



THE CROSSING • INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE
DONALD NALLY, CONDUCTOR

DISC 1 (55:12)

To the Hands

Caroline Shaw

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2. II. in medio/in the midst 3:00
3. III. Her beacon-hand beckons 3:41
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5. V. Litany of the Displaced 3:01
6. VI. i will hold you 3:09

7. I come near you 13:52

Hans Thomalla

Ad cor

Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

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9. II. joy 2:30
10. III. I laugh at you mockingly 2:03
11. IV. Wound/joy/I laugh at you 4:32

12. Ad genua/To the knees 10:04

Anna Thorvaldsdottir

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David T. Little

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Santa Ratniece

Common Ground

Lewis Spratlan

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The Crossing
International Contemporary Ensemble
Donald Nally, conductor

Seven responses to the cantatas of Dieterich Buxtehude's oratorio
Membra Jesu nostri patientis santissima (1680)



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 THE CROSSING
DONALD NALLY — CONDUCTOR

Seven Responses was born out of a desire to explore how artists address the suffering of others today and yesterday. It emerged from conversations regarding the value of noticing suffering, a complicated topic that demands objectivity (you have to stand away from the tree to see the tree fully). It inspires both group discussion and solitary contemplation. And that's why we wanted to talk about it, in music, while taking a leap out of our comfort zone (new music) to explore the musical sounds and styles of an earlier time, set next to those of today, in texts of parallel content.

We asked seven of the world's foremost composers to create musical responses to Dieterich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri* (1680), an iconic sacred oratorio of the German Baroque consisting of seven cantatas, each addressed to one of the limbs of Jesus hanging on the cross. With these new works performed in alternation with the original cantatas, we created a concert of Wagnerian proportions – over three and a half hours of singing and playing

with collaborators Quicksilver in the early music and ICE in the new works. The event has the highs and lows of grand opera and the nuances of intimate chamber music; it challenges us to explore our relative distance from, or closeness to, music across centuries, cultures, and continents. And, because of the extraordinary creativity of these seven composers, it requires us to listen carefully to who we are, what we are doing.

Listening is what *Seven Responses* is about. Listening to how we respond to suffering and how we declare joy; listening to the voices of composers reaching over centuries, over lands, over cultures; listening to each other in a room full of people singing. Listening to who is in a trough and who is on a peak; riding the waves of the music and letting the energy of the wave determine the direction of the phrase, the time, the collective, the problem and the solution – in our lives, and of those around us.

- Donald Nally

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1 – solos in *I come near you*
2 – solo in *Ad genua/To the knees*
3 – solos in *My soul will sink within me*
4 – solos in *Common Ground*

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Dedicated to the memory of Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

Seven Responses was commissioned by The Crossing and premiered at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral June 24 and 25, 2016 with the cantatas of Buxtehude played by Quicksilver. It was recorded June 26, 2016 at St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley, Malvern, Pennsylvania.

Major funding for *Seven Responses* has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Glatfelter Family Foundation, and a generous anonymous donor.

dress in magic amulets, dark, from My feet and My soul will sink within me were co-commissioned by Eric Owens.

To the Hands was co-commissioned by Debra Reinhard and Pamela Prior.

I come near you was co-commissioned by The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music and Joe Waz.

Photos: *Seven Responses* premiere, June 24, 2016 photo: Chip Colson

innova is supported by an endowment from the McKnight Foundation.

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To the Hands

words and music: Caroline Shaw

How does one respond to an image of another person's pain? And how does one respond to the music of another artist who is trying to ask that same question? These are the two queries that anchored my approach to The Crossing's incredible *Seven Responses* project. *To the Hands* begins and ends with strains of Buxtehude's own *Ad manus*, with small harmonic and melodic references woven occasionally throughout. The division of the piece into six parts reflects the partitioning of *Membra Jesu nostri*, and I continued the tradition of blending old text with new.

The first movement acts as a prelude and turns the opening tune of *Ad manus* into a wordless plainchant melody. The second movement fragments Buxtehude's setting of the central question, "*quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum*," or "what are these wounds in the midst of your hands?" It settles finally on an inversion of the question, so that we reflect, "What are these wounds in the midst of our hands?" We notice what may have been done to us, but we also question what we have done and what our role has been in these wounds we see before us.

