

# THE BLACK LAKE



**THREE CHOIRS  
FESTIVAL 2025**  
HEREFORD 26 JUL – 2 AUG

## Arvo Pärt

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten 6'

## Edward Elgar

Introduction and Allegro 14'

## Benjamin Britten

Les Illuminations 23'

## Interval

## Richard Blackford

The Black Lake 45' *festival commission, premiere*

### Les Illuminations

#### Fanfare

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

#### Villes

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont montés ces Alleghanyes et ces Libans de rêve! Des chalets de cristal et de bois qui se meuvent sur des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères ceints de colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent mélodieusement dans les feux. Des cortèges de Mabs en robes rousses, opalines, montent des ravines. Là-haut, les pieds dans la cascade et les ronces, les cerfs tettent Diane. Les Bacchantes des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle. Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des ermites... Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées des peuples. Des châteaux bâtis en os sort la musique inconnue. Le paradis des orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse la fête de la nuit. Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?

#### Phrase

J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.

#### Antique

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies, tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remeunt. Tachées de lies brunes, tes joues se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

#### Royauté

Un beau matin, chez un peuple fort doux, un homme et une femme superbes criaient sur la place publique: 'Mes amis, je veux qu'elle soit reine!' 'Je veux être reine!' Elle riait et tremblait. Il parlait aux amis de révélation, d'épreuve terminée. Ils se pâmaient l'un contre l'autre. En effet ils furent rois toute une matinée où les tentures

Elizabeth Watts *soprano*

Betsan Llwyd *narrator*

Steffan Rhodri *narrator*

Three Choirs Festival Chorus

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

David Hill *conductor*

**Performance of The Black Lake supported by the  
Three Choirs Festival Commissioning Circle**

**Commissioning Partner: Bournemouth Symphony  
Chorus and Lighthouse, Poole's Centre for the Arts,  
who will give a second performance in 2026**

#### Fanfare

I alone hold the key to this wild parade.

#### Towns

These are towns! This is a people for whom these Alleghenies and Lebanons rose up! Chalets of crystal and wood move on unseen rails and pulleys. Old craters, girded by colossi and palm-trees of copper, roar harmoniously midst the fires. Processions of Mabs in russet and opaline robes climb the ravines. Up there, Diana suckles stags, with their feet in the waterfall and brambles. Suburban Bacchantes sob, and the moon burns and howls. Venus enters caves of blacksmiths and hermits... Groups of belfries sing people's ideas. From castles of bone comes unknown music. The paradise of storms founders. The savages dance ceaselessly the festival of the night. Which lovely arms, which beautiful hour will give back to me this country whence my slumber and my smallest movements come?

#### Phrase

I have stretched ropes from steeple to steeple; garlands from window to window; chains of gold from star to star, and I dance.

#### Antique

Graceful son of Pan! Around your brow, crowned with small flowers and berries, move your eyes, precious orbs. Stained with brown dregs, your cheeks are hollowed. Your fangs gleam. Your breast is like a zither, its chiming spreading about in your white arms. Your heart beats in this belly where sleeps the dual sex. Wander in the night, moving gently this thigh, that other thigh, and that left leg.

#### Royalty

One fine morning, among a most gentle people, a man and woman wondrous to behold cried out in the public square: 'My friends, I desire that she should be queen!' 'I want to be queen!' She was laughing and trembling. He spoke to his friends of revelation, of trial endured. They swooned, one against the other. Indeed, they became royalty for a whole morning while crimson drapes

carminées se relevèrent sur les maisons, et toute l'après-midi, où ils s'avancèrent du côté des jardins de palmes.

### Marine

Les chars d'argent et de cuivre –  
Les proues d'acier et d'argent –  
Battent l'écume, –  
Soulèvent les souches des ronces.  
Les courants de la lande,  
Et les ornières immenses du reflux,  
Filent circulairement vers l'est,  
Vers les piliers de la forêt,  
Vers les fûts de la jetée,  
Dont l'angle est heurté par des tourbillons de lumière.

