



Ceremony for the Commemoration of Benefactors

Saturday 17 October 2020
6.00pm

In the Chapel at Girton College
and
Livestreaming on YouTube

CEREMONY FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF BENEFACTORS

Introduction and welcome, The Mistress

Dreams by Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Anthem: Let All the World (setting by Greta Tomlins 1912-1972)

“Let all the world in ev’ry corner sing,
My God and King!
The heav’ns are not too high,
His praise may thither fly;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.
Let all the world in ev’ry corner sing,
My God and King!

Let all the world in ev’ry corner sing,
My God and King!
The church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in ev’ry corner sing,
My God and King!”

First Reading

Thomas Edison (1847-1931) on the Progress of Electricity (November 1896)

Read by the MCR President, George Cowperthwaite

“The best thing of the present day”, said Mr. Edison, “is that every discovery cheapens articles and tends to bring everything within the reach of common people. I am afraid they don’t appreciate this enough, but it is a fact all the same, and in the future it will be always so. Every step will benefit the great body of the people. Our hope lies in chemistry and physics, and these are in touch with physiology and surgery. There is an endless scope for the discovery and invention. The wisest people we have don’t know the millionth part of any subject, and I am convinced there is not one thing we do in the best way. The possibilities of advance are infinite, sir, infinite.”

The Guardian, 25 November 2016

Reflection on the life and Legacy of Alfred Yarrow (1842-1932)

Dr Shaun Fitzgerald, Fellow in Engineering

**Dr John Wills, Hertha Ayrton Research Fellow, elected by the
Yarrow Board**

Second Reading

When Great Trees Fall by Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

Read by Members of the Choir

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.

Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance, fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of
dark, cold
caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

Reflection from the Chaplain on the act of Commemoration

Recitation of Benefactors by Representatives of the College Community

Reflective Silence

Anthem: O Lord Hear My Prayer by Moses Hogan (1957-2003)

“O Lord, please hear my prayer,
In the mornin’ when I rise.
It’s your servant bound for glory,
O dear Lord, please hear my prayer.

O Lord, please hear my prayer,
Keep me safe within your arms.
It’s your servant bound for glory,
O dear Lord, please hear my prayer.

When my work on earth is done,
And you come to take me home.
Just to know I’m bound for glory.
And to hear you say well done.
Done with sin and sorrow, have mercy.
Amen.”

Final word from the Mistress

Organ Voluntary

The Fugue (sostenuto e legato) from Mendelssohn’s Sonata VI in D minor (Op 65, 1845)

Played by Organ Scholar Emily Nott

