

## **Out of the Darkness** - Julian Marshall's deeply stirring cantata that sparkles with rhythm and life.

A new chamber cantata by Julian Marshall

Featuring soloist Melanie Pappenheim (solo Sop), the Schoolhouse 6 Ensemble chamber choir, Lucy Railton ('cello) and Sophie Harris ('cello).

The work takes as its text the poem 'Aus dem Dunkel' by Gertrud Kolmar, the remarkable German Jewish poet who was killed in Auschwitz in 1943. The programme will also include works by William Byrd, Arvo Part and Gyorgy Ligeti.

"Out of the Darkness is unique, completely remarkable in every way."  
(Jack Higgins author)

"Amazing achievement"  
(Orlando Gough – composer)

"Julian Marshall's new cantata "Out of the Darkness" is a reminder that great music is still being made".  
(No'a Winter Lazerus - Composer/Producer)

[www.outofthedarknessproject.org](http://www.outofthedarknessproject.org)

**Out of the Darkness** is a highly accessible and powerful new chamber cantata composed by Julian Marshall. The work takes as its text the poem 'Aus dem Dunkel' by Gertrud Kolmar – the remarkable German Jewish poet who was killed in Auschwitz in 1943.

It is written for mezzo soprano solo, chamber choir, and two 'cellos.

Its world premier took place in March 2009 at Winchester Cathedral (19<sup>th</sup>) and then followed by the London premier at St Gabriel's Church, London SW1 (25<sup>th</sup>).

Following the March concerts, the work was recorded for the new British independent label MMC Recordings and is released in November 2009.

Touring continued in the autumn of 2009 with three outstanding concerts in Brighton, Totnes and London (St James' Piccadilly).

Touring resumes in March 2010 with concerts in the UK and a special invitation to perform at the Gertrud Kolmar conference in Weimar, Germany.

The performers comprise a stellar cast of players and include Melanie Pappenheim (solo sop) – for whom the work was written and well known for her work with The Shout, composer Jocelyn Pook and for her singing on the Dr Who TV series; Sophie Harris ('cello); Lucy Railton ('cello) and the young singing ensemble Schoolhouse 6 Ensemble .

## About the work

Julian Marshall kindly ascribes some influence on his art to me through my book, *Bearing Witness*, where I describe conducting spiritual retreats at the site of the extermination camps, Auschwitz-Berkinau. There is a confluence between our work: we both try to give voice to spirits that can shake souls and deepen commitment to serving life. Julian gives his creative talents in this magnificent cantata, *Out of Darkness*, to richly and subtly voicing Gertrud Kolmar's 1937 prophetic poem of desolation, loss and courage. She would later die at Auschwitz. His work bears witness to the depth of this woman's humanity and to our spiritual ability to find freedom within constraint. I am very grateful for this cantata, which so exemplifies the power of art to shatter, heal, transform and inspire.

Bernie Glassman

Zen Peacemakers

Montague, Massachusetts, USA

July 27, 2009

## *Out Of The Darkness – Julian Marshall*

In November 2008 I stumbled across the poetry and letters of Gertrud Kolmar and was at once struck by what a remarkable woman and poet she was. During World War II she lived in Berlin, taking care of her ageing father until in 1943, following his deportation to a concentration camp, she herself was deported to Auschwitz, where she was murdered. Yet her writings suggest that even in the darkest of circumstances she was able to meet her fate with a stoic equanimity.

Her poetry is strikingly full of life – colour, vibrancy, deep sensation – and her poem, 'Aus dem Dunkel' (*Out Of The Darkness*), is surely one of the most beautiful. Written in 1937 the poem evokes powerful, dream-like images of crumbling and decay – serving as an eerie foretelling of the imminent tidal wave of horror about to hit the world.

Deeply moved by this poem I decided to set *Out Of The Darkness* as a cantata for chamber choir, mezzo soprano soloist and two cellos. To begin with, I imagined that I would settle on a musical language that might somehow 'meet the darkness' in the poem. But as I began to compose, quite different stylistic voices seemed to suggest themselves. Influences of Tango and Bossa Nova, as well as more abstract ideas, all seemed ironically appropriate! The result is a cantata of about thirty-five minutes.

I have been asked if I consider *Out Of The Darkness* a ‘holocaust’ piece. My answer is both yes and no. It is, in as much as the text is, of course, deeply imbedded historically in European and Jewish social context. It is also, however, for me, important to approach the piece in a broader context: as an enquiry into the critical issues of freedom and constraint that have relevance for so many today.

## Form

*Out Of The Darkness* is divided into seven sections – including an off-stage Prologue. The sixth, *River*, features the line, ‘Far off, the river speaks with its banks’, but is also the only section with text not from Kolmar’s poem but from two Sephardic ballads – *La Serena* and *A La Nana*. I have allowed myself this poetic licence as *River* allows a brief time for reflection away from the journey of the main text. And why Spanish? Well, Kolmar was a linguist; the Jewish culture is multinational, and the words are not only incredibly beautiful – but also, in the case of *A La Nana*, painfully ironic:

### A La Nana

A la nana, a la buba,  
Se durma la criatura,

Lullaby, baby,  
May the child sleep.

