



Harvard University, The Memorial Church  
March 3, 2024

Harvard University Choir  
Edward Elwyn Jones, conductor  
David von Behren, organ and piano  
Veronica Li, clarinet  
Nicholas Tolle, Aaron Trant, and Michael Weinfeld-Zell, percussion

***Babylon*** (2017)

Music by Sarah Rimkus (b. 1990)  
Texts by the composer after various sources

1. A Stranger
2. Veni
3. Babylon
4. Mama
5. Home

***Songs to the Lord of Peace*** (2006)

Music by Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)  
Poetry by Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

1. Evening Prayer
2. I Have Called You
3. Be My Defender
4. There Is a Way to Glory

***The Big Picture*** (2016–17)

Music by Judith Weir (b. 1954)  
Texts by Henry VIII (*attrib.*), Wallace Stevens,  
Robert Frost, John Boyle O'Reilly, and Christina Rossetti

1. Green
2. Blue
3. Gold
4. Red, White
5. Colour

*This concert is made possible with the support of the Mary Reiss Nelson Memorial Concert Fund.*

## ***Babylon*** (2017)

Music by Sarah Rimkus (b. 1990)

American composer **Sarah Rimkus** (b. 1990) was born in Washington, D.C. and educated at the University of Southern California (BM) and the University of Aberdeen (MMus and PhD). Her principal teachers included Stephen Hartke, Morten Lauridsen, Phillip Cooke, and Paul Mealor. Rimkus's choral music has been particularly widely performed and commissioned in the USA, the United Kingdom, and continental Europe. She has received numerous awards, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, the ASCAP Foundation Leonard Bernstein Award, and SACRA/PROFANA's composition award in 2019. Rimkus's work—which also encompasses solo instrumental, chamber, and orchestral genres—is harmonically and melodically driven, with both a strong sense of emotion and intricacy of construction, and it often explores issues of communication and conflict.

### **Note by the composer:**

I have always been fascinated by travel and distances. I've moved homes a fair amount in my life, as have many of us, and often have the bulk of my creative ideas while moving from place to place in some way or another.

Much music throughout history has had a similar fascination—fitting for an art form that is so heavily based on movement through time, and of course drawing so necessarily on universal experiences.

This is even more apparent in American culture, a fragmented culture built by immigrants (voluntary and forced), where so much of our folk music carries themes of journeying and pilgrimage and the solitude and alienation felt along the way.

*Babylon* takes a selection of these American folk texts and fashions them into a new work that uses new, contemporary musical ways to show that movement and that solitude. They are supported by sacred texts which carry the same themes, many of which are particular texts, images and stories that have worked their way into American folk music and art as well as the collective cultural consciousness. My hope is that it uses these themes to create a new musical experience appropriate to their prevalence in the present day.

## Lyrics

### 1. A stranger.....

I  
I am  
I am a

I  
I am  
I am a  
I am a stranger here.

I am  
I am a  
I am a stranger everywhere.

O Lord  
O Lord I am  
O Lord I am a stranger here.

O Lord I am  
O Lord I am a stranger everywhere.

Look down,  
Look down that road  
Where you and I must go.  
Look down,  
Look down that long road  
Where you and I must go.

I  
I am  
I am a stranger here.  
I am a stranger everywhere.  
I would go home, Lord, but I am a stranger there.  
I would go home but I am a stranger there.  
I am a stranger there.

All you who walk by,  
All you who walk by on the road,

*Qui transitis per viam,  
All you who walk by  
on the road,*

*O vos omnes  
Qui transitis per viam,  
Attendite et videte:  
Si est dolor  
sicut dolor meus.*

2. **Veni**.....

Early in the morning the birds begin to sing,  
Early in the morning when the birds begin to sing,  
You can hear those hammers ring.

Come go,  
Come go along with me  
Some pleasures to see,  
To see.

Away  
Away we go,  
We go, we go.  
Over the hills to the valley below,  
To the valley below.

Rise and fly this morning,  
Come away with me.

*Veni sancte spiritus.*

I  
I am  
I am a  
I am afraid,  
I am afraid, I am afraid  
I am afraid you will lead me astray.

Come go along with me,  
For some pleasures to see.  
Early in the morning when the birds begin to sing,  
You can hear those hammers ring.

3. **Babylon**.....

