

Merton at the BBC Proms

Prom 58, 'The Sound of an Orchestra', on 26th August 2018 commemorated the centenary of the birth of Leonard Bernstein and recreated the style of his more informal concerts aimed at bringing classical music to a wider audience. It included a piece called *All These Lighted Things* by Elizabeth Ogonek (born 1989), an American composer of contemporary classical music. The composer introduced the piece herself through a recording shown on large video displays in the Albert Hall.

I originally wanted to write a piece that was related in some way to the Liturgy of the Hours or these moments of prayer throughout the day – and that it has to do with the progression of light. *All These Lighted Things* came from me at a time in my life when I was emerging from a very dark place. And I just needed to write something that was a little more charged with light and less gravity. The first movement is very bright in a weird way. I was thinking very much about the progression of being very close to the sun, very far from the sun, and then again lying midway between the sun. And so the first movement is very much like what happens when those rays of light are right in your face; and if that were filtered - you could screen-shot that and treat that as a filter - what would it be? So this is Thomas Merton:

O Sweet Irrational Worship

Wind and a bobwhite
And the afternoon sun.

By ceasing to question the sun
I have become light.

My leaves sing.

I an earth, earth

All these lighted things
Grow from my heart.

The poem, consisting of 31 lines in all, was originally published in Emblems of a Season of Fury (1963). Ed.