

Stonewall Warriors

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots

Conducted by Dominic Ellis-Peckham

Narrative written by Séamus Rea

Actors: Jonathan Blake , Mzz Kimberly Sanchia McCormack,
Annette Badland,

Stage Director: George Nicholas

MEDIEVAL LOVE

O Virtus Sapientae

Music: Hildegarde von Bingen (1098-1179) Arr: Cheryl Lynn Helm
(b. 1957), Text: Sacred chant

*O strength of Wisdom
who, circling, circled,
enclosing all
in one lifegiving path,
three wings you have:
one soars to the heights,
one distils its essence upon the earth,
and the third is everywhere.
Praise to you, as is fitting,
O Wisdom.*

Heaven-Haven (A Nun Takes the Veil)

Music: Samuel Barber (1910-1981), Text: Gerard Manley Hopkins
(1844-1889)

Samuel Barber met the Italian composer Gian Carlo Menotti when they were both studying at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. After graduation, the two men bought a house in upstate New York where they lived and worked together for the next forty years.

*I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,*

*To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.*

Nigra Sum Sed Formosa

Music: Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611), Text: Song of Solomon

*I am black but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem,
therefore have I pleased the Lord, and he hath brought me into his
chamber, and hath said unto me:
Arise my love, my fair one, and come away,
Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy
voice, and thy countenance comely.*

THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE AND MICHELANGELO

A Woman's Face

Music: Rufus Wainwright (b. 1973), Text: William Shakespeare
(1564-1616), Arr. Dominic Ellis-Peckham

Solo: James Guy

*A woman's face with nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.*

Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day

Music: Nils Lindberg (b. 1933), Text: William Shakespeare (1564-1618)

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

THE AGE OF OSCAR WILDE

The Crown of Thorns

Music: Pyotr Illych Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), Text: Richard Henry Stoddard (1825-1903)

*When Jesus Christ was yet a child
He had a garden small and wild,
Wherein He cherished roses fair,
And wove them into garlands there.*

*Now once, as summer time drew nigh,
There came a troop of children by,
And seeing roses on the tree,
With shouts they plucked them merrily.*

*Do you bind roses in your hair?
They cried, in scorn, to Jesus there,
The Boy said humbly: "Take, I pray,*

All but the naked thorns away."

*Then of the thorns they made a crown,
And with rough fingers pressed it down,
Till on His forehead fair and young,
Red drops of blood like roses sprung.*

Les Fleurs et Le Arbres

Music: Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Text: Anon

*The flowers and the trees,
The bronzes, the marbles,
The golds, the enamels,
The sea, the fountains (waterfalls),
The mountains and the plains
Console our pain.*

*Eternal nature,
You seem more beautiful
To a heart in sorrow,
And art reigns over us,
Its flame illuminates
the laughter and tears.*

INTERVAL

THE ROAD TO STONEWALL

Hymn to St Cecilia

Music: Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), Text: W.H. Auden (1907-1973)

Solos: Sopranos: Sophia Allen, Eleanor Wolfe, Alto: Sarah de Winter, Tenor: Tobin Webb, Bass: Mark Alexander

*In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on*

*Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.
Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.*

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

*I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.
I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.
I am defeat*

*When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.
All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.
I shall never be Different.
Love me.*

*O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.
O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.
O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.
O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.
That what has been may never be again.
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.
O bless the freedom that you never chose.
O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.
O wear your tribulation like a rose.*

I Am Like Many

Music: Stuart Beatch (b. 1991), Text: adapted by the composer from 19th and 20th c. sources

Solos: Sopranos: Kathleen Holman, Ché Ramsden, Sophia Allen,
Altos: Michaela Caunter, Tenors: Oli Glynn

Senate House Library commissioned Stuart Beatch, the Fourth

Choir's resident composer, to compose a song which the Choir is premiering in 2018. The text of I Am Like Many, includes quotations from a debate in 1958 when the UK Parliament discussed the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report that homosexuality should be decriminalised. One MP quoted a letter from a gay constituent who had been sent to prison which finished "I do not pretend that I am good. But I am like many".

*God, like the potter, when his clay is damp,
Gives every man, in birth, a different stamp.
Bear witness: man, whate'er his rank may be.
Who now can say my caste from stain is free?*

26 November 1958.

*Parliament debates the Wolfenden Report today.
The House is torn by the problem it faces;
by the distinction between sin and crime;
by the risk in the remedies it might propose.
It is a foregone conclusion
that the homosexual laws will not be reformed yet,
but that reform must come eventually.*

*Is such conduct injurious to society?
'Tis hard to say why erring mortals think
This fount is pure, and that unfit to drink.
Great nations have fallen and empires been destroyed
because corruption became widespread.*

*Is it a matter for the private conscience?
And tell us, casuists, were statutes meant
To scourge the wicked or the innocent?*

*These persons are a malignant canker;
if allowed to grow it would eventually
kill what is known as normal life.*

*That little spot, which constitutes our isle,
Is not the world! Its censure or its smile*

Can never reason's fabric overthrow

*People have no idea of the life of fear and dread we live.
I want them to look upon this debate with kindness and
sympathy
and think, 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.'*

*Love, love it was, that made my eyes delight
To have his person ever in my sight.
I do not pretend that I am good but I am like many.*

STONEWALL WARRIORS

Panda Chant II

Music and Text: Meredith Monk (b. 1942)

Monk has been part of the avant-garde music scene in New York since the 1960s. As a composer, performer, director, vocalist, filmmaker and choreographer, she creates multi-disciplinary works which combine music, theatre, and dance. Her wife was the Dutch-born choreographer Mieke van Hoek, who died in 2002.

Help Us O Lord

Music: Aaron Copland (1900-1990), Text: Biblical

Aaron Copland, like many of his generation who were brought up at a time when same-sex relationships were illegal, never discussed his personal life in public. However, during his long life, he had many relationships with other men including the photographer, Victor Kraft and the painter, Prentiss Taylor.

*Help us, O lord: for with thee is the fount of life.
In thy light shall we see light.
Let us march and try our ways: turn to God.
It is good that man should wait,
it is good that man should hope for the salvation of the Lord.*

This Marriage

Music: Ed Rex; Text: Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273), trans. Kabir Helminski

The gender-neutral words of this poem in praise of marriage are by the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi. Although married, Rumi's most intense relationships were with other men, in particular a wandering dervish called Shams. When Shams disappeared (perhaps murdered), Rumi's intense longing for Shams led him to think that the souls of the two men had become united in God. An out-pouring of poems followed which he believed came from Shams and which were published under the title "The Works of Shams of Tabriz". Rumi's love for Shams, like Hildegard's for her beloved Richardis, may have been spiritual rather than physical but then, love is love.

May these vows and this marriage be blessed.

May it be sweet milk,

this marriage, like wine and halvah.

May this marriage offer fruit and shade

like the date palm.

May this marriage be full of laughter,

our every day a day in paradise.

May this marriage be a sign of compassion,

a seal of happiness here and hereafter.

May this marriage have a fair face and a good name,

an omen as welcomes the moon in a clear blue sky.

I am out of words to describe

how spirit mingles in this marriage.

Take the A Train

Music and Text: Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967), Arr. Clare Wheeler