

Choral Symphony

[1] I. Overture (Psalm 107, verses 1–3)

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious and his mercy endureth for ever. Let them give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

[2] II. Allegro agitato, ma non troppo (Psalm 107, verses 4–8)

They went astray in the wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them forth by the right way, that they may go into the city where they dwelt. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!

[3] III. Largo (Psalm 107, verses 10–16)

Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death being fast bound in misery and iron; Because they rebelled against the word of the Lord and lightly regarded the counsel of the most Highest. He also brought down their heart through heaviness. They fell down, and there was none to help them. So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble he delivered them out of their distress. For he brought them out of darkness, and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and smitten the bars of iron in sunder.

[4] IV. Allegro molto (Psalm 107, verses 23–31, 35–37, 43)

They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters; these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For at his word a stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to the heaven and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of their trouble. They reel to and from and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress. For he maketh the storm to cease so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they are at rest and so he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men! He maketh the wilderness a standing water and water-springs of a dry ground. And there he setteth the hungry that they may build them a city to dwell in, that they may sow their land, and plant vineyards to yield them fruits of increase. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness. Whoso is wise will ponder these things and they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

[5] St Paul's Voyage to Melita (From Chapter XXVII of the Acts of the Apostles, Authorised and Revised versions)

AND WHEN IT was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus's band. And the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens.

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 'Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.' Nevertheless, the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore.

But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, they let her drive. And running under the lee of a certain island, they had much work to come by the boat: which when they had hoisted it, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

And when they had been long without food, Paul stood forth in the midst of them,

'Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.'

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in the sea of Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast our anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let the boat down into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers,

'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.'

Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and let her fall off.

And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat,

'This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your safety: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.'

And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. And when they had cast off the anchors, they left them in the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made towards shore. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim out and escape. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship.

And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.