

I Saw Eternity



Choral Works by
Alexander Campkin

Performed by
Phoenix Consort
& Adam Whitmore

TRACKLIST

I Saw Eternity

1	World of merriment	3.50
2	Bright Apollo	3.33
3	Calm me, O Lord	6.17
4	True Love	4.35
5	Sleep (Ivor Gurney, arr. Alexander Campkin)	3.32
6	I saw Eternity	3.16
7	I flying	6.05
8	Dazzling Darkness	4.28
9	Bright Shadows	4.45
10	Sleep, Holy Babe	4.48
11	I saw Eternity like a shadow	3.07
12	Tommy's Carol	3.04
13	I saw Eternity and the sun	2.50
14	Awake, Awake!	3.19
	Total Running Time	57.34

PROGRAMME NOTE

Choral Works by Alexander Campkin

Performed by Phoenix Consort & Adam Whitmore

I Saw Eternity marks the first album recorded by the Phoenix Consort.

The choral music of Alexander Campkin on this album depicts a journey from darkness to light, reflecting the composer's own personal journey, influenced by his own experiences.

As a young ensemble, the chance to record new music, including some premiere recordings and performances, such as *Bright Apollo*, has been a great pleasure. It's been an exciting project to share in, interpreting and performing works never heard before, and discussing how best to convey their meaning.

We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to eternalise such heartfelt composition through this recording. It was wonderful to share these moments with Alexander, who we welcomed to Durham during the recording sessions in December 2023.

The live feedback gave us confidence that our interpretations and sound reflect that which Alexander envisioned when composing his works.

We are excited for the next steps of each of our singers individually, as well as the consort's next endeavours in the recording industry.

TEXTS

1 World of merriment

Hear the bells!
What a world of merriment
their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, in a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that
so musically wells
From the bells,
From the jingling and the
tinkling of the bells.

Text by Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849).

Commissioned by The Portsmouth Grammar School. First performed by The Portsmouth Grammar School Chamber Choir conducted by Sam Gladstone in St Thomas' Cathedral, Portsmouth, on 11 December 2015.

2 Bright Apollo

Far above the hollow
Tempest, and its moan,
Singeth bright Apollo
In his golden zone, -
Cloud doth never shade him,
Nor a storm invade him,
On his joyous throne.

So when I behold me
In an orb as bright,
How thy soul doth fold me
In its throne of light!
Sorrow never paineth,
Nor a care attaineth
To that blessed height.

Text by Thomas Hood (1799–1845).

Bright Apollo was **commissioned** by Jennifer Weller and Caroline Harrison QC. It is dedicated to the Phoenix Consort and Adam Whitmore.

TEXTS

3 Calm me, O Lord,

Calm me, O Lord,
as you calmed the storm.
Still me, O Lord,
and keep me from harm.
Embrace me, O Lord.

Calm me, O Lord was inspired by the text to a prayer I read on a church's website, and adapted for this work.

The piece opens in a slow and very calm manner with simple harmonies, the whole choir moving together in homophony.

More dissonant material emerges as the text intensifies. The upper voices break away and begin to sing independently, each voice repeating short musical fragments at will. Joined by the basses, the choir crescendos towards a lyrical climax.

4 True Love

True love is a flame that burns forever.
True love has a glow so bright that
no-one can dim.
True love gives with open heart,
true love sings in tender tones,
with soft hands entwines the heart.

Doubt that the stars are fire.
Doubt that the sun doth move.
Doubt truth to be a liar
But never doubt I love thee.

Text inspired by William Shakespeare.

True Love fuses a poignant quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with my adaptation of a love poem of unknown authorship.

This piece was sung during my own wedding, and the text formed part of our vows. *True Love* was based on my piece 'Heaven-Haven' **commissioned** by Hermione Ruck Keene.

TEXTS

5 Sleep

Come, Sleep, and with
thy sweet deceiving
Lock me in delight awhile;
Let some pleasing dreams beguile
All my fancies; that from thence
I may feel an influence
All my powers of care bereaving!

Though but a shadow, but a sliding,
Let me know some little joy!
We that suffer long annoy
Are contented with a thought
Through an idle fancy wrought:
O let my joys have some abiding!

Text by John Fletcher (1579–1625).

Music by Ivor Gurney (1890–1937),
arranged by Alexander Campkin (b. 1984)

6 I saw Eternity

I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great Ring of pure
and endless light,
All calm as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time,
in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres.

Text by Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

I saw Eternity sets an evocative text
by Henry Vaughan. I was inspired to
compose the piece one evening whilst
I was on tour in France. I was greatly
honoured that the choir received an
invitation to give the piece its first
performance just two days later
in La cathédrale Saint-Samson de
Dol-de-Bretagne.

