

RIPE CHURCH
SATURDAY 26TH JUNE 1999

THE ESTERHÁZY CHAMBER CHOIR

A CELEBRATION
OF
ENGLISH SONG

WITH

STEPHEN ROOKE *TENOR*

CONDUCTED BY

TIM LOLE

PROGRAMME

CHOIR~

WILLIAM BYRD	<i>HAEC DIES</i>
	<i>AVE VERUM CORPUS</i>
THOMAS TALLIS	<i>IF YE LOVE ME</i>
	<i>O NATA LUX</i>
HENRY PURCELL	<i>REMEMBER NOT, LORD, OUR OFFENCES</i>
	<i>HEAR MY PRAYER, O LORD</i>

STEPHEN ROOKE~

GEORGE HANDEL	<i>WHERE'ER YOU WALK</i>
HENRY PURCELL	<i>MUSIC FOR A WHILE</i>

CHOIR~

CHARLES WOOD	<i>HAIL, GLADDENING LIGHT</i>
WILLIAM HARRIS	<i>FAIRE IS THE HEAVEN</i>

INTERVAL 20 MINUTES

***DURING THE INTERVAL
"PIMMS" WILL BE SERVED
IN THE CHURCHYARD***

CHOIR~

C V STANFORD

THE SWALLOW

THE BLUE BIRD

QUICK! WE HAVE BUT A SECOND

STEPHEN ROOKE~

ROGER QUILTER

O MISTRESS MINE

TO DAISIES

CHOIR~

FOLK SONGS

THE OAK AND THE ASH

ARRANGED: JOHN MARSHALL

MY SWEETHEART'S LIKE VENUS

ARRANGED: GUSTAV HOLST

DASHING AWAY WITH THE SMOOTHING IRON

ARRANGED: JOHN BYRT

STEPHEN ROOKE~

FRANK BRIDGE

GO NOT, HAPPY DAY

E'EN AS A LOVELY FLOWER

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

THE CHOIRMASTER'S BURIAL

CHOIR~

JOHN GARDNER

REJECTION

LENNON/MCCARTNEY

WHEN I'M SIXTY-FOUR

PROGRAMME NOTES

This rather eclectic programme, loosely encompassed as it is by the term 'English Song' (with apologies to Mr Handel and the Irish contingent), portrays a tradition rather than a genre. Therein we have aspired to musicologist Peter Stadlen's description of *lieder*: 'The elusive art of suggesting the dramatic content of the text by other than operatic means'. The composers represented here are many and varied, but they are linked through the centuries by two things: an English home, and a gift for vocal writing.

In the sixteenth century **William Byrd** and **Thomas Tallis** were, if you like, the Lennon and McCartney of their times. Whether they would, given the technology and marketing, have sold over 200 million recordings of their work is a matter for conjecture. They certainly had the music printing business nicely carved up between them, having been granted by Elizabeth I a 21 year monopoly not only for publishing all music scores but also for producing the manuscript upon which they were printed. Byrd is represented here with his contrasting *Ave Verum Corpus* (All hail true body) and *Haec dies* (This is the day), while the contrapuntal ingenuity of Tallis is well demonstrated in *If ye love me* and *O nata lux* (*O Light of light*).

Thanks in part to the interest shown by more 'modern' composers such as Holst, Britten and Vaughan Williams, **Henry Purcell** (who here represents the seventeenth century) has been the subject of a popular revival. In true post-Renaissance style, his vocal music reveals a sensitivity to both the rhythm and the meaning of the words, thereby evoking an emotional response in his audience. His ecstatic *Hear my prayer* is one seamless heart-rending crescendo.

The adoptive Englishman **George F Handel** wrote the dramatic oratorio *Semele*, from which comes the very popular *Where'er you walk*, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, not long after completing *Messiah*. He lived, worked and was revered in London, enjoying a comfortable life thanks

to pensions from Monarchs and aristocratic patronage. His huge popularity resulted mainly from his prolific output of dramatic oratorios and his legacy dominated the English music scene for 150 years after his death in 1759.

A leap of a century or so brings us to **Charles Wood**, a friend and pupil of **Charles Villiers Stanford** (both of whose lives straddled the birth of the 20th millennium), the influential Professor of composition at the Royal College of Music. Wood, when he too had become a tutor at the same college, frequently found himself passing gifted composition students on to Stanford, a state of affairs which irritated him greatly, especially as they included such talents as Beecham, Howells, Vaughan-Williams and Tippett. Wood was known for his friendliness and humility while the senior man had a more robust approach to life and pupils: never a man to mince his words, Stanford once told Vaughan-Williams that a much-agonised-over quartet movement was 'All rot, my boy'. Wood's work is represented by *Hail, Gladdening light* while Stanford's is portrayed in *The Swallow*, *The Bluebird* and an arrangement of *Quick, we have but a second*, an Irish air.

The double choir anthem *Faire is the heaven*, by **William Harris**, is a delightful Finzi-esque motet written in 1925 and 'affectionately dedicated to Sir Hugh Allen', conductor of the Bach Choir and Head of Music at Oxford. (Rather suspiciously, Harris was to be appointed conductor of the Oxford Bach Choir a year later~ a little musical back-scratching perhaps, or just plain nepotism?)

The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century led composers of many different nationalities to incorporate traditional folk tunes into their work. This became one of the most recognisable aspects of early twentieth century English composers, one of whom was **Frank Bridge**. Anthony Payne, describing *Go not, happy day* in his own inimitable way, avers that 'this quintessentially Edwardian ballad...derives an innocent charm from the crosscurrents of its accompanying sextuplets' which would be difficult to gainsay. **Roger Quilter** (who died in 1953),

on the other hand, was known for his fragile and beautifully poised songs whose lyrics were often penned by Tennyson and Shakespeare.