El Dio grande que los guarde  
A los niños de los males.

May great God guard them,  
Keep the children from evil.

### La Serena

Si la mar era de leche  
Los barquitos de canela  
Yo me mancharia entera  
Por salvar la mi bandera.

If the sea were milk;  
the little boats of cinnamon,  
I would immerse myself entirely,  
To save my flag.

(Translations: Krysia Howard)

## Source

‘Out of the Darkness’ would probably not exist if it were not for my reading the remarkable book, *Bearing Witness*, by Bernie Glassman. In this book, Glassman writes with compelling conviction about leading Zen retreats at the site of the Auschwitz death camp. One might well wonder why anyone would want to spend several days immersing themselves in a site of true human hell. Glassman’s point is that in bearing witness to the suffering of our human condition, a healing can take root; that in becoming wakeful, to the best of our ability, to the full range of our human experience, we might begin to birth a deeper wisdom, a wider inclusivity. In his own words, ‘to recognise ourselves and others as manifestations of Oneness, Diversity and Harmony’. My piece is a dedicated ‘Amen’ to this possibility.

(Julian Marshall, August 2009)

## Out of The Darkness

Out of the darkness I come, a woman,  
I carry a child, but no longer know whose;  
Once I knew it.  
But now no man is for me anymore . . . .  
They all have trickled away like rivulets,  
Gulped up by the earth.  
I continue on my way.  
For I want to reach the mountains before daybreak,  
and the stars are beginning to fade.

Out of the darkness I come.  
Through dusky alleys I wandered alone,  
When, suddenly, a charging light's talons tore the soft blackness,  
The wild cat, the hind,  
And doors flung open wide, disgorged ugly screams, wild howls,  
beastly roar.  
Drunkards wallowed . . . .  
I shook all this from the hem of my dress along the way.

I traversed the deserted marketplace.  
Leaves floated in puddles, reflecting the moon.  
Haggard, hungry dogs sniffed the refuse on the cobblestones.  
Trampled fruit rotted away,  
An old man in rags tormented wretched strings with his play  
And sang with a thin, discordant, plaintive voice  
Unheard.  
Once, these fruits ripened in sun and dew,  
Dreaming still of the fragrance and bliss of the loving bloom,  
But the wailing beggar  
Had long forgotten and knew nothing but hunger and thirst.

Before the castle of the mighty I halted,  
And as I set foot upon the lowest step,  
The flesh-red porphyry burst cracking under my sole.-  
I turned  
And looked up at the plain window, the late candle of the thinker,  
He pondered and pondered, never finding his query's resolve,  
And to the shaded little lamp of the infirm, who still did not learn,  
How he should die.  
Under the arch of the bridge  
Two ghastly skeletons fought over gold.  
I lifted up my poverty as a grey shield before my face  
And passed unimperiled.

Far off, the river speaks with its banks.

And now, I struggle along a rocky, cumbersome path.  
Fallen rocks, thorny bushes wound my blind, searching hands:  
A cave awaits,  
Its deepest chasm a shelter for the metal-green raven  
    who has no name.  
There I shall enter,  
Under the aegis of those huge, shadowing wings, I shall  
    crouch down and rest.  
Somnolent, I shall listen to my child's mute, growing word,  
And sleep, my face turned toward the East, until sunrise

-Gertrud Kolmar

**Reprinted from Kolmar, Gertrude. My Gaze is Turned Inward: Letters 1934-1943. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004. English translation reprinted with permission.**

## **Julian Marshall**

Educated at Dartington Hall School and The Royal College of Music, Julian Marshall became known internationally in the late '70s as co-creator (with Kit Hain) of the group 'Marshall Hain' - and especially for their massive hit record 'Dancing in the City'. He was also a member of 'The Flying Lizards' who scored a top 5 hit with 'Money' in 1979.

In the 80's he formed the group 'Eye to Eye' with American songwriter and performer Deborah Berg – recording two classic albums for Warner Brothers produced by Steely Dan producer Gary Katz and a latter day third album produced by Rhett Davies.

He has been an A & R man for Polydor records, produced records, played as a session musician on both sides of the Atlantic, been a life long improviser and jazz player and given solo improvised piano recitals – latterly providing music for 'Shaping the Invisible' – the theatre company he formed with theatre maker and performer Emma Roberts.

He has also spent many years running his own highly successful teaching and mentoring practice while also lecturing at Dartington College of Arts, Dartington International Summer School of music, Plymouth University and elsewhere.

But it is composition that has been his consuming passion over time – now firmly at the centre of his creative life.

Compositions include a broad range of music - from a 'Missa Brevis' written when the composer was 17 (composed for and recorded by the Dartington Hall School choir); many jazz compositions for own bands (which include being played live, recorded and broadcast); many songs for above named bands; a film score for the Orion Pictures movie 'Old Enough'; a millennium commission written for the Plymouth Symphony Orchestra and several school choirs entitled 'The Clock of the Long Now' (written with a text by poet Rose Cook)....

His cantata 'Out of the Darkness' was premiered in March 2009 and he has several works in progress.