek to cheek.
Oh darlin', won't you please dance with me?
I want my arms about you!
The charm about you will carry me through to heaven.
I'm in heaven!
And my heart beats so that I can hardly speak.
But I seem to find the happiness I seek
when we're out together dancing cheek to cheek!

Thanks to:

*Hallgrímskirkja, Sigurður Savarsson, Hörður Áskelsson, Inga Rós Ingólfssdóttir,
The Icelandic Ministry for Education, Science and Culture and the City of Reykjavík.
listvinafelag.is*