

Christopher Best

How Great, How Fall'n

Op. 47

**for double choir (with tubular bells),
solo voices, brass quintet and organ**

2004

INSTRUMENTATION

Soloists; Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

Choir 1; Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

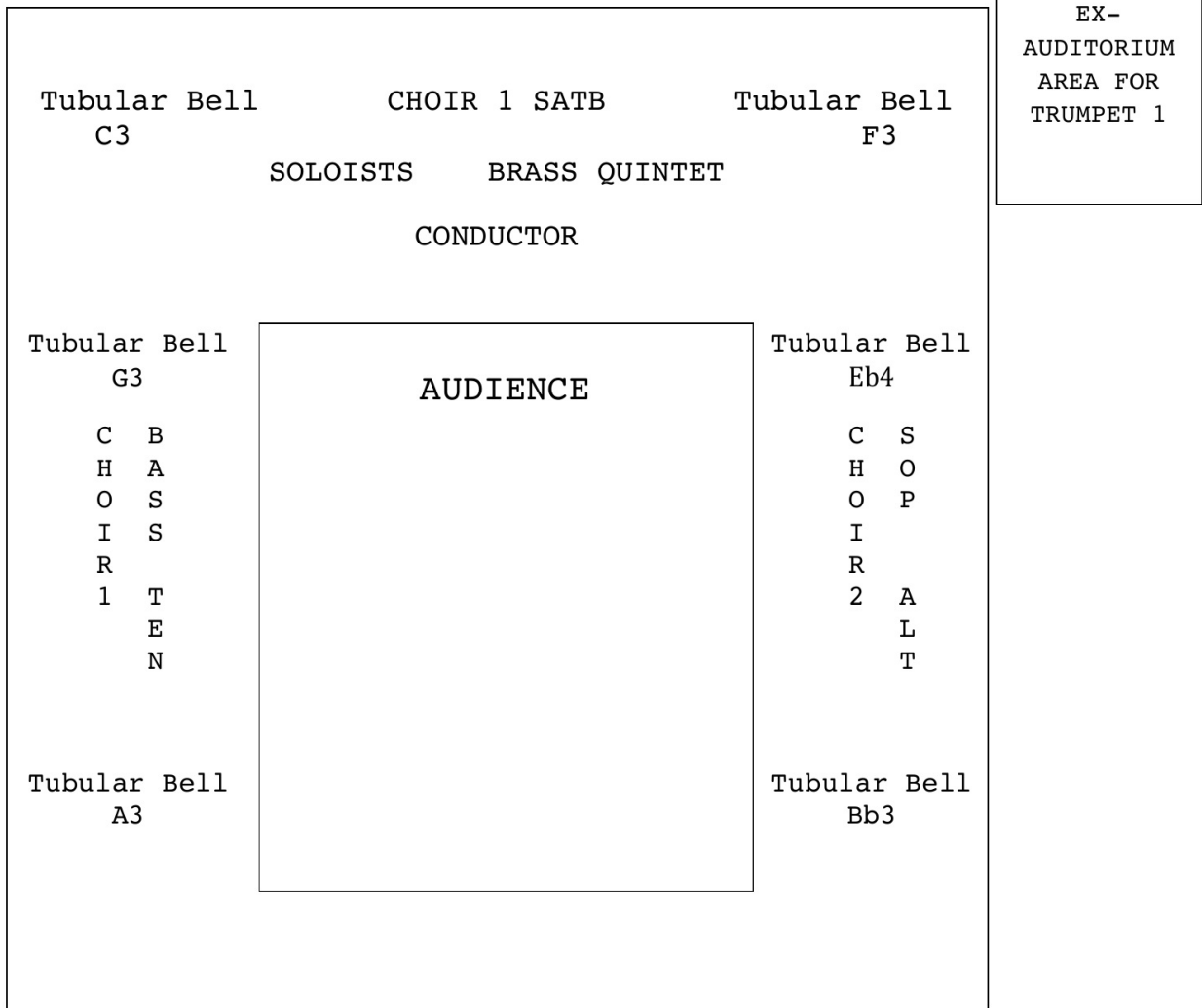
Choir 2; Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass

