



*A concert of English vocal music*

There is such a wealth and diversity of English vocal music that selecting a programme for this concert has been a difficult task. From our original, very long, list of pieces, we have tried to include some of the main composers to show the development and variety of music over the last four centuries. Inevitably there are some notable omissions, particularly from the later twentieth century, and the lack of a female composer in our programme - both of which could be included in a future concert! Hopefully in tonight's selection you will find some of your favourites as well as others that may be new to you.

<b>Sing joyfully</b>	W. Byrd (1540 – 1623)
<b>Ave verum corpus</b>	
<b>O nata lux de lumine</b>	T. Tallis (c. 1505 – 1585)
<b>Flow my tears</b> Soloist: Sue Tatman	J. Dowland (1563 – 1626)
<b>Fine knacks for ladies</b>	
<b>'When I am laid in earth'; 'With drooping wings' from Dido and Aeneas</b> Soloist: Rachel Poyser	H. Purcell (1659 – 1695)
<b>Fantasia upon one note</b>	
<b>O ravishing delight</b> Soloist: Rachel Poyser	T. Arne (1710 – 1778)
<b>O where shall wisdom be found?</b> Soloists: Penny Carpenter, Janet Hayton, Jenny Bamforth, Fiona Mayer-Jones, Steve Pearce, Alistair Fisher, Robin Datta, Kerrin Tatman	W. Boyce (1711 – 1779)
<b>Turn thee unto me, O Lord</b> Soloists: Rachel Poyser, Sue Tatman	

English vocal music in the Renaissance and Baroque periods

**Thomas Tallis** and **William Byrd** between them have left a rich legacy of sacred vocal music, much of which is still performed regularly in church services today. **Tallis** began his career before the Reformation and, although remaining a Catholic throughout his life, had to tread a very fine line to please the fluctuating liturgical sympathies of Thomas Cranmer, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. The intimate and prayerful text of *O nata lux de lumine* comes from an anonymous hymn from the 10th century which was traditionally sung at the office of Lauds on the feast of the Transfiguration. It is a through-composed, mostly homophonic work although the last section is repeated as is common in **Tallis's** short pieces. The harmonic language bristles with "false relations" and the very last cadence of the motet has one of the most famous dissonances in English music where F natural, F sharp, E flat and D overlap during the penultimate bar, a harmonic palette that wouldn't be out of place in many 20<sup>th</sup> century works!

**William Byrd**, being a little younger than **Tallis**, was fortunate to be writing after Queen Elizabeth stabilised the kingdom politically ushering in a new English Renaissance during which Byrd and Shakespeare flourished. He was one of **Tallis's** pupils and the similarities between the meditative *Ave verum*, which some consider his finest piece, and *O nata lux* are clearly evident. By comparison *Sing joyfully* is a prime example of Byrd's later English anthem writing. It is in six parts, both sopranos and altos dividing with the text taken from the first four verses of Psalm 81. *Sing joyfully* is believed to have been sung for the christening of Mary, daughter of James I, supported by evidence given in the 'Old cheque book' of the Chapel Royal, where it is mentioned toward the end of the service. It is a supreme example of the English Renaissance style being ornamental, polyphonic and sprightly.

**John Dowland** was an English Renaissance composer, singer and lutenist who is best known today for his melancholy songs, of which 'Flow my Tears' is possibly his most famous. It was originally published as an instrumental piece under the name *Lachrimae pavane* in 1596, and, following its later popularity with an added vocal line, became his signature song as he would occasionally sign his name "Jo. Dolandi de Lachrimae". Although originally intended to be accompanied on the lute, today's arrangement is for string quartet. It begins with a falling motif representing the falling tears of the anguished lover and features some interesting interplay between the voice and accompanying instruments. *Fine knacks for ladies*, by contrast, is far from melancholic being a witty madrigal in the form of a street seller's song. Its three verses explore the idea of materialism and the value of 'gifts and trifles' given in love. The underlying theme is that love remains true in the heart no matter the value of one's possessions. The music is lively and energetic written in a much simpler, homophonic style.

*Dido and Aeneas* is one of England's first operas and was first performed at a girls' school in 1688. The libretto is based on Book IV of Virgil's *Aeneid* and recounts the love story of Dido, Queen of Carthage and the Trojan hero, Aeneas. In the final part of the opera, Dido chooses to die following her lover's abandonment of her. The aria *When I am laid*, often referred to as *Dido's lament*, is a fine example of the ground bass technique popular in Baroque times. Its descending chromatic line effectively mirrors Dido's despair with its repetition bringing her ever nearer her final fate. **Purcell** uses a minor tonality and descending vocal lines before a final leap in register on 'Remember me' dramatises her final cries. The final chorus *With drooping wings* follows immediately with Purcell again employing overlapping descending vocal lines to represent the cupids' tears falling on her tomb.