By the waters of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.

*Super flumina Babylonis  
illic sedimus et flevimus,  
cum recordaremur Sion.*

There on the trees we hung our harps,  
For there our captors asked us for songs,  
Our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
They said, "Sing us the songs of Zion!"

How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?

If I forget you, *cum recordaremur Sion.*  
If I forget *illic sedimus et flevimus*  
If I *Super flumina Babylonis-*

4. **Mama**.....

Mama, make me a garment The Lord,  
And make it long and white and narrow. The Lord is my shepherd  
Mama, make me a garment I shall not want,  
And make it long and white and I shall not want.  
narrow. I shall not want.  
Mama.

My soul's gonna shine like a star; He makes me lie down,  
I'm bound to heaven when I die. lie down in green pastures,  
My soul's gonna shine like a star, green pastures.  
Down in the valley one day. *In pascuis herbarum aclinavit me.*

Mama, make me a garment He leads me  
And make it long and white and beside still waters,  
narrow. still waters.  
Little bird, little bird, *Super aquas refectionis enutrivit me.*  
Go through my window.

My soul's gonna shine like a star; Though I walk  
I'm bound to heaven when I die. *through the valley*  
I'm gonna lay down in that green grass and look up at the sky, of the shadow of  
Down in the valley one day. *Si ambulavero*  
*in valle mortis*

Little bird, little bird, if you see my mama  
Will you please tell her for me,  
Lord, to see that governor:  
Tell him to set me free.

I will fear no evil,  
For you are with me.

5. Home .....

Take this hammer, carry it to the captain,  
Tell him I'm gone, tell him I'm gone.

Take this hammer, carry it to the captain,  
Tell him I'm gone, tell him I'm gone.

If he asks you, "was I running?"  
Tell him I'm flying, tell him I'm flying.

I'm going to make these days I started,  
Then I'm going home, I'm going home.

For you are with me,  
For you are with me.

Look down that road  
Where you and I must go.  
Look down that road  
Where you and I must  
Go home.  
Go.

I  
I am  
I am a

Sources: Sequence for Pentecost, Responsary for Holy Saturday, Psalm 137, Psalm 23,  
American folk songs, collected by Alan and John Lomax

## ***Songs to the Lord of Peace* (2006)**

Music by Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

Poetry by Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer **Gwyneth Walker** (b. 1947) is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. She is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont before returning to live in her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut. A composer since age two, Gwyneth Walker has always placed great value on writing in a broad array of genres. More than 400 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, solo instruments, chorus, and solo voice have been created—all arising from the impetus of performers and collaboration with musicians. Over the decades, she has traveled throughout North America to attend performances of her works and to meet her musician colleagues. Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of New England. She was the recipient of the 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council and the 2018 “Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award” from Choral Arts New England. In 2020, her alma mater, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, presented her with the Hartt Alumni Award.

### **Note by the composer:**

The texts for these four songs are taken from a series of *Freedom Songs* which Thomas Merton wrote in 1966. These poems were created in response to a special request in connection with the Christian non-violent movement for Civil Rights. Thus, faith, equality and peace are the unifying themes in the songs.

The ordering of the texts and the creation of the musical settings have been formed with the intent of presenting a growth in the intensity of the message. From the quiet *Evening Prayer* to the powerful *There is a Way*, the songs span a variety of imagery and musical language. The prayer, the voice of faith and the affirmation of equality grow ever more insistent.

Images central to the various songs are:

*Evening Prayer* — the prayer rising “sweet as incense smoke”

*I Have Called You* — forceful, the voice of the Lord speaking “I have called you by your name. You belong to me.”

*Be my Defender* — growth in intensity from the quiet supplication “Lord, be my Defender” to the dramatic “Kneel and tremble in the night”

*There is a Way* - a triumphant march to glory!

Lines from the poem *There is a Way* encompass the inspiration behind the entire set of Songs to the Lord of Peace.

*There is a way to glory.*

*Love is this way to glory.*

*Riding on to Sion where the Lord of Peace rules in glory.*

### 1. Evening Prayer

Lord, receive my prayer  
Sweet as incense smoke  
Rising from my heart  
Full of care  
I lift up my hands  
In evening sacrifice  
Lord, receive my prayer.