Brass Quintet; 2 Trumpets in Bb, Horn in F, Trombone and Tuba

Organ; minimum 2 manuals (including Swell) and pedals

6 Tubular Bells (hand-held by choir members); C3, F3, G3, A3, Bb3, Eb4

FLOOR PLAN GUIDE



DURATION

Ca. 11 minutes

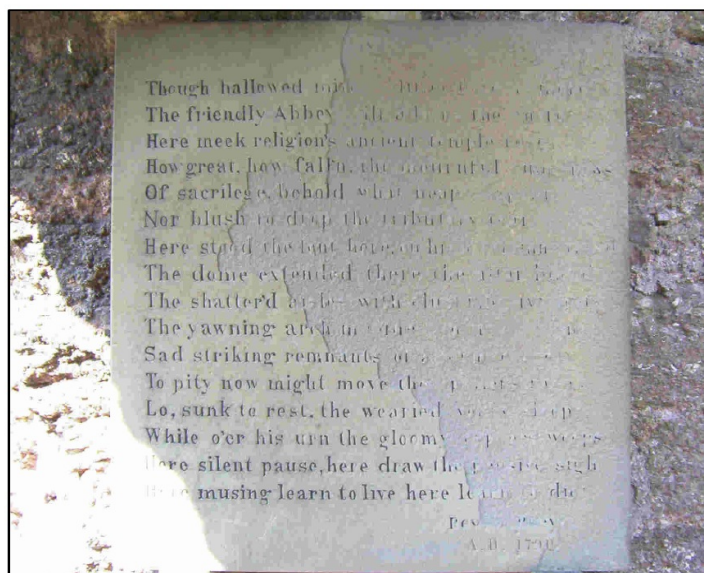
COMPOSER'S NOTE

How Great, How Fall'n was composed in response to a call for works from the John Armitage Memorial Concert Trust. The premiere took place at the Church of St Brides, Fleet St, London.

The inspiration for the work came from a visit to Torre Abbey, an English monastery dating from 1196, which is now little more than a shell. On the fractured arch of the chancel I found an eighteenth century stone plaque, a poem by the Reverend Joseph Reeve that pays homage to the abbey ruins. Over time, this plaque has itself become a ruin, so badly weathered down one side that only parts of the verse remain legible. The elements had somehow bridged the six hundred year divide between the observer and the observed, leaving me acutely aware that our own endeavours will all too soon be eroded to dust.

TEXT

Though hallowed m....
 The friendly Abbey still....
 Here meek religion's ancient temple....
 How great, how fall'n the (mournful?)....
 Of sacrilege, behold....
 Nor blush to drop the (tributary?)....
 Here stood the here, on....
 The dome extended there the....
 The shatter'd with....
 The yawning arch....
 Sad striking remnants....
 To pity now might move the....
 Lo, sunk to rest, the wearied (sleep?)
 While o'er his urn the gloomyweeps
 Here silent pause, here draw the sigh
 Here musing learn to live here learn to die
 Rev
 A.D. 1790



PERFORMANCE NOTES

Single tubular bells are held by designated members of the two choirs (see floor plan). In the sections showing free rhythm (marked with an asterisk), the first note should be sounded at the correct place in the bar and each successive player then strike their instrument as soon as they hear the preceding note. The result will be a slight randomisation of the rhythm. Elsewhere, tubular bells must be played in strict time (lasciar vibrare throughout).

When singing the independent sections, the choirs must ensure smooth glissandi and observe the durations reasonably accurately. To help count the long silences between phrases, it is useful to remember that the conductor is beating crotchet = 60: i.e. marking seconds. One person from each choir section should direct the group to ensure entries and endings of each phrase happen together.

Every effort should be made to observe the spirit of the floor plan – maybe utilising balcony areas if performing in church etc. The essential thing is to space the choirs and bells around the audience.

