

A L A N B U L L A R D

A S O N G T O S A I N T H E L E N A

Cantata for Soprano and Bass Soloists, Choir and Orchestra

VOCAL SCORE

A Song to Saint Helena was commissioned by Colchester Choral Society in memory of Mr W J Hughes (whose bequest partially funded the commission) and to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the granting of Colchester's first Charter by Richard I.

Saint Helena is the patron saint of Colchester and her statue tops the tower of the Moot Hall. I have taken the text from a number of sources and the work begins with settings of the inscriptions on the Moot Hall bells, written in about 1900 by Sir Gurney Benham and used with kind permission of Ms Maura Benham. An orchestral interlude then moves back to AD60, and in the Latin words of the Annals of Tacitus the choir sing of the sacking and burning of the Roman colony of Colchester by the Iceni and the Trinovantes, led by Boadicea, while the bass solo sings a loose paraphrase of the Latin text.

The next section suggests a ruined Roman city, in the Dark Ages, dreaming of past and possible future splendours. Colchester must have been like this - it was more or less abandoned by the year 800 - and although the fragmentary Anglo-Saxon poem The Ruin does not specifically refer to Colchester it seems entirely suitable here. I have set sections of the translation by Kevin Crossley-Holland, with his kind permission, for solo soprano and choir.

The revival of Colchester in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is typified by the Castle, St John's Abbey and St Botolph's Priory - and by the signing of the Charter in 1189. I have given part of the text of the Charter - in many ways the beginning of Colchester's modern prosperity - to the bass solo, with the choir later echoing and joining in with the bell inscriptions again. But the last word is for St Helena, the discoverer of the True Cross: the soloists, echoed by the choir, sing the fifteenth century Prayer to Saint Helena.

Musically, the work makes much use of scales and change-ringing techniques - and as it progresses the scales change their quality from a rather brusque and earthly mode (Phrygian) to a luminous and heavenly one (Lydian), the key-centre always being E.

Alan Bullard.

Orchestration: 2 Flutes (2nd = Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Bassoons  
3 Trumpets in B flat  
Timpani (1 player), Percussion (2 players)  
Violins 1 and 2, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses

