

The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Music Notes for November 12, 2023

This morning's service of remembrance and commemoration begins in the Memorial Room, whose centerpiece *Sacrifice*—by the American sculptor and author Malvina Hoffman—pays tribute to Harvard's First World War dead. Antiquarian bookseller, literary translator, and composer Simon Beattie's *A Remembrance* (2017) is dedicated to the memory of Private Sydney James Lacey, who died on July 19, 1916, in the Battle of Fromelles on the Western Front, one of ca. 5000 soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force to die that day.

The flow of men four years before turns
Trickle
Coming back
To town and village
Lives worn thin
With worry
Loved ones wait.

Strange arrivals these,
These boys brought up too soon
To witness horror there, now
Coming back
To town and village, where
Life wears on.
Their fate:

Man memorials.
Grey faces,
Grave looks
For the living.
Grey stone,
Graven names
For the dead.

Simon Beattie, 2014

Sir Edward Bairstow was appointed organist of York Minster in 1913, a post he held until his death; in addition, he became Professor of Music at Durham University in 1929, where his pupils included Gerald Finzi and Francis Jackson. *Blessed City, Heavenly Salem* is one of Bairstow's best-known works and sets words from the seventh-century hymn *Urbs beata Hierusalem* translated by the Anglican priest and

scholar John Mason Neale. The composer bases the work on the plainsong melody found in the thirteenth-century Nevers Manuscript: the melody appears in a variety of different guises throughout the work, in which the organ plays an important and prominent role.

Blessed city, heavenly Salem,
Vision dear of peace and love,
Who of living stones art builded
In the height of heaven above,
And by angel hands apparelled,
As a bride doth earthward move.

Out of heaven from God descending,
New and ready to be wed
To thy Lord, whose love espoused thee,
Fair adorned shalt thou be led;
All thy gates and all thy bulwarks
Of pure gold are fashioned.

Bright thy gates of pearl are shining,
They are open evermore;
And, their well-earned rest attaining,
Thither faithful souls do soar,
Who for Christ's dear name in this world
Pain and tribulation bore.

Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the heavenly architect.
Nevermore to leave the temple,
Which with them the Lord hath decked.

To this temple, where we call thee,
Come, O Lord of hosts, today;
With thy wonted loving kindness,
Hear thy servants as they pray;
And thy fullest benediction
Shed within its walls away. Amen.

Anonymous Latin 7th cent., English translation John Mason Neale (1818–1866)

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford studied at Cambridge University, and also in Leipzig and Berlin, where he was a pupil of Carl Reinecke: while in Germany, he became an ardent devotee of the music of Johannes Brahms, whose influence is strongly heard throughout Stanford's oeuvre. Stanford was later the organist of Trinity College, Cambridge, before moving to London as the first professor of composition at the new Royal College of Music, where his notable students included Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, and Ralph Vaughan Williams. His contribution to the revival of Anglican Church music at the end of the nineteenth century is unparalleled. Of all Stanford's motets and anthems, the *Three Latin Motets* are the most regularly sung, and were written as graces to be performed before meals on feast days in the hall of Trinity College. "Beati quorum via" is the lyrical third motet, which explores the various textural combinations of a six-part choir.

Beati quorum via integra est: Qui ambulant in lege Domini.

Blessed are those whose way is blameless: Who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalm 119:1

George Thalben-Ball was born in Australia but spent almost his whole life in England, where is remembered for his nearly 60 years as organist of London's Temple Church. *Elegy* is his best-known organ work: it originated as an improvisation that he played at the end of a live BBC daily religious service during World War II, when the service finished a couple of minutes earlier than expected. After a flood of calls from listeners inquiring as to the name of the work, Thalben-Ball wrote down the improvisation for publication. Composer in residence Carson Cooman's *Remembering* was commissioned by Bates College for the renaming of its chapel to the memory of the Reverend Professor Peter J. Gomes, and takes as its theme the latter's hymn tune *Armistice*.