

[HOME \(/\)](#) / [THE LAB \(/THE-LAB/BLOG\)](#) / [\(/THE-LAB/BLOG\)](#)[/ WIM HENDERICKX: 'BLOSSOMINGS IS BASED ON TEXTS FROM 18TH CENTURY TIBETAN BUDDHISM, 12TH CENTURY CHRISTIANITY AND 13TH CENTURY ISLAM'](#)

Wim Henderickx: 'Blossomings is based on texts from 18th century Tibetan Buddhism, 12th century Christianity and 13th century Islam'

Author: [The Team \(/users/team\)](#)***01 Sep 2016***[!\[\]\(faf942dc3e59ce8eb64b4ac481eca7e0_img.jpg\) \(https://twitter.com/share?url=http://tinyurl.com/zluc](https://twitter.com/share?url=http://tinyurl.com/zluc)[!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901_img.jpg\) \(https://plus.google.com/share?url](https://plus.google.com/share?url)[!\[\]\(d3102649f02e825ddb76dc3de0190154_img.jpg\) \(https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http)[!\[\]\(4b7a79268f6ba26c1471d4232fffa85a_img.jpg\) \(https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http)[!\[\]\(95b425611cbd2b8716a140cf67c81822_img.jpg\) body=I%20thought%20you%20might%20be%20interested%20in%
tibetan-buddhism-12th-century.%0D%0A%0D%0A](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http)[!\[\]\(b4eeff342f60cc7bcd67d869b4fedca2_img.jpg\) %2C%20conductor%20Martyn%20Brabbins%26nbsp%3Band%20tr
%2C%20London.%20This%20premiere%20](https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http)

 Blog,  Guest Blogger,  Premiere,  Composer

On 23 September 2016, the BBC Singers, conductor Martyn Brabbins and trumpet virtuoso Marco Blaauw will give the world premiere of my work *Blossomings* at LSO St Luke's, London. This premiere is part of a tribute concert to Jonathan Harvey called *Other Presences: The Music of Jonathan Harvey* (for more information and to book tickets, visit: <http://www.classicaldiary.com/event/other-presences-music-jonathan-harvey> (<http://www.classicaldiary.com/event/other-presences-music-jonathan-harvey>)).

I first met Martyn Brabbins in Antwerp in 2011 at the Royal Flemish Philharmonic's house. He was conducting the recording of four of my works for the CD 'Tejas & other orchestral works'. It was an amazing collaboration. Martyn is a true craftsman and it was delightful how he understood and performed my music. From then on our paths crossed several times a year, working on various projects, such as the latest double CD with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic with again four of my works. And we were becoming closer friends.



Martyn knew that the music of Jonathan Harvey was particularly important to me, because of our common fascination for the spiritual and also for Buddhism, and he asked me to compose a commemorative work that would run alongside his music. I like to admit that Jonathan Harvey

was a major inspiration for me as a person as well as an artist. His inspiring music has captivated me and I cherish warm memories of him as a human being. We met several times and Harvey was also the curator of the Music Festival [Music@Venture \(mailto:Music@Venture\)](mailto:Music@Venture) in Antwerp in 2005 when I was commissioned to write a work (*Nada Brahma*) for soprano, instrumental ensemble and electronics. My trips to Africa and to the east have especially been a quest to get in touch with people and cultures. I try to process all these impressions and influences in a pure and honest way into my music, never to imitate, but as a source of inspiration.

Harvey made the connection between Buddhism and Christianity in many of his compositions. In times of terror and war, I wanted to go one step further and chose to put music on texts from three different world faiths or spiritual backgrounds; Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, as a unifying and positive message. I completely agree with British author Karen Armstrong's view, that religion should be a force of harmony to the world. It is often said that religions provoke wars, which I think is totally untrue. There is always a political force that draws religion into conflicts. The actual objective of writing this work was to put emphasis on the beauty of different cultures and on reconciliation. Armstrong says: 'Toleration of the other is not enough, it should shift towards appreciation of the other, the stranger.' I like to see this, not as a woolly vision at all, but as a positive search for ways to achieve a viable and peaceful world for future generations.

