

THE APOSTLES

A DRAMATIC ORATORIO

SIR EDWARD ELGAR

[The words arranged from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha by Elgar]

BLESSED VIRGIN  
THE ANGEL

ROSALYN RILEY (Soprano)

MARY MAGDALENE

YVONNE LEA (Contralto)

ST. JOHN

GRENVILLE HEATH (Tenor)

ST. PETER

CLIVE BAILEY (Bass)

JUDAS

PAUL TURNER (Bass)

JESUS

CHRISTOPHER UNDERWOOD (Bass)

ORGAN — RUSSELL MEDLEY  
REHEARSAL PIANISTS — SYLVIA HOARE & ANNIE KELLY

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY  
CONDUCTOR

JOHN BETHELL

SYNOPSIS

PART 1.

PROLOGUE. The chorus meditates on the mission of Christ.

1. THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES

Christ at prayer on the mountain at night; introduced by the tenor.

The angel sings the prophecy about the mission. Tenors and basses announce the dawn. The apostles, tenor and chorus describe the calling of the apostles.

2. BY THE WAYSIDE

Jesus sings the Beatitudes, the chorus and apostles, with the Blessed Virgin commenting after each one.

3. BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

Jesus and the apostles embark for Capernaum. Mary Magdalene recalls here sinful life and begs for mercy.

A storm arises; Jesus walks on the water to re-assure the terrified apostles. Mary Magdalene is moved by the stilling of the waters, and believes that she may be forgiven. The action moves to Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks the apostles whom people think he is. Peter is commissioned as the rock upon which the Church will be built. Mary Magdalene washes Jesus' feet. The section ends with a hymn of praise to Jesus sung by soloists and chorus.

PART 2

INTRODUCTION (Organ)

4. THE BETRAYAL

The tenor describes Christ's teachings, and about the foretelling of His death. Tenors, basses and Judas tell the story of the betrayal. The chorus, Judas and a priest describe and comment on the trial. Judas meditates in growing despair on what he has done.

5. GOLGATHA

Mary and John express their grief at the Crucifixion. It is said that Elgar could not bear to linger on this episode, which is brief.

6. AT THE SEPULCHRE

The contralto and chorus of angels (sopranos and contraltos) meditate upon the empty tomb.

7. THE ASCENSION

Jesus commands the apostles to commence the teaching of his word. The contralto describes the Ascension. The words of Christ in heaven are sung by the Mystic Chorus (Children's Choir). Soloists and chorus express their joy.

The music rises to a triple forte. Mary, Peter and John can be heard singing the Magnificat. In the background can be heard some music from "The Dream of Gerontius" ("and thou art calling me").

The performance will end at approximately 9.45. Part 1 lasts about 63 minutes, and Part 2 about 52 minutes. There will be an interval of 15 minutes at about 8.35.