

# A Child is Singing

Opus 24

## A Dramatic Cantata

for Baritone Solo, SATB Choir and Piano Accompaniment

Title and Poem: *A Child is Singing*

by

ADRIAN MITCHELL

Additional words by an anonymous survivor of Hiroshima  
and Cynthia and Andrew Downes

Music by

**Andrew Downes**

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**A CHILD IS SINGING Opus 24 (1981)**

duration 20'

This Dramatic Cantata, about the horrors of nuclear war, for baritone soloist, SATB chorus and piano, was commissioned by the Clarion Singers for performances for CND and Amnesty International. The first performance took place March 20th 1982 in Carrs Lane Church, Birmingham.

The cantata is a setting of the poem, *A Child is Singing*, by Adrian Mitchell, with additional words by an anonymous survivor of Hiroshima, and Cynthia and Andrew Downes.

The baritone soloist sings the role of the fictional General Giah. The SATB chorus represent military, politicians and civilians.

Preview File Only

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# A Child is Singing

The poem by ADRIAN MITCHELL

A child is singing  
And nobody listening  
But the child who is singing.

Bulldozers grab the earth and shower it.  
The house is on fire.  
Gardeners wet the earth and flower it.  
The house is on fire.  
The houses are on fire.  
Fetch the fire engine, the fire engine's on fire.  
We will have to hide in a hole.  
We will burn slow like coal.  
All the people are on fire.

And a child is singing  
And nobody listening  
But the child who is singing.

Reproduced by kind permission of Adrian Mitchell.

From an anonymous survivor of Hiroshima:

A glaring, whitish, pinkish light appeared in the sky. An unnatural tremor, followed by a wave of suffocating heat, and a wind swept away everything in its path. Within a few seconds, the thousands of people in the streets were scorched by a wave of searing heat...

CHOIR BEHIND AUDIENCE.  
 COMPLETE DARKNESS:  
 THEN PROJECTION OF  
 BLACK & WHITE STILL  
 PICTURE OF HIROSHIMA  
 AFTER BOMB. FEW  
 MOMENTS SILENCE, THEN  
 MUSIC BEGINS.  
 PROJECTION REMAINS  
 UNTIL PROCESSION OF  
 CHOIR

Lento e molto cantabile (♩ = 60)

PIANO

(V = slight break)

SONG FROM BEHIND AUDIENCE

15

pp LISTENING SING-ING

S  
A

3

3

AND NO-BO-DY LIST...ENING BUT THE CHILD WHO IS SING...ING

PIANO

S  
A

mp cresc f

mp cresc

20

mp

S  
A

3

A CHILD SIN...ING AND NO-BO-DY LIST-ENING

T  
B

(25) f (NO DIMINUENDO)

Soprano (S) and Alto (A) vocal lines with lyrics: BUT THE CHILD WHO IS SIN- GING

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) vocal lines

PIANO accompaniment

(30)

PIANO accompaniment

Preview File Only

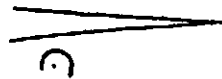
Soprano (S) and Alto (A) vocal lines with lyrics: A CHILD SIN..... GING AND NO-BO-DY LIST..... ENING

Tenor (T) and Bass (B) vocal lines

PIANO accompaniment

35

pp



LONG PAUSE

S  
A

T  
B

BUT THE CHILD WHO IS SIN ... GING

PIANO

LIGHTS GO UP, RATHER DIMLY, TO REVEAL A STAGE BEDECKED WITH POLITICAL SLOGANS IN PRAISE OF CAPITALISM AND FREE ENTERPRISE AND CONDEMNING MARXISM AND STATE CONTROL. TO STAGE L, THERE IS A PODIUM COVERED IN VARIOUS FLAGS AND INSIGNIA, AND ABOVE IT A LARGE PORTRAIT OF GENERAL GIAH. AS THE MUSIC PROGRESSES, THE AUDIENCE BECOMES AWARE OF SENIOR SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS MARCHING UP CENTRE ISLE. (CIVILIANS IN FRONT, SOLDIERS BEHIND) FINALLY COMES GENERAL GIAH. THEY MARCH UP CENTRE STEPS, AND TAKE UP POSITION IN FRONT OF THEIR SEATS WHICH FACE PODIUM. THE SOLDIERS STAND TO ATTENTION. THE GENERAL GOES STRAIGHT TO THE PODIUM, AND SIGNALS THE PEOPLE TO SIT. N.B. IF MILITARY UNIFORMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, UNIFORM ARMBANDS WILL SUFFICE FOR SOLDIERS. (THE SOUND OF MARCHING SHOULD FORM A SINISTER ACCOMPANIMENT TO ENTRY MUSIC. THE MARCHING SHOULD PREFERABLY BEGIN BEFORE THE MUSIC, BUT THIS WILL DEPEND ON DISTANCE TO BE COVERED I.E. SIZE OF HALL.)