When I meet the man  
On my way  
When he starts to curse  
And threatens me,  
Lord, guard my lips  
I will not reply  
Guide my steps in the night  
As I go my way.

Maybe he belongs  
To some other Lord  
Who is not so wise and good  
Maybe that is why those bones  
Like scattered in the road.

When I look to the right and left  
No one cares to know  
Who I am, where I go.

Hear my prayer  
I will trust in you  
If they set their traps  
On my way  
If they aim their guns at me  
You will guide my steps  
I will pass them by  
In the dark  
They will never see.

Lord, to you I raise  
Wide and bright  
Faith-filled eyes  
In the night  
You are my protection  
Bring me home.

And receive my prayer  
Sweet as incense smoke  
Rising from my heart  
Free of care.

### 2. I Have Called You

Do not be afraid  
O my people  
Do not be afraid  
Says the Lord:

I have called you  
By your name  
I am your Redeemer  
You belong to me.

When you cross the river  
I am there  
I am with you  
When your street's on fire  
Do not be afraid  
O my people  
You belong to me.

Bring my sons from afar  
Says the Savior  
Bring them from that dark country  
Bring them glad and free  
Says the Lord  
They belong to me.

Bring my songs and daughters  
From that far country  
From their house of bondage  
Set them free  
Bring them back in glory  
Home to me.

Do not be afraid  
O my people  
I Have called you by your name  
You belong to me.



### 3. Be My Defender

Lord, when there is no escape, be my Defender  
When they crowd around me, Lord  
Be my Defender,  
Steal me out of here,  
Have mercy Lord, show your power  
Steal me out of here,  
Be my Defender.

Man  
Crowding all around  
Why are you  
    So cold, so proud  
Why is your tongue so mean  
    Why is your hand  
    So quick to harm  
    Why are you like  
    A rattlesnake  
    So quick to strike?

Man  
Crowing all around  
You have children in your home  
You have looked for happiness  
    You have asked the Lord  
    For better days  
Kneel and tremble in the night  
Ask my Lord to change your heart  
Fear my Lord and learn the ways  
Of patience, love and sacrifice

Lord, when they all go by, riding high  
Looking down on me, be my Defender  
Be my Defender, Lord  
And my secret heart will know  
A sweeter joy, Lord, a sweeter joy  
For I'll walk alone  
With only you  
I'll like down to sleep in peace, in hope  
For though I cannot trust in Man  
I trust in you.

Lord, when they all go by  
Riding high  
Looking down on me  
Be my Defender,  
Lord, be my Defender.

### 4. There Is a Way to Glory

There is a way to glory  
Clear and straight  
but not for men of blood  
They shall not stray  
Upon my road  
Nor the unclean  
Whose hands have taken life:  
They shall not find this holy way  
To Jerusalem  
Where the Lord of peace  
Rules in glory.

Love is this way to glory  
Truth and Mercy  
No beast of prey  
Shall be there  
No angry wolf or bear  
By my highway  
Murder shall not stain  
That way with blood  
But forgiveness everywhere  
Shall teach my people how  
To go to glory.

Songs of love and joy  
Echo everywhere  
And the holy people  
Travels there  
Glad and free  
Forgiving and forgiven  
Riding on to Sion  
Where the Lord of Peace  
Their Defender, their Redeemer  
Rules in glory

# *The Big Picture* (2016–17)

Music by Judith Weir (b. 1954)

**Judith Weir** (b. 1954 to Scottish parents in Cambridge, England) studied composition with John Tavener, Robin Holloway, and Gunther Schuller. On leaving Cambridge University in 1976 she taught in England and Scotland, and in the mid-1990s became Associate Composer with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of Spitalfields Festival. She was a Visiting Professor at Princeton (2001) Harvard (2004) and Cardiff (2006-13) and in 2014 was appointed Master of the Queen's Music. Since Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died in September 2022, Weir is now Master of The King's Music. From 2015 to 2019 she was Associate Composer to the BBC Singers. Weir was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1995 Birthday Honours. She was promoted to Dame Commander (DBE) in the 2024 New Year Honours.

## Note by the composer:

*The Big Picture* was written to celebrate the completion of a major redevelopment and refurbishment to Aberdeen Art Gallery. Wishing to examine a subject important, in different ways, to both the visual arts and music, I decided to write about Colour.