**Purcell's** 'Fantasia upon one note' was written originally for viols, the precursors of modern stringed instruments. In this version a viola sustains middle C for all 49 bars of the piece! Around this Purcell weaves an elaborate polyphony, with imitative writing at the opening and later fast music offset by slower chordal sections in the middle and at the end of the piece. Susan Tatman

### Boyce and Arne

**William Boyce** was an eminent musician of the 18th century, notable for a collection of symphonies as well as music for the organ and choir. He held such prestigious posts as Organist of the Chapel Royal and Master of the King's Music until the onset of deafness precluded him working as a practising musician. He then continued his teacher Maurice Greene's work compiling and editing 'Cathedral Music' so that we owe a great deal to them both for the survival of much early English repertoire.

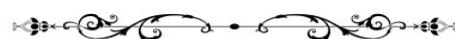
*O where shall wisdom be found* is a verse anthem setting of words from the Old Testament prophet Job. The first verse section is concerned with the pursuit of wisdom; the second short full section deals with the surety of God and the right way to wisdom. The third section, a trio, tells of God creating all things and the final full section states that to depart from evil ways is to understand wisdom.

*Turn thee unto me O Lord* is a tripartite anthem. The first section, rich with suspensions and counterpoint, beseeches God to hear us in our woes and misery. The second, a light soprano duet, speaks of the relief and joy gained from God 'turning' towards us and the final joyous finale speaks of the confidence of knowing we have put our trust in God.

**Thomas Arne**, a Roman Catholic, was initially trained as a lawyer before working as a composer for David Garrick at Drury Lane. He later moved to Covent Garden after a falling out and thence to Dublin. Due to his Catholicism, Arne never wrote for the Anglican Church so perhaps his reputation has not survived so well as others such as Boyce but writing the music for *Rule Britannia* and a version of *God save the King* has ensured he regularly appears on programmes today. *O ravishing delight* is a typical late Baroque operatic recitative and aria with different sections depicting different moods. Robert Poyser



INTERVAL



<b>A choral flourish</b>	R. Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)
<b>Let the florid music praise!</b> (words by W. H. Auden) Soloist: Lucy Bates	B. Britten (1913 – 1976)
<b>Sleep</b> (words by John Fletcher) Soloist: Ross Tomlinson	P. Warlock (1894 – 1930)
<b>Spring</b> (words by Thomas Nashe) Soloist: Penny Carpenter	I. Gurney (1890 – 1937)
<b>Chorale Prelude on 'St Ann's'</b>	C. H. H. Parry (1848 – 1918)
<b>The snow</b> Violinists: Louise Turner, Philippa Naidoo	E. Elgar (1857 – 1934)
<b>As torrents in summer</b>	
<b>The blue bird</b> (words by Mary Coleridge) Soloist: Sue Tatman	C. V. Stanford (1853 – 1924)
<b>Now sleeps the crimson petal</b> (words by Alfred, Lord Tennyson)	R. Quilter (1877 – 1953)
<b>Love's philosophy</b> (words by Shelley) Soloist: Claire Holdich	
<b>Little Polly Flinders</b> Soloist: Janet Hayton	M. Diack (1869 – 1947)
<b>My soul there is a country</b> <b>I was glad when they said unto me</b>	C. H. H. Parry (1848 – 1918)

### English Choral Music at the turn of the Twentieth Century

While the heart of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had seen a move towards larger scale choral works for the concert platform, this period was to mark a return to the composition of English choral music for use in church services and smaller occasions.

**Parry** is most well recognised for his larger-scale anthems and hymns, with their rich Brahms-like textures creating a sense of grandeur, which can be heard even in his unaccompanied pieces. **Stanford** was able to build upon this approach, with a greater loosening of harmonic vocabulary to include impressionistic elements and folk song influences. This was later seen in **Elgar's** complete mastering of the form through his deep understanding of text, and later in **Vaughan Williams's** writing. Having been taught by **Stanford**, **Vaughan Williams** went further in his development of harmonic thinking, combining all these elements with a distinctive use of, among other aspects, open 4<sup>th</sup> intervals which harked back to the medieval period. Indeed, music critic John Alexander Fuller Maitland, writing in 1911 about the music of **Vaughan Williams**, stated that "one is never quite sure whether one is listening to something very old or very new." It is this embodiment of the old and new, together with a favouring of contemporary texts typically on the subject of nature and God's creation, which has led these composers to be regarded as 'typically English' in their style.