### Interlude

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

### Being Beauteous

Devant une neige un Être de Beauté de haute taille. Des sifflements de mort et des cercles de musique sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler comme un spectre ce corps adoré: des blessures écarlates et noires éclatent dans les chaires superbes. Les couleurs propres de la vie se foncent, dansent, et se dégagent autour de la Vision, sur le chantier. Et les frissons s'élèvent et grondent, et la saveur forcenée de ces effets se chargeant avec les sifflements mortels et les rauques musiques que le monde, loin derrière nous, lance sur notre mère de beauté, – elle recule, elle se dresse. Oh! nos os sont revêtus d'un nouveau corps amoureux.  
Ô la face cendrée, l'écusson de crin, les bras de cristal! Le canon sur lequel je dois m'abattre à travers la mêlée des arbres et de l'air léger!

### Parade

Des drôles très solides. Plusieurs ont exploité vos mondes. Sans besoins, et peu pressés de mettre en œuvre leurs brillantes facultés et leur expérience de vos consciences. Quels hommes mûrs! Des yeux hébétés à la façon de la nuit d'été, rouges et noirs, tricolores, d'acier piqué d'étoiles d'or; des faciès déformés, plombés, blêmis, incendiés; des enrouements folâtres! La démarche cruelle des oripeaux! – Il y a quelques jeunes...  
Ô le plus violent Paradis de la grimace enragée!...  
Chinois, Hottentots, bohémiens, niais, hyènes, Molochs, vieilles démentes, démons sinistres, ils mêlent les tours populaires, maternels, avec les poses et les tendresses bestiales. Ils interpréteraient des pièces nouvelles et des chansons 'bonnes filles'. Maîtres jongleurs, ils transforment le lieu et les personnes, et usent de la comédie magnétique...  
J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

### Départ

Assez vu. La vision s'est rencontrée à tous les airs.  
Assez eu. Rumeurs des Villes, le soir, et au soleil et toujours.  
Assez connu. Les arrêts de la vie. Ô Rumeurs et Visions!  
Départ dans l'affection et le bruit neufs!

*were raised anew on houses, and for a whole afternoon, when they promenaded along the palm gardens.*

### Seascape

*Chariots of silver and copper –  
Prows of steel and silver –  
Pound the foam, –  
Disturb the stumps of bramble.  
The moorland streams,  
And the vast ebb-tide canals,  
Flow circling towards the east,  
Toward the pillars of the forest,  
Toward the piers of the jetty,  
Whose corner is struck by whirls of light.*

### Interlude

*I alone hold the key to this wild parade.*

### Being Beauteous

*Against the snow a Beauteous Being, tall in stature. Whisperings of death and circles of muffled music make this exalted body rise, stretch and tremble like a spectre: black and scarlet wounds break out in the wondrous flesh. The true colours of life deepen, dance, and dissolve around the vision on the site. And the shudderings rise and roar, and the furious impulse of these impressions, charged by the deathly whisperings and raucous music which the world, far behind us, casts upon our mother of beauty – she retreats, and rises up. O! our bones are clothed again in a new amorous body.  
O the ashen face, the horsehair shield, the crystal arms! The cannon on which I must hurl myself through the tangle of trees and the light breeze!*

### Parade

*What stalwart amusing fellows. Several have exploited your worlds. In no need, and little hurry to set their brilliant minds and their experience of your consciences to work. What mature men! Eyes, torpid like the summer night, red and black, tri-colored, of steel pierced with golden stars; deformed features, leaden, made pale, scorched; a playful hoarseness! The cruel bearing of tawdry finery! There are some who are young ones...  
O most violent paradise of the mad grimace!...  
Chinese, Hottentots, Bohemians, fools, hyenas, Molochs, old madwomen, sinister demons, they mingle their popular and maternal wiles with bestial poses and caresses. They would interpret new plays and songs 'for good girls'. Master jugglers, they transform place and persons and use spellbinding comedy...  
I alone hold the key to this wild parade.*

### Leaving

*Seen enough. The vision was found in every song.  
Had enough. Clamour of towns, in the evening, in the sunlight, and always.  
Known enough. Life's constraints. O Clamour and Visions!  
Leaving for new affection and new noise.*

*Arthur Rimbaud (1854–91)*

## The Black Lake

*\* Words in italics indicate sung texts.*

(ORCHESTRAL INTRODUCTION – LIKE A SOFT LULLABY)

### Female Narrator (FN):

Long ago in a slate quarry, a slab fell onto a quarryman's head  
from the terrace above. Another widow with a small child.  
A whip-round for a mangle, another washerwoman.