With close, high harmonies and gradual
harmonic shifts, this piece for upper
voices explores suspended dissonance
and consonance.

7 I flying

We were the flotsam of the day,
last twisted remnants of the brutal cold,
bent on a wind-wrecked, kelp-jet beach
with the baby Gabriel in tow.
The mad-cap girls rolled the pram
till it sped like tossed foam, though,
long-legged, the pilot boy still strolled.

Pressing for a salt-wounded shore,
I was drenched in this sense of
I can't take much more
when I saw your arms stretch wide
from your chariot sides, and you cried:
'I flying.' 'I flying.' Oh Gabriel, only one,
the only one with wings —
smile of 'behold!' —
for the storm-shattered, star-struck, fold.

Text by Finuala Dowling (b. 1962).

Commissioned by José De Oliveira as a
gift for his beloved wife Vetta Wise

TEXTS

8 Dazzling Darkness

The Night
Through that pure virgin shrine,
That sacred veil drawn over
Thy glorious noon,
That men might look and live,
as glowworms shine,
And face the moon,

Wise Nicodemus saw such light
As made him know his God by night.
Who in that land of darkness
Did at midnight speak with the Sun!

Dear night! this world's defeat;
The stop to busy fools;
my soul's calm retreat.
Dear night! A deep but dazzling darkness,
Might live invisible!

Text by Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

Dazzling Darkness was inspired by Henry
Vaughan's evocative text *The Night*. This
fast and dynamic piece explores a range
of vocal and colouristic textures to reflect



Photo provided courtesy of Tolosa Choral Competition, 2023

TEXTS

the energy, beauty and mysticism of this text. In the music I create expansive soundworlds by combining singing alongside effects such as whistling, humming and chord clusters.

9 Bright Shadows

Bright shadows of true Rest!
some shoots of bliss,
Heaven once a week;
A day to seek;
Eternity in time; the steps by which
We Climb above all ages; and the rich,
And full redemption of the
whole week's flight.

Text after Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

Commissioned by Alexandra Schwinn for Concanenda. First performed by Concanenda conducted by Alexandra Schwinn in Cambridge, February 2013.

10 Sleep, Holy Babe

1 Sleep, holy Babe!
upon Thy mother's breast;
Great Lord of earth and sea and sky,
How sweet it is to see Thee lie
In such a place of rest.

2 Sleep, holy Babe!
Thine angels watch around,
All bending low with folded wings,
Before Th' incarnate King of kings,
In rev'rent awe profound.

3 Sleep, Holy Babe! while I with Mary gaze
In joy upon that Face awhile,
Upon the loving infant smile
Which there Divinely plays.

4 Sleep, Holy Babe!
Ah! take Thy brief repose,
Too quickly will Thy slumbers break,
And Thou to lengthened pains awake,
That Death alone shall close.

Text by Edward Caswall (1814–1878).

11 I saw Eternity like a shadow

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a vast shadow moved;
in which the world
And all her train were hurled.

Text from *The World* by
Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

12 Tommy's Carol

1 A glorious voice sounds
through the night,
And chides the darkness into light:
The mists of sleep are driv'n afar,
And Christ shines forth the Morning Star.

2 Now from the langour leaps the mind,
And leaves all taint of earth behind;
The new-born planet flames on high,
And bids all care and sorrow fly.

3 Now from above the Lamb is sent,
To pay the debt, O penitent! Weep!

TEXTS

and with tears thy praise uplift,
In thanks for so supreme a gift.

4 To Father, Son and Holy Ghost
The King of Heaven's immortal host,
May men and angels praise outpour,
Forever and forever more.

Text by Donald MacLeod.

Commissioned by Steve Edge for
*Tommy's Charity: Funding research,
saving babies' lives.*

13 I saw Eternity and the sun

I saw Eternity the other night.
The way, which from this
dead and dark abode
Leads up to God,
A way where you might tread the sun.

Text from *The World* by
Henry Vaughan (1621–1695).

TEXTS

14 Awake, Awake!

Awake, Awake! good people all!
Awake and you shall hear
The Lord our God, died on the cross
For us he loved so dear.

1 The moon shines bright
and the stars give light
A little before the day
Our Lord, Our God, he called on us
And bid us awake and pray!
Awake, Awake! good people all!

2 O fair, O fair Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end,
Thy joy that I may see?
Awake, Awake! good people all!

3 My song is done, I must be gone,
I can stay no longer here;
God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a happy new year!
Awake, Awake! good people all!