Tempo a little slower than previously (♩=54)

40

PIANO

PIANO

ff

tr

pp

tr

PED

(45)

ff

ff

ff

(PED)

ff

ff

ff

(50)

GENERAL  
GIAH  
(Baritone)

PIANO

mp

I, GENERAL GI-AH, PRE-SI-DENT OF THE UN-I-TED WESTERN ALL-

pp



(55)

**ff**

**GENERAL GIAN**

- I - ANCE HAVE IN MY POWER, AS YOU KNOW, THE MEANS OF DESTROYING OUR ENEMIES

**PIANO**

*mf*

**LOUD APPLAUSE**  
**GRADUALLY DYING AWAY**

**ff**  
**PED**

**GIAN**

**R.H.**

**PIANO**

**L.H.**

**ff**

**p**

**(PED)**

(60)

*mp*

MY SPEECH TO-NIGHT IS THE MOST SERIOUS OF MY LIFE, FOR NEVER BE -

(CRESCENDO POCO - A - POCO) f

- FORE HAVE WE BEEN SO DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THAT FIN -- AL STEP WHICH MUST BE

(CRESCENDO POCO - A - POCO) mf

mp 65

GIAH TA - KEN IF TRUTH IS TO SUR ... VIVE . WITH

S A CHORUS IF TRUTH IS TO SUR - VIVE .

T B

PIANO

(mp)

GIAR

EVERY DAY THAT PASSES THIS CANCEROUS ENEMY BE-

PIANO

*f*

PED

(BROADLY)

COMES A MORE DANGEROUS THREAT TO OUR WAY OF LIFE : To OUR

*f*

*mp*

PED

(70)

*ff*

FREE - DOM : FREEDOM IN ENTERPRISE, BUSINESS, SPEECH, E - VEN

*ff*

*ff*

*ff*

mp

THOUGHT. MY FRIENDS, FOR OUR

ff P

PED PED PED

75

CHIL-DREN OUR CHERISHED VAL-UES MUST BE PRO-

PED PED

-TEC-TED. OUR GREAT ID - EALS MUST BE DE-FEN-DED E-YEN WITH OUR

PED PED

(WITH INTENSITY)

**GIAH** *f* 80 *mp*

LIVES . | THERE-FORE

**Soprano** *p*

**CHORUS** EV..EN WITH OUR LIVES .

**Tenor**

**PIANO** *f*

**GIAH** *mf*

SAY TO YOU, THE TIME HAS NOW COME TO TEST OUR STRENGTH. NEVER BEFORE HAVE OUR DEFENCES BEEN SO IM-

**PIANO** *p* *mf*

**PED** **PED**

(85) *f* *ff*

-PEN-E-TRABLE, WE ARE SAFE FROM ATT-...ACK. WITH YOUR SUPP-

*ff* *mf*

-ORT I AM NOW READY TO LAUNCH OUR MISSILES THE

(mf)

GIAH  
THREAT WILL BE GONE FOR - E - VER .

S  
A  
CHORUS  
THE THREAT WILL BE GONE FOR E - VER

T  
B  
(LEGATO)  
mp

PIANO  
mp  
PP

(PED)

90 EACH SOLOIST SLOWLY STANDS BEFORE SINGING

SOPRANO SOLO

ALTO SOLO  
THE MISSILES MUST BE LAUNCHED:

TENOR SOLO  
THERE IS NO ALT-

BASS SOLO  
YES, IT MUST BE DONE:

PIANO  
tr.  
PP tr.  
(PP) (PP)

ALL CHORUS SLOWLY STAND

mp

SOP. SOLO

ALT. SOLO

TEN. SOLO

BASS SOLO

PIANO

95

God, WE MUST PROTECT OUR CHILDREN.

- ER - NA - TIVE :

(pp)

(pp)

pp

(TUTTI)

mp

CHORUS

T

B

PIANO

PPP

YES, YOU HAVE OUR SUPP--ORT, THE MISS-ILES MUST BE



100 *mp*

GIAH

*P* *pp* *O* ———— GOD, STAY WITH US IN THIS

S  
A

CHORUS LAUNCHED; IT IS OUR ON--LY HOPE

T  
B

(Recitative ad lib)

GIAH TURNS AND QUICKLY LEAVES THE STAGE.

*P*

MISS-ION ———— | WILL GO AND GIVE THE SIG-NAL

A ———— MEN

LIGHTS DIM : STAGE AUDIENCE SITS , AND THEN REMAINS STILL AND SILENT.

