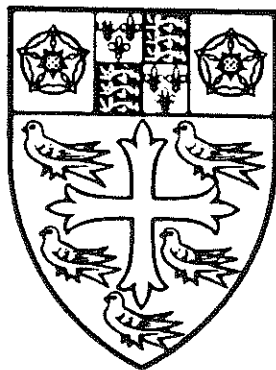


Westminster Abbey



**Service of Thanksgiving
for the
Life and Work
of
Dame Peggy Ashcroft, DBE
(1907-1991)**

**Friday 29 November 1991
Noon**

*Before the Service organ music is played by Andrew Lumsden,
Sub-Organist of Westminster Abbey.*

*The Royal Shakespeare Theatre Wind Band,
under the direction of Guy Woolfenden,
plays music from productions of 'The Wars of the Roses'
and 'All's Well That Ends Well'.*

*The Service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey
conducted by Martin Neary,
Organist and Master of the Choristers.*

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Procession of visiting clergy moves to places in the Sacrarium.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and conducted to her seat in Quire.

His Royal Highness The Prince Edward is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

All stand as His Royal Highness is conducted to his place in Quire.

At 12 noon, the Procession of the Collegiate Body moves from the West End of the Church as the Choir sings these sentences:

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St John 11: 25, 26

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Job 19: 25-27

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

1 Timothy 6: 7; Job 1: 21

William Croft (1678-1727)

Organist of Westminster Abbey (1708-27)

All remain standing for the Dean to say

THE BIDDING

IN EVERY century there are born a handful of actors in our nation who are so supremely gifted as to enrich and illuminate the lives of their contemporaries.

Within this act of worship, chiefly in the words of Shakespeare and the music of Mozart, and through the tributes of her friends, we give thanks to God for the incomparable talents of Peggy Ashcroft.

We recall with affection one who radiated an ageless beauty of voice and spirit; one who had a direct and transparent honesty and who was radical and daring in her choice of roles; an essentially private person who was yet the passionate and single-minded champion of many causes in defence of human rights. She delighted in her family and took particular pleasure that her son Nicholas followed her in the theatre. And she delighted in her friends who now gather to recall a great actress and a woman of rare integrity.

All sing the Hymn:

PRAISE, my soul, the King of Heaven,
To his feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia,
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia,
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Choir only
Father-like, he tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia, alleluia,
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia, alleluia,
Praise with us the God of grace.

Praise my Soul 192 AMNS

John Goss (1800-80)

Descant Albert Tysoe (1884-1962)

H F Lyte (1793-1847)

Psalm 103

All sit for Janet Suzman to read:

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION

AND death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan't crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be made and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

Dylan Thomas (1914-53)

All remain seated for the Choir with members of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Wind Band to sing:

GLORIA in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

GLORY be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men.

Guy Woolfenden (b 1937)

*'Gloria'
from the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1970 production of
'Henry VIII' in which Peggy Ashcroft played Queen Katherine*

All remain seated for Geraldine James to read:

1 CORINTHIANS 13

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

All remain seated for Julian Bream, CBE to play music which he played at poetry readings with Peggy Ashcroft:

Étude No 11 in E minor *Heitor Villa-Lobos (1886-1959)*

All remain seated for

AN ADDRESS

given by

Harold Pinter, CBE

*All remain seated for Dame Judi Dench, DBE and
Dorothy Tutin, CBE to read from 'Cymbeline':*

FEAR no more the heat o'the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o'the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th'all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finisht joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must,
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

All remain seated for

Piano Concerto in C, K467
Second Movement: Andante
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91)
played by Murray Perahia
and the English Chamber Orchestra

All remain seated for

AN ADDRESS
given by
Sir Peter Hall, CBE

All remain seated for Felicity Lott, CBE with the Choir and the English Chamber Orchestra to sing:

LAUDATE Dominum omnes gentes: laudate eum omnes populi.

Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia eius: et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto; sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

O PRAISE the Lord, all ye heathen: praise him, all ye nations. For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Psalm 117

All sit or kneel for the Prayers, led by the Precentor, the Reverend Alan Luff.

Let us pray.

LET us keep silence to remember Peggy Ashcroft before God, each of us giving thanks for our own memories of her as a woman, as a friend and as an actor.

O Eternal God, who holdest all souls in life, look in mercy upon thy servant Peggy for whose life and work we give thee hearty thanks: grant that she may rest in peace and be raised in glory, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for all who mourn.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort: deal graciously, we pray thee, with those who mourn, that casting every care on thee, they may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for all in the theatre.

O GOD the King of Glory, who in our making didst bestow upon us the gift of tears and the sense of joy, and didst implant in us the desire for recreation of mind and body; give to those who minister to this need, through drama and music, a high ideal, a pure intention and the will to use their art for our enrichment and for thy greater glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Among the causes to which Dame Peggy gave her support were those concerned with human rights. Let us pray for all prisoners of conscience.

O GOD, our Father, whose love is without end and whose care reaches into the darkest places of the earth: uphold those who suffer for the sake of conscience; save those who hold them prisoner from their own sin and folly; and enable us to bring love and hope and faith where they are most needed, through Jesus Christ our suffering Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us sum up our prayers in the words that our Saviour taught us, saying:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

All sit for the Abbey Choir to sing:

BRING us, O Lord God, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling but one equal light, no noise nor silence, but one equal music, no fears nor hopes but one equal possession, no ends nor beginnings but one equal eternity, in the habitation of thy glory and dominion, world without end. Amen.

William Harris (1883-1973)

John Donne (1572-1631)

All remain seated for portraits of some of the Shakespearian heroines played by Dame Peggy Ashcroft as described by their counterparts:

Juliet by Romeo

from ROMEO AND JULIET

read by

Freddy Stuart

(second year student, Central School of Speech and Drama)

Katharina by Petruchio

from THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

read by

Ben Kingsley

Queen Margaret by The Duke of York

from HENRY VI PART III

read by

Donald Sinden, CBE

Beatrice by Benedick

from MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

read by

Paul Scofield, CBE

Desdemona by Othello
from OTHELLO
read by
Willard White

Cleopatra by Enobarbus
from ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
read by
Ian Holm, CBE

All stand to sing the Hymn:

LET all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.
The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.
The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all the heart
Must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

Luckington 202 AMNS
Basil Harwood (1859-1949)
Descant Martin Neary (b 1940)

George Herbert (1593-1632)

All remain standing for the Dean to give

THE BLESSING

All sit for Sir John Gielgud, CH to read:

SO, fare thee well.
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phoebus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal!

She looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.

from 'Antony and Cleopatra'

OUR revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

from 'The Tempest'

All stand for the Processions to return to the West End of the Abbey.

Music after the Service:

Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542 *J S Bach (1685-1750)*

Members of the Congregation are asked to remain in their places until directed to move by the Stewards.