

opportunity to try and inject some happiness into their lives. The composers of these songs are unknown; they are genuine folk music. Probably the best known of tonight's selection is Deep river, which describes a longing to cross over the River Jordan to heaven on the other side. Down to the river to pray has been made popular recently by Alison Krauss and Union Station who sing it in a haunting a cappella version not dissimilar to ours this evening.

The second half of tonight's programme brings us back to Britain, with a selection of English folk songs. The first three that we hear tonight are taken from Vaughan-Williams' Five English Folk Songs, written in 1913. In the early twentieth century Vaughan-Williams feared that the traditional English folk song was dying out, due to improved literacy in poor areas, and to the increase in availability of printed music. He spent many years travelling round the country collecting examples of folk songs, and published a great many of them in his lifetime in his own arrangements. These are followed by four more familiar folk songs, all on watery themes. We are attempting a Geordie accent in The keel row, so that's something for you to listen out for...

We conclude our concert this evening with a few songs offering a more modern take on the theme of water. Beyond the sea is an English version of Charles Trenet's La Mer, which was apparently written in just ten minutes on a train in 1943, on SNCF lavatory paper! Trenet then recorded the song in 1946. The arrangement we sing tonight bears more resemblance to Bobby Darin's 1960 version, with English words which are actually unrelated to the French version. The song has since been recorded more than 400 times in various languages.

Under the sea is taken from Walt Disney's 1989 film The Little Mermaid. With a heavy Calypso/Caribbean feel and clever lyrics the song expounds the benefits of living underwater as opposed to living on the land. And we close our concert this evening with a spectacular arrangement of an all-time great: Bridge over troubled water. Paul Simon wrote the song in 1969 with Art Garfunkel in mind, and it was Garfunkel who sang the vocals when the song was recorded. It is the title song of the duo's last album together, released in January 1970, which topped the US album chart for six weeks before being replaced at number one by the Beatles' Let it be. The arrangement you will hear this evening owes more to the gospel-style version performed in 1987 by Luther Vandross and Jennifer Holliday.

LER, Nov 2008

Next concerts in
The Elemental Season

Earth Music - sacred music on the theme of the earth. Saturday March 7th 2009 at 8pm, English Martyrs Church, Liebenrod Rd, Reading

Air and Fire Music - light-hearted music for summer. Saturday June 20th 2009 at 7:30pm, St Laurence's Church, Reading, and Saturday 27th June 2009, at 7:30pm, St Mary the Virgin, Henley-on-Thames

tamesis

chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the first concert in the
2008-9 "Elemental" season

Water Music

Saturday November 15th 2008
7:30 pm

Wesley Methodist Church,
Queen's Road, Reading

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

Programme

A selection of part-songs:

Full fathom five - Charles Wood (1866-1926)
Clear and gentle stream - Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)
The Bluebird - Charles V. Stanford (1852-1924)
Slow fresh fount - William Horsley (1774-1858)
As torrents in summer - Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
Seafarer - Louise Rapple

Interlude

Andante in C - WA Mozart (1756-1791)
Dance of the blessed spirits - CW Gluck (1714-87)
Jane Anstead - flute, Louise Rapple - piano

Shenandoah - Trad. American arr. James Erb

Four spirituals:

Wade in the water - arr. Lydia Adams
Deep river - arr. Paul Hart
Didn't it rain? - arr. Bob Chilcott
Down to the river to pray - arr. Philip Lawson

INTERVAL

A selection of folk-songs:

The dark-eyed sailor - arr. Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958)
Just as the tide was flowing - arr. Vaughan-Williams
The lover's ghost - arr. Vaughan-Williams
Bobby Shaftoe - arr. David Willcocks
Afton Water - arr. Willcocks
O waly waly - arr. John Rutter
The keel row - arr. John Burt

Interlude

Tambourin - FJ Gossec (1734-1829)
Waltzing Matilda variations - Mark Underwood
Jane Anstead - flute, Louise Rapple - piano

Beyond the sea - Charles Trenet arr. Kirby Shaw
Under the sea - Alan Menken arr. Kirby Shaw
Bridge over troubled water - Paul Simon arr. Kirby Shaw

Tamesis is:

Sopranos	Altos
Miranda Bradshaw	Jane Anstead
Rachel Burgess	Sarah Finch
Bethan Davies	Charlie Hodgkinson
Penny Firshman	Paula Nichols
Clare Garner	Liz Rapple

Susie Ingram
Lisa McAdam
Jessica Reid
Tamsyn Wilson

Basses
Andy Button
John Cobb
Eric Hanson
Austin Jacobs
Patrick Moore
Stephen Nichols

Tenors
Nick Brown
Simon Eastwood
Jason Murray
Graham Watt

Tamesis Chamber Choir aims to offer something different from other choirs in the area. We are a high-standard, fun chamber choir performing several concerts per year. We re-audition formally each September but do sometimes have vacancies during the year, so if you are interested in singing with us, contact Louise on 0118 931 4279 or email lourap@gmail.com.

Louise Rapple graduated in Music and French from Reading University in 1998, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France and returned to the UK to direct the Reading University Singers for two years, following that with seven years in Church music, as Organist and Choir Director at two local Churches. When not conducting Tamesis, she teaches piano privately and at Queen Anne's School and Shiplake College. She directs the chamber choir at Shiplake College and also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, a larger choir whose members visit Cathedrals twice a year to sing Evensong. In order to prevent her life from being entirely over-run by music, she is planning to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats next summer!

Grateful thanks to everyone at Wesley for the use of this lovely Church and also to our instrumentalists, Judith Creighton (piano) and Jane Anstead (flute).

Notes on the programme

Tonight's concert opens with a selection of part-songs. The part-song came about as a kind of throw-back to the madrigal. Madrigals were popular in the late 16th Century, and two hundred years later, in the late 18th Century, Madrigal Societies began to spring up. As a result people started writing more modern versions of the madrigal, which became known as part-songs, glees or catches. Glee Clubs were popular throughout the 19th Century, originally mainly in men's singing clubs, with the soprano line being sung by boys, but later with the addition of women. Only one of the part-songs featured this evening is technically a glee: Horsley's Slow fresh fount. The principal difference between a glee and a part-song is that glees, like madrigals before them, were originally intended to be sung by solo voices, whereas part-songs were written for chorus-singing. Horsley was one of the best-known composers of glees, in fact writing little else.

Wood's Full fathom five sets the well-known Shakespearean text from The Tempest in a lively and catchy version. Finzi's Clear and gentle stream is the fourth from a set of seven part-songs setting poems by Robert Bridges, of which 'My spirit sang all day' is probably the best-known. The words are quite lovely, portraying as they do the idyllic English countryside of the poet's youth. Stanford's The Bluebird takes words by Mary Coleridge and sets them in an impressionistic style to create a beautiful, calm piece which really captures the stillness of the lake below the hills. As torrents in summer is taken from Elgar's oratorio King Olaf, a marvellously rip-roaring story of the battle between the Norse Gods and Christianity, with a libretto by Longfellow. Finally in this section, Seafarer is not strictly a part-song, having been written in 1996 when I was in my second year at University.

From Scandinavia we cross the sea to America, with a native American river shanty, Shenandoah. The provenance of the song is unclear - in some versions, Shenandoah is a river, in others, a valley, and in yet others, an Indian Chief. In our version, fitting in with our watery theme, Shenandoah is very much a river. We follow this with three Negro Spirituals. These songs were first sung by African American slaves in the early 19th century, who sang them at every possible