

the words are quite beautiful: "Take him, earth, for cherishing; to thy tender breast receive him. Body of a man I bring thee, noble even in its ruin." As the music moves from unison melody to extravagant harmony it reflects the sweep from body to spirit, from earthly to divine, and also the ambiguity of death: both sorrow in mourning and joy at passing into paradise.

We end the first half on a quite different note with Rutter's For the beauty of the earth. The words were written originally in 1864, by the poet and hymnist Folliott S. Pierpoint. Though quintessentially English in nature, and reputedly inspired by Pierpoint's love of the English countryside, the piece is very popular in the United States, and is often sung at Thanksgiving services.

Parry's Songs of Farewell were written over a period of nearly ten years, and were completed only a few years before his death in 1918. Sadly, he never had the opportunity to hear them sung as a single work, although they were performed at his memorial service in February 1919. The first to be written was There is an old belief, which is based on a work commissioned in 1907. This was performed once, then shelved until 1913, when Parry revised it and added three further motets, the first three in the set. After further revisions these four were largely complete by March 1915 and that autumn Parry wrote the final two motets. The fifth piece is a sumptuous setting of John Donne's At the round earth's imagined corners. The sixth movement, the only one set for double choir, is a setting of Psalm 39, Lord, let me know mine end.

The final section of this evening's concert starts on a really joyful note with Mendelssohn's fabulous motet Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden. This eight-part setting produces such a full and glorious sound that I defy you not to smile while listening. The first of a set of six motets that Mendelssohn wrote in the last couple of years of his life, Frohlocket was originally written for use at Christmas but stands well on its own in a spring concert. This is followed by Greene's well-loved anthem Thou visitest the earth, another work that draws on the Psalms (in this case Psalm 65) for its text. It comes from a collection published in 1743, at a time when Greene occupied the position of Master of the King's Musick. That collection also includes Greene's better known anthem Lord, let me know mine end, the text of which is of course included in Parry's Songs of Farewell, heard earlier in the evening.

Tonight's programme closes with Let all the world, the final movement of Five Mystical Songs by Vaughan Williams. The five songs, written between 1906 and 1911, set four poems by the Welsh poet George Herbert, all taken from his 1633 collection The Temple. It was first performed in 1911 at the Three Choirs Festival, which was later to be closely associated with Sumsion, who opened the concert this evening.

LER/PACM, March 2009

Next concerts in  
**The Elemental Season**

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

# tamesis

## chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

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

# Earth Music

Saturday March 7th 2009

8:00 pm

English Martyrs Church,  
Liebenrood Road, Reading

[www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk](http://www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk)

## Programme

Fear not, O land - Herbert Sumsion (1899-1995)

Turn back O man - Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Terra tremuit - Giovanni da Palestrina (1525-1594)

God so loved the world - John Stainer (1840-1901)

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Interlude:

When I am laid in earth (Dido's lament) - Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Miranda Bradshaw - soprano, Lisa McAdam - piano

Reading by Susie Ingram

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Take him, earth, for cherishing - Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

For the beauty of the earth - John Rutter (B.1945)

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INTERVAL

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Songs of Farewell - C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918)

1. My soul, there is a country
2. I know my soul hath power to know all things
3. Never weather-beaten sail
4. There is an old belief
5. At the round earth's imagined corners
6. Lord, let me know mine end

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Interlude:

The sun is coming up from The Tender Land - Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Tamsyn Wilson - soprano, Lisa McAdam - piano

Reading by Charlie Arbuthnott

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Frohloeket, ihr Völker auf Erden -

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Thou visitest the earth - Maurice Greene (1696-1755)

Let all the world - Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Tamesis is:

Sopranos  
Miranda Bradshaw  
Rachel Burgess  
Bethan Davies  
Penny Firshman  
Clare Garner  
Jenny Haggart  
Susie Ingram  
Lisa McAdam  
Jessica Reid  
Tamsyn Wilson

Altos  
Jane Anstead  
Sarah Finch  
Charlie Hodgkinson  
Paula Nichols  
Liz Rapple  
Chloë Robson

Tenors  
Nick Brown  
Simon Eastwood  
Jason Murray  
Graham Watt

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

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](mailto:lourap@gmail.com).

Grateful thanks to everyone at English Martyrs for the use of this lovely Church.

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 at Queen Anne's School and Shiplake College, where she directs the chamber choir. She 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 later this year!

John Cobb started learning the organ as a chorister, and later became organist at St Mary de Crypt Church, Gloucester. While studying Computer Science at Exeter University, he was Organ Scholar at the University Chapel and, later, Music Director. In 1994, he became Organist and Music Director at St Ambrose Episcopal Church, Foster City, California. On returning to the UK, he began studying with Anne Marsden Thomas, passing Grade 8 with distinction in 2003. John is a founder member of Tamesis, and has been choir organist since 2007, so he now finds himself moving between the basses and the organ loft at many of the concerts!

## Notes on the programme

Tonight's concert opens with Sumsion's uplifting anthem *Fear not, O land*, a setting of five verses from the Old Testament book of Joel. This was written in 1963, shortly before the end of the composer's near-forty-year tenure as organist of Gloucester Cathedral. Though perhaps less well known as a composer, Sumsion was a close friend of Gerald Finzi and Herbert Howells, whose influences can certainly be heard in his choral works. In order that John need not run back and forth from the organ too many times this evening, we continue with Holst's *Turn back, O man*, composed in 1916 at the height of, and perhaps in part inspired by, the First World War. The words were commissioned by the composer from the English poet Clifford Bax, younger brother of the composer Arnold Bax. Around fifty years later, those same words found a rather wider audience, after Stephen Schwartz set them to music in the hit musical *Godspell*.

We continue with two unaccompanied works. Palestrina's *Terra Tremuit* is a five-part offertory, one of 68 that he wrote during his lifetime. Palestrina left literally hundreds of compositions, including over 100 mass settings. Firmly in the Catholic tradition, his music had a vast influence on the development of Catholic Church music and he was the leading exponent of Renaissance polyphony. Quite different in character is Stainer's anthem *God so loved the world*, taken from probably his best known work, *The Crucifixion*. This oratorio, composed in 1867, is one of the few works by Stainer still regularly heard today, although his work was widely performed in his own lifetime.

Howells' masterpiece, *Take him, earth, for cherishing* was the result of a commission occasioned by the death of John F Kennedy. It was first performed in 1964 at an American-Canadian memorial service in Washington. It is set to text by the 4th century writer Prudentius and