



Paul Carr
I OFFER YOU LOVE

Chorus Angelorum | Gavin Carr



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PAUL CARR *(b. 1961)*

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| 1 | Rain (<i>Euan Tait</i>) | 4'44 |
| 2 | I Offer You Love (<i>Mahatma Gandhi</i>) | 5'11 |
| 3 | Autumn Song (<i>Emily Brontë</i>) | 4'50 |
| 4 | Be Still My Soul (<i>Jane L. Borthwick after Katharina A. von Schlegel</i>) | 5'11 |
| 5 | You God, Are My God (<i>Psalms 63</i>) | 6'40 |
| 6 | Soft Music (<i>Paul Carr</i>) | 5'29 |
| 7 | Agnus Dei (<i>Mass</i>) | 7'52 |
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65'13

CHORUS ANGELORUM

PAUL TURNER *piano*

SAM HANSON *organ*

CHRIS AVISON *trumpet*

GAVIN CARR *conductor*

I OFFER YOU LOVE

1 Rain

Euan Tait (b. 1968)

Having previously set various texts by Euan Tait, I was very struck by his short poem, *Rain*, which he'd posted on Facebook, so I asked if I could set it for unaccompanied choir. At the same time I had discovered the wonderful performance on YouTube of Kim André Arnesen's *Flight Song*, also to words by Euan, in a concert given by the University of North Texas 'A Cappella' Choir, conducted by Allen Hightower, to whom *Rain* is dedicated.

*Never a sound so beautiful:
Rainfall through the deep
Of the stillness, the darkness,
Like a refreshing caress
The skin relearns, gives back
At a time of pain. Rain,
Like an old friend, forgotten,
Returning laden with light.*

2 I Offer You Love

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

A setting for choir and piano of Mahatma Gandhi's much-loved Prayer for Peace. It was composed in January 2020 in dedication to Jon L. Culpepper and Dallas Chamber Choir, following their beautiful American première of my unaccompanied motet, *Holding The Stars*.

I offer you peace.

I offer you Love.

I offer you friendship.

I see your beauty.

I hear your need.

I feel your feelings.

My wisdom flows from the highest source.

I salute that source in you.

Let us work together

For unity and peace.

3 Autumn Song

Emily Brontë (1818-1848)

When working in London, I stay with my friend Nic Howard in his beautiful cottage in Outwood, Surrey. Nic is an award-winning garden designer, so this seasonal poem feels particularly apt as a thank-you in dedication to him. Nic owned a very good Clavinova which sat in his design studio, but which he never played, and as he also needed more space, he offered it to me; not having had a piano for many years, I was delighted to take it if it would fit in the boot of my One Series, and fit it did with only centimetres to spare, so I took this as a sign and this became the start of a more prolific time of choral song-writing for me, both accompanied and 'a cappella' - much of which was composed at Nic's piano and is recorded on this album.

*Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;
Lengthen night and shorten day;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.*

4 Be Still My Soul

Jane L. Borthwick (1813-1897) after Katharina A. von Schlegel (b. 1697)

Dedicated to Philip Lange, my former piano teacher while I was a student at Michael Hall, Rudolf Steiner School, in Forest Row, Sussex. Philip was always enthusiastic when I would show up to lessons having composed something on the piano. My first ever piece was called *A Rainy Night*, because I wrote it, sat at the piano, on a wet Sunday night. Philip insisted I play it as the school concert, which I did; the audience wouldn't stop clapping and I had to play it again - and so began my life as a composer.

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change, He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord.
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

5 You God, Are My God

Psalm 63

This anthem, scored for choir with solo trumpet and organ, was a private commission from Sue and Ian Wood (Ian is my Uncle). Sue has a strong religious belief and had commissioned me to set Psalm 63 some years ago, but I wasn't keen on the final part of the Psalm, feeling as I do with many Psalms, that they spoil somewhat at the end, and I struggled to set words I couldn't relate to; but as I later discovered, Sue also felt the same and was happy for me to omit the final 3 lines. I composed it in August 2020 between the two lockdowns, while dog-sitting at my brother's house for a week; he has a lovely music room with a beautiful grand piano, and despite being a non-believer, I momentarily felt inspired to compose it for Sue, in admiration of her faith.

*You God, are my God, eagerly I seek you: I thirst for you,
My whole being longs for you: In a dry and parched land where there is no water.
I have seen you in the sanctuary: And beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life: My lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I shall live: And in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods: With singing lips my mouth will praise you.
On my bed I remember you: I think of you through the watches of the night.
Because you are my help: I sing in the shadow of your wings.
I cling to you: Your right hand holds me fast.*

6 Soft Music

Paul Carr (b. 1961)

Commissioned in 2019 by Guildhall Alumni Choir in dedication to their founding conductor, Diana Bickley, this is a song set to my own words about love and longing, and the memories associated with pain and loss.