Moving yet closer to the present there follows a work by **Benjamin Britten** who was born on St. Cecilia's day 1913 and died in 1976. *The Choirmaster's burial* is from the song cycle *Winter Words*. With words by Thomas Hardy, this ballad has a recurring hymn tune ~*Mount Ephraim*~ in the piano part. The interpretation reflects Hardy's nihilistic philosophy by avoiding sentimentality and paring the music down to the bone. **John Gardner** (who is still alive) was Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy until 1975. He wrote *Rejection* as one of *Five Philanders*, a commission for the 1975 Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival. The song is dedicated to Steve Race, the jazz pianist and broadcaster.

Finally, recognising the diffusion that has occurred between musical genres and categorisation in the latter half of this century, we include *When I'm sixty-four*, written by **John Lennon** and **Paul McCartney** (the other living composer represented in tonight's concert) in the 1960's. Since then they have sold more than 200 million recordings. Like Byrd and Tallis, their talents were also rewarded by the monarch~ not with a monopoly, but with MBEs.

Karen Zeff

STEPHEN ROOKE TENOR

Stephen Rooke was born in Newport, Gwent, and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, winning several prestigious prizes while there.

Stephen has been a member of both Glyndebourne Festival and Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and was awarded the Erich Vietheer Prize by Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Following a Masterclass given by Sir Michael Tippett during the 1988 Manchester Tippett/ Debussy Festival, Stephen was offered a performance of Tippett's *Songs for Dov* with the

College Chamber Orchestra, which culminated in an invitation to give a recital at the Tivoli Festival in Copenhagen. Further concert work includes *Messiah* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra; the same work for the Burrswood Golden Jubilee Appeal at Glyndebourne with the Esterházy Chamber Choir; Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*; Mozart's *Requiem*; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*; Verdi's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* and *My Fair Lady* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Future operatic plans include Count Elemer in *Arabella* for Opera North and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Concert plans include another *Messiah* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

THE ESTERHÁZY CHAMBER CHOIR

The Lewes-based Esterházy Chamber Choir was founded in 1993 and comprises some forty experienced singers originally selected by their Music Director David Angus. For this concert the choir has been rehearsed and directed by Tim Lole, their resident conductor. The name Esterházy was inspired by its links with Haydn who has a special place in the choir's repertoire. Count Esterházy was Haydn's patron and most of Haydn's works were first performed at the Esterháza palace in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The choir aims to perform at a professional standard whilst remaining firmly rooted in the fine English tradition of amateur music making. It also aims to make music more accessible to the young by offering free admission to accompanied children under 16 for all its own concerts.

The choir is a warm and friendly group which welcomes approaches for audition from experienced musicians who have similar aspirations. The singers are also pleased to offer their talents in support of charitable events. Every year the choir performs a Christmas concert of popular favourites with families in mind.

An extensive repertoire spans five centuries of sacred and secular music by composers such as Purcell, Tallis, Haydn, Handel, Howells, Tavener, Michael Rose and Britten. As well as being noted for its *a capella* work, the choir has performed recently with the London Mozart Players, London Philharmonic Brass, the Irish Chamber Orchestra and its own Esterházy Chamber Orchestra.

Outstanding among the choir's recent concerts have been what was described as 'The definitive *Messiah*: an electric performance' with the London Mozart Players in Brighton; a highly successful concert of choral and organ music in Brighton which included Fauré's *Requiem*; performances of Haydn's *Creation* during the Brighton Festival; a performance of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* with Osian Ellis; and two charity gala performances of Handel's *Messiah* at Glyndebourne.

THE FRIENDS OF ESTERHÁZY

We would like to pay especial thanks to the members of our 'Friends' Association who have given generous financial support. Promoting and producing concerts, with or without orchestras, is very expensive and the choir would not be able to continue without this additional help.

Mrs. C.R.K. Baden-Powell

Mr. Alexander Bruce

Mr Hedley Cornwell

Mr. C.B. d'A. Fearn

Mr. & Mrs. P. Gillham

Mr David Millington

Ms Deborah Peat

Rev. D.W.A. Stride

Mrs Sylvia Williams

Mr. David Botibol

Karen & John Coley

Mr. Mark Evans

Mr. Derek Froud

Mrs. J.R. Gumpert

Dr. M.A. Norman

Dr. Derrick J. Platt OBE

Mr. R.L. Vigars

Prof. Adrian Wood

If you are interested in becoming a 'Friend', please take a blue application form, to be found near the entrance to the church.

THE CHOIR

Sopranos

Becky Clifford
Fran du Corbier
Pru Heathcote
Linda Lee
Michelle Lefevre
Tess Powderham
Tricia Roussel
Françoise Towler

Altos

Beth Gilham
Meryll Goodwin
Joan Hester
Sarah Jarvis
Denise Jones
Joyce Phillips
Nancy Turner
Karen Zeff

Tenors

Ken Sagar
David Spear
Richard Ware
Julius Weeks

Basses

John Astbury
Peter Claridge
Dereck Froud
David Goodwin
Matthew Spencer
Michael Tearle
Philip Towler

Rehearsal Pianist: **Sarah Jarvis**

Esterházy Chamber Choir & Orchestra

Leader~ Andrew Bernardi

Conductor~ Tim Lole

NEXT CONCERT

*Saturday 13th November 1999 at
7.30p.m.*

St George's Kemp Town

Bach~ Magnificat

Vivaldi~ Gloria

Handel~ Zadoc the Priest