The text that follows in the third movement is a riff on Emma Lazarus' sonnet *The New Colossus*, famous for its engraving at the base of the Statue of Liberty. The poem's lines "Give me your tired, your poor,/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" and its reference to the statue's "beacon-hand" present a very different image of a hand – one that is open, beckoning, and strong. No wounds are to be found there – only comfort for those caught in a dangerous and complex environment. While the third movement operates in broad strokes from a distance, the fourth zooms in on the map so far that we see the intimate scene of an old woman in her home, maybe setting the table for dinner alone. Who is she, where has she been, whose lives has she left? This simple image melts into a meditation on the words *in caverna* from the *Song of Solomon*, found in Buxtehude's fourth section, *Ad latus*.

In the fifth movement the harmony is passed around from one string instrument to another, overlapping only briefly, while numerical figures are spoken by the choir. These are global figures of internally displaced persons, by country, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) data reported in May 2015 (accessed on 20/03/2016 at www.internal-displacement.org). Sometimes data is the cruelest and most honest poetry.

The sixth and final movement unfolds the words *in caverna* into the tumbling and comforting promise of "ever ever" – "ever ever will I hold you, ever ever will I enfold you." They could be the words of Christ, or of a parent or friend or lover, or even of a nation.

-Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

I. Prelude: wordless

II. in medio/in the midst

in medio. in medio.

in medio manuum tuarum

quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum

quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum nostrarum

in the midst. in the midst.

in the midst of your hands

what are those wounds in the midst of your hands

what are those wounds in the midst of our hands

- from Buxtehude's *Ad manus* (Zechariah 13:6, adapted by the composer, with the addition of "in medio manuum nostrum" ("in the midst of our hands"))

III. Her beacon-hand beckons

Her beacon-hand beckons:

give

give to me

those yearning to breathe free

tempest-tossed they cannot see

what lies beyond the olive tree

whose branch was lost amid the pleas

for mercy, mercy

give

give to me

your tired fighters fleeing flying

from the

from the

from

let them

i will be your refuge

i will be your refuge

i will be

i will be

we will be

we will

- the composer, responding to the 1883 sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, which was mounted on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1903

IV. ever ever ever

ever ever ever

in the window sills or

the beveled edges

of the aging wooden frames that hold

old photographs

hands folded

folded

gently in her lap

ever ever

in the crevices

the never-ending efforts of
the grandmother's tendons tending
to her bread and empty chairs
left for elijahs
where are they now
in caverna
in caverna

- the composer; the final line, "in caverna," is drawn from Buxtehude's Ad latus, from the Song of Songs; "in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow of the cliff"

V. Litany of the Displaced

The choir speaks global figures of internal displacement, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures>). The numbers spoken are the numbers of internally displaced persons by country, in ascending order. These are people, some of whom may have legal refugee status, who have been displaced within their own country due to armed conflict, situations of generalized violence or violations of human rights.

VI. i will hold you

i will hold you
i will hold you
ever ever will i hold you
ever ever will i enfold you
in medio in medio

- the composer, with the final line a reprise from the original Zechariah text



I come near you

music: Hans Thomalla

words: arranged by Hans Thomalla after Arnulf of Leuven and *Song of Solomon*

The piece is simple in its text and its music: it speaks of the attempt to come near someone or something suffering for us. For the sources of the texts, from which I assembled my brief libretto, and for the work of Dieterich Buxtehude, to which my musical material refers, that someone is Jesus. But for me today the Other suffering for us can be seen much wider: anyone or anything enduring pain for me, us, our lifestyle.

Since I write music, that Other appears concretely in the piece as suffering nature, or to be more specific: as quiet multiphonics in the beginning. These multiphonics – inharmonic saxophone, bassoon, or clarinet noises that seem like quiet screams – are the sound of nature under pressure. They are wild and untamed chords coming from an instrument being played slightly “off”, with atypical fingerings or “wrong” mouth-position. The result is something clearly distorted but at the same time beautiful in its resistance against an abstract harmonic system.

The voices of the choir with their initially rather traditional if not reified figures of harmony and expression are drawn towards these quiet screams. They are increasingly affected by the nature-sounds of the wind instruments, and for a moment true harmony seems possible: an attempt to "come near", to understand, to influence the Other and to be influenced. This moment of true and open contact is brief, though, as it eventually drowns in increasingly loud and assertive gestures of harmonic control.

