

The Lost Chord ~ Christ Church Choir Anthem, Sunday January 22, 2023

Composed by Arthur Sullivan in 1877, based on a poem by Adelaide Anne Procter (published 1860)

The poem/anthem is about a young woman who is practising at the organ and plays a chord that transports her into some sort of heavenly state. Then, when she attempts to recreate the chord, she can't. Hence, the lost chord!

So when you hear the expression, it means **something wonderful, but unattainable**.

Sullivan wrote the melody at the bedside of his dying brother, Fred. It has been recorded by many great singers, including Enrico Caruso, who sang it at a benefit concert for the families of victims of the *Titanic* disaster. (April 29, 1912, Metropolitan Opera House, New York City)

The text:

*Seated one day at the organ, I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly over the noisy keys.*

*I knew not what I was playing, or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music like the sound of a great Amen.*

*It flooded the crimson twilight like the close of an angel's psalm,
And it lay on my fevered spirit with a touch of infinite calm.*

*It quieted pain and sorrow like love overcoming strife,
It seemed the harmonious echo from our discordant life.*

*It linked all perplexed meanings into one perfect peace
And trembled away into silence as if it were loth to cease.*

*I have sought, but I seek it vainly, that one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ and entered into mine.*

*It may be that death's bright angel will speak in that chord again;
It may be that only in Heav'n I shall hear that grand Amen!*