Christopher Best
 December 2004

How Great, How Fall'n

Remnants of an Abbey

Christopher Best

Senza misura

Alto (Choir 1) *pp* 3" 2" Ha -

Tenor (Choir 1) *pp* 3" 2" 2" 54" Though

Bass (Choir 1) *pp* 3" 2" 3" 2" 2" until cued

Tenor (Choir 2) *pp* 3" 2" 3" 2" 3" 2" 2" until cued

Though



15

A. (C1) 3" 2" 3" 1" 2" 1" 5" 43" llowed

B. (C1) 3" 2" 3" 2" 3" 2" 2" 30" The

S. (C2) *pp* 2" 2" 2" 39" The

A. (C2) *pp* 2" 2" 2" 9" The

T. (C2) 3" 2" 2" 2" 3" 9" The

B. (C2) *pp* 3" 2" 3" 35" M.. The

M..

Box closed

Slowly open box

Org. SWELL 8' Diapasons *p possible* *cresc.*

Adagio conducted beat (cued from tenors choir 2)

(♩ = c.60)

I

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Choir 1 (sopranos)

Choir 2 (tenors)

Choirs are independent of the rest of the music from here until bar 51. Their music is therefore notated separately.

Adagio conducted beat (cued from tenors choir 2)

(♩ = c.60)

Org. *pp* Partially open

lasciar vibrare sempre *See performance notes

Tub. B. *mp*

9

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.

Tub. B.

mp

*See performance notes



A

16

mp

Soprano rhythm poco rubato

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.

Though ha - llo - wed m... The

21

S. (Solo) friend - ly Abbey still Here *poco più f*

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.



26

S. (Solo) meek re - lig - ion's an - cient tem - ple... How great, how fall - 'n *(non rubato) mf p*

A. (Solo) How great, how fall - 'n *mp mf p*

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.

30

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

mp

the (mourn - ful?)..

mp

the (mourn - ful?)..

Org.

Tub. B.

ff

*See performance notes

35

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.

Tub. B.

The musical score for page 35 includes staves for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn., Tba, S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), B. (Solo), Org., and Tub. B. The vocal soloists (S, A, T, B) have lyrics: "How great, _____ how" and "How great, _____". The T. (Solo) and B. (Solo) parts feature triplets of eighth notes and a half note, marked *mf*. The Organ part consists of a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The tuba part is currently blank.

40

Tpt I *mf*

Tpt II *mf*

Hn *mp*

Tbn. *mf*

Tba *mf*

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo) *mp*
the (mourn - ful?)...__

T. (Solo) *mp*
fall 'n____
the (mourn - ful?)...__

B. (Solo) *mp*
how fall 'n____
the (mourn - ful?)...__

Org.

Tub. B. *mf*

A tempo (l.v. sempre)

D

48

Tpt I *mp*

Tpt II *mp*

Hn *distinto*

Tbn. *mp* *distinto*

Tba *mp*

S. (C1) *mf* (ma ben marc e staccato)

A. (C1) *mf* (ma ben marc e staccato)

T. (C1) *mf*

B. (C1) *mf*

S. (C2)

A. (C2)

T. (C2)

B. (C2)

Org.

Tub. B. *f*

To pi - ty now might

To pi - ty now might

Here stood the..

Here

52

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

mf (ma ben marcato e staccato sempre)

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

The dome ex - ten - ded there the.. Of sac - ri - lege, be - hold..

The dome ex - ten - ded there the.. Sad stri - king rem - nants

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Tub. B.

move the.. The yawn - ing arch.. How great, how

move the.. The yawn - ing arch.. Nor blush to

ex - ten - ded The shat - ter'd The yawn - ing

dome there.. with..

Tpt I
 Tpt II
 Hn
 Tbn.
 Tba
 S. (Solo)
 A. (Solo)
 T. (Solo)
 B. (Solo)
 S. (C1)
 A. (C1)
 T. (C1)
 B. (C1)
 Tub. B.