(A WORDLESS CHORUS, LIKE SOFT, SIGHING WIND)

### Soprano:

*I am the Queen of the Black Lake,  
My kingdom is the grievous waters  
That lie beyond the utmost sorrow.*

### Chorus:

*I am learned in the chemistry of tears;  
I assembled them in the cauldron of the centuries,  
Then measured and reduced them to their elements.*

### Soprano and Chorus:

*I swallowed the sun;  
And the moon I took as my pillow to my resting place.*

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

## Scene 1: Village

### Male Narrator/Boy (MN):

I'll go and ask Huw's Mam if he can come out to play.  
Can Huw come out to play?

### Huw's Mam (FN):

No, he can't.  
He's in bed and that's where you should be, you little monkey.  
What were you two doing yesterday – making mischief, driving  
people out of their minds?

### Boy (MN):

What people out of their minds?  
We're not driving them out of their minds – it's them that's going  
out of their minds themselves.

(BRIGHT ORGAN INTRODUCTION TO ASCENSION DAY HYMN)

### Chorus:

*Heddiw cododd Crist o'r bedd,  
Haleliwia!  
Awd w rein tragwyddol hedd  
Haleliwia!*

*Translation:  
Today, Christ rose from the grave,  
Hallelujah!  
Creator of our everlasting peace  
Hallelujah!*

### Huw (FN):

Tell me Huw, why do Church people go to church on Ascension  
Day?

### Boy (MN):

Well, because Jesus Christ went up to Heaven like a balloon of  
course, after he rose from the dead.

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

### Boy (MN):

Can Moi come out to play,  
Just to the Sheep Field to get pignuts?

### Moi's Mam (FN):

Don't you be late now, you little monkey.

### Boy (MN):

Come on, lads, or it'll be getting dark.

(MYSTERIOUS MUSIC)

### Huw (FN):

Look, there's a moon.

### Boy (MN):

There's Little Owen the Coal's Mam.

### Em's Mam (FN):

Come and see, my little chick, before they put a lid on him.

### Boy (MN):

It's Em, Little Owen the Coal's big brother, who used to wear  
women's clothes, home from the Asylum, from Denbigh – in his  
coffin...

### Moi (FN):

Come on, lads or we'll never get any pignuts.

### Boy (MN):

So we went very quietly to where the pignuts were.  
And what did we see in front of us – Grace Ellen Shoe Shop and  
Frank Bee Hive lying down by a tree stump. Why is Frank lying on  
top of Grace Ellen, and nearly choking her?

### Huw (FN):

I don't know.

### Boy (MN):

Me neither.

### Moi (FN):

They must have been playing, as people do after they get  
married...

### Boy (MN):

But Grace Ellen and Frank Bee Hive aren't married.  
Will you come out to play tomorrow, Huw?

### Huw (FN):

Yes, if Mam will let me.

### Boy (MN):

Alright. Good night, now.

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

## Scene 2: Home

### Boy (MN):

Dew, there's a nice smell from somewhere. Could it be coming  
from our house.  
Yes! It is too! Hello Mam. Dew, I'm hungry.

### Mam (FN):

Come on then, my chick. You eat your fill.  
Where did you get those potatoes that were under the stairs?  
Are you sure you didn't steal them, are you, chick?

### Boy (MN):

Steal them? No, I got them from the lad at Gorlan Farm.  
Don't tell anybody, he said.  
Dew, these mushrooms are good.

