



CONVIVIAM  
RECORDS

# As We Are *Oratorio by Carson Cooman & Euan Tait* Changed

*Performed by* The Choir of Royal Holloway,  
London Mozart Players, Sarah Fox & Robert Murray  
*Directed by* Rupert Gough

# As We Are Changed

*Oratorio for soprano and tenor soloists,  
SATB chorus, and chamber orchestra.*

*Music by Carson Cooman (b. 1982), libretto by Euan Tait (b. 1968).*

## TRACKLIST

### Part One: Collisions

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 1  | Collisions . . . . .                            | 3.41 |
| 2  | Two souls on a far planet . . .                 | 6.58 |
| 3  | All the horses of the<br>world vanish . . . . . | 2.39 |
| 4  | All of me. . . . .                              | 1.56 |
| 5  | Receiving his soul . . . . .                    | 2.10 |
| 6  | Lullaby . . . . .                               | 5.14 |
| 7  | What I was (1) . . . . .                        | 5.03 |
| 8  | The ignored . . . . .                           | 1.26 |
| 9  | What I was (2) . . . . .                        | 3.19 |
| 10 | Cradle song for a . . . . .<br>young adult      | 5.53 |

### Part Two: Song of My Music

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | My music began . . . . .                            | 2.26 |
| 12 | The creation of a life . . . . .                    | 1.33 |
| 13 | Birth . . . . .                                     | 2.38 |
| 14 | Lion, lioness . . . . .                             | 1.26 |
| 15 | Creation of the world . . . . .<br>through birdsong | 2.08 |
| 16 | Song for musicians . . . . .                        | 2.10 |

### Part Three: Songs of Transformations

- |    |                          |      |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 17 | No home . . . . .        | 4.38 |
| 18 | A living music . . . . . | 4.11 |
| 19 | Soul seascape . . . . .  | 3.27 |
| 20 | A human music. . . . .   | 4.19 |

*Recorded at St. Barnabas Church,  
London, 17 & 18 September, 2020*

## SYNOPSIS

Our world and our lives are transformational and in constant transformation, and this work is the music of those transformations.

The earth we live on does not stay still but evolves and changes; our lives are changed through our own personal struggles, through meetings with those whose difference from us becomes a teacher, with sudden catalytic events, and from the daily, determined creativity of love working and spreading outwards from our humanity.

### PART ONE: COLLISIONS

The work begins with a great cry, worlds and lives in the process of creation and destruction; a creation and recreation myth, that everything is made from a great cry of anguish as much as a creative command. When human beings love, they are utterly changed, sometimes even broken by that love; loving another person means that we meet and are changed by their life story and their cry of pain — in

the journey of a human relationship, human lives and ways of thinking and being are remade. The chorus sings for the great catalytic cries of all human beings, which are heard as far off yet powerful sounds, to which we are drawn in compassion — to answer and try to heal. Yet it is true that our pain can either become a source of compassion for others — or a cause of further bitterness and pain.

The two soloists represent two young souls lost from our shared lives, the ending of their life-journey ambiguous, mysterious, hinted at. They are both familiar people yet completely unknown — troubled, confusing to us, the mystery of people who fail to fit in and whose difference can stir anger, violence and prejudice in others. Yet their humanity is emerging into the new — the new planet a metaphor for their transformed existence. The soloists sing of their stories, and the movement ends with a tender song of remembrance: love's determined, fierce, compassionate response to them.

## PART TWO: SONG OF MY MUSIC

The music becomes wild with rejoicing life and is the music of the creativity of our humanity, of our vividly living world, of seascapes, creatures, erupting into life through the gift of music, of the creation of human souls and the world through music.

## PART THREE: SONGS OF TRANSFORMATION

The final part is the music of our personal and shared transformations. We stand on the edge of the new always, our lives a creative offering, constantly renewed in love, constantly open to where the cries of pain from our fellow human beings take us. Who is calling out to me?

Where shall I meet you? Our encounters with music always change us, for music is a powerful creative force, and we are constantly struggling, yet also changed and transformed.



Euan Tait

*Commissioned by and dedicated to  
the Commonwealth Choral  
(Boston, Massachusetts)  
in celebration of David Carrier's  
40th anniversary as  
artistic director, 2019–20*

## LIBRETTO

### PART ONE: COLLISIONS

#### 1 Collisions

Cries  
of pain  
spark life  
as feral fire,  
the crush  
and burst  
of rock  
accretes.

