

The Esterházy Chamber Choir



Directed by David Thomas

Draw on, sweet night

Music for a Summer Evening inspired by John Wilbye's madrigal

Ringmer Parish Church
Saturday 16 June 2007, 7.30 pm

The Choir

Sopranos: Cesca Eaton, Fran du Corbier, Dilys Goggins, Leanne Holmes, Jancis Ham, Alison Jeffery, Lucy Morgan-Jones, Joanna Stephens, Andrea Thomas

Altos: Claire Champness, Denise Jones, Janet Ormerod, Joyce Phillips, Grainne Sinclair, Liz Webb, Karen Zeff

Tenors: Michael Bulman, Robert Carpenter, John Carroll, Thomas Whalley

Basses: John Astbury, Derek Froud, Graham Keeley, Andrew Simpson, Philip Towler, Roger Walkinton, Peter Williams

About The Esterházy Chamber Choir

The Esterházy Chamber Choir was founded in 1993 and is based in Lewes, East Sussex. Comprising up to 30 singers from a wide variety of backgrounds, the choir aims to perform to a professional standard whilst remaining firmly rooted in the fine English tradition of amateur music making. The choir's repertoire spans four centuries of sacred and secular music with an emphasis on *a cappella* singing.

New singers (all voices) are welcomed. Entry is by audition, usually held following one of our regular rehearsals on a Wednesday evening.

The Conductor

David Thomas began his musical training as a chorister at Magdalen College, Oxford, under Dr Bernard Rose. At the age of 13 he began organ lessons with Malcolm Archer and in 1983 became Organ Scholar of The Queen's College, Oxford, studying organ with James Dalton and Kimberly Marshall and singing with Margaret Philpot as well as reading for a degree in Music. After appointments at The Leys School, Cambridge, and The King's School, Canterbury, he moved to Edinburgh to become Director of Music at Fettes College. Since 2001 he has been Headmaster of Reigate Grammar School, an independent day school in Surrey.

To contact the Choir

To support the choir, to audition or to enquire about hiring the choir for weddings and other special events, please email choir@esterhazy.org.uk. To prevent your email from being identified as spam, please include the word **choir** in the subject box.

**To join our mailing list and to receive our brochure for next season, please
complete the form on your seat
and hand it in to any member of the choir.**

Programme

The title of John Wilbye's madrigal **Draw on Sweet Night** is the inspiration for this evening's programme, in which we explore music inspired by texts about night and sleep. We also pay tribute to one of the giants of English choral music, Ralph Vaughan Williams, with his **Mass in G minor** and three of his **English Folk Songs**.

In literary terms, night and sleep are ambiguous: they imply rest and peace, but at the same time amorous delight, or tearful lamenting. Dawn can be welcomed as the start of a new day, or figuratively as a new beginning. Sleep is also, of course, a metaphor for death – eternal sleep, to be spent in the 'lux perpetua' of heaven. Music for evening services (evensong or compline) often calls on God's protection through the night, while the notion of 'eternal rest' is familiar to us from the words of the Requiem. We hope to cover all these facets of night and sleep in tonight's programme.

The other composers represented in this programme – all English – range from a pre-Reformation figure in William Mundy, through some of the Elizabethan madrigalists, to the nineteenth and twentieth century masters such as Charles Wood and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Interspersing the choral music are solo songs by John Dowland and Henry Purcell.

* * *

Hail, gladdening light

Charles Wood (1886-1926)

We begin our concert with an anthem for Evensong. Although frequently mentioned as one of the foremost figures of nineteenth century English church music, Wood (like his teacher Charles Villiers Stanford) was in fact Irish by birth. However, he studied at the Royal College of Music in London before becoming a Fellow in Music at Selwyn College, Cambridge. On Stanford's death in 1924, Wood succeeded him as Professor of Music. His output is almost exclusively for the Anglican church, with a large number of service settings and anthems. **Hail, gladdening light** is a translation by John Keble from the original Greek, and is antiphonal i.e. it divides the (unaccompanied) choir into two, and sets one group against the other to achieve its effect.

Hail, gladdening light, of his pure glory poured, who is the immortal Father, heavenly blest, Holiest of Holies, Jesu Christ Our Lord.

Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest, the lights of evening round us shine; we hymn the Father, Son and Holy Spirit divine.

Worthiest art Thou at all times to be sung with undefiled tongue; Son of our God, giver of life alone; therefore in all the world Thy glories, Lord, thy own.

