

PROGRAMME NOTE

The Anvil is about the universal longing for suffrage, protest, liberty. It takes as its starting-point the 1819 Peterloo massacre in Manchester, England. A wide range of choral forces and soloists enabled Emily to conjure the complex web of voices in a mass protest, held together by the soprano as narrator, plus bass-baritone and choir as one or many voices from the crowd and bannings. Musical influences for the score ranged from early 19th Century hymn tunes to the power and terror of mill machinery.

The idea of Michael making a large grid or woven text as part of the libretto came when we began to research Peterloo and found the repeated occupation 'weaver' in inventories of the dead and injured. The finished text was not meant to be read only in a straightforward linear way – though it can be – but also as a vertical and horizontal 'weave'. Like the protesting crowds it evokes, it contains multiple voices and registers, from lists of injuries to slogans on banners, declarations of political will to shouts of protest, prayers to cries for help and snippets of stories.

This huge 'Anvil Grid' became a starting-point and resource for Emily's music, but we felt another kind of text was needed, one with a narrative thread. So Michael wrote 'The Stories of Peterloo' and that became the spine of the piece. Why the title? We chose it partly because the scrap ground where Peterloo took place was anvil-shaped, but mainly because of its resonances with work being done, with futures being forged. *The Anvil* is, we hope, a universal cry for suffrage and democracy.

Emily Howard and Michael Symon Roberts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Commissioned by BBC Radio 3 and Manchester International Festival and first performed by Kate Royal (soprano), Christopher Parves (baritone) and the BBC Philharmonic, BBC Singers, Hallé Choir, Hallé Youth Choir and Hallé Ancoats Community Choir, conducted by Ben Gernon at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, on 7th July 2019

First broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 16th August 2019, the 200th Anniversary of Peterloo

INSTRUMENTATION

3 Flutes (3rd doubling Piccolo)

3 Oboes

3 Clarinets in B \flat (3rd doubling Bass Clarinet)

3 Bassoons (3rd doubling Contrabassoon)

5 Horns in F

3 Trumpets in B \flat

2 Tenor Trombones

Bass Trombone

Tuba

Tirpani

Percussion (5 players):

1. Large Bass Drum, Kit (15 Tom-toms (very low, low, medium, high, very high), 2 Tom-toms, (medium, very high), Metal Rebound)
2. Kit 2 (Tenor Drum, 5 pieces of highly resonant Trash Metal (very low, low, medium, high, very high), medium Suspended Triangle, 3 Woodblocks (low, medium, high), Suspended Cymbal (very high), Metal Rebound, Double Bass bow)
3. Pair of Large Cymbals, Kit 3 (Large Thunderstorm, 2 Tom-toms (low, high), 1 piece of highly resonant Trash Metal (very high), 3 Suspended Cymbals (low, medium, high), Metal Rebound, Double Bass bow)

Solo Soprano

Solo Baritone

Chamber Choir

Youth Choir

Chorus

Strings

(recommended: 14-12-10-8-6)

Score in C

Duration: 90'

The Anvil

An Elegy for Petrarcho

Heavy brass (3 parts)
Musette (No. 2) = 10)
Woods
Piccolo (No. 2) = 10)

The score is divided into two main sections: **Heavy brass** and **Woods**. The **Heavy brass** section includes parts for Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Trombone 3, and Tuba. The **Woods** section includes parts for Flute 1, Flute 2, Oboe 1, Oboe 2, Clarinet 1, Clarinet 2, Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2, and Piccolo. Below these are parts for **Musette** (No. 2) = 10 and **Piccolo** (No. 2) = 10. The score is written in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. A large watermark is visible across the score.