We are remade  
when we break:  
our earth shakes  
centrifugal, our cries  
tear down trees,  
wrench the land  
open, squall  
the waters,  
fracture the seed,  
make new, life  
from broken days.

We  
are all shatterings,  
our lives

made from each other,  
spinning  
towards another,  
our stories collisions,  
our pain  
our compassion  
or destruction.

#### 2 Two souls on a far planet

What you were is over. You  
are utterly changed; you have left us.

You cannot sing now as you used to;  
your music has shifted, dissolved,

remade. You are on a new planet,  
your life renewed in a different direction,

for this is not the earth you expected,  
and you are not the same:

here, you are the fall of a methane rain,  
an infinitely slow falling

onto a crystalline soil  
delicate as glass made from ice;

tears are the great seas here, sing  
the whisper-breezes of this  
strange world.

Now, my brother, my sister,  
beloved, belonging, yet unknown,

you are elsewhere, far out of sight  
of those who still love you,

you are the unexplored souls,  
but here, in this distant place at last

you've met something hidden  
in your lost lives,  
your greatest forgotten hunger.

### 3 All the horses of the world vanish

The day I was lost, my cries  
disturbed all horses of the world.  
I fell in their fields, bleeding,  
my pain buzzing about my head,  
and something in my invisible cries  
terrified all the herds. Their breath  
reared, the frost splintered  
as they turned the grass  
to a thunder of breaking glass

and hoof-beats, wakened voices,  
then all of them leapt into the air,  
as if the sky were a vast aerial ocean  
and they were escaping; all those  
who loved me and searched for me  
knew the horses had gone,  
had left us all.

### 4 All of me

You haven't heard  
my story, not this,

under the surface,  
the molten sea

of what I was,  
of all I've become.

### 5 Receiving his soul

I am already gliding  
across the surface of another planet,  
weightless here, I can never  
set foot or root in this soil:

I am held in the broken fingers  
of love that cannot hold me; none  
has ever condemned me here,

I flee from the place  
I fell; soil and flesh  
cry deep wounds.

I am gone from you.  
I am exo-planet.  
I am new.

### 6 Lullaby

They, brother and sister broken,  
like the first children awoken here,  
born into this other world, held  
in the web of a shattered love,  
in love stripped naked, confused  
by their leaving, but here, breaking  
into an unknown music.

Here, their pain remains,  
aches, embedded in us;  
we hold the rage of our loss,  
our grief sung like this;  
in us great waves form,  
gather, and do not break.

### 7 What I was (1)

I was not there,  
among you, ever.

I remember what I was:  
I was always bird, rising  
from my room, troubling  
the trees as I passed,  
leaving my brothers  
crying out for me:  
"who are you?"

I was always lost,  
teachers' and parents' despair  
at how little I achieved,  
what I failed to do. My heart  
echoes still with their fear.

At night,  
during the slow rest of time,  
I would watch ceaselessly  
for whatever it was  
to come to me,  
whomever it was  
who would meet me  
and say, welcome, my sister.  
Whoever it was  
would never come.

I was bird.  
I cried: who will hear me,  
who answer me?  
The trees stirred

with the watching,  
pacing creatures.  
I heard the small panics  
of my brothers' sleep.  
I walked out  
into the winter fields at dawn,  
then lifted my wings  
from the silent earth.

### 8 The ignored

What you guessed in silence then  
has become a life-splitting cry

ejected from their memory,  
crowding the torn sky.

### 9 What I was (2)

It was the last hours before dawn,  
the last cries of the partying young  
before first light. I closed the bar,  
brought the shutters down, left.  
My shift was done. I raced  
like a relieved, escaped gazelle  
into the woods I'd always known  
and played in since I was a child,  
hide and seek and gone among  
the purr and roar of the beasts.

But now, the taste of the air sweet  
and cold, behind me, sudden  
angry cries: "We know and hate  
who you are. You will not live  
among us," and then a flash  
of terrible light inside my head,  
and my whole body tore,  
cried out, and I fell bleeding,  
soil and saliva, holding in  
my last unanswered words.

### 10 Cradle song for a young adult

My beloved child, let me at least  
be this for you, holding your spirit  
at the birth of my mourning  
in the eggshell of my music.

My beloved child, let me at least  
cradle your wounded hands  
in the broken cup of my fingers:  
for touch is love, surviving.  
My beloved child, let me wash  
your being in these tears, until  
you know how fully you are loved  
and my rivers are not drought.