Duration: approximately 20 minutes

A S O N G T O S A I N T H E L E N A

- CHOIR Placed here on high We serve the town, Beneath the crown, Beneath the sky.  
Differing in size, In note and weight, Yet small or great We harmonise.  
With measured speech Well timed and true Our message due We tell to each.  
Brief, clear and bold, We say our say And then straightway Our peace we hold.  
O mortal race Our lesson learn: Each has his turn And time, and place.  
(Inscriptions on the Moot Hall bells by Sir Gurney Benham, used with permission)
- CHOIR qua contumelia et metu graviorum, quando in formam provinciae cesserant,  
BASS the people of Britain, led by Boadicea, had been ground down by the Roman oppressors,  
the Roman petty tyrants: the Britons were insulted, humiliated.
- CHOIR rapiunt arma,  
BASS so they took up arms, and rebelled.  
CHOIR acerrimo in veteranos odio,  
BASS they hated the Roman veterans, who had recently settled in Colchester,  
CHOIR quippe in colonia Camulodunum recens deducti pellebant domibus, exturbabant agris,  
captivos, servos appellando.  
BASS and driven them out of their land, calling them captives and servants, slaves.  
CHOIR ad hoc templum divo Claudio constitutum quasi arx aeternae dominationis aspiciebatur,  
BASS and, for the Britons, the temple of Claudius was a citadel of everlasting Roman oppression.  
CHOIR inter quae nulla palam causa delapsum simulacrum Victoriae  
BASS then, for no apparent reason, the Statue of Victory fell down,  
CHOIR ac retro conversum quasi cederet hostibus.  
BASS with its back turned, as though it were running away from the enemy.  
CHOIR et cetera quidem impetu direpta aut incensa sunt:  
BASS when everything had been stolen or set on fire -  
CHOIR templum in quo se miles conglobaverat biduo obsessum expugnatumque.  
BASS the temple where the soldiers were hiding was besieged, and taken by storm.  
(from the Annals of Tacitus: English paraphrase by A.B.)  
CHOIR O mortal race Our lesson learn: Each has his turn And time, and place.
- CHOIR Wonderful is this wall of stone, wrecked by fate.  
SOPRANO The city buildings crumble, the bold works of the giants decay.  
Roofs have cave in, towers collapsed,  
Barred gates are gone, gateways have gaping mouths, hoar frost clings to mortar....  
CHOIR Slaughtered men fell far and wide, death struck down every valiant man,  
SOPRANO Death struck down every valiant man,  
CHOIR ...Deserted ramparts became waste places, the derelict town decayed.  
SOPRANO ...Warriors and craftsmen lay dead in the earth....  
CHOIR Here, long ago, many a happy man  
Was clothed resplendently in glowing gold.  
Proud and flushed with wine, in his shining armour  
He gazed upon his treasure...silver and curious stones,  
Gold, gems, and precious jewels...  
And he gazed at this fine castle, built in a great kingdom.  
(from the Anglo-Saxon poem The Ruin, translated by Kevin Crossley-Holland, used with permission)
- BASS Richard, by the grace of God, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine....  
to the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Earls, Barons, Sheriffs, Stewards, Provosts, and  
all his Bailiffs and faithful subjects of his whole land within the sea and beyond,  
greeting.  
(+CHOIR) Know ye, that we have granted, and by this our present charter have confirmed to our  
burgesses of Colchester, that they may appoint from amongst themselves whomsoever they  
will for Bailiffs and a Justice to hold the pleas of our crown, and to plead the same  
pleas within their borough.
- CHOIR + Placed here on high We serve the town, Beneath the crown, Beneath the sky.  
SOPRANO Grant that they be freethrough the whole of England....  
BASS Differing in size, In note and weight, Yet small or great, We harmonise.  
CHOIR And they that owe them debts, shall well and fully pay them....  
BASS With measured speech Well timed and true Our message due We tell to each.  
CHOIR And all the burgesses may hunt the fox, and the hare, and the polecat....  
BASS
- CHOIR + Brief, clear and bold, We say our say And then straightway Our peace we hold.  
SOPRANO Given by the hand of William, our Chancellor, the sixth day of September, 1189.  
BASS (from Colchester's Charter of 1189)
- CHOIR O mortal race, Our lesson learn: Each has his turn And time, and place.  
CHOIR +
- SOLOISTS Saint Helena, I to thee pray To help me at my final day  
To set the cross and His passion Betwixt my sinful soul and doom (= judgment)  
Now and in the hour of my death, And bring my soul to perfect rest.  
(Prayer to Saint Helena, c.1425, slightly modernised by A.B.)

Commissioned by Colchester Choral Society in memory of Mr W J Hughes

A S O N G T O S A I N T H E L E N A

Cantata for Soprano and Bass Soloists, Choir and Orchestra

ALAN BULLARD (1989)

Spirited ( $\text{♩} = c.120$ )

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. Each system has a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Spirited' with a quarter note equal to approximately 120 beats per minute. The score includes various dynamics such as *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *p* (piano). There are also performance instructions like 'obs.' (obscure) and 'w.w.' (with woodwind). A circled number '1' is placed above the first measure of the fifth system. A large blue watermark 'Preview File Only' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

S  
A  
T  
B

Placed here on  
Placed here on  
Placed here  
Placed here

pizz Str.  
imp

This block contains the first system of a musical score. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Soprano: "Placed here on"; Alto: "Placed here on"; Tenor: "Placed here"; Bass: "Placed here". The piano part includes a "pizz Str." (pizzicato strings) instruction and a dynamic marking of "imp" (impetuoso).

S  
A  
T  
B

high, on high We serve the town,  
high, on high We serve the town,  
on high We serve the town,  
on high We serve the town,

This block contains the second system of the musical score. It features the same four vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Soprano: "high, on high We serve the town,"; Alto: "high, on high We serve the town,"; Tenor: "on high We serve the town,"; Bass: "on high We serve the town,". The piano part continues with accompaniment for the vocal lines.

(2)

S — the town, Be - neath the crown, Be - neath,

A — the town, Be - neath the crown, Be - neath,

T — Be - neath the crown, Be -

B — Be - neath the crown, Be -

(2)

Preview File Only

S be-neath the sky.

A be-neath the sky.

T -neath the sky.

B -neath the sky.

Sts. *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Ped. →

Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass staves are shown with whole notes. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, marked *(dim.)*, and a similar triplet in the left hand marked *(Ped. →)*. A *pp* dynamic is indicated, along with a *{w.w.}* marking. A blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid on the piano part.