GRAVE ( $\text{♩} = 42$ )

105

*pp* CRESCENDO POCO A POCO

PED

ALLOW ALL NOTES TO REVERBERATE FREELY

R.H

PIANO

L.H

(110)

ALLOW TO REVERBERATE FREELY

(PED)

(111)

(PED)

AT EACH ARROW, A BLACK AND WHITE SLIDE, AS DESCRIBED, APPLARS ON SCREEN

MUCH FASTER ( $\text{♩} = 108$ )

(115)

(115)

↑  
ARIEL PHOTO  
OF DEVASTATED CITY

PIANO

fff

↑

PHOTO OF A SINGLE HOUSE, BURNING →

(120)

p

↑ ↑ ↑

CLOSE UP PHOTO OF A CHILD DISFIGURED BY RADIATION

ATEMPO - HARSHLY

ff

S  
A

CHORUS

BULLDOZERS GRAB THE EARTH AND SHOWER IT. THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE

T  
B

PIANO

ff

NO PHOTO (BLACKSLIDE-1) ↑

125 A TEMPO - SADLY

mp

GARDEN - ERS WET THE EARTH AND

CLOSE UP PHOTO OF OLD PERSON DISFIGURED BY RADIATION

PHOTO OF GRAVES, BEDECKED WITH FLOWERS (PERHAPS MILITARY CEMETERY)

RESIGNED 130

mp

FLOWER IT. THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE

NO PHOTO (BLACK SLIDE 2)

S  
A  
CHORUS

THE HOUSES ARE ON FIRE

T  
B

PIANO

PP

(NO PHOTO) →

ATEMPO - ANIMATED

fff (135)

FETCH THE FIRE EN-GINE, THE FIRE EN-GINE'S ON

fff

(NO PHOTO) →

RATHER SLOWER

fff (no dim)

f

FIRE WE WILL

fff (no dim) f

(NO PHOTO)

140

HAVE TO HIDE IN A HOLE WE WILL

mf mp (mp)

mf mp (mp)

(NO PHOTO)

(mp) P (P)

S  
A  
CHORUS

BURN SLOW LIKE COAL ALL THE

T  
B

PIANO

(mp) P (P)

(NO PHOTO)

HORRIFIC PHOTO OF PEOPLE, BURNING →

PEO-PL E ARE ON FIRE

LIGHTS GO UP. MILITARY MESSENGER, BREATHLESS, RUNS ON STAGE, UP TO PODIUM

QUICK RECITATIVE

MESSENGER  
(TENOR SOLO)

*f*

I COME WITH A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL GI-AH!

150

*f*

HE HAS ORDERED ME TO TELL YOU THAT THE EN-E-MY MISSILES HAVE PIERCED OUR DEFENCES

*mp*

WE MUST GO QUICKLY TO THE V. I. P. SHELTERS

LED BY THE MESSENGER, THE  
CHOIR FILES OFF THE STAGE IN A  
FAST, BUT ORDERLY MANNER.  
AT BOTTOM OF STAGE STEPS, THEY  
FAN OUT AND MOVE TO  
DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE HALL,  
TAKING UP POSITION ALL AROUND  
THE AUDIENCE. ABOUT HALFWAY  
THROUGH THE PROCEDURE, THERE  
IS A LIGHTS BLACKOUT.



(As lights go out.....)

(As choir members reach final positions.....)

(Complete silence and darkness.....)

PIANO

P LAISSEZ VIBRER

PP LAISSEZ VIBRER

155

SLOW AND ATMOSPHERIC (♩ = 60)

pp

PED

(pp)

160

(PED)

mp

p

a niente

165

(SHORT PAUSE)

SEMITONE CLUSTER FROM BOTTOM OF PIANO: ALLOW TO GRADUALLY FADE TO NOTHING

(PED)

Handwritten musical score for the first system, featuring a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music is in 9/8 time and includes dynamic markings 'pp' and 'p'. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final notes.

PED →

Handwritten musical score for the second system, including staves for R.H. (Right Hand), PIANO, and L.H. (Left Hand). The R.H. part has dynamic markings 'mf' and 'f'. The L.H. part includes a 'SEMITONE CLUSTER FROM BOTTOM OF PIANO' and a circled measure number '170'. The system ends with a fermata.

(PED) SEMITONE CLUSTER FROM BOTTOM OF PIANO ALLOW TO REVERBERATE FREELY →

Handwritten musical score for the third system, including staves for R.H. (Right Hand) and L.H. (Left Hand). The R.H. part has a dynamic marking 'f'. The L.H. part includes a dynamic marking 'f' and a '(Loco)' marking. The system ends with a fermata.

