

music miscellany

selection of sounds to please

Elgar's vision of God and angels

GUILDFORD Philharmonic Choir will be performing Sir Edward Elgar's spiritual masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius* in the cathedral on Saturday, October 30.

Gerontius, along with the *Enigma Variations*, were Elgar's breakthrough works that, at the relative late age of 43, finally confirmed his place among the highest echelons of the English musical elite – and secured his position on the continent too.

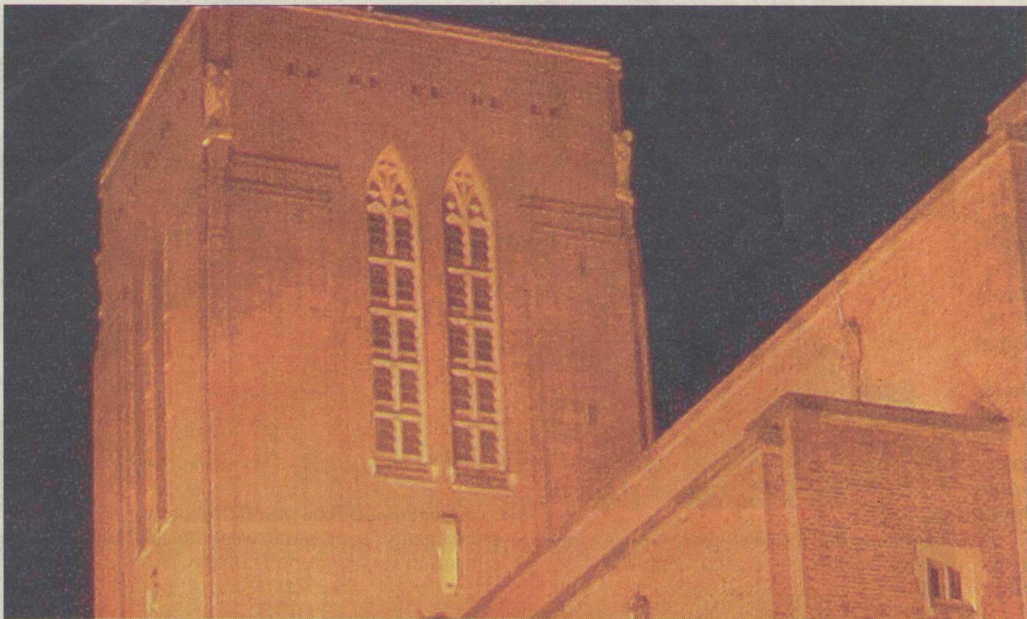
It is a setting of a poem by Cardinal Henry John Newman that describes Gerontius' imagined approach to death, his meeting with God to be judged and the aftermath.

The oratorio is stacked full of the most beautiful tunes, arranged by a series of musical themes which are set out in the introduction and then recur throughout the work, including fear, agony, awe, repentance, easing of pain and judgement.

Several passages stand out, culminated in Elgar's portrayal of the sight of God, only for the briefest of moments, an ecstatic musical climax that fuelled frantic correspondence between Elgar and his publisher August Jaeger over whether it should be attempted.

The soloists will be Eugene Ginty (*Gerontius*), Catherine Denley (angel) and Michael Bundy (Angel of the Agony/priest) and the vocalists will be accompanied by the Forest Philharmonic under the baton of Jeremy Backhouse.

See listings for booking information.



Guildford Philharmonic and the Forest Philharmonic Orchestra will perform Elgar's spiritual masterpiece The Dream of Gerontius in Guildford Cathedral.