I'll get a whole capful again tomorrow.  
Did you have a hard wash to do, Mam?

**Mam (FN):**

Just a bit tired, you know, my chick.  
Go to bed quickly now so I can iron these clothes.  
The Vicarage wants them first thing.

**Boy (MN):**

Mam thought the world of Canon, our vicar then. You should have seen her ironing his surplice and his stole on our table. She did all the men's and boys' first, then his very slowly. No one would ever think that Canon was such a kind man by looking at his face; he'd had smallpox long ago and it left a scar on the side of his mouth.  
(*innocently*) Mam, where did Canon get smallpox?

**Mam (FN):**

Don't ask foolish questions.

**Boy (MN):**

Will there be a scar on his head in Heaven?  
Then Mam stopped ironing and started to cry.  
Mam was always crying quietly about something. I was used to it.

**Mam (FN):**

No, there won't be, my chick.  
There'll not be one scar in Heaven.

(SOPRANO STANDS NEAR FEMALE NARRATOR TO MAKE IT CLEAR SHE IS THE SINGING VOICE OF MAM.)

**Soprano:**

*Y Gŵr a fu gynt o dan hoelion  
Dros ddyn pechadurus fel fi,*

**Boy (MN):**

She had tears rolling down her cheek and was laughing at the same time, till she stopped and went on with her ironing while singing:

**Soprano and Chorus:**

*A yfodd y cwpan I'r gwaelod  
Ei hunan ar ben Calvari.  
Ffynhonell y Cariad Tragwyddol  
Hen gartre meddyliau o hedd.  
Dwg finnau I'r unrhyw gyfamod  
Na thorrir gan angau na'r bedd.*

*Translation:  
The Man who was once under nails  
For a sinful man like me,  
He drank the cup to the bottom  
Alone on top of Calvary.  
The source of eternal love,  
Old home of thoughts of peace,  
Take me to the only covenant  
Unbroken by death or the grave.*

**Boy (MN):**

Dew, Mam had a good voice.  
And she could take people off really well too.  
Is that Will Starch Collar's collar Mam?

**Mam (FN):**

No indeed. You know they're all Canon's.

**Boy (MN):**

Only a joke, Mam.

**Mam (FN):**

Don't joke about Will Collar Starch.  
He was a bad old rascal long ago, drunk in the Blue Bell and out all night.

**Boy (MN):**

How did he get to be a good man?

**Mam (FN):**

He heard the Voice.  
It was the time of the Revival, before you were born and lots of people were hearing the Voice. But Will Collar Starch was the only one who heard and saw the Voice.

**Chorus:**

*Blow ye the trumpet, blow,  
The gladly solemn sound.  
The year of jubilee is come,  
Return ye ransom'd sinners home.*

(REVIVAL MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER DIALOGUE)

**Mam (FN):**

He was going home rolling drunk, and put his head over the bridge to be sick.  
And what did he see but a huge wheel of fire coming down the river.  
And a Voice came from the wheel of fire:

**Chorus:**

*'Will, you old sinner,  
Don't you know you're going headfirst to eternal damnation?'*

**Mam (FN):**

And Will starts shouting 'Oh Dear Mam what shall I do, what shall I do?'

**Chorus:**

*Will, you old sinner,  
Turn back, sinner, turn back.  
Don't you know you're going headfirst to eternal damnation,  
Into the middle of the fire and brimstone?  
Turn back, you old sinner!  
Haven't you been saved yet?  
Will, you old sinner,  
Haven't you been saved?*

**Mam (FN):**

(roaring with laughter)  
He never went to the Blue Bell again and had a clean collar every night. And where do you think they saw him next?

**Boy (MN):**

I don't know.

**Mam (FN):**

On his knees in the Sinner's Seat in Salem Chapel, shouting with all his might like a madman, "Salvation is like the sea, rolling to the shore!"

(They both laugh.)

**Boy (MN):**

Dew, Mam was good that night and I was rolling about laughing in the chair.  
(Mysterious music)  
Though there was a night when Huw and I looked down from that bridge and the moon in the river looked just like a wheel of fire. Perhaps that's what Will Collar Starch saw when he was drunk.



