

## James MacMillan



James MacMillan Photo © Eric Richmond / ArenaPAL

### CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

#### The Birds of Rhiannon

2001

24 min

Tone-poem for orchestra with optional chorus (SATB)

Text: Michael Symmons Roberts (E)

2.picc.2.corA.2.bcl.dbcl.ssax.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4):glsp/tuned gongs/t.bells/6low bells/vib/marimba/3wdbl(graded)/6tpl.bl/3cowbells/guero/whip/rainstick/3metal sheets(sm,med,lg)/thundersheet/bongos/bodhran/brake dr/SD/TD/BD/2flexatones/susp.cym/water gongs(sm,lg)/2gliss.gongs/tam-t-harp-strings

*"...boldly coloured music, dramatic confrontations of ideas, a powerful surge of momentum, and instrumental lines that have an independent life but gel as a cohesive texture... MacMillan shares with Rimsky a virtuosity in defining and combining instrumental timbres."*  
*Daily Telegraph*

**World Premiere: 26 Jul 2001**

Royal Albert Hall, London, United Kingdom

The Sixteen; BBC Philharmonic

Conductor: James MacMillan

#### Cantos Sagrados

(orchestral version)

1989 orch.1997

22 min

for chorus (SATB) and orchestra

Text: Ariel Dorfman, Ana Maria Mendoza and sacred texts (L-E)

3(III=af/picc).2.corA.2.bcl.3(III=dbn)-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(3):vib/metal bar/cyms/sizzle cym/t.bells/SD/susp.cym/2tuned gongs(B,D)/BD/tam-t-harp-pft(=cel)-strings

**World premiere of version: 21 Mar 1998**

Glasgow Cathedral, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Royal Scottish National Orchestra and chorus

Conductor: Christopher Bell

#### Magnificat

(orchestral version)

1999

14 min

for SATB choir and orchestra

Text: 1662 Book of Common Prayer (E)

2.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):vib/glsp/t.bells/tam-t/susp.cym-harp-organ(ad lib)-strings

**World Premiere: 05 Jan 2000**

Wells Cathedral, Wells, United Kingdom

Wells Cathedral Choir/St.John's CollegeChoir, Cambridge/BBC Philharmonic

Conductor: James MacMillan

#### Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis

(orchestral version)

1999/2001

21 min

for SATB choir and orchestra

Text: 1662 Book of Common Prayer (E)

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):vib/glsp/t.bells/tam-t/susp.cym-harp-organ(ad lib)-strings

## Nunc Dimittis

(orchestral version)  
2001

8 min

for SATB choir and orchestra

Text: 1962 Book of Common Prayer (E)

1.picc.1.corA.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(2):vib/glsp/t.bells/tam-t/susp.cym/BD-harp-organ(ad lib)-strings

**World premiere of version: 16 Nov 2001**

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, United Kingdom

BBC Philharmonic and BBC Singers

Conductor: James MacMillan

## Quickening

1998

48 min

for counter-tenor, 2 tenor and baritone soloists, children's choir, SATB choir and orchestra

Text: Michael Symmons Roberts (E)

2.picc.3(III=corA).3(III=bcl).2.dbn-4.4.3.1-timp.perc(4):handbells/  
3temple bowls(dobaci)/marimba/tgl(high)/rainstick/2wdbl/2congas/  
5tpl.bl/4brake dr/finger cyms/glsp/steel dr/3wdbl/SD/cyms/susp.cym/  
tam-t(med)/vib/tuned gongs/5cowbells/5tom-t/tam-t(lg)/t.bells/  
3tgl(high,med,low)/whip/log dr/BD/susp.cym-harp-pft(=cel)-  
chamber org-grand org or synth(ad lib)-strings

*"Using a richly allusive libretto by Michael Symmons Roberts, Quickening deals with the the concept of birth in all its explosive, miraculous, life-changing and occasionally life-threatening forms... MacMillan grounds it in sonorities of gripping viscerality... His great gift is to make a complex but white-hot passion immediately coherent and persuasive."*