Here stood the.. To pi - ty now might move the..
 Here stood the.. To pi - ty now might move the..
 fall - 'n the mourn-ful.. The shat-ter'd.. with.. The dome ex -
 drop the (tri - bu - ta - ry?).. The shat-ter'd.. - with.. The dome ex -
 Nor blush to Sad stri - king rem - nants..
 arch.. drop..

58

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Tub. B.

The yawn - ing arch.. Nor blush to drop the (tri - bu -

The yawn - ing arch.. How greathow fall - 'n the (mourn -

ten - ded there the.. Sad stri - king rem - nants..

ten - ded there the.. Of sac - ri - lege, be - hold..

Here stood the.. ex - ten - ded the shat - ter'd

Here dome there..

61

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)
ta - ty?..

A. (Solo)
ful?.. The shat - ter'd.. with.. The dome ex - ten - ded there the..

T. (Solo)
The shat - ter'd.. with.. The dome ex - ten - ded there the..

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)
f Here stood the.. To pi - ty now might move the.. The

A. (C1)
f Here stood the.. To pi - ty now might move the.. The

T. (C1)
f The yawn - ing.. To pi - ty might move the..

B. (C1)
with.. arch.. now

Tub. B.

64

Tpt I *f* *mf*

Tpt II *f* *mf*

Hn *f* *mf* *f*

Tbn. *f* *mf* *f*

Tba

S. (Solo) Of sac - ri - lege, be - hold..

A. (Solo) Sad stri - king rem - nants.. Here stood the..

T. (Solo) Here stood the..

B. (Solo)

S. (C1) yawn - ing arch.. How great, how fall-'n the (mournful?)..

A. (C1) yawn - ing arch.. Nor blush to drop the (tri - bu - ta - ry?)..

T. (C1) ex - ten - ded Sad stri - king rem - nants..

B. (C1) dome there.. To pi - ty

Tub. B.

staccato

E ♩ = ♩ (♩ = c.120)

67

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

now..

(sounds 8va higher)

mp

GREAT Flutes 4'

(sounds 8va higher)

Org.

Tub. B.

mf

slowly and discreetly move off-stage

73

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

mp cantabile, but emphasising attack of each note

To pi - - ty

cantabile, but emphasising attack of each note

mp

To pi -

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

mp cantabile, but emphasising attack of each note

To pi - - ty

cantabile, but emphasising attack of each note

mp

To pi -

Org.

79

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Org.

Tub. B.

now

- ty now

might

move

mp cantabile, but emphasising attack of each note

now

might

now

might

now

might

now

might

84

The musical score is divided into five systems. The first system contains five brass staves: Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, and Tba. The second system contains four vocal soloist staves: S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), and B. (Solo). The third system contains four vocal choral staves: S. (C1), A. (C1), T. (C1), and B. (C1). The fourth system contains two staves for the Organ and Tub. B. The score includes lyrics for the vocal soloists and chorists: "move" and "the..". The Organ part features a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with a descending melodic line. The tuba part is mostly silent, with some chordal accompaniment.

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Org.

Tub. B.

the..

move

move

the..

the..

89

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Org.

Tub. B.

Lo, sunk to rest,

Lo, sunk to rest,

Lo, sunk to rest,

Lo, sunk to rest,

95

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

Org.

Tub. B.

the wear - ied... (sleep?)

the wear - ied... (sleep?)

the wear - ied... (sleep?)

the wear - ied... (sleep?)

101

Musical score for page 24, rehearsal mark 101. The score includes parts for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, Tba, S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), B. (Solo), S. (C1), A. (C1), T. (C1), B. (C1), Org., and Tub. B. The vocal parts have lyrics: "the wear - ied.. (sleep?)".

106

This musical score page, numbered 106, is divided into several systems. The first system contains five staves for brass instruments: Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn., and Tba. The second system features four vocal soloist parts: S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), and B. (Solo). The third system contains four vocal choral parts: S. (C1), A. (C1), T. (C1), and B. (C1). The fourth system includes the Organ (Org.) and a Tuba B. (Tub. B.) part. The vocal parts include lyrics: "While o'er his urn". The organ part features a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand. The tuba part provides a steady bass line.