The earliest composer in tonight's programme, Mundy's career at the Chapel Royal began pre-Reformation under Henry VIII and ended in the reign of Elizabeth I. He therefore composed for both the Roman and Anglican rites, and left music in both Latin and English.

O Lord, the maker of all thing is, like the previous piece, an anthem for evening prayer and sets a text from *The King's Primer* of 1545.

O Lord, the maker of all thing,
 We pray thee now in this evening
 Us to defend through thy mercy
 From all deceit of our enemy;

Let neither us deluded be
 Good Lord, with dream or fantasy,
 Our hearts waking in thee thou keep,
 that we in sin fall not on sleep.

O father through thy blessed son
 Grant us this our petition,
 To whom with the Holy Ghost always
 In heaven and earth be laud and praise.
 Amen.

Edmund Spenser's text is a vision of heaven, to which 'happy soules' journey for their eternal rest. It inspired one of the finest of 20th centuries English anthems, from William Harris, a composer known almost entirely for his Anglican church music. He was born in London, studied at the Royal College of Music, where he taught from 1921 to 1923, and served as organist successively of St Augustine's Church, Edgbaston, New College and Christ Church, Oxford, before moving to St. George's Chapel, Windsor in 1933, where he spent the rest of his career. *Faire is the heaven* is his best-known work.

Faire is the heaven where happy soules have place
 In full enjoyment of felicitie;
 Whence they do still behold the glorious face
 Of the Divine, Eternall Majestie;
 Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
 Which all with golden wings are overdight.
 And those eternall burning Seraphins
 Which from their faces dart out fiery light;
 Yet fairer than they both and much more bright

Be the Angels and Archangels which attend
 On God's own person without rest or end.
 These then in faire each other farre excelling
 As to the Highest they approach more neare,
 Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling
 Fairer than all the rest which there appeare
 Though all their beauties joynd together were;
 How then can mortal tongue hope to expresse
 The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

An Evening Hymn

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Composed in 1688 to a poem by William Fuller, Bishop of Lincoln, this solo song is an example of one of Purcell's favourite forms, the 'ground bass', in which a short pattern (in this instance, of five bars) is repeated throughout in the bass part, while the singer weaves melodies above it. The song is beautiful in its simplicity, not least the quietly ecstatic extended 'Hallelujah' with which it ends.

Now, now that the sun hath veil'd his light	And can there be any so sweet security!
And bid the world goodnight;	Then to thy rest, O my soul!
To the soft bed my body I dispose,	And singing, praise the mercy
But where shall my soul repose?	That prolongs thy days.
Dear, dear God, even in Thy arms,	Hallelujah!

Soloist: Lucy Morgan-Jones

Mass in G minor

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Kyrie – Gloria – Credo – Sanctus – Benedictus – Agnus Dei

The origins of this, the composer's only setting of the mass, can be traced back to 1904, when Vaughan Williams was invited to become the editor of the New English Hymnal. As a result, he became interested in the music of the Tudor polyphonists, especially Tallis, who became the specific inspiration for Vaughan Williams' best known piece today, his 'Tallis Fantasia'. However, he was to draw on this inspiration again for his mass, which employs the clearly defined imitative entries, melodic shapes derived from plainsong, and modal harmonies typical of 16th century music.

Composed in 1922, the work is intended for liturgical performance, and was first heard in its proper setting in Westminster Cathedral in 1923. It is set in Latin for double chorus *a capella*, with a quartet of soloists – a disposition of forces very similar to the layout of strings in the 'Tallis Fantasia', with which this work also shares a spiritual serenity.

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison

Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy

Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine fili unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, agnus Dei, filius Patris.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee. We give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

*Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe
deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad
dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.*

*Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus
Dominus, tu solus altissimus, Jesu
Christe, cum sancto spiritu in gloria Dei
patris. Amen.*

*Credo in unum Deum, Patrem
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilem omnium et invisibilem. Et in
unum Dominum Jesum Christum Filium
Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante
omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de
lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum non factum, consubstantialem
Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui
propter nos homines et propter nostram
salutem descendit de caelis.*

*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex
Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio
Pilato passus et sepultus est.*

*Et resurrexit tertia die secundum
scripturas et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad
dexteram Patris: et iterum venturus est
cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos: cujus
regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum
Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem. Qui
ex Patre Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre
et Filio simul adorantur et
conglorificantur: qui locutus est per
Prophetas. Et in unam sanctam
catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem
peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem
mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.*

*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus
Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria
tua. Osanna in excelsis.*

Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only O Christ art most high with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds: God of God, light of light, very God of very God; begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried.