Blossomings (3 Prayers for a better World)

Last Spring Martyn Brabbins visited me in my studio, while I was composing. As he read the texts on which I was working, he was hit and charmed by the word *Blossomings* in the Buddhist poem. It became the title of the work, with *3 Prayers for a better World* as the subtitle. This triptych for mixed choir and trumpet (with optional electronics) is based on texts from 18th century Tibetan Buddhism, 12th century Christianity and 13th century Islam. Also the music in this work was inspired by these different eras and cultures. The work contains 3 parts:

Prayer I: From the blossoming lotus (text by Jigme Lingpa)

Prayer II: Holy Spirit (text by Hildegard of Bingen)

Prayer III: O love (text by Rumi)

**The texts**

*'From the blossoming lotus of devotion, at the centre of my heart,
Rise up, O compassionate master, my only refuge!*

*Remain as the jewel ornament on the crown of my head, the mandala of great bliss,
Arousing all my mindfulness and awareness, I pray!'*

This first text is a fragment of the *Prayer of Invoking the Lama* by Jigme Lingpa, who was an 18th century tertön, a discoverer of ancient hidden texts in Tibetan Buddhism. This prayer is recited in Tibet to invoke the presence of the master in their hearts. The concept of the Master is essential in Buddhism, he is not only the carrier and transmitter of the inspiration of all enlightened beings, as the Buddhas. He is also the human face of the absolute, as it were, the embodiment of wisdom and compassion of all Buddhas, focussing their liberating energy on humans. (*1)

*'Holy Spirit,
Giving life to all life,
Moving all creatures,*

*Root of all things,
Washing them clean,
Wiping out their mistakes,*

*You are our true life,
Luminous, wonderful,
Awakening the heart from its ancient sleep.'*

Hildegard of Bingen was a medieval Benedictine abbess, mystic, philosopher, writer and composer. She experienced visions from a very early age, causing a painful spiritual struggle. At the age of 42 she became physically ill because of great suffering and tribulations. As she believed her visions were instructions from God, she started writing them down. It was very particular for a woman to be able to speak in a time and place where few women were permitted a voice. In her prayer she brings an ode to the Holy Spirit, which is focussing its energy on all living creatures. (*2)

*'O love, O pure deep love, be here, be now — be all;
Worlds dissolve into your stainless endless radiance,

Frail living leaves burn with you brighter than cold stars.
Make me your servant, your breath, your core.'*

The Islamic prayer *O love* was written by Rumi, a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist and Sufi mystic. His poems have been widely translated all over the world and his spiritual legacy is still very alive. The depth of his spiritual vision extended beyond narrow sectarian concerns. He wrote: "The Light of Muhammad does not abandon a Zoroastrian or Jew in the world. May the shade of his good fortune shine upon everyone! He brings all of those who are led astray into the Way out of the desert."(*3)

In all three texts you can sense the same tone of devotion, love and gratitude. It appeals to the imagination that these prayers came into being in completely different eras, places and circumstances and yet they are so similar. They were written by exceptionally ethical people whose aim was to make the world a better place.

The music

To the side of the mixed choir a double bell trumpet will be commenting on and introducing parts of the texts. The sound of this trumpet can also be seen as a calling upon the master (Jonathan Harvey).

The (optional) electronics will create a sonorous background of the harmonic material sung by the choir. This will give the work a spatial effect.

Part I: *From the blossoming lotus*, after a virtuoso introduction (call) by the trumpet, accompanied by an almost inaudible humming of the choir (bocca chiusa), the first part opens with very deep sounds in the basses, suggesting a Buddhist mantra. This leads to a first climax (a calling upon the master). After an interlude by the trumpet, the basses enter again with low pedal

polyphonic textures by the other choir members. After a very intimate part with the words 'I pray' the choir repeats the musical material from the beginning, leading to the epilogue of the first prayer.

Part II: In *Holy Spirit* the music opens with finger cymbals, played by the choir members. These sacral sounds turn into a dialogue between the male and the female



voices. Basses and tenors are humming in parallel fourths and are answered by the sopranos and the altos, who are singing the text of this second prayer. The trumpet comes along with a very melodic phrase, accompanied by a sustained humming of the tenors. The male voices then enter with very dark sounds, while the females are singing with an almost angelic sonority. Very rapid trumpet motives are followed by three chords in the choir and finger cymbals by the singers.

Part III: *O love*, begins with a drone (an ostinato sound) sang by the choir. From this a heterophonic texture arises, sung by soloists of the choir. A mezzo soprano then enters in a Middle East, Arabic style and is answered by the trumpet, playing off stage (lontano). Then the first words of the third prayer enter in a homophonic texture. The latter part of the prayer is based on a minimalist and canonic structure, leading to a climax. After a short melodic interlude by the trumpet, there is a delicate and transparent sound in the choir. The work ends with the starting material of this prayer, combined with a musical motive inspired by Jonathan Harvey's name.