112

Musical score for page 26, measures 112-115. The score includes parts for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, Tba, S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), B. (Solo), S. (C1), A. (C1), T. (C1), B. (C1), Org., and Tub. B. The lyrics "the gloom - y.." are present in the vocal parts.



OFF-STAGE

117

Musical score for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn., Tba., S. (Solo), A. (Solo), T. (Solo), B. (Solo), S. (C1), A. (C1), T. (C1), B. (C1), Org., and Tub. B. The score is in 3/8 time and features a key signature of two flats. The lyrics "weeps" are written under the vocal staves. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*. The section marker "G" is located at the top of the page, and "OFF-STAGE" is written above the brass staves. The page number "27" is in the top right corner, and the measure number "117" is at the start of the first staff.

123 Solo sempre rubato

Musical score for measures 123-128. The score includes parts for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, Tba, and Org. The Tpt I part features a melodic line with dynamics *mf** (quasi sotto voce), *pp*, *p*, and *espress.*. The Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, and Tba parts provide accompaniment with *p* dynamics. The Org. part has a rhythmic accompaniment.



129

Musical score for measures 129-134. The score includes parts for Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, Tba, and Org. The Tpt I part features a melodic line with dynamics *mf* and *ben marcato*. The Tpt II, Hn, Tbn, and Tba parts are silent. The Org. part has a rhythmic accompaniment.

* Dynamics shown are the perceived dynamics within the auditorium

134

Tpt I *p subito*

Tpt II *più f*

Hn *più f*

Tbn. *più f*

Tba *più f*

Org.



139

Tpt I *p*

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

Org.

H ↓ Conductor signals to choir 1 to continue independent phrases

144 *sotto voce*

Tpt I
Tpt II
Hn
Tbn.
Tba
Org.

mp *più f* *mp* *più f* *mp* *più f*



Conductor signals to choir 2 to continue independent phrases

I ↓

149

Tpt I
Tpt II
Hn
Tbn.
Tba
Org.

155

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

Org.

mf

mf

mf

mf



161

Org.

Ped.

Tub. B.

16' (sounds 8va lower)

*See performance notes

mf



167

Org.

Ped.

Tub. B.

*See performance notes

J

172 solo (still off-stage) *tr* *mf* *rubato rhythm* *p* *rit.*

Org.

Ped.

*See performance notes

Tub. B. *f*



176 *più f espress.* *mp legato*

Org.

Ped.



180 *mf* *p* *mp legato*

Org. **SWELL 8' Diapason**

Ped.

185

Tpt I
p warmly

Tpt II
con sord.
p mp

Hn
con sord.
p mp

Tbn.
con sord.
p mp

Tba
con sord.
p mp

S. (Solo)
mp
Here si - lent pause, here draw _____ the

A. (Solo)
mp
Here si - lent pause, here draw _____

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.
(sounds at pitch)
mp
(sounds at pitch)

Ped.

Tub. B.

190

The musical score is divided into five systems. The first system (measures 190-193) features five brass parts: Tpt I, Tpt II, Hn, Tbn., and Tba. Each part contains triplet figures in measures 190 and 191, with dynamics of *mp* and *p*. Measures 192 and 193 show sustained notes with dynamics of *p* and *mp*. The second system (measures 190-193) features vocal soloists: S. (Solo) with the word "sigh", A. (Solo) with "the sigh", T. (Solo), and B. (Solo). The third system (measures 190-193) features the Organ and Pedal. The fourth system (measures 190-193) features the Tuba B. The score includes dynamic markings (*mp*, *p*), articulation marks (accents), and a tempo change to "A tempo" at the end of the page.

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Org.

Ped.

Tub. B.

sigh

the sigh

mp

p

mp

p

mp

p

A tempo

195

(off-stage)

Tpt I

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

senza sord.

pp

senza sord.

pp

senza sord.

pp

senza sord.

pp

S. (Solo)

A. (Solo)

T. (Solo)

B. (Solo)

Here mu - - sing learn to live,

here_ draw_ the sigh_ here learn_

Here mu - - sing learn to live,

here learn

mf

mf

mf

mf

p

mf

p

Org.