My beloved child, my tendon love  
is flesh-body, is thread-snapped,

but you are here, you stand  
at my side, your body as rain,

and I am softly calling:  
be loved, be loved, be loved.

## PART TWO: SONG OF MY MUSIC

### 11 My music began

My music began  
when the sea played with me,  
when I swam out and I looked down  
from my fragile boat of skin  
into the vivid deep,  
and seabirds cried above  
and wouldn't be silent,  
when the sea turned to fire  
in the utter stillness of sunset.  
The sea is a child  
and knows my heart;  
the sea is the heart of me.

### 12 The creation of a life

Music's heart, restless with love,  
searches the void and calls:

My children, come; larval songs,  
majesty of fires, flare into life!

And we were born as music, scattering  
our many voices and dances

into the world; the music in us  
enrages and renews lives.

We are troubled music;  
our longings and child cries

create the wind-howl world,  
love's sea bellow and roar.

### 13 Birth

Before I was born,  
I was not child, but music,

I began to sing in the womb;  
my mother's blood heard me,  
caught the fire of me: her voice,  
her music, drew me into the world.

### 14 Lion, lioness

The pride of the world gathers:  
we are the wild, world sweeping fire  
of lion, lioness roars: this is our music,  
the music we fought to find;  
this is love, feral, persistent.

### **15 Creation of the world through birdsong**

When music created life, first  
music created the birds  
to sing us into life,  
counterpoints  
of wren, finch, oriole,  
grosbeaks and tanagers;

their music sang our flesh  
into rhythms of blood,  
melodies and dances  
that cannot be finished, ever,

for our song thunders  
through our days, breaking  
river banks, fixed courses.

### **16 Song for musicians**

Welcome to all who sing on the rapids,  
those who call through music's rivers  
to the unheard ache in the depths  
of fear-thunder hearts.

In fizzing, white-water beings  
of voices, a constant singing;  
our hearts hear, resonate  
with light's riotous yes.

## **PART THREE: SONGS OF TRANSFORMATION**

### **17 No home**

You come here, expecting home,  
but there is no journey home.  
Music has changed you.  
Live, be unfamiliar.

You are listeners, witnesses,  
flocks of souls alighting  
in this place where your heart,  
has rested, heard,  
yet is always restless,  
always on the edge of flight.

Who you are  
changes the lives you touch.  
You learn and teach love.  
Here is the perch of the soul,  
your resting place, yet here  
you wait on the edge  
of your transformation.

### **18 A living music**

Music, like breath, infuses this place,  
and, like breathing, you won't know  
it's changed

until the change is done: stone  
no longer stone,  
but note-shimmer, a water wall  
that pours

from the windows, from the  
first racing life  
that begins to sing here, brass-flash  
of light,

the violin's high bird cry, the  
doublebass growl  
in the belly of the human,  
the harp itself

the nearest music comes to water's  
own voice.  
All of you, caught up in these lives as  
they change

to a rapid river: singer, see the story  
your singing  
will unfold. Watch, child of music,  
your becoming,

here, and roads beyond. See the life  
you carry  
pour into the stone. You will not  
leave quietly.

### **19 Soul seascape**

No warning: the storm in me  
returned, and I knew again  
the old familiar, my soul-struggle,  
the oncoming waves rising  
high, alive in my blood.

### **20 A human music**

Friends, listen:  
you are unbroken music.

Listen, remember,  
you are active, fervent laughter,

the natural music  
of love, speaking to silence, or fear.

In your being, music  
becomes the sound of a long healing,

yours perhaps,  
or someone your searching love reveals,

alert, longing  
for your song, far off, unfolding, real.

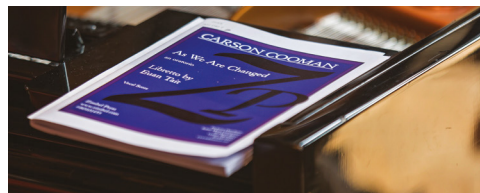
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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Carson Cooman** (b. 1982) is an American composer with a catalog of hundreds of works in many forms—from solo instrumental pieces to operas, and from orchestral works to hymn tunes. His music has been performed on all six inhabited continents in venues that range from the stage of Carnegie Hall to the basket of a hot air balloon. Cooman's music appears on over forty recordings, including more than twenty-five complete CDs on the Naxos, Albany, Artek, Gothic, Divine Art, Métier, Diversions, Convivium, Altarus, MSR Classics, Raven, and Zimbel labels.