(PED) →

(8ve) -----

R.H.  $ff$  ALLOW TO DIE AWAY

PIANO  $fff$  ALLOW TO DIE AWAY

L.H.  $ff$  ALLOW TO DIE AWAY

SEMOTONE CLUSTER UP FROM TOP OF LEFT HAND CLUSTER LIFT HANDS IMMEDIATELY

SEMOTONE CLUSTER FROM BOTTOM OF PIANO LIFT HANDS IMMEDIATELY

IF LOWER NOTES ARE AVAILABLE, THE LOWEST 6 SEMITONES SHOULD BE USED

(PED)

(175) REPEAT 8 OR 9 TIMES

R.H.  $fff$   $pp$

L.H.  $fff$

ALL NOTES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REVERBERATE FREELY; BY THE TIME OF THE 6th OR 7th REPEAT, THE STRUCK NOTES SHOULD BEGIN TO MERGE INTO THE REVERBERATION.

(PED)

(Loco)

(RELEASE FINGERS IMMEDIATELY)

R.H.

PIANO

L.H.

BROKEN CHORDS SHOULD ONLY BE PLAYED WHEN REVERBERATION HAS ALMOST CEASED

ALLOW TO REVERBERATE INTO NEXT SECTION

4" (APPROX)

6" (APPROX)

ALL NOTES SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REVERBERATE FREELY

(PED)

A TEMPO (♩=60)

R.H.

PIANO

L.H.

(PP)

(ALL NOTES REVERBERATE FREELY)

mf

(PED)

180

R.H.

PIANO

L.H.

(PP)

mf

mp

(PED)

P

(185)

CHORUS

S  
A

T  
B

A — GLA - RING WHITISH, PIN..KISH LIGHT APP--

PIANO

(PP)

(ALLOW ALL NOTES TO CONTINUE REYERBERATING)

A

(PED) →

(ABCDE : A SERIES OF COLOUR SLIDES OF APPROPRIATE PAINTINGS BY ATOM BOMB SURVIVORS)

mp

--EARED IN THE SKY AN UN-NAT-U-RAL

PP

(PED) →

190 CRESCENDO POCO A POCO

TRE - MOR FOLLOWED BY A WAVE OF SUFF - O - - CA - - TING

CRESCENDO POCO A POCO

mp

(PED) →

mf CRESCENDO

HEAT AND A WIND SWEEP A WAY EVER Y THING IN ITS

mf CRESCENDO

f

3

B

(PED) →

ff (no diminuendo)

CHORUS

S A

ALT SOP 2

PATH

T B

R-H

PIANO

L-H

ff

ff

(THIS BAR SHOULD CONTINUE UNTIL REVERBERATION REACHES PP)

ff

pp

(PED)

195

P (SOSTENUTO)

CRESC POCO A POCO

S A

WITH-IN A FEW SECONDS, THE THOU-- SANDS OF

T B

R-H

PIANO

L-H

pp

a niente

(PED)

(RELEASE PEDAL ONLY WHEN REVERBERATION HAS DIED COMPLETELY)

mf  $\longleftarrow$  f  $\longleftarrow$  (200) ff (no diminuendo)

S  
PEO-PL E IN THE STREETS WERE SCORCHED BY A WAVE OF SEAR--ING

A  
PEO-PL E IN THE STREETS WERE SCORCHED BY A WAVE OF SEAR--ING

T  
PEO-PL E IN THE STREETS WERE SCORCHED BY A WAVE OF SEAR--ING

B  
PEO-PL E IN THE STREETS WERE SCORCHED BY A WAVE OF SEAR--ING



(205) (NO VIBRATO) pp  $\longleftarrow$

SOPRANO SOLO 1  
AND A CHILD IS

SOPRANO SOLO 2  
AND A CHILD IS

S  
HEAT

A  
HEAT

CHORUS  
T  
HEAT

B  
HEAT

PIANO R.H.  
pp  
PED

(E)



**SOPRANO SOLO 1**  
**SOPRANO SOLO 2**  
**PIANO R.H.**

*p*  $\triangleright$   $\text{pp}$   $\triangleleft$  *p*  $\triangleright$

SING - - - - ING      AND NO - BO - DY      LISTEN - - - ING

(PP)

(PED)  $\rightarrow$

**SOPRANO SOLO 1**  
**SOPRANO SOLO 2**  
**PIANO R.H.**

*pp* (no crescendo) (210)  $\triangleright$

BUT THE CHILD WHO IS      SIN - - - - GING

(PP)      PPP  $\triangleright$

(PED)  $\rightarrow$

**PIANO R.H.**

*pppp*      DIMINUENDO POCO - A - POCO      *rit*      (ALLOW TO FADE TO NOTHING)

(PED)  $\uparrow$

COMPLETED HAGLEY 27<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1981.