Tub. B.

p

(If singing), choirs finish abruptly
on penultimate bell chord

200

Tpt I *mp* *mp* *pp*

Tpt II

Hn

Tbn.

Tba

S. (Solo) *p*
to die.

A. (Solo) here learn to die.

T. (Solo) *p*
here learn to die.

B. (Solo) here learn to die.

S. (C1)

A. (C1)

T. (C1)

B. (C1)

S. (C2)

A. (C2)

T. (C2)

B. (C2)

Org. *mf*
add

Ped. add 32'

Tub. B. L.V.

...unique sonorities and an engaging sound world... a major opus in terms both of its evocative musical content and its duration, ...representing an important contribution to the body of music for low flutes...

Will Sleath (flautist) **'Fragilities'**

... 'How Great, How Fall'n' created a lot of interest from both audience and performers alike. [It] was exactly the type of new music that JAM prides itself on supporting...

Edward Armitage, Chairman John Armitage Memorial Concert Series

...An idiosyncratic blend of stylistic types- Gamelan/folk...the music comes across vividly...

SPNM Reading panel **'Dolya Nash Krai'**

... 'Playfall' is a mature and powerful work, able to portray the dark shadows of loss that can unexpectedly creep into even the most joyful moments in life...

Dance Europe

... 'Night Walking' impressed me because it combined lightness and warmth. Here was proof that contemporary music can succeed on all fronts; it required concentration but was also exhilarating...

Artistic Director SPNM

... 'Another Kind of Air' is courageous in its simplicity and deserves to be heard...The sharp focus of the thematic material combines with the transparent medium to make for a piece that proclaims an unambiguous space...

SPNM Reading panel

...This is lovely music for dance and it develops in a delightful way... I particularly liked the pizzicato section...

(composer Howard Skempton) **'Life Before Birth'**

...The piano command is impressive... the pieces make a satisfying arch in terms of mood...

SPNM Reading panel, **'Then Again...'**

... 'Triphony' showed competence in the handling of a difficult medium... the climax to the third movement was highly effective...

Cambridge Evening Telegraph

...Best has previously written, with verve, for traditional forces... ['Cue-Play-Review'] seemed so clearly bound up with human responses... but the finale to this concert was his electronic tape 'From Steel to Stone'. In the darkened studio, its shifting layers made a shapely and animating effect.

Nottingham Evening Post

Christopher Best is a freelance composer based in the South West of England. Major works have been commissioned by 'Emilyn Claid and Co', 'Scottish Dance Theatre', 'Bimba Dance Theatre', 'Jamaican National Dance' and the 'SPNM'. Works have been especially written for ensembles including 'Aquarius', 'Jane's Minstrels', 'Kokoro', the choir of Selwyn College Cambridge and 'Onyx Brass', plus a host of distinguished soloists. His compositions have received considerable critical acclaim and been performed all over the world.

Recent output includes; 'Scending' for flutes and accordion and 'Fragilities' for flutes and cello (both commissioned by William Sleath, generously funded by the Britten Pears Foundation), 'Terra al Sol' for voices, string trio and accordion (commissioned by the Fisarchi Ensemble of Florence), 'How Great, How Fall'n' (orchestral version premiered by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra in 2011 at the Teatru Manoel, Valletta, original version for brass, voices and organ given by JAM in 2004), 'Echoes of a Lost Music' for electric guitar (UK tour 2011-12, New Zealand tour 2009), 'Still Beating' for Clarsach harp (premiered by Ruth Wall in 2007 at Wapping Power Station, London) and 'Panaura' for orchestra (premiered by the Kokoro ensemble in 2006 at Dartington Hall).

Since 2010, Chris has held a senior lectureship in music composition at Falmouth University, having formerly been Reader in music composition at Dartington College of Arts in Devon. He has taught extensively abroad, and co-directed residential music and dance exchanges in Devon, London and Madrid.

Further information, scores, parts and recordings of music by Christopher Best can be obtained from the composer.

Christopher Best

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