Pursuing the relationship between music and colour to its logical conclusion, composers have often discussed whether musical tones and keys can be related to particular colours; the extreme form of this phenomenon is 'synaesthesia' where listeners experience musical sound visually, in colour. Although I have never sensed music this way, I realised after long reflection that I had certain clear ideas about certain keys 'belonging' to certain colours; and I have explored these personal perceptions in *The Big Picture*, a cantata for two choral groups and small instrumental ensemble, in five colour-themed movements, as follows:

**1. Green** is in E major. I hear this as a very bright key, with its multiple sharps, and see green as a bright, energetic colour. Probably the 'green' of this music is brighter than the holly described in its text "Green Groweth The Holly", written (reputedly) by King Henry VIII.

**2. Blue.** The D minor of this piece reminds me of a melancholy, dark blue. Wallace Stevens' poem *The Man with the Blue Guitar* (of which this movement is a setting of the first two stanzas only) is said to be inspired by Picasso's *The Old Guitarist*. Looking at some of the blues in that picture, the deep sombre ones, these are exactly the right hue for this music (!)

**3. Gold** is an atmosphere and an actual object as much as a colour, and for this setting of *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost, I invented a chord which I felt had a particularly strong, metallic brightness, a combination of G and D majors, which remains in the air as a haze into which the poem disappears and reappears.

**4. Red, White** is a setting of a love poem by the 19th century Irish poet and activist, John Boyle O'Reilly. The basic tune to which the poem is sung hints at another red-referencing love song, by Robert Burns. In my mind the richer the red (shading towards purple) the more flats in the key signature, and this movement is in the very flat key of D flat major. White, meanwhile, is suggested by an absence of musical tone; the 'white' sections of this movement are whispered or hissed.

**5. Colour.** Christina Rossetti's poem moves swiftly through a band of different colours approximating somewhat to those in the visible spectrum. The recital of colours gave me the chance to revisit keycolours from the previous movements, but in the order Rossetti lists them, resulting in some sudden and strange modulations. The final half-minute or so allows all the colours to be 'heard' at once in a giant, extended chord.

### 1. Green

Green groweth the holly,  
So doth the ivy.  
Though winter blasts blow never so high,  
Green groweth the holly.

As the holly groweth green  
And never changeth hue,  
So I am, ever hath been,  
Unto my lady true.

As the holly groweth green  
With ivy all alone  
When flowers cannot be seen  
And greenwood leaves be gone,

Now unto my lady  
Promise to her I make  
From all other only  
To her I me betake.

Adieu, mine own lady,  
Adieu, my special  
Who hath my heart truly  
Be sure, and ever shall.

*(Green Groweth the Holly – attrib. King Henry VIII)*

### 2. Blue

I  
The man bent over his guitar,  
[A shearsman of sorts.] The day was green.  
They said, "You have a blue guitar,  
You do not play things as they are."  
The man replied, "Things as they are  
Are changed upon the blue guitar."  
And they said then, "But play, you must,  
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,  
A tune upon the blue guitar  
Of things exactly as they are."

II  
I cannot bring a world quite round,  
Although I patch it as I can.  
I sing a hero's head, large eye  
And bearded bronze, but not a man,  
Although I patch him as I can  
And reach through him almost to man.  
If to serenade almost to man  
Is to miss, by that, things as they are,  
Say it is the serenade  
Of a man that plays a blue guitar.

*(The Man with the Blue Guitar —  
Wallace Stevens; stanzas 1-2 only)*

### 3. Gold

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

*(Nothing Gold Can Stay — Robert Frost)*

### 4. Red, White

The red rose whispers of passion.  
And the white rose breathes of love;  
Oh, the red rose is a falcon,  
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud,  
With a flush on its petal tips;  
For the love that is purest and sweetest  
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

*(A White Rose — John Boyle O'Reilly)*

### 5. Colour

What is pink? a rose is pink  
By a fountain's brink.  
What is red? a poppy's red  
In its barley bed.  
What is blue? the sky is blue  
Where the clouds float thro'.  
What is white? a swan is white  
Sailing in the light.  
What is yellow? pears are yellow,  
Rich and ripe and mellow.  
What is green? the grass is green,  
With small flowers (in) between.  
What is violet? clouds are violet  
In the summer twilight.  
What is orange? Why, an orange,  
Just an orange !