-Hans Thomalla (b. 1975)

I come near you
To your side
From which the fountain of blood flows

With quiet countenance
I stand before you
To contemplate your wounds

I come near you
When the hour of my death draws close,
Let me stand by your side

Arise, arise my love
My beautiful
And come
My beautiful
My love

I come near you
To your side

I stand before you
To contemplate your wounds

I come near you
Let me stand by your side

My love
My beautiful
My love



Ad cor

music: Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen

words: Ursula Andkjær Olsen (translated by Katrine Øgaard Jensen) and sung text from the Old Testament

Buxtehude is a very fresh and inspiring composer, so I was happy to be able to come closer to him with this gorgeous initiative from The Crossing. "My" *Membra* was fortunately THE HEART. Lovely music and a text quoted from The Bible. The *Song of Songs*. What could a heart wish for more? I decided at once to give my music a flavour of Buxtehude's *Ad Cor*, which means a near-quotation of Buxtehude's e-minor chords. They became an important part of the musical language I have chosen for this work. My work has four movements, each one pointing at different perspectives in the whole thing.

I...the heart is full of pain, loss and sorrow.

II...the heart is full of hope and expectation and love

III...A voice of today is trying to find a place to see things clearly from, but is doubting, discussing in a bitter aggressive way

IV...the former three movements are played on top of each other in an attempt to let them speak together. Sometimes successfully, some times not.

- Pelle Gudmudsen-Holmgreen (1932-2016)

I.. Wound (Choir 1)

Wound!
you have wounded my heart,
my bride.
In this wounded heart may your love gain entry,
my love.

II. joy (Choir 2)

Joy!
Hail to thee,
my love.
I greet you with a joyful heart.
Embracing you is a joy.
With a lively heart I call to you,
truly, dearest heart, I love you.

Joy!
Hail to thee,
my love.

III. I laugh at you mockingly (spoken text by the percussionist)

I laugh at you mockingly, intimacy-lovers
I laugh at you mockingly, solicitude-lovers
I laugh at you, love-lovers

I don't want your authenticity
I don't want your tastefulness
I don't want your true feelings

I want to BATHE in true sentimentality
I want to be CLEANSED in true sentimentality

My body SCREAMS for sentimentality

a hard, smooth material
I'd be molded into

now is the time

I SHALL LIFT UP MY COUNTENANCE UPON THEE AND GIVE THEE SHIT

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY FEELINGS

I am completely without empathy
it happens to me frequently
I am not evil
I just can't feel anything/anyone

IV. Wound/joy/I laugh at you (texts from the previous movements)





Ad Genua/To the knees

music: Anna Thorvaldsdottir

words: Guðrún Eva Minervudottir

Guðrún Eva's beautiful text inspired the lyricism of the solo voice that planted the seeds for the music. The music is also inspired by the notions of humility and of turning a blind eye - and a sense of longing for beauty in the face of pain and difficulty. The music envelopes the solo voice in a dreamlike state, both terrifying and calm at the same time. She is surrounded by elements that occupy the same space, but she is alone, unheard - passionately longing for "reality" to resonate with her. But it is easy not to see the pain that does not belong to you.

-Anna Thorvaldsdottir (b. 1977)

I fall to my knees
I fall
I fall
I fall
to my knees and ask
forgiveness for

lazy thoughts,
unseemly hunger
and
the beautiful, wild stampede of my fear

I fall to my knees
I fall
I fall
I fall
to my knees and into
the dark haze
of the purple, innocent sky
I fall deep into the sky and beg
for clarity,
true satisfaction
and union of the soul

I give myself up
I give
I give up
I fall to my knees I fall
I fall I fall
to my knees and worship
the eternal music



dress in magic amulets, dark, from My feet
words and music: David T. Little

Written in response to the first cantata of Dieterich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri* - entitled *Ad pedes* (To the feet) - *dress in magic amulets, dark, from My feet* explores the troubling historic use of crucifixion nails as magic or medicinal amulets. Inspired by both Catholic rituals and the equally ritualistic nature of certain sub-genres of extreme metal, the work seeks to create a meditative, almost unearthly space, where a Christ figure comments on the practice of crucifixion, the ghastly repurposing of crucifixion nails, and the complexities of His own death in the context of the salvation narrative.

- David T. Little (b. 1978)

Take this,
All of you,
Take these...
Dress in magic,
Dress in magic amulets,
Take these...

Dress in magic,
Dress in magic amulets,
Dark, from My feet.

...My feet.

You rejoice in wounds.
My demise.
Our demise.
Magic pain.





My soul will sink within me

music: Santa Ratniece

words: letters of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1253

For my response to the seventh, concluding cantata - To the Face - of Buxtehude, I was inspired by the texts of St. Clare of Assisi. She was an Italian saint and nun who founded the Order of Poor Ladies of San Damiano. St. Clare was a close friend to St. Francis of Assisi; she used to call herself "the little plant of the most blessed Francis." They were a glorious inspiration for each other. We are traveling back in the time to faraway Middle Ages, to feel the joy and suffering of St. Clare. She had a very gentle heart, but her life was very ascetic and she suffered from anorexia.

