



WILLOW CONSORT DIRECTED BY DANNY PURTELL

CONVIVUM
RECORDS

THE
ROAD HOME
CHORAL MUSIC FROM AMERICA

Tracklist

1 Deep River

Spiritual, arranged by Gerre Hancock (1934-2012)

Text: Traditional

2 Soar Away

Composed by Carter Sligh (1991-)

Text: Alfred Marcus Cragle (1884-1968)

Soloists: Georgie Gulliver, Rosie Parker, Hugh Beckwith, Timothy Burt

3 I Am

Composed by Dominick DiOrio (1984-)

Text: Mary Elizabeth Frye (1905-2004)

Soloist: Georgie Gulliver

4 The Road Home

Composed by Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

Text: Michael Dennis Browne (1940-)

Soloist: Brianna Louwen

5 Were You There

Spiritual, arranged by Norman Luboff (1917-1987)

Text: Traditional

6 There Will Be Rest

Composed by Frank Ticheli (1958-)

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Seven Last Words

Composed by Bern Herbolzheimer (1948-2016)

7 Father, forgive them

Text: Luke 23:34

8 Amen dico tibi

Text: Luke 23:43

Soloist: Brianna Louwen

9 Mulier, ecce filius tuus

Text: John 19:26-27

10 Eli, lama sabatani?

Text: Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34

11 I thirst

Text: John 19:28

Soloist: Oliver Hooper

12 Consummatus est

Text: John 19:30

13 Father, into thy hands

Text: Luke 23:46

Programme Note

In recent years the choral music of America has become increasingly popular. 'The Road Home' presents a small survey of some of the lesser-known gems of the repertoire.

Gerre Hancock is most famous for his work as Organist and Master of the choristers at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York. Hancock's beautiful and harmonically rich arrangement of 'Deep River' has the true feel of an ebbing and flowing river. The spiritual itself offers advice to slaves who wish to escape from their masters by the river, which will wash away their scent.

Carter Sligh, based in Washington DC, sang with Willow Consort from 2014-15 whilst studying at The University of York. 'Soar Away' takes its inspiration from a style of singing known as 'Sacred Harp'. The name is derived from a tune book printed in shape notes. There are four shapes, each with a connected syllable, fa, sol, la and mi. These allowed non-music readers to learn the harmonies for full congregational singing. The idea behind 'Soar Away' is a group of singers in a church up in the mountains, and

everything other than the theme directly lifted from the hymnbook is echoes, bouncing off the mountains.

'I Am', a setting of the poem 'Do not stand at my grave and weep', begins placidly, taking the refrain of "I Am" as a mantra for existence. Dominick DiOrio's use of a dramatic soprano solo is both a musical and theatrical choice, with the soloist communicating from beyond death to those still alive. The act of "being" is here an act of defiance, with life triumphing over the grave.

'Were You There' is a tender and beautiful hymn that dwells on the crucifixion. In this luscious arrangement by Norman Luboff, the simple homophonic setting really allows the listener to focus in on the words.

Frank Ticheli's 'There Will Be Rest' was written for friends whose child had died. It sets a hauntingly beautiful poem by Sara Teasdale, one of America's greatest female poets. Teasdale took her own life at the age of just forty-eight. Ticheli writes in the front of the score 'Many of her poems address the pain that tormented her spirit, but to the

end she seemed to draw strength and hope from the stars and their permanent radiance'. 'There Will Be Rest', one of her last poems, is a perfect summary of her lifelong concern for the stars and their ancient promise of peace. This choral setting is designed to capture the poem's purity of spirit and delicate lyricism.'

We have chosen to end the recording with Bern Herbolzheimer's devastating setting of 'Seven Last Words' - a piece which Willow Consort was lucky enough to give the UK premiere of in 2016, shortly after Bern's death. The piece uses only the words of Christ without their specific context from a composite of the four Gospel records. Herbolzheimer uses a combination of Latin and English allowing him to concentrate specifically on the words and to repeat them with great freedom. The music is exquisitely crafted and there is very careful layering of parts, which rise with increasing intensity and then fade back into silence. We are able to hear the full range of emotion in the human voice.