(OPPRESSIVE MUSIC)

But Good Friday was miserable – until tea-time anyhow.

Mam, why do you always go to Church at midday and stay till after three?

**Mam (FN):**

To suffer with Him. He took three hours to die you know.

**Boy (MN):**

Then, after being in Church all afternoon she was laughing at everything I said to her and going around the house singing. But somehow she was never the same after Canon died. She never went to the Vicarage to wash for Huws the Parson who came after him.

**Scene 3: Church**

(BRIGHT, FRESH ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

**Boy (MN):**

I was the first to arrive at Church next morning.

Dew, it was a fine Sunday morning too.

**Chorus:**

*Therefore with Angels and Archangels,  
and with all the company of Heaven,  
we laud and magnify thy glorious Name;  
Holy, holy, holy,  
God of power  
God of might.*

**Boy (MN):**

Huws the Parson was praying:

**Chorus:**

(CHANTING SOFTLY UNDERNEATH THE FOLLOWING NARRATION)

*We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table.  
Amen.  
But thou art the same Lord  
Whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Amen.  
Grant us therefore gracious Lord  
So to eat the flesh of thy dear son Jesus Christ  
And to drink his blood,  
That our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body,  
And our souls washed through his most precious blood.*

**Boy (MN):**

I peeped through my fingers and thought about the bags of crusts and buttered bread and leftover meat that Mam and me used to bring from the Vicarage when Canon was alive. By now the end of the queue was at the Altar. But who suddenly got up from her pew at the back and walked up, in great style, with a white spotted veil?

**Huw (FN):**

Grace Ellen Shoe Shop.  
Do you remember seeing her in Sheep Field with Frank Bee Hive?

**Boy (MN):**

Yes, of course.

**Huw (FN):**

Well, she's had a baby  
And she won't tell anyone who the father is.

**Chorus:**

*(muttering rhythmically)  
The body of our Lord Jesus Christ...  
The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ...*

(CHORUS CONTINUES UNDER NARRATION)

**Boy (MN):**

There she was at the altar rail, with her head bowed.  
Then Hughes the Curate gave Grace Ellen a piece of bread.  
She cupped her hands and swallowed it.  
By now everyone was looking at Grace Ellen, there on her own, waiting for Huws the Parson to turn 'round with the Cup.  
But he didn't...  
I'm sure Canon would never have refused her the wine.  
Grace Ellen didn't get up either, for a long time, still waiting for the Cup. In the end she got up and walked down, as proud as anyone in Church.  
She walked down the middle of the church, then out through the door.

(ORCHESTRA ERUPTS IN A FRENZY)

**Soprano [Queen of Yr Wyddfa]:**

*The hurricanes roar above my paralysis,  
And the rain saturates without cleansing;  
But is there no mercy in the sun,  
Nor pity in the spring breezes?  
They amuse me with their petty vows,  
Their empty promises grate upon my ears,*

*Come again, my Beautiful One,  
Come again and take me  
Before the sun rises from its resting place.  
And I shall again offer you my sacrifice;  
And my sweet incense shall ascend to thy abode.*

(MUSIC BECOMES CALMER – TRANSITION)

**Boy (MN):**

Are you coming to help me pump the organ for the English service this afternoon, Huw?

**Huw (FN):**

Yes. And afterwards we'll go to see Moi.

(DISSONANT, THREATENING MUSIC)

**Scene 4: Moi**

**Boy (MN):**

I got a shock when I saw Moi lying in his bed.

**Moi (FN):**

Hullo, lads, I'm OK,  
But Mam won't let me get up.

**Boy (MN):**

That's what you get for going to catch salmon with Little Owen the Coal.  
(He tries to laugh)  
But even as we were laughing with him,  
I couldn't take my eyes off Moi's face.  
His eyes were shiny like glass,  
and his face was white as chalk.

**Moi (FN):**

Pass me that pot from under the bed, will you.  
Hold it so I can spit in it.