St. Clare wrote four letters to Agnes of Prague; I composed on the essential parts of this extraordinary prose poetry. All the lyrics in some way reflect The Face in many dimensions.

We can see our faces only in the mirror. St. Clare is diving deeply into the mirror of Eternity. The music is embraced by this profoundly mystical text.

- Santa Ratniece (b. 1977)

Look into this mirror every day,
O queen, spouse of Jesus Christ,
And continually examine your face in it,
So that in this way you may adorn yourself completely,
Inwardly and outwardly,
Clothed and covered in multicolored apparel,
Adorned in the same manner
With flowers and garments
Made of all the virtues as is proper,
Dearest daughter and spouse of the most high King.
Moreover, in this mirror shine blessed poverty,
Holy humility, and charity beyond words,
As you will be able, with God's grace,
To contemplate throughout the entire mirror.

- The fourth letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1253

Valete in Domino et oretis pro me.
(Farewell in the Lord. And pray for me)

- The first letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1234

Vale, carissima filia, cum filiabus tuis usque ad thronum gloriae magni Dei et optate pro nobis.
(Farewell, dearest daughter, together with your own daughters, until we meet at the throne of glory
of the great God, and pray for us)

- The fourth letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1253

What you hold, may you continue to hold,
What you do, may you keep doing and not stop,
But with swift pace, nimble step, and feet
That do not stumble so
That even your walking does not raise any dust.

- The second letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1235-38

I will remember this over and over
and my soul will sink within me.

- The fourth letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1253

Place your mind in the mirror of eternity;
Place your soul in the splendor of glory;

Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance;
And, through contemplation,
Transform your entire being
Into the image of the Divine One himself,
So that you, yourself,
May also experience
What his friends experience
When they taste the hidden sweetness
That God alone has kept from the beginning
For those who love him.

Vale semper in Domino, sicut me valere peropto, et tam me quam meas sorores tuis sacris orationibus recommenda.

(Stay well, always in the Lord, just as I very much desire to stay well, and be sure to remember both me and my sisters in your holy prayers)

- The third letter of St. Clare of Assisi to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 1238



Common Ground
music: Lewis Spratlan
words: Paul Kane

Paul Kane and I independently decided that we wanted to compose a piece that addressed our concern with the degradation of the environment. We sought a meaningful way to connect this sentiment with Buxtehude's text.

When we noticed in the opening section that Buxtehude had dropped the reference to breast milk ("*lac*") and concentrated, instead, on the breast as chest ("*pectus*"), it reinforced our sense that "breast" could be better thought of in its meaning as "the seat of the affections," the place where emotion is felt. Buxtehude himself refers to it as the "true temple of God," as something to be "revered." This provided the environmental link, as we could then think of the natural world as the breast of the Earth, to be revered and, in our own times, protected and treated ethically.

With that in mind, we conceived of a four-part libretto leading towards a deeper understanding of our responsibility to the environment: first, a celebration of Earth's bounty and beauty; second, grief

at Earth's despoilment at our hands; third, personal remorse for having contributed to this ruin; and finally, redemptive hope for repair and a true change of heart. Along the way, there are echoes of Buxtehude in some of the phrasing and in the Latin quotations, suggesting that what was sacred for him has resonance for us in a different register.

Since we wanted the piece to work at both a general and personal level, we decided to embody this dynamic in two characters, Tomás and Angelica, with the Chorus commenting as in Greek tragedy. In fact, tragedy was part of the structure, as the woman, Angelica, is suffering from a fatal environmental disease. Her lover, Tomás, is distraught and cannot understand how Angelica continues to love the world for itself. His love is entirely focused on Angelica, while she, with a selflessness that points to an even greater love, values life itself, whether expressed in the person of Tomás or in the natural world around her. Tomás, through Angelica and by way of a confrontation with destruction and the necessity for remorse, finally comes to comprehend a new level of love which carries an imperative to act on behalf of life. This redemptive moment, though fragile and surrounded by darkness, nonetheless becomes an occasion for joy, as it points to the life-affirming possibility of real change.

-Lewis Spratlan (b. 1940)

PROLOGUE

Choir	See how the light falls upon the land! Glorious day!
Echo	Gloria Dei!
Choir	Feel the gentle breeze that scents the air, Beautiful day!
Echo	Beata Dei!
Choir	Hear the hum of Nature and the song of birds, Miraculous day!
Echo	Miraculum Dei!
Choir	Savor the air with its taste of Spring, Celestial day!
Echo	Caelum Dei!
Choir	But look, here come Angelica and Tomás,

with love in their eyes.
Echo Love in their eyes!