We would like to dedicate our CD to the memory of Bern, and we are delighted to have recorded his music. Borrowing words from the final movement of 'Seven Last

Words' we offer this tribute to Bern: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Danny Purtell





Texts and translations

1 Deep River

Deep river,
My home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

Deep river,
My heart is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, don't you want to go
To that Gospel feast,
That Promised Land
Where all is peace?

Deep river, Lord,
I want to cross over into campground.

2 Soar Away

Above the sky
I want a sober mind,
An all-sustaining eye,
To see my God above,

And to the heavens fly.
I'd soar away above the sky,
I'd fly to see my God above.
I want a Godly fear,
A quick, discerning eye,
That looks to Thee, my God,
And sees the tempter fly.
Text: Alfred Marcus Cragle (1884-1968)

3 I Am

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush.
I am the quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.
Text: Mary Elizabeth Frye (1905-2004) alt.

4 The Road Home

Tell me, where is the road
I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost,
So long ago?
All these years I have wandered,
Oh, when will I know
There's a way, there's a road
That will lead me home?

After wind, after rain,
When the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream
In the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling
From far away,
There's a voice I can hear
That will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me,
Come away, is the call,
With the love in your heart
As the only song;
There is no such beauty
As where you belong:
Rise up, follow me,
I will lead you home.

Text: Michael Dennis Browne (1940-)

5 Were You There

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when
they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when
they laid Him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me
to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when
they laid Him in the tomb?

6 There Will Be Rest

There will be rest, and sure stars shining
Over the roof-tops crowned with snow,
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
The music of stillness holy and low.

I will make this world of my devising
Out of a dream in my lonely mind.
I shall find the crystal of peace, - above me
Stars I shall find.

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Seven Last Words

7 Father, forgive them

Pater, dimitte illis,
non enim sciunt quid faciunt.

*Father, forgive them;
for they know not what they do.*

8 Amen dico tibi

Amen dico tibi
hodie mecum eris in paradiso.
*Truly, I say to you,
today you will be with me in paradise.*

9 Mulier, ecce filius tuus

Mulier, ecce filius tuus,
Et tu, ecce mater tua!
*Woman, behold you son,
and you, behold your mother!*

10 Eli, lama sabatani?

Deus meus,
Ut quid me dereliquisti?
Eli, lama sabatani?
*God, my God,
Why hast thou forsaken me?*

11 I thirst

Sitio.
I thirst.

12 Consummatum est

Consummatum est!
It is finished!

13 Father, into thy hands

Pater in manus tuas
commendo spiritum meum.
*Father, into thy hands
I commend my spirit.*

Biographies

Willow Consort

Since its formation in 2014, Willow Consort has been praised for its imaginative programming and expressive performances, and Willow Consort is committed to sharing neglected repertoire to a wide audience in the UK and further afield.

As well as being made up of the best young singers in the UK, Willow Consort regularly invites guest singers from around the world to join its ranks. Recent collaborations have included singers from Australia, America, France and Norway. Future plans include a return to our programmes of Russian sacred music and a new programme of lesser-known English Renaissance masterpieces for low voices.

Danny Purtell

Danny Purtell is an English conductor, singer and composer based in Denmark. He graduated from the University of York in 2015 with a first-class BA in Music.

Danny was the inaugural recipient of the Stile Antico Foundation Bursary and works regularly with some of the best ensembles in Europe including: I Fagiolini (Robert Hollingworth), Ars Nova Copenhagen (Paul Hillier), Mogens Dahl Kammerkor (Mogens Dahl), Christians IV Vokalensemble (Ruben Munk).

The Road Home



Soprano

Amandine Bontemps
Ellie Bray
Georgie Gulliver (2, 3)*
Brianna Louwen (4, 8)*
Claire Ward

Alto

Anya Chomacki
Katie Jeffries-Harris
Rosie Parker (2)*
Sarah Lucy Penny

Tenor

Hugh Beckwith (2)*
Thomas Brooke
Oliver Clarke
Oliver Hooper (11)*

Bass

Timothy Burt (2)*
George Clarke
Nathan Harrison
Thomas Lowen
George Smith

**Solo performances*



Recording Venue

St Thomas with St Maurice
Church, York. 21/23.07.17

Director of Music

Danny Purtell

Engineer

Ada Khan

Producer

Andrew King

Creative Designer

Mike Cooter

Executive Producer

Adrian Green



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