Wim Henderickx

(*1) source: *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche

(*2) source: Underhill, Evelyn. *Mystics of the Church*

(*3) source: Ibrahim Gamard, Rumi and Islam

--

Antwerp based composer **Wim Henderickx's** orchestral work *Tejas* (2009) was hailed in

Wim Henderickx: 'Blossomings is based on texts from 18th century Tibetan Buddhism, 12th century Christianity and 13th century Islam' (<http://www.classicaldiary.com/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blo...>)
Gramophone as 'a veritable Rite of Spring of the 21st century'. Martyn Brabbins recorded this work in 2011 with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic on the cd *Tejas & other orchestral works*. In 2013 Henderickx joined this orchestra as artist in residence and since 1996 he is composer in residence for Music Theatre Transparant, an international production company for music theatre. In November 2015 his work *The Queen without a Country* was selected as one of the winning productions by the 'Music Theatre Now' jury in New York. His latest double CD with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic has been enthusiastically received in the international media, 'a truly immersive experience' (*BBC Music Magazine*) and 'not music that's easy to ignore' (*The Guardian*). One of his earliest orchestral works *Raga I* (1996) received it's German premiere last June with the Beethoven Orchestra in Bonn. The upcoming months he'll finish his second symphony, a ballet production and a music theatre piece, all to be premiered in March and April 2017. His scores are published by Norsk Musikforlag in Oslo.
www.wimhenderickx.com (<http://www.wimhenderickx.com/>)

[Log in \(/user/login?destination=node/16701%23comment-form\)](/user/login?destination=node/16701%23comment-form) or [register \(/user/register?destination=node/16701%23comment-form\)](/user/register?destination=node/16701%23comment-form) to post comments

You may also like...



[\(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-](/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-century)

[tibetan-buddhism-12th-century\)](#)

Wim Henderickx: 'Blossomings is based on texts from 18th century Tibetan Buddhism, 12th century Christianity and 13th century Islam' (/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-century)

01 Sep 2016

SEARCH

Keyword...

Qnd

LATEST ARTICLES

1. [Wim Henderickx: 'Blossomings is based on texts from 18th century Tibetan Buddhism, 12th century](#)



[\(/the-lab/blog/watch-pekka-kuusistos-hilarious-proms-encore\)](/the-lab/blog/watch-pekka-kuusistos-hilarious-proms-encore)

Watch Pekka Kuusisto's hilarious Proms encore! (/the-lab/blog/watch-pekka-kuusistos-hilarious-proms-encore)

12 Aug 2016



[\(/the-lab/blog/opinion-classical-music-audiences-divide-between-](/the-lab/blog/opinion-classical-music-audiences-divide-between-)

[generations\)](#)

OPINION | Classical music audiences: the divide between generations (/the-lab/blog/opinion-classical-music-audiences-divide-between-generations)

05 Jul 2016



[\(/the-lab/blog/decoding-classical-music-3-introduction-symphony\)](/the-lab/blog/decoding-classical-music-3-introduction-symphony)

Decoding Classical Music #3 | An Introduction To The Symphony (/the-lab/blog/decoding-classical-music-3-introduction-symphony)

30 Jun 2016

[Christianity and 13th century Islam' \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-century\)](/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-century)

2. [Watch Pekka Kuusisto's hilarious Proms encore! \(/the-lab/blog/watch-pekka-kuusistos-hilarious-proms-encore\)](/the-lab/blog/watch-pekka-kuusistos-hilarious-proms-encore)
3. [5 Radical Alternatives To Build A New Concert Hall In London \(/the-lab/blog/5-radical-alternatives-build-new-concert-hall-london\)](/the-lab/blog/5-radical-alternatives-build-new-concert-hall-london)
4. [OPINION | Classical music audiences: the divide between generations \(/the-lab/blog/opinion-classical-](/the-lab/blog/opinion-classical-)

5. [Confessions: Brook Street Band & Soprano Nicki Kennedy \(/the-lab/confessions/confessions-brook-street-band-soprano-nicki-kennedy\)](#)

TAGS

[Audiences \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-c](#)

[BBC Proms \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-](#)

[Baroque \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-cer](#)

[Beginner's Guide \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-](#)

[Blog \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-bas](#)

[Book \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-centur](#)

[Brexit \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-centu](#)

[Cello \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-centur](#)

[Composer \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan](#)

[Discovery \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-](#)

[Fun \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddf](#)

[Guest Blogger \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-](#)

[Infographics \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th](#)

[Interview \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-cent](#)

[Listen \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-bud](#)

[Mozart \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-cent](#)

[Nature \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-centur](#)

[Opinion \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-cer](#)

[Phono \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-bu](#)

[Piano \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-centu](#)

[Poll \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddf](#)

[Premiere \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-ce](#)

[Project \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-centur](#)

[Sounds from the Screen \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-](#)

[Symphony \(/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-c](#)

Wim Henderickx: Blossomings is based on texts from 18th centu... <http://www.classicaldiary.com/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blo...>
Theremin (/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhism-12th-ce
Video Game Music (/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-buddhis
Violin (/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetan-bud
soundtrack (/the-lab/blog/wim-henderickx-blossomings-based-texts-18th-century-tibetar

SUBSCRIBE

Email Address

Subscribe

© 2016 Classical Diary All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions \(/terms-and-conditions\)](/terms-and-conditions)