**Niall Docherty**

**Performance Information**

**Niall Docherty *A Godly Dream***

Seventeen-part male voice ensemble

**Niall Docherty** voice, singing all multi-tracked vocal lines

**Text**

**Extracts from *Ane Godlie Dream* (1603)**

Stanza 11

Lord Jesus cum (said I) and end my greif. My spreit is vexit, the captiue wald be frie: All vice abounds, O send vs sum relief, I loath to liue, I wishe desoluit to be. My spreit dois lang and thristeth efter thee, As thriftie ground requyris ane shoure of raine: My heart is dry, as fruitles barren tree, I feill my selfe, how can I heir remaine?

Stanza 19

Thy haist is greit, he asnwerit me again, Thou thinks thee thair, thou art transported so: That pleasant place most purchaist be with paine, The way is strait, and thou hes far to go. Art thou content to wander to and fro, Throw greit deserts throw water and throw fyre? Throw thornes and breirs and monie dangers mo, Quhat says thou now? Thy febil flesh will tyre.

Stanza 27

I luikit vp vnto that Castell fair, Glistering lyke gold, and schyning bricht: The staitlie towres did mount aboue the air, Thay blindit mee, thay cuist sa greit ane licht. My heart was glaid to sie that joyfull sicht, My voyage than I thocht was not in vaine: I him besocht to guyde mee thair aricht, With manie vowes neuer to tyre againe.

Stanza 33

I luikit down and saw ane pit most black, Most full of smuke and flaming fyre most fell: That vglie sicht maid mee to flie aback, I feirit to here so manie shout and yell: I him besocht that hee the trueth wald tell, Is this said I, the Papists purging place? Quhair thay affirm that sillie saulles do dwell, To purge thair sin, befoir thay rest in peace?

*Elizabeth Melville*

**Programme Note**

This a capella piece for any combination of male voices is inspired by a poem from 1603 called *Ane Godlie Dreame*, a Calvinist dream-vision by Scottish noblewoman and religious reformist Elizabeth Melville. Melville was an active member of the presbyterian resistance to the ecclesiastical policies of both James VI and Charles I, and was close to many of the leading figures of the movement. The earliest known Scottish woman to see her work in print, her poems were largely forgotten outside academic circles until brought to wider public attention by Germaine Greer.

The poem is a startlingly vivid lamentation of a world overrun with sin, as well as a desperate appeal to God for deliverance. The piece aims to capture some sense of the emotional pitch at which devout Christian reformers must have lived at this time in history, with the threat of eternal damnation both terrifying and constant. The poem is also a detailed vision of the promise of Heaven for those willing to embrace the new faith, as well as a rumination on eternity. This is reflected in the piece’s final section.

Echoes of Scottish traditional music and Renaissance/Early Modern choral music are fused with jazz and contemporary styles. Much close harmony is used, and whilst the parts are simply numbered rather than strictly split into tenor or bass, the music does require the full range of male voices from bass to counter tenor or falsetto. The words and phrases used are either direct quotes from the poem, or slightly adapted by the composer.

The full-length 480-line poem is difficult to find online The particular stanzas from which the words to this piece are taken or adapted from are quoted in the original Scots. The language has been Anglicised by the composer in the piece itself.

**Biography**

Originally from Glasgow, Niall graduated from the University of Oxford with a degree in English and spent time at the Royal Academy of Music on the Musical Theatre programme, working briefly as an actor whilst beginning to write his own music as a means of staying creative between auditions. This quickly took over, and he will enter the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland this year in order to pursue writing full-time.