3

Soprano: *mf* In note and weight,

Alto: *mf* Dif-fer-ing in size,

Tenor: *mp* In note and weight, *mf* Yet small or

Bass: *p* Dif-fer-ing in size, *mf* Yet small or

3

Piano: *Sbs. pp*, *cresc.*, *mf*

The vocal staves contain lyrics for the first system. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, marked *Sbs. pp*, and a *cresc.* marking. A *mf* dynamic is indicated. A blue watermark "Preview File Only" is overlaid on the piano part.

S  
Yet small or great We har - mon - ise.

A  
Yet small or great we har - mon - ise. *p* *soffo voce*  
With mea - sured speech Well

T  
great, or great We har - mon - ise. *p* *soffo voce*

B  
great We har - mon - ise. With mea - sured speech Well

*p*  
Bns.

S  
timed and true Our mes - sage due We tell to each.

A  
timed and true Our mes - sage due We tell to each.

T  
timed and true Our mes - sage due We tell to each.

B  
timed and true Our mes - sage due We tell to each.

Sbs.  
W.W.  
*f*

Preview File Only

Musical score for SATB choir and piano. The SATB parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are shown as whole notes. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

4

S  
Brief, clear, and bold, \_\_\_\_\_ and bold, We say our

A  
Brief, clear, and bold, \_\_\_\_\_ and bold, We say our

T  
Brief, clear, \_\_\_\_\_ and bold, \_\_\_\_\_ We say \_\_\_\_\_

B  
Brief, clear, \_\_\_\_\_ and bold, \_\_\_\_\_ We say \_\_\_\_\_

4

Sta.

p Timp

f

Musical score for SATB choir and piano with lyrics. The SATB parts have lyrics underneath. The piano accompaniment includes dynamics like *f*, *p*, and *Timp*. A circled '4' appears at the beginning of the section.



First system of musical notation. It includes five staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: S: say, our say And then straightway, and; A: say, our say And then straightway, and; T: our say And then straight -; B: our say And then straight -; The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). Dynamics include *mp* and *pp*. There is a large blue watermark "Preview File Only" diagonally across the piano part.

Second system of musical notation. It includes five staves: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano accompaniment. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: S: then straightway, and then straightway Our peace we hold.; A: then straightway, and then straightway Our peace we hold.; T: way Our peace we hold.; B: way Our peace we hold.; The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). Dynamics include *p* and *pp*.

5

S *pp sotto voce*

A O mor-tal race Our les-son learn: Each has his turn And time,

T *pp sotto voce*

B O mor - tal race Our les-son learn: Each has his turn And time,

5

ob.

Bn. *pp*

$\text{♩} = \text{♩} = c 120$

S *sempre pp*

A and place, his turn And time, and place, his turn And time, and place.

T *sempre pp*

B and place, his turn And time, and place, his turn And time, and place.

Side Drum *pp cresc: poco: a poco p*

Piano accompaniment for the first system, featuring a treble and bass clef with musical notation.

Empty musical staves for the second system.

Piano accompaniment for the second system, including dynamic markings like "sbs. pizz f" and "mp".

6

S con- me-li-a, con-

A con- -me-li-a, con-

T qua -tu - me-li-a, qua

B qua -tu - me-li-a, qua

6

Piano accompaniment for the third system, including the label "Bns." for Bassoon.

S -me-li-a me-tu -o-rum,  
A -me-li-a me-tu -o-rum,  
T -tu - me-li-a et me-tu gra-vi-  
B -tu - me-li-a et me-tu gra-vi-

Sta.  
(Bn.)

This system contains the vocal parts for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with the piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in treble clef, and the piano part is in bass clef. The lyrics are: S -me-li-a me-tu -o-rum, A -me-li-a me-tu -o-rum, T -tu - me-li-a et me-tu gra-vi-, B -tu - me-li-a et me-tu gra-vi-. The piano accompaniment includes a section marked 'Sta.' and another marked '(Bn.)'. There are various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

BASS SOLO

mp the peo - ple

Fls.  
S.D.  
Stvs.

This system features a 'BASS SOLO' section. The bass line is in bass clef and includes the lyrics 'the peo - ple'. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef and includes markings for 'Fls.', 'S.D.', and 'Stvs.'. There are various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

7

BASS of Bri - tain, led by

S con- -me-li-a,

A con- -me-li-a,

T qua -tu -me-li-a,

B qua -tu - me-li-a,

S.D. Bn.

7

BASS Boa - di - cea, had been ground down

S con- -me-li-a

A con- -me-li-a

T qua -tu - me-li-a et me-tu

B qua -tu - me-li-a et me-tu

Sns. Bn.