



Errollyn Wallen

MIGHTY RIVER

Composing for the orchestra is my favourite challenge and this commission from the Rector and PCC of Holy Trinity Clapham Common and John Wates, to mark the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, is an especially important one for me.

It is an innate human instinct to be free just as it is for the river to rush headlong to the sea. That is the concept for this work.

The work makes reference to the hymn *Amazing Grace* and the spirituals *Deep River* and *Go Down Moses*. It is as if the perpetual motion of the music, like water, like time, through its sheer momentum, comes across the cries and echoes of human hearts and voices, singing out of suffering, repentance, humility and hope.

Each new piece I write is like an adventure and in composing **Mighty River** I reaffirmed my belief that history is a living thing of which we are all part. It has been a joy to have got to know John and Carol Wates (Carol is a distant relative of William Wilberforce) and to have discussed with them the creation and intentions of this work. I feel honoured to have been chosen to commemorate this very special day.

Mighty River is in a single movement and I dedicate it to my great-great-great-great-great-great grandmother. I will never know her but I praise her for her courage and toughness. Because of her I thrive.

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