Text adapted from
The Bellman's Song, traditional.

BIOGRAPHIES

Alexander Campkin

Alexander Campkin (b.1984) studied at Oxford University, Royal Academy of Music and University for Performing Arts in Vienna.

At the age of 17 he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which stopped him from pursuing a career as a viola player and led him to focus on composition.

His music, described as 'fresh and attractive' by Gramophone magazine, has been performed and broadcast in over two hundred countries and territories, including at the Royal Albert Hall, Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Tokyo Opera City Hall.

Commissions include BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Royal Opera House, Tallis Scholars, Wigmore Hall, London Mozart Players and the Vokalkapelle der Theatinerkirche Munich.

www.alexandercampkin.com



Photo by AP Wilding

BIOGRAPHIES

Adam Whitmore



Adam founded the Phoenix Consort whilst studying for his degree in Modern Languages at Durham University, and currently also conducts the Durham University Chamber Choir.

Whilst on a placement year, he was fortunate to sing with chamber choirs and early music groups in Spain and Estonia. Adam also often works with the Rodolfus Foundation, which, much like the Phoenix Consort, aims to spread choral music's influence among young people in the UK.

Phoenix Consort

The Phoenix Consort is a UK-based vocal ensemble, specialising in choral music from polyphony of the Renaissance to contemporary compositions of the 21st century.

The group consists of young artists, currently or formerly students at Durham University, and emphasises the perpetuation of choral music's influence among young people today.

Formed during the pandemic, the group has performed across the United Kingdom. In November 2023, the group won two third prizes at the 54th Tolosa Choral Competition, and performed in cities and towns across the Basque Country, Spain.

www.phoenixconsort.com



PERFORMERS

Soprano

Beth Yates, Kate Ryan
Arielle Loewinger, Laura Murphy

Alto

Ella McAvoy, Owen Ravden
Maria Pennington, Anna Shanu-Wilson
Emma Kerrigan

Tenor

Nathan Green, Matthew Holloway-Strong
Tom Klafkowski, Henry Saunders
Barnaby Sladden

Bass

Ben Lee, Nick Stoner, Toby Hunt,
Tom Richardson, Ollie Woods



Photo by David Rose Photography

CREDITS

Engineer

Adaq Khan

Producer

George Richford



Design

Mike Cooter

Executive Producer

Adrian Green

Recorded at:

St Hild and Bede College Chapel, Durham, 9th and 10th December 2023

Acknowledgements:

The Phoenix Consort is grateful to the funders of this project:

Benefactor: Nicholas Yates.

Patrons: Alexander Campkin, Ciara Ryan, Ruth Sladden, Gillian Yates.

Supporters: William Adam, Peter Banks, Sophie Brooks, Katharine M Brown, Eoin Buchanan, Duncan Byrne, Robert Christie, Graham Curtis, Susan Daldorph, Rosalyn Egeland-Jensen, Thalia Eley, Caroline Fisher, David Fuller, The Hair Gallery, Bethan Holloway-Strong, Maria Holloway-Strong, Matthew Holloway-Strong, Amy Jackman, Katherine Jones, Josie Klafkowska, Brenda Klafkowski, Donna Kuhl, Helen Lee, James Lyons, Benjamin Mackay, Hugh and Joan Osborn, Lynn Pennington, Paul Roberts, Pauline Sillence, Amanda Stoner, Alison and John Syner, Paul Trower, David Valentine, Susan Watermeyer, Jessica Whitehead, Ian Whitmore, Roger Williams, Claire Woods, Alexandra Yates - and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Cover illustration: Amy Carson

Every effort has been made to secure necessary permissions to reproduce copyright material in this booklet, although in some cases it has proven difficult to locate copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we would be pleased to include appropriate acknowledgements in subsequent pressings. www.conviviumrecords.co.uk



COPYRIGHT

This digital booklet is made freely available through the website www.conviviumrecords.co.uk for personal use and reference only.

Copyright subsists in all recordings, associated artwork and supporting imagery from Convivium Records, including within this digital booklet. It is illegal to copy this / them in whole or in part, for any purpose whatsoever, without permission from the copyright holder, Convivium Records Ltd. Any unauthorized copying, reproduction, distribution, re-recording, broadcasting or public performance of this or any other content provided by Convivium Records Ltd. will constitute an infringement of copyright.

To apply to use any recordings, associated artwork and supporting imagery from Convivium Records, including any content within this digital booklet, for anything other than personal use, please email: hello@conviviumrecords.co.uk

Applications for a public performance licence should be sent to:
Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9DE.
For more on copyright, please visit: www.conviviumrecords.co.uk/copyright