*Soft music floats on waves of love, as flowers burn in praise of you.
Holding the sun's soft embrace I leap into the warm air,
Eyes closed, heart still, alive with memories and chorales.*

*My senses are caressed by light, perfumed by music,
Yet in the cold silver of the moon I cry out in the darkness to you;
Love is laid bare through my pain, its song a sea of tears.*

*My soul shall complete its course unseen, but true;
And I will rise from a thousand sighs, to bathe in the love of you.*

7 Agnus Dei

Mass

This is a choral reworking of my popular *Air for Strings*, which is frequently played on Classic FM. I had previously made an arrangement of it for unaccompanied choir, but it didn't really work and I scrapped it; still feeling it would be effective in a choral setting, my brother Gavin made this arrangement of it in 2018 for choir and organ.

*Agnus Dei,
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis,
Dona nobis pacem.*

*Lamb of God,
who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us, grant us peace.*

8 Midwinter

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Over the past few years, English Arts Chorale have commissioned various works from me, four in fact, including my *Stabat Mater* and a setting of Blake's *The Lamb*, both of which they have also recorded. Long-time choir member, Rosemary Scott, first introduced me to the choir and has been instrumental in support of various commissions, so this carol was composed over the Christmas period in 2020, as a gift in dedication for her generous support and friendship.

*In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.*

*Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter,
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.*

*Enough for Him, whom cherubim,
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk,
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.*

*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him;
Give my heart.*

9 Drop, Drop, Slow Tears

Phineas Fletcher (1580-1650)

I first heard this poem by Phineas Fletcher in the powerful setting by Kenneth Leighton when the BBC Singers performed it in a Radio 3 concert in the 1970s. Many years later, one of my oldest friends, Jocelyn Bundy, joined the Alumni Choir of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where we had both been students in the early 1980s. Having spent her life in opera stage management, surrounded by singers, I was delighted when she finally decided to join a choir, and wrote this as a gift to her in admiration.

*Drop, drop, slow tears,
And bathe those beautiful feet
Which brought from Heaven
The news and Prince of Peace:*

*Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercy to entreat;
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.*

*In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let His eye
See sin, but through my tears.*

10 How Do I Love Thee?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

In the early 1970s while a pupil at Michael Hall School, in Sussex, my first music teacher was Rhyll Godber, who instilled in me a love of choir singing through her class music lessons, in which we sang part-songs, as well as larger choral classics. Through the wonder of Facebook we've re-connected some 50 years later, so I composed this song in April 2021 in dedication to Rhyll, and as a thank you for the inspiration she brought to me during my early years at school.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of being, and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with a passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and if God choose,

I shall love thee better after death.

11 Music When Soft Voices Die

Percy Bysshe Shelly (1792-1822)

My first introduction to this Shelley poem was through the setting by Roger Quilter; the words and music both hauntingly beautiful in their lyricism. As composers, we often rely on the commissioning support of organisations, but also of individuals, and in March 2021, Steve Brosnan (himself a choral singer) offered to sponsor this recording, and this setting for unaccompanied choir was composed as a thank you in dedication to him for his support and generosity.

*Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory –
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.*

*Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.*

12 Go, Lovely Rose

Edmund Waller (1606-1687)

St. Valentine's Day in 2021 fell during the 2nd Coronavirus lockdown and I found myself in a somewhat lonesome and thoughtful mood; so sitting at the piano, I wrote this song in that one evening and dedicated it to my bother Gavin and his wife Heather.

Go lovely rose!

Tell her that wastes her time and me,

That now she knows,

When I resemble her to thee,

How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Small is the worth

Of beauty from the light retired;

Bid he come forth,

Suffer herself to be desired,

And not blush so to be admired.

Tell her that's young

And shuns to have her graces spied,

That hadst though sprung

In deserts, where no men abide,

Thou must have uncommented died.

Then die! that she

The common fate of all things rare

May read in thee;

How small a part of time they share

That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

This recording was made possible with the generous support of Steve Brosnan.

CHORUS ANGELORUM

Soprano: Claire Bessent; Elenor Bowers-Jolley; Leah Jackson; Kirsty O'Neill; Emily Owen; Elinor Rolfe Johnson.

Alto: Lucy Ballard; Rosie Clifford; Nancy Cole; Ruth Kiang.

Tenor: Ben Alden; Daniel Bartlette; Graham Neal; Richard Robbins.

Bass: Simon Grange; Timothy Murphy; Andrew Tipple; Lawrence Wallington; Christopher Webb.

Producer, engineer and editor: Philip Rowlands.

Recording and editing assistant: Tim Burton.

Recorded 21-23 April 2022 at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, U.K.

Bechstein Grand Piano supplied by Jacques Samuel Music.

Publisher: Goodmusic Publishing.

Cover image: "Eye" © 2016 Rob Burton.

Inside front cover: photograph of Paul Carr © 2013 Suzy Bennett.

Booklet notes © 2022 Paul Carr.

Design: Red Engine Design.

Printed in the E.U.

5060192781205