*Despite being nailed by man's hand  
Never has anyone so handsome been seen.*

**Boy (MN):**

Jesus, Moi, you're spitting blood!  
And that was the last time we saw old Moi.  
On Sunday night Huw called round.

**Huw (FN):**

Have you heard? Moi's dead.

**Boy (MN):**

Moi? No he hasn't, you're telling a lie, Huw.  
But I knew by his face that he was telling the truth.  
Then I started to cry like a baby.

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

We both stood with the Choir at the graveside singing:

**Chorus:**

*I raised my cry to the firmament...  
Even to the joists of Heaven's floor;  
And like comets did my voice come back to my lips.*

(MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER NARRATION)

**Boy (MN):**

When I went to bed I could still see old Moi lying under the earth  
and then I started dreaming. There was Moi, lying in bed with a  
lot of angels taking his bed, flapping their wings with a terrible  
noise like pheasants, and Moi smiling at me till he went out of  
sight.

**Soprano:**

*I raised my cry to the firmament...  
But then I took hold the baby's head,  
Planting my red kiss on his cheeks,  
Turning his spittle into an issue of blood.*

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION, CONTINUING UNDER NARRATION)

**Scene 5: Mam's Illness**

**Boy (MN):**

It had been snowing all night. By schooltime, the Hill was like a  
glass floor between two big walls of snow. When it got to dinner  
time I was starving hungry, and thinking what Mam might have  
for dinner for us.  
But when I came through the door there was no cloth on the  
table, or anything, just Mam in the rocking chair.  
When she turned to face me I nearly had a fit. She couldn't speak,  
only lick her lips, and looking so oddly at me.  
What's the matter, Mam?

**Mam (FN):**

*(weakly)* Go up to Pen Bryn to get Gran.

**Boy (MN):**

And I ran and slid for my life up to Pen Bryn.  
And Gran lived with us for three months till Mam got better.

**Scene 6: The Choir From The South**

**Male Chorus (a cappella):**

*Pwy sydd gyda'r wawr yn rhodio  
Rhwng y blodau yn yr ardd?  
Er i ddwylaw dyn Ei hoelio  
Welwyd neb erioed mor hardd:*

*Translation:  
Who walks at dawn amongst  
The flowers in the garden?*

(MALE CHORUS CONTINUES TO SING UNDER NARRATION)

**Boy (MN):**

It was there, on the hillside of Braich that they stood together, the  
choir that came up from the South to beg for money because the  
coal mines had gone on strike.  
And then the voices rising till everyone could hear them from the  
bottom of the Nant.

**Male Chorus:**

*Iesu, Iesu*

**Boy (MN):**

And then going very quiet to sing the last line.

**Male Chorus:**

*Hwn fu farw drosom ni!*

*Translation:  
He who died for us!*

**Huw (FN):**

Jesus, they're good singers.  
They're far better than our Temperance Choir.  
Do you know why?

**Boy (MN):**

No, I don't know.

**Huw (FN):**

It's the coal dust that gets in their throats.  
And that's what gives them good voices.

**Boy (MN):**

*(aggressively)* Quiet, you fool.

**Huw (FN):**

*(slightly indignantly)* Yes, it's true. That's what my Dad said  
anyway.

**Boy (MN):**

Suddenly our Temperance Choir struck up with their own  
chorus.  
Then the South Choir's conductor turned to face us.  
Then all the South Choir and all of us were singing.

**Soprano and Full Chorus:**

*Er i ddwylaw dyn Ei hoelio  
Welwyd neb erioed mor hardd:  
Iesu, Iesu,  
Hwn fu farw drosom ni!  
Amen.*

*Translation:  
Despite being nailed by man's hand  
Never has anyone so handsome been seen.  
Jesus, Jesus,  
He who died for us!  
Amen.*

**Huw (FN):**

That was the best singing I've ever heard.  
Do you know what I'd like?

**Boy (MN):**

No, I don't know.