And the third day he rose again according to the scriptures and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord the giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken by the prophets; and I believe in one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

<i>Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Osanna in excelsis.</i>	Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
<i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.</i>	O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
<i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.</i>	O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
<i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.</i>	O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Soloists: Cesca Easton, Liz Webb, Robert Carpenter, Philip Towler

INTERVAL

Drinks will be served during the interval

Three Elizabethan madrigals:

Come, sable night
Sweet Suffolk owl
Sleep, fleshly birth

John Ward (1571-1638)
Thomas Vautor (fl.1600-1620)
Robert Ramsey (fl.1616-1644)

The madrigal flourished in England between about 1590 and 1630, derived directly from its Italian predecessor, and borrowing many features of Italian style. Inspired by the poetry of Sir Philip Sidney and others, the typical English madrigal set pastoral or amorous texts full of imagery suitable for depicting in music, was for between four and six voices, and was unaccompanied. The form attracted many different composers about whom little is known today, and who left no other works.

Of the three composers represented here, John Ward was the most prolific: a former chorister at Canterbury Cathedral, he published a set of madrigals in 1613, and also wrote church music and for viol consort. **Come, sable night** is a lament, referring to the ubiquitous shepherd Amyntas, mourning for his lost love. Thomas Vautor is known only through his sole book of madrigals, published in 1619, three years after he was awarded his Bachelor of Music degree from Oxford. He often chose quirky texts: in **Sweet Suffolk owl**, we see night-time from a different perspective, and he explores the opportunity for the choir to imitate the call of the owl to its full. Of Robert Ramsey, we know only that he took his Cambridge degree in 1616, and was later organist at Trinity College. However, he left one of the finest of all madrigals, **Sleep, fleshly birth**, possibly written as lament on the death of Prince Henry in 1612.

Come, sable night, put on thy mourning stole,
and help Amyntas sadly to condole.
Behold, the sun hath shut his golden eye,
the day is spent, and shades fair lights supply.
All things in sweet repose their labours close;
Only Amyntas wastes his hours in wailing,
whilst all his hopes do faint, and life is failing.

Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight,
with feathers like a lady bright,
thou singest alone, sitting by night:
Te-whit, te-who...
Thy note, that forth so freely rolls,
with shrill command the mouse controls,
and sings a dirge for dying souls,
Te-whit, te-who...

Sleep, fleshly birth, in peaceful earth,
and let thine ears list to the music of the spheres,
while we around this fairy ground
thy doleful obit keeping,
make marble melt with weeping.
With num'rous feet we'll part and meet.
Then chorus-like in a ring thy praises sing,
while show'rs of flow'rs bestrew thee,
we'll thus with tears bedew thee.
Rest in soft peace, sweet youth, and there remain
'till soul and body meet to join again.

Flow my tears

John Dowland (1563-1626)

One of the most famous songs ever written, Dowland's *Lachrimae* Pavan (from which this song derives) was one of the most performed, copied and imitated pieces of music throughout seventeenth century Europe. It occurs in over 100 different versions and arrangements, and the original was reprinted several times. The falling scale with which the song opens is one of the most descriptive musical figures ever written.

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!
Exiled for ever, let me mourn;
Where night's black bird her sad infamy sings,
There let me live forlorn.

Down vain lights, shine you no more!
No nights are dark enough for those
That in despair their lost fortunes deplore.
Light doth but shame disclose.

Never may my woes be relieved,
Since pity is fled;
And tears and sighs and groans my weary days
Of all joys have deprived.

From the highest spire of contentment
My fortune is thrown;
And fear and grief and pain for my deserts
Are my hopes, since hope is gone.

Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,
Learn to contemn light
Happy, happy they that in hell
Feel not the world's despite.

Soloist: Janet Ormerod

Three Romantic partsongs:

To be sung of a summer night on the water	Frederick Delius (1862-1934)
Lay a garland	Robert Pearsall (1795-1856)
The long day closes	Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)

The partsong is the nineteenth century equivalent of the madrigal – secular pieces for unaccompanied choir, often setting expressive texts or words of a pastoral nature. The best known examples are by Stanford, Parry and Elgar, but most composers tried their hand at the genre at some stage. Delius, who is better known for his large-scale works, chose instead to compose a wordless chorus, intended simply to evoke the mood of its title: **To be sung of a summer night on the water**. This is one of a set of two such works Delius wrote in 1917 for the Oriana Choir.