A graduate of Harvard University and Carnegie Mellon University, Cooman's primary composition studies were with Bernard Rands, Judith Weir, Alan Fletcher, and James Willey. In 2006, Cooman was appointed Composer in Residence at the Memorial Church of Harvard University. As an active concert organizer, Cooman specializes in the performance of contemporary music. Over 300 new compositions by more than 100 interna-



tional composers have been written for him, and his organ performances can be heard on a number of CD releases and more than 2,000 recordings available online. For more information, visit

[carsoncooman.com](http://carsoncooman.com)

**Euan Tait** is a European of Welsh-Scottish heritage, born in the still part-ruined Berlin in 1968 and now living in sight of the Rivers Wye and Severn in the ancient Welsh kingdom of Gwent. He delights in



the wisdom and learning we gain from our differences, including within faiths and between faiths and from perspectives beyond traditional faiths — his spirituality was forged in the challenging community life of L'Arche in the 1990s.

He is a retreat leader leading week-ends exploring the inner life of great choral works, as well as a teacher and a librettist. He teaches English to adults of many nationalities, as well as teenagers. As a librettist, he has worked internationally with composers such as Kim Andre Arnesen, Carson Cooman, Michael Bussewitz-Quarm, Paul Spicer, and Janet Wheeler. His major projects include texts for Cooman's 2019 oratorio *As We Are Changed*, for Spicer's 2014 choral symphony *Unfinished Remembering* (Symphony Hall, Birmingham, UK), and Arensen's 70 minute cantata *The Wound in the Water* (Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, 2016). His shorter texts include *Flight Song*. Euan's work explores themes of human brokenness, of internal and external exile, of music as our companion through life, and of healing. For more information, visit [euantait.com](http://euantait.com)

### **Sarah Fox (soprano)**

Sarah Fox was educated at Giggleswick School, London University and the Royal College of Music. A former winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Award and the John Christie Award, she is also an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway College, London University.

Roles at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden have included Micaela/Carmen, Asteria/Tamerlano, Zerlina/Don Giovanni and Woglinde/Der Ring des Nibelungen. Other operatic roles include Ellen Orford/ Peter Grimes, Ilia/Idomeneo, Susanna/Le Nozze di Figaro & Mimi/La Bohème. Her prestigious concert career has taken her worldwide with engagements in Denver, Hong Kong, Melbourne, New York, San Francisco, Tel Aviv and Tokyo as well as tours throughout the UK and Europe. She has appeared several times at the BBC Proms and at London's Wigmore Hall and is a regular guest on BBC Radio 2's 'Friday Night is Music Night.' Her numerous recordings encompass a wide range of composers including Mozart, Poulenc and Cole Porter.





### **Robert Murray (tenor)**

Renowned for his intelligent musicianship and incisive dramatic portrayals of a broad operatic, concert, and recital repertoire, British tenor Robert Murray has firmly established himself as one of the most exciting musicians of his generation. He has performed principal roles with the Royal Opera House, Hamburg State Opera, the Salzburg Festival, English and Welsh National Operas, Norwegian Opera, Bergen National Opera, Garsington Opera, the Beijing Music Festival, the Venice Biennale, and the Edinburgh Inter-

national Festival among many others. He collaborates regularly with such conductors as Edward Gardner, Sir Mark Elder, Harry Christophers, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Charles Mackerras, Oliver Knussen, and Paul McCreeh both in opera and concert.

In recital, Murray has worked with Andrew West, James Baillieu, Graham Johnson, Joseph Middleton, Malcolm Martineau. He has recorded opera, song, and oratorio extensively for multiple labels. He is a committed exponent of contemporary music.

### **Rupert Gough**

Rupert Gough has been director of Choral Music and College Organist at Royal Holloway, University of London since 2005. He is also Organist and Director of Music at London's oldest surviving church, Saint Bartholomew the Great, which maintains a professional choir. At Royal Holloway Rupert has developed the choral programme to include weekly choral recitals, choral conducting courses for undergraduates, frequent new choral commissions and transformed the Chapel Choir into an elite group of

24 choral scholars. The Choir has particularly come to prominence through their series of recordings for Hyperion Records and travels widely for concert performances.

