

Composer's Note

John Henry Newman's moving and profound sacred poem *Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom* has cast a spell on me ever since I was a boy chorister in Oxford in the 1960s: it was introduced to me attached to William Harris's stirring hymn tune Alberta, composed, apparently, as he was crossing that Canadian province by train in the 1920s. Why is this Victorian text still so powerful? For me, it is a perfect expression of the comfort of a compassionate faith, filled as it is with human fragility and the doubt that we know Newman was grappling with at this stage in his life. Because it has always spoken so directly and personally to me I was determined that it should be a cornerstone of my *Eternal Light: A Requiem* both as a stand-alone movement but also as the thematic climax of the Requiem's concluding movement, 'In Paradisum'. Whilst I admire the familiar, existing tunes associated with the hymn, I wanted my 'Lead, Kindly Light' to evoke the turbulent waters of the sea, serving as a reminder of the fact that its words were written by a man who believed himself to be confronted with the possibility of death, stranded as he was at sea and critically ill, and also of the metaphor of troubled waters, for anyone who has looked despair in the face, sought and found a kindly light to lead them on.

Howard Goodall, February 2009
www.howardgoodall.com

'Lead, Kindly Light' forms part of the larger work, *Eternal Light: A Requiem*

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Eternal Light: A Requiem was commissioned by Mark Stephenson on behalf of London Musici to celebrate its 20th anniversary. It was commissioned as both a choral-orchestral-dance piece for London Musici, The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and Rambert Dance Company (Artistic Director: Mark Baldwin) and as a choral-orchestral work.

Eternal Light: A Requiem is available on EMI Classics (50999-2-15047-2-3), performed by London Musici, The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, with soloists Natasha Marsh, Alfie Boe and Christopher Maltman, conducted by Stephen Darlington.

www.eternallightrequiem.com

Vocal score of *Eternal Light: A Requiem* available for sale (ISBN 0-571-53230-6).
Orchestral materials available on hire.

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Lead, Kindly Light

from

Eternal Light: A Requiem

John Henry Newman

Howard Goodall

$\text{♩} = 40$

Piano *mf*

3 S. A. *mf*

Lead, kind - ly light, a - mid th'en - cir - cling gloom, Lead Thou me

T. B. *mf*

6 on! The night is dark, and I am far from home: Lead Thou me

The musical score is set in 3/2 time with a tempo of quarter note = 40. It begins with a piano introduction in the left hand, marked *mf*. The vocal parts enter at measure 3. The Soprano Alto part has a melodic line with lyrics: "Lead, kind - ly light, a - mid th'en - cir - cling gloom, Lead Thou me". The Tenor Bass part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line. The score continues to measure 6, where the vocal parts sing: "on! The night is dark, and I am far from home: Lead Thou me". The piano accompaniment provides a rich harmonic texture throughout.

36

smile Which I have loved long since, and lost a - while,

39

loved since, and lost a - while.

41 *rall.*