*(Colour — Christina Rossetti)*

## Harvard University Choir

Edward Elwyn Jones, Gund University Organist and Choirmaster  
David von Behren, Assistant University Organist and Choirmaster  
Carson Cooman, Research Associate in Music and Composer in Residence  
Soren Choi and Ari Cheriyan, Choir Secretaries  
Tara Goetzloe, Social Secretary  
Frank Kelley, Voice Teacher

Soprano: Elizabeth Bennett, Leyna Blume, Tara Guetzloe, Carolyn Hao, *Olympia Hatzilambrou*, Hanabi Ito, *Isabella Meyer*, *Nicole Newell*, Caitlin Paul, Lara Tan Rui Qi, *Akhila Yalvigi*, Peggy Yin, Lea Wang

Alto: Katie Burstein, *Ari Cheriyan*, *Maliya Ellis*, *Sonja Johnson-Yu*, Julia Kim, *Sophia Lerebours*, Katherine McPhie, Kiese Nanor, Julia Paolillo, Shiva Ramkumar, Roseanne Strategos, Angela Wu

Tenor: *Fahim Ahmed*, *Jonathan Caron*, *Dhruv Goel*, Sam Lyczkowski, *Luis Pabón Rico*, Sebastian Rojas, Ian Svetkey, AJ Yi, Livingston Zug

Bass: *Lucas Amory*, *Chung Hon Michael Cheng*, *Soren Choi*, *Henrique Neves*, Christopher Ong, *John Burton Rogers III*, Moritz von Brescius, Jordan Woods

*Italics denote members of the Ferris Choral Fellows.*

For over 180 years the **Harvard University Choir** has provided a unique opportunity for student singers to perform choral literature at the highest level, both in concert and during the services of the Memorial Church. Its program of daily choral services, broadcasts, tours, commissions, and recordings make it one of the premier college chapel ensembles in the United States, and each year the choir presents America's longest-running Christmas Carol Services to packed congregations. Highlights of recent seasons include concert performances of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and *Vespers*, Haydn's *The Creation*, J. S. Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Mass in B minor*, C. P. E. Bach's *Die Israeliten in der Wüste*, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Handel's *Athalia*, *Saul*, and *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Mass in C minor* (in completions by Harvard Professor Robert Levin), Roxanna Panufnik's *Westminster Mass*, Alice Parker's *Melodious Accord*, Stephen Paulus's *The Three Hermits*, and Benjamin Britten's *St. Nicolas*. Committed to the presentation of new music, the choir has premiered works by today's most prominent composers, including David Conte, Mark Miller, Tarik O'Regan, Alice Parker, Daniel Pinkham, Craig Phillips, John Rutter, and Gwyneth Walker.

**Edward Elwyn Jones** is the Gund University Organist and Choirmaster at Harvard University, a post he has held since 2003. Mr. Jones directs the music program in the Memorial Church in the midst of Harvard Yard and leads the 180-year old Harvard University Choir in its daily choral services, broadcasts, tours, commissions, and recordings. Mr. Jones is also Music Director of the Harvard Radcliffe Chorus, the Lowell House Opera (New England's longest-running opera company), and is a frequent collaborator with Yale's Schola Cantorum. As a conductor, he has guest conducted with such organizations as Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Grand Harmonie, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, Boston Camerata, Emmanuel Music (Boston), Longwood Symphony Orchestra, and the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra. He has led opera productions with Enigma Chamber Opera, Iceland's Reykjavik Summer Opera Festival, New England's Intermezzo Opera, Lowell House Opera, and the Harvard Early Music Society. Mr. Jones has worked alongside William Christie, Christopher Hogwood, Nicholas McGegan, and Gil Rose, and has served as continuo player and Assistant Conductor to Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists.

During his time at Harvard, Mr. Jones has overseen the publication of a new university hymnal and the installation of two new pipe organs in the Memorial Church, and has commissioned works from some of America's most prominent contemporary composers, including Daniel Pinkham, Alice Parker, and David Conte. A native of Wales, Mr. Jones studied music at Cambridge University, where he was Organ Scholar of Emmanuel College, and served as conductor of three university orchestras. He received the Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting from Mannes College of Music in New York City, where he was the recipient of the Felix Salzer Memorial Award.