



Songs of
Farewell...

A Showcase Concert of the Parish
Choir of Saint John's Finch Street
Friday 24 May 2024 7PM

Featuring the 'Songs of Farewell' by
Charles Parry together with the 'Funeral
Sentences for Queen Mary' by Henry
Purcell and other music by Elgar, Reger,
Whitacre, Ramsay and Swarbrick

5 Finch Street, East Malvern

PROGRAMME

SLEEP FLESHLY BIRTH - ROBERT RAMSAY
WHEN DAVID HEARD - ROBERT RAMSAY
THEN DAVID MOURNED - THOMAS TOMKINS

MAN THAT IS BORN OF A WOMAN - HENRY PURCELL
THOU KNOWEST LORD - HENRY PURCELL
IN THE MIDST OF LIFE - HENRY PURCELL

A BOY AND A GIRL - ERIC WHITACRE
THEY ARE AT REST - EDWARD ELGAR
NACHTLIED - MAX RAGER

MY SOUL, THERE IS A COUNTRY - HUBERT PARRY
I KNOW MY SOUL HATH POWER - HUBERT PARRY
NEVER WEATHERBEATEN SAIL - HUBERT PARRY
THERE IS AN OLD BELIEF - HUBERT PARRY

O WALY, WALY - ROWAN SWARBRICK

NOTES

The inspiration for this programme "Songs of Farewell" is taken from English composer Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry's works collected under the same name. These six choral motets composed between 1916 and 1918 are some of the last works Parry wrote before his death, with texts taken from various poets (Henry Vaughan, John Davies, Thomas Campion, John Gibson Lockhart and John Donne) and from psalm 39 in the Book of Common Prayer (no. 6 Lord, let me know mine end). Written during the First World War, a time when many of his own students were killed in action, Parry's choices of text reflect a desire for peace and an end to violence.

The concert opens with Robert Ramsay's Sleep Fleshly Birth, a setting of a text by an unknown poet on the death of Henry, the eighteen year old Prince of Wales in 1612. This six-voice madrigal makes extensive use of expressive word painting (thy doleful obit keeping, make marble melt with weeping) yet is truly marked by the varying textures Ramsay pulls from the six parts. Ramsay's When David Heard employs many similar compositional approaches in a heartfelt lament by David over the death of his son, Absalon, and Thomas Tomkins' Then David Mourned similarly expresses David's grief at the death of Saul and Jonathan.

It would not be fitting to programme a choral concert without including Henry Purcell's Thou Knowest Lord, first performed at the funeral of Queen Mary II, and a well loved staple of many a choir. Originally coupled with an instrumental march and canzona, these works are often combined with two other settings by Purcell, Man that is born of a woman and In the midst of life, and performed as his Funeral Sentences.

To bring some light and shade to this programme, we have a slightly more modern bracket of works more themed around the endings of things, rather than death. Max Reger's Nachtlied heralds the end of the day and coming of the night, in superb late romantic chromaticism, Edward Elgar's They are at Rest is a song of praise to the dearly departed, and Eric Whitacre's A Boy and a Girl paints a picture of love lost, in typical Whitacre harmonies. To close the programme, O Waly, Waly brings some much needed light heartedness, yet still with a twinge of melancholy at the fading of love.

- DIRECTOR OF MUSIC -
ROWAN SWARBRICK

- ORGAN SCHOLAR -
NERIDA EVANS

- SOPRANO -
MAYA CHARLES SEDERGREEN*, BRON WILLIAMS,
JENNIFER THOMSON, MARION WILSON*, ELYSE
BELFORD-THOMAS

- ALTO -
ALEXANDRA AMERIDES, SASKIA MASCITTI*,
NERIDA EVANS

- TENOR -
MARK FOULCHER, WILL GRANT*, SATOSHI OKITA,
ALEXANDRA AMERIDES

- BASS -
IAN DAMMAN*, ROBERT BUCKMASTER, RICHARD
BURMAN, ROWAN SWARBRICK

(* DENOTES CHORAL SCHOLAR)

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