Robert Pearsall was one of the earliest composers of partsongs, and **Lay a garland** is generally regarded as his best. It is a lament written in 1840 to words taken from Beaumont and Fletcher's play *The Maid's Tragedy*. Sullivan's famous **The long day closes** was originally composed for men's voices in 1868, some years before the start of his collaboration with W.S.Gilbert. It was later arranged for mixed voices, and seems to represent the typical image of Victorian words and music.

Lay a garland on her hearse
Of dismal yew
Maidens, willow branches wear
Say she died true

Her love was false
But she was firm
Upon her buried body
Lie lightly
Thou gentle earth

The Long Day Closes

No star is o'er the lake, its pale watch keeping,
The moon is half awake, through grey mist creeping.
The last red leaves fall round the porch of roses,
The clock has ceased to sound, the long day closes.
Sit by the silent hearth in calm endeavour,
To count the sound of mirth, now dumb forever.
Heed not how hope believes and fate disposes:
Shadow is round the eaves, the long day closes;
The lighted windows dim are fading slowly.
The fire that was so trim now quivers lowly, quivers lowly.
Go to the dreamless bed where grief reposes,
Thy book of toil is read, the long day closes.

The Dark-eyed Sailor**The Springtime of the Year****Just as the Tide was Flowing**

Vaughan Williams made these arrangements of English folk songs early in his career in 1913. He had started collecting folk songs as early as 1903, partly in order to preserve them, and partly because of a fascination with earlier music. (His use of a theme by Tallis for his famous *Fantasia* is another example of this trait.) Vaughan Williams arranges the folk songs sensitively, preserving the outline of the melodies and employing harmonies which enhance rather than distract. The texts are banal in the extreme, but the music is certainly not.

The Dark-eyed Sailor

It was a comely young lady fair,
Was walking out for to take the air;
She met a sailor all on her way,
So I paid attention to what they did say.

Said William, "Lady, why walk alone?
The night is coming and the day near gone."
She said, while tears from her eyes did fall,
"It's a dark-eyed sailor that's proving my downfall.

"It's two long years since he left the land;
He took a gold ring from off my hand,
We broke the token, here's part with me,
And the other lies rolling at the bottom of the sea."

Then half the ring did young William show,
She was distracted midst joy and woe.
"O welcome, William, I've lands and gold
For my dark-eyed sailor so manly, true and bold."

Then in a village down by the sea,
They joined in wedlock and well agree.
So maids be true while your love's away,
For a cloudy morning brings forth a shining day.

The Springtime of the Year

As I walked out one morning,
In the springtime of the year,
I overheard a sailor boy,
Likewise a lady fair.

They sang a song together,
Made the valleys for to ring,
While the birds on spray
And the meadows gay
Proclaimed the lovely spring.

Just as the Tide was Flowing

One morning in the month of May,
Down by some rolling river,
A jolly sailor, I did stray,
When I beheld my lover,
She carelessly along did stray,
A-picking of the daisies gay;
And sweetly sang her roundelay,
Just as the tide was flowing.

O! her dress it was so white as milk,
And jewels did adorn her.
Her shoes were made of the crimson silk,
Just like some lady of honour.
Her cheeks were red, her eyes were brown,
Her hair in ringlets hanging down;
She'd a lovely brow, without a frown,
Just as the tide was flowing.

I made a bow and said, Fair maid,
How came you here so early?
My heart, by you it is betray'd
For I do love you dearly.
I am a sailor come from sea,
If you will accept of my company
To walk and view the fishes play,
Just as the tide was flowing.

No more we said, but on our way
We'd gang'd along together;
The small birds sang, the lambs did play,
And pleasant was the weather.
When we were weary we did sit down
Beneath a tree with branches round;
For my true love at last I'd found,
Just as the tide was flowing.

Draw on, sweet night

John Wilbye (1574-1638)

We end this concert with the piece which provided the inspiration for this programme. John Wilbye's reputation as one of the finest of the English madrigalists rests on two published collections (1598 and 1609) containing some 60 works. The quality of his music arises partly from his inventive use of harmony and dissonance, partly from his sense of pace, but mainly from his gift for finding the right music to express the mood of the words. **Draw on, sweet night** is often regarded as one of the finest of all madrigals, demonstrating all of the above features (listen to the chords on the words 'painful melancholy') and providing a fitting end to our programme.

Draw on, sweet night, best friend unto those cares
that do arise from painful melancholy;
my life so ill through want of comfort fares,
that unto thee I consecrate it wholly,
Sweet night, draw on. My griefs, when they be told
to shades and darkness, find some ease from paining;
and while thou all in silence dost enfold,
I then shall have best time for my complaining.

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Saturday 8th March 2008, 7:30pm, St. Michael's, Lewes