*The Times*

*"MacMillan writes a skilful, archaic counterpoint for the Hilliards, with only the lightest accompaniment... the final climax of this virtual oratorio is a rampage of choral-orchestral joy."*  
*Sunday Times*

*"Two outer movements, joyous and celebratory, frame an inner pair, dark and menacing with belching low brass, screaming trumpets, whip-crack percussion and martial snare drums... MacMillan's output is prodigious, his skill at handling large forces dazzling..."*

*The Observer*

9790060119811 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1412**

**World Premiere: 05 Sep 1999**

Royal Albert Hall, London, United Kingdom

Hilliard Ensemble; BBC Symphony Orchestra/BBC Symphony Chorus/Westminster

Cathedral Boys' Choir

Conductor: Andrew Davis

CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA 2

## Seven Last Words from the Cross

1993

45 min

Cantata for SSAATTBB chorus and strings

Text: Biblical (E-L)

*"...probably MacMillan's masterpiece... the maturity in this composition is astounding: the tonal structure of the seven settings, harmony which can be spare or lush without ever being overwritten, an inexorable sense of the drama in the text, the balance between voice and strings. A few seconds, in difficult times, when meditation was centre stage, when it was possible to regain optimism."*

*The Guardian*

9790060114175 **Study Score - Hawkes Pocket Score 1360**

9790060115615 **(Vocal Score)**

**World Premiere: 27 Mar 1994**

BBC TV, United Kingdom

Capella Nova/BT Scottish Ensemble

Conductor: Alan Tavener

## St John Passion

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John  
2007

1 hr 27 min

for solo baritone, chorus and orchestra

Text: Revised Standard Version of The Bible (E); the Vulgate (L); Stabat Mater (L) with additional text by the composer (E)

1 baritone solo, small chorus(="narrator chorus", 8-24 singers of professional standard), larger chorus (professional chorus minimum 80 voices, amateur chorus minimum 120 voices)

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).1.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(1):t.bells/tuned gongs/tgl/Sanctus bells/5tpl.bl/SD/BD/susp.cym/sizzle cym/tam-t-chamber organ-strings

*"MacMillan has come up with a masterly work that has all the hallmarks of a 21st-century classic... MacMillan is a master of ratcheting up the tension, building the drama, his subtle use of syncopation adding to the effect. But he can also turn his hand to the most lyrical, vulnerable music."*

*Musical America*

*"A blazing blockbuster, a piece as fiercely communicative as anything that the 48-year-old MacMillan has written before.... The end of Part One was masterly: no loudspeaker wailing as the Crucifixion loomed, but a resigned, pianissimo meditation, threaded with keening instrumental solos."* *The Times*

**World Premiere: 27 Apr 2008**

Barbican Hall, London, United Kingdom

Christopher Maltman, baritone; London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus

Conductor: Colin Davis CBE

CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA 2

## Visitatio Sepulchri

1992-93

45 min

for 7 solo singers or 7-part chorus and chamber orchestra

Text: Texts from a 14th century Easter Day liturgical drama and the Te Deum (L)

2S,A,2T,B,male speaker (Sprechstimme)

2(II=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-2.2.2(II=btrbn).0-timp.

perc(1):2cowbells/2wdbl/2bongos/2timbales/SD/2tam-t/5tom-t/

5tpl.bl/glsp/t.bells/BD/cyms/bell tree-strings(min:8.6.4.4.2)

NB: this work is available both as a music theatre piece and for concert performance

*"This work is quintessential MacMillan. It progresses relentlessly from spaciouly looming towers of string tone to outbursts of terror... the strength of feeling is irresistible; bursting with love, pain and tenderness..."*

*Opera*

**World Premiere: 20 May 1993**

Tramway, Glasgow, United Kingdom

Francisco Negrin, director; Scottish Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Ivor Bolton