**Huw (FN):**  
To become a parson.

**Boy (MN):**  
And me too.

**Huw (FN):**  
Do nothing at all but singing and praying all day long.

**Boy (MN):**  
You'd have to stop swearing.

**Huw (FN):**  
Dew, I'll never swear again.  
But I don't want to be godly, just to be good

**Boy (MN):**  
And me too.

(ORCHESTRAL TRANSITION)

And I was hurrying home to tell Mam.  
I was going to say, 'Mam, I've been converted!'  
But when I opened the door and saw her face I stopped dead. She  
looked as if she'd been crying, with a wild look on her, and her  
eyes going through me like steel pins, like the time before.  
What is it, Mam?

**Mam (FN):**  
Your Uncle Will's been here.

**Boy (MN):**  
Mam's brother, thrown out of the Quarry for drinking, he'd come  
before, drunk, at midnight, and Mam had shouted:

**Mam (FN):**  
'You'll never set foot in this house.'

**Boy (MN):**  
Did he come into the house?

**Mam (MS):**  
Yes.

**Boy (MN):**  
Then I couldn't get any sense out of her.  
She talked to herself, or to someone she thought was standing  
behind her.

**Mam (FN):**  
(violently) You old scoundrels, it was you who sent that old devil  
here!

(ORCHESTRAL STORM INTERLUDE)

### Scene 7: Huw's Departure

(STORM MUSIC DIES DOWN, CONTINUING UNDER DIALOGUE)

**Boy (MN):**  
The day started badly – the rain was pelting down all day; and  
lightning.  
Mam wasn't in the house, so I looked for Huw.

**Huw (FN):**  
(awkward pauses between the boys)  
You know the two Cor Sowth men staying with us?  
Dad's going with them to the South to work in a coal mine.  
He wants to take me with him.

**Boy (MN):**  
You, Huw? Will they let you leave school?

**Huw (FN):**  
Yes, Dad says.

**Boy (MN):**  
Will you work in a coal mine, Huw?

**Huw (FN):**  
Yes, of course.

**Boy (MN):**  
You'll talk South when you come back.

**Huw (FN):**  
What?

**Boy (MN):**  
I said you'll talk South when you come back.

**Huw (FN):**  
I'm not coming back.

**Boy (MN):**  
When are you going, Huw?

**Huw (FN):**  
Tomorrow.

**Boy (MN):**  
You won't be in school tomorrow then?

**Huw (FN):**  
No.

**Boy (MN):**  
I'll never see you again, then?

**Huw (FN):**  
I'll write when I get there and start working.

**Boy (MN):**  
Dew, now remember to.

**Huw (FN):**  
Course I will. Goodbye, now.

**Boy (MN):**  
What will I do now?  
Huw and Moi gone,  
And me all on my own.

### Scene 8: The Asylum

**Boy (MN):**  
Mam wasn't at Gran's. So off we went, Gran and me, back home.  
There was Mam, still wearing her coat, soaking wet.  
What is it Mam?  
Where have you been?  
But she just looked through me with her steel pin eyes. Gran told  
me to go next door and ask Grace Evans to come straight away.  
Is Mam very ill Mrs Evans?

**Mrs Evans (Chorus altos):**  
Yes, she's quite poorly.  
They want to take her to hospital.

**Boy (MN):**  
Mrs Evans, why can't she go in an ambulance, her being so ill?

**Mrs Evans (Chorus altos):**

*She isn't ill in the way you mean love.*

**Ellis Evans (Chorus tenors):**

*She has a weakness, you know*

**Boy (MN):**

They want to take her away to Denbigh.  
The Asylum, the Asylum, the Asylum.  
Em came back from there in his coffin.

**Boy (MN):**

*(hesitantly)* I know... what to do... Mrs Evans.

*(bravely)* Mam, you and me are going for a trip in the Corner Shop motor.

We're having a holiday.

And into the car we went, Davey Corner Shop, Little Will  
Policeman's Dad and a lady I'd never seen before.  
Mam talking to herself or as if to someone behind her. Dew, I  
said, those singers from the South are good.  
You should have heard them sing The Man Who Was Nailed To...