SCENE 1

Angelica This world of beauty makes me sad.
Yet its loveliness fills my heart with joy -
joy mixed with sorrow
sorrow mixed with these happy tears.

Tomás Angelica, do not cry, or if you must
do it here on my consoling breast.

Angelica Oh it's not for me only that I cry—what's my life
but part of the life around me, and within?
Love, as open as the Earth, bares
its breast and sings, "There is no time."

Tomás No time to waste—seize the moment
as it flickers by! Let us be One!

Angelica We are already, don't you see?
Light makes the dappled shade,
breezes rise out of stillness,
silence encompasses sound.

Tomás [aside] I cannot bear this bittersweet love.
The toxic world has made her ill
and yet she sings its praise and turns
from me, who desires only her.

Angelica But listen, underneath there is a melancholy strain:
we have done much harm. There is a murmur of pain.

SCENE 2

Women This world of beauty makes us sad.
So much is passing, never to come again.

Men So much has passed, that ages labored to make,
unmade by man, who labors for gain.

Women We murmur in pain against the stars,
why should fate have brought us this end?

Men The stars are silent, distant and cold—
it is we ourselves we have condemned.

All The seas are rising, the ground on fire,
wells are poisoned, the air full of grief.
Blindly at the crossroads we have slain
our mother: we howl among ashes of disbelief

Women Darker the world—that was made from light—
weeping wounds have stained its breast.

Men Death, that was natural, has turned unreal—
man-made, uncreated, unblessed.

All Light is failing, there are cries in the night,
we become like children frantic with fright.

SCENE 3

Tomás [aside] We are running out of time, each week

a new phase waning like the moon.

How can I live when her life is all but over?

Full to half, from half to crescent moon.

Angelica Look in the sky, the moon in broad daylight,
ghostly, diminished, but ever-present even so.

I'll be the Moon and you the Sun

and our child will be the Earth,

half in darkness, half in light.

Choir Remorse is the darkness, remorse is the light,
out of night comes day, if we turn to face forward—
starlight, moonlight will lead the way.

Tomás Angelica, you are the Sun and I the Moon
reflecting the glory I see for what it is:
joyous and shining in the midst of sorrows,
life is what you love, the life we all share.

Angelica Tomás, we are the life that lives within us,
that lives without us—there is no other.
Tomás, we are the Earth, there is no Other,
our lives are one with lives around us.

Choir Remorse is the darkness, remorse the light,
we turn to life rising in the breast of the world.
Rise up! Rise up!

All

Light falls upon the land!
Gloria, glorious Day!
Rise up! Rise up!
Let us heal Earth's wounds!
Gloria Dei! Glorious Day!
Out of darkness comes day! Glorious Day!
We are the Earth, there is no Other,
rejoice to know the worst,
a single star can pierce the night.
We are the Earth, there is no Other,
rejoice to know the best,
life is the heart that beats within our breast.
Take hands, take heart!
What comes to pass will pass
like a shadow moving across the world.
Take hands, take heart!
Only light can cast shadows,
only light, only light!
Rise up! Rise up!
Life beats within the breast,
Glorious Darkness, Glorious Day!

THE CROSSING

The Crossing a professional chamber choir dedicated to new music and conducted by Donald Nally. Formed by a group of friends in 2005, the ensemble has since grown exponentially and “has made a name for itself in recent years as a champion of new music” (*The New York Times*). Highly sought-after for collaborative projects, The Crossing has sung with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the American Composers Orchestra, Network for New Music, Lyric Fest, the baroque orchestra Quicksilver, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Toshimaru Nakamura, and The Rolling Stones. The ensemble has sung at Walt Disney Concert Hall, The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Upcoming collaborations include National Sawdust in Brooklyn, the Gardner Museum in Boston, the Cleveland Art Museum, Colgate and Harvard Universities, and the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. They premiered John Luther Adams’ *Sila: the breath of the world* at Lincoln Center in a collaboration with the Mostly Mozart Festival, Lincoln Center’s Out of Doors Festival, eighth blackbird, Jack Quartet, and TILT brass.

The Crossing has an ongoing commitment to recording the many works they commission; they appear on the Innova, Navona, Albany, and ECM labels. The ensemble is the recipient of the 2015 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, two ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, as well as the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award from Chorus America. The Crossing is represented by Alliance Artists Management.

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