Rupert was a chorister at the Chapels Royal, St. James's Palace, and won a scholarship to the Purcell School. He received (with distinction) a Masters degree in English Church Music from the University of East Anglia whilst Organ Scholar at Norwich Cathedral. For 11 years he was Assistant Organist at Wells





Cathedral during which time he made around 30 CD recordings as accompanist and director. A prize-winning organist, he has performed widely including Moscow, Hong Kong and across the USA.

### **The Choir of Royal Holloway**

The Choir of Royal Holloway is considered to be one of the finest university choirs in Britain. The choir was created at the time of the foundation of Royal Holloway College in 1886, and was originally only for women's voices. The group, comprised of 24 choral scholars and 2 organ scholars, undertakes a busy schedule of weekly services and concerts, international tours, recordings and live broadcasts. Royal Holloway is the only university that maintains a tradition of singing daily morning services, and is home to the only choir in the country performing weekly live streamed concerts.

In recent years the choir have collaborated with many well-known ensembles for recordings, concerts and radio broadcasts including the King's Singers, the BBC Singers, Britten Sinfonia,

London Mozart Players, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, Onyx Brass, Fretwork and the jazz-trio Acoustic Triangle. The choir has an extensive and highly acclaimed discography with Hyperion, Decca, Signum and Naxos amongst others, and has a particular reputation for championing the work of Baltic and other contemporary composers. Most recent recordings feature the work of Ola Gjeilo, Rene Clausen, Ben Parry and Joanna Marsh. A live concert recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Thomas Adès and the Britten Sinfonia is also due for release from Signum Records. The choir also recently travelled to Paris to record a newly-rediscovered mass by Pierre Villette with alumna Sarah Fox.

### **London Mozart Players**

Founded in 1949 by Harry Blech to delight audiences with the works of Mozart and Haydn, over the last 71 years the LMP has developed an outstanding reputation for adventurous, ambitious programming from Baroque through to genre-crossing contemporary music. It continues to build on its long history of association with many of the world's

finest artists including Sir James Galway, Dame Felicity Lott, Jane Glover, Howard Shelley, Nicola Benedetti, John Suchet and Simon Callow. The orchestra enjoys an international reputation, touring throughout Europe and the Far East, most recently Dubai and Hong Kong, and records for Naxos, Chandos, Signum, Hyperion, Convivium Records and the German label CPO.

The London Mozart Players has been the resident orchestra at Croydon's Fairfield Halls for thirty years, and in

September 2019 enjoyed a gala concert to celebrate the Halls' reopening. As Croydon's resident orchestra, the ensemble has shown an invigorated and growing commitment to the borough's cultural life. Being one of the original pioneers of orchestral outreach work, LMP has enjoyed a host of relationships with schools and music hubs across the UK (and recently in Dubai and Hong Kong), working with teachers and heads of music to inspire the next generation of musicians and music lovers.





## CREDITS

# As We Are Changed

*Oratorio by Carson Cooman with libretto by Euan Tait.  
Performed by The Choir of Royal Holloway, London Mozart Players,  
Sarah Fox & Robert Murray, directed by Rupert Gough.*

**The Choir of Royal Holloway Soprano** Megan Bennett · Kitty Casey · Zoe Fox  
Eve Garrard · Maia Jarvis · Eleanor Miles-Kingston · Isabel Pott · Amelia Smith  
Dorothy Whyte-Venables **Alto** Elizabeth Ajao · Ruben Dales · Olivia Earl · Lucy Ormrod  
Sophie Overin **Tenor** Jordan Berry · James Edgeler · Robert Murray John · Zachary Smith  
Christopher Willoughby **Bass** Alfie Evans-Hutchinson · Samuel Morton-Morris  
Nicholas Peat · Benjamin Richards · Geoff Williams

**London Mozart Players Violin I** Ruth Rogers (leader) · Sijie Chen · Ann Criscuolo  
Martin Smith **Violin II** Jennifer Godson · Clare Hayes · Jeremy Metcalfe · Jayne Spencer  
**Viola** Judith Busbridge · Christopher Beckett · Richard Cookson · Michael Posner  
**Cello** Sebastian Comberti · Ben Chappell **Double Bass** Benjamin Russell  
Catherine Elliott **Clarinet** Oliver Pashley **Trumpet** Neil Brough **Trombone** Ian Fasham  
**Piano** Malcolm Archer

**Soloists Soprano** Sarah Fox · tracks 3, 7, 13, 19, 20 **Tenor** Robert Murray · tracks 5, 9, 15,  
19, 20 **Cello** Sebastian Comberti · track 18

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**Executive Producer** Adrian Green



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