**Mam (Soprano & Female Chorus):**

*Y Gŵr a fu gynt o dan hoelion  
Dros ddyn pechadurus fel fi,  
A yfodd y cwpan i'r gwaelod  
Ei hunan ar ben Calfari;*

*Translation:*

*The Man who was once under nails  
For a sinful man like me,  
He drank the cup to the bottom  
Alone on top of Calvary;*

**Boy (MN):**

...By now the two in the front had stopped talking and the next  
thing I heard was the pair of them singing with us, with Little  
Will Policeman's Dad singing tenor.

**Soprano and Full Chorus:**

*Fynhonell y cariad tragwyddol,  
Hen gartre meddyliau o hedd  
Dwg finnau i'r unrhyw gyfamod,  
Na thorrir gan angau na'r bedd.*

*Translation:*

*The source of eternal love,  
Old home of thoughts of peace,  
Take me to the only covenant  
Unbroken by death or the grave.*

(THE SINGING REACHES A CLIMAX. SUDDENLY AN OMINOUS  
HUSH.)

**Boy (MN):**

At last we came to a big gate by the side of the road, up a gravel  
drive to the door of a huge building about four times as big as the  
Salem Chapel. Mam was shaking like a leaf as she got out of the  
car. The lady took Mam by the arm.

**The Lady (Chorus altos):**

*You come with me now,  
Everything will be alright.*

(FEMALE NARRATOR LOOKS AROUND HER, THEN SLOWLY LEAVES  
THE STAGE. SOMBRE MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER NARRATION.)

**Boy (MN):**

At last the lady came back, on her own. She put a little parcel, tied  
with string, in my hand and said, 'These are your Mam's clothes'.

Then she said, 'You need to take these too'.

And now she's putting two rings in my other hand: Mam's  
wedding ring, and the other one that was always on her finger.  
I couldn't say anything – only look at the little parcel that was in  
my right hand and the rings in my left hand. And I'm trying to  
think how they'd got all Mam's clothes into such a small parcel.  
Then I start crying. Not crying like I did years ago after falling  
and hurting myself, nor how I'd cry at some funerals.  
But crying like throwing up – crying as if it was the end of the  
world, and glad to be crying.

Dew, I'd never cried like that before and I've never cried like that  
since.

**Scene 9: The Black Lake**

(REPRISE OF OPENING LULLABY MUSIC, BUT NOW MORE DESOLATE)

**Boy (MN):**

At the Black Lake at last. Oh, my feet are sore. I'll take off these  
old shoes for a minute. The old lake is looking good too. It's odd  
they call it a Black Lake 'cos I can see the sky in it.

(WORDLESS, HUMMING CHORUS – SOFT AND MYSTERIOUS)

**Soprano and Chorus:**

*I am the Queen of the Black Lake.  
I knew the thrill of morning.  
And did revel therein until surfeiting.  
I am learned in the chemistry of tears,  
Momentum, without Magnitude was the task.  
To win and to be vanquished was my lot.*

**Boy (MN):**

Perhaps they're all down there: Huw and Moi and Em, Gran –  
and everyone.

Dew! It would be strange, a marvel, if I saw Mam rising from the  
Lake now and shouting:

'Come here, you little monkey. Been making mischief with that  
old Huw again?'

(SOFT, MURMURING MUSIC)

I'll shout, just to see if there's an echo.

Mam-a-a-m.

**Chorus:**

*Mam-a-a-m*

**Boy (MN):**

*Mam-a-a-m.*

*Mam-a-a-m.*

Is this the Voice, I wonder?

Yes, yes, it is.

**Soprano and Chorus:**

*My innocence sought the secrets of the trees.  
And like a prophet I interpreted  
The murmuring of birds.  
I hungered for the bread of life  
And was satisfied.*

*Therefore with Angels and Archangels  
and with all the Company of Heaven...  
Gan hynny gydag Angylion ac Archangylion  
A Holl Gwmpeini Nef..*