Claire Holdich

**Parry's** triumphant organ piece is a setting of William Croft's (1678-1727) famous tune to Isaac Watts's words 'O God our help in ages past' traditionally sung at Remembrance services. The theme is strung out across the piece in sections, each highly decorated with florid counterpoint leading to a dramatic cadenza and grand ending.

Robert Poyser

### English Art Song

The late Victorian era gave birth to a generation of composers whose legacy is a substantial and magnificent corpus of English art song repertoire every bit as rich and significant as that of the more well-known 19<sup>th</sup>-century Lieder. Evolving partly from German and French classical song, for which the 19th century is so well-known, but also from drawing room ballads and even music hall, some of the most beautifully melodic,

complex and moving settings of English words since the time of Purcell were crafted by composers of enormous sensibility, who were influenced by Shakespeare, the poetry of the Romantics, Elizabethan music, impressions and experiences of World War and the early 20th century Zeitgeist.

**Michael Diack** was well-known in his day for arrangements, many ballad-like songs and most notably the nursery rhymes set in the style of Handel. *Little Polly Flinders* is in the style of (and subtitled “With apologies to”) Mozart. **Roger Quilter**, virtually unknown outside the field of art song, became popular with the Edwardian public between 1900 and 1910 as leading vocalists sang his music, and inspired younger composers including **Peter Warlock** and **Ivor Gurney**. Warlock was well educated, and, though he had little formal musical training, he devoted his life to editing, transcribing and writing music. His songs are rich in colour, chiefly because of the prolific use of chromaticism, which is abundant in *Sleep*, a beautiful setting of words by John Fletcher. In contrast, **Ivor Gurney** was a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral and studied at the Royal College of Music. His adult life, however, was dogged by first physical and then mental illness, and his poetry and music dominated by his experiences of war. *Spring* has an optimistic pastoral quality, and is evocative of an Englishness which seemed to be laid waste by the horrors of the First World War. **Benjamin Britten**, widely considered the most significant British composer since Purcell, enjoyed his first successes in 1937 with his set of Variations on a theme by his teacher Frank Bridge. The same year saw the first performance of ‘On This Island’, five settings of poems by Britten’s friend, W. H. Auden, and the first song cycle of many. The stark nature of his settings and the virtuosic handling of words in the vocal writing are both already evident here.

Rachel Poyser



<b>Conductors:</b>	Rachel Poyser	Robert Poyser	Susan Tatman	
<b>Choir:</b>	Jenny Bamforth	Lucy Bates	Peter Bolton	Robin Datta
	Penny Carpenter	Ian Champion	Colin Cranmer	Alistair Fisher
	Maddy Fisher	Janet Hayton	Claire Holdich	Fiona Mayer-Jones
	Steve Pearce	Rachel Poyser	Robert Poyser	Janice Summers
	Kerrin Tatman	Susan Tatman	Ross Tomlinson	Pam Waddington Muse
	Henry Wadsworth	Kevin Wheeldon	Colin Wright	
<b>Strings:</b>	Chris Ashmead	Eileen Ashmead	Jack Gillett	Julie Jenkins
	Philippa Naidoo	Sue Sidwell	Amber Tatman	Louise Turner (leader)
<b>Organ:</b>	Robert Poyser			
<b>Piano:</b>	Rachel Poyser	Robert Poyser		

**INVITATIONE** is a new ensemble, formed only this year. The brainchild of a group of local musicians and music teachers working in the Hull and East Riding area, it seeks both to furnish audiences with high quality live music in local venues and to create enjoyable performing experiences for our players and singers. We are proud of our eclectic mix: a quarter of our group are still at school or university, some of them aspiring to enter the musical world as professionals; perhaps another quarter have jobs relating to music; however, this ensemble is characterised by the mingling of professional musicians with amateur music-makers whose day jobs are as varied as biology teacher, engineer, paramedic, fire service co-ordinator and Anglican curate. Some of these appear as soloists this evening, as well as being in the choir.

We aim to bring a wide variety of exciting music to the public, from programmes of small-scale chamber works, to larger orchestral and choral repertoire. Our first two concerts have taken place at St. Vincent’s Church, Hull, raising much needed funds for their organ restoration project. Future performances will take place in different venues across the region including Beverley Minster, Patrington Church, and Holy Trinity, Hull. Our next concert is in support of Amnesty, on January 31<sup>st</sup>, in the Judy Dench Theatre at Hymers College, Hull.

If you would like to be informed of future concerts via our mailing list, or you would like to invite **Invitatione** to stage a future concert, please email [suantatman@hotmail.com](mailto:suantatman@hotmail.com). For more information, visit **Invitatione** on Facebook.