

## Ten years of Tamesis: Recordings

October 2012 saw the launch of our second CD, *Remembrance*. Encouraged by fantastic feedback from our November 2011 concert 'A Time to Mourn', we recorded the programme in April this year and linked up with ABF The Soldiers' Charity to donate all profits to their fantastic cause. We've made the album available on iTunes and through Amazon, and we've used YouTube, social media and audio clips to reach a wider audience. The album has attracted media interest around the country. The Soldiers' Charity's chief of staff, Brigadier Robin Bacon, has personally championed the album. He says, "This is powerful, dignified and wholly appropriate music for Remembrance" and is a particular fan of *The Kontakion*, performed tonight.

The album features works by living composers Rupert Lang and Peter Aston, both of whom have been complimentary. Lang said it is "...beautifully presented, with poise, elegance and sound infused with much life and energy." We were fortunate to work with acclaimed producers Alexander Van Ingen and Dave Rowell; Simon Dinsdale played the organ and we welcomed professional wind and percussion players and Berkshire Maestros brass quartet to accompany us.

Our first album, a recording of arrangements from Bob Chilcott's *Spirituals for Choirs*, launched in October 2009 and received airplay on BBC Radio 3's The Choir. We are delighted to have received praise from Bob Chilcott for both recordings. We're selling *Spirituals* tonight at a special price of £5, with proceeds also going to The Soldiers' Charity.

We've put a lot of work into the planning, preparation, recording and marketing of our albums and gained great satisfaction from the results. Thank you all for your support so far - please continue to help us spread the word so we can raise even more for The Soldiers' Charity. At £10, we think *Remembrance* is a great Christmas gift for any music lover!

Find us on facebook  
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Subscribe to our youtube channel  
at [youtube.tamesis.is](http://youtube.tamesis.is) and help us  
publicise our Remembrance CD

### Forthcoming concerts

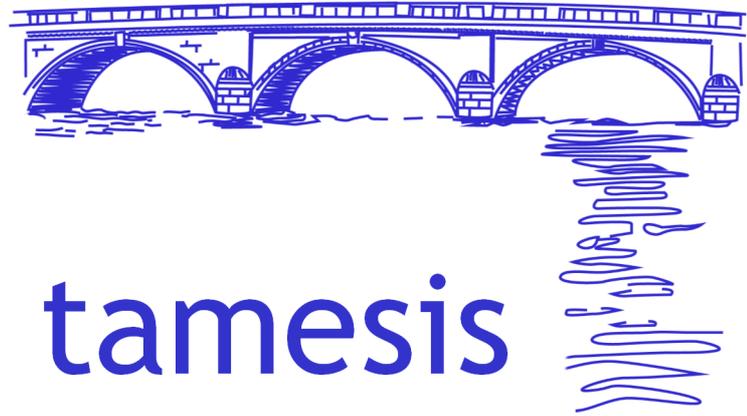
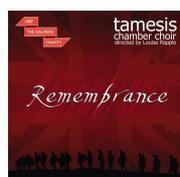
Saturday March 9th 2013, 7:30pm  
St Laurence's Church, Reading  
"Light Bites"

Popular music including Jenkins, Rutter, Bohemian Rhapsody, Toto's Africa, Mr Blue Sky and more

Saturday July 9th 2013, 7:45pm  
Douai Abbey, Woolhampton  
"A Summer Feast"

Sacred music by Allegri, Bach, Howells, Gorecki, Mendelssohn, Monteverdi and more

by circulating our youtube  
"Remembrance" video



# tamesis

## chamber choir

director - Louise Rapple

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

presents the first concert  
in the 2012-13 season  
"A la Carte"

## Autumn Fruits

Saturday November 17th 2012  
7:30 pm  
Greyfriars Church, Reading





## Tamesis Chamber Choir

### Sopranos

Miranda Bradshaw  
Rachel Burgess  
Clare Garner  
Katie Johnston  
Julie Kench  
Anne Owen  
Tania Pratt  
Charlie Watson  
Alison Wilkins  
Tamsyn Wilson

### Tenors

Tim Beavan  
Nick Brown  
Simon Eastwood  
Graham Watt

### Altos

Lucy Allen  
Alison Evans  
Sarah Finch  
Marion Harris  
Vic Henshall  
Charlie Hodgkinson  
Liz Rapple  
Elysia Roberts  
Chloë Robson

### Basses

Andy Button  
John Cobb  
Ed Hobson  
John Kendall  
Patrick Moore  
Jeremy Robson  
Dan Tyndall

**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).

**Happy Birthday, Tamesis!** Yes, we will be ten years old this year. To celebrate this small but significant milestone, we decided to ask you, our audience and our singers, what you would like to hear us perform in our tenth anniversary season. All through last year you voted on our website - 62 people made 178 votes! Louise then spent a long time collating all the results and fashioning them into three programmes. We have called the season the 'A la carte' season, because you have chosen what you would like to hear from a menu of pieces. Our summer concert at Douai Abbey will showcase the wonderful sacred music that you chose and at our spring concert, 'Light Bites', at St Laurence's, we will perform popular favourites including Bohemian Rhapsody, Jenkins' Adiemus and Rutter's Birthday Madrigals. Our concert this evening includes part songs, folk songs, madrigals and a few sacred pieces. The three programmes are all absolutely gorgeous: congratulations to you all on your good taste!



Louise began learning piano from six and sang in a Church choir from seven. She read Music and French at Reading University, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France during her year abroad, and returned to direct the Reading University Singers for two years.

Having graduated, Louise became Organist and Choir Director at St John's Church in Crowthorne, later moving to the same position at Christ Church, Reading where she spent five happy years with a lovely choir. She founded Tamesis in 2003 and could not be happier with the way the choir has turned out! She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, an occasional choir which sings Cathedral Evensongs twice a year. She is in demand locally as a deputy conductor, and enjoys the challenge of stepping in when other choir directors are indisposed; she regularly conducts Reading Gay Chorus, Goring Chamber Choir and the Twyford Singers

Louise works full-time at Shiplake College, teaching piano, playing the organ and administrating all sorts of things. As part of her work there she runs the College Chamber Choir and Shiplake Community Choir, a choir for singers of all ages and abilities, singing a mainly popular repertoire.

**A big thank you to Rebecca and the authorities here at Greyfriars for the use of this lovely Church and for making us so welcome**

### Cantique de Jean Racine

Verbe égal, au Très-Haut,  
Notre unique espérance,  
Jour éternel de la terre  
Et des cieux,  
De la paisible nuit  
Nous rompons le silence:  
Divin sauveur,  
Jette sur nous les yeux.

Répands sur nous le feu  
De ta grâce puissante;  
Que tout l'enfer  
Fuie au son de ta voix;  
Dissipe ce sommeil  
D'une âme languissante  
Qui la conduit  
A l'oubliée de tes lois!

Ô Christ, sois favorable  
A ce peuple fidèle  
Pour te bénir  
Maintenant assemblé;  
Reçois les chants qu'il  
Offre a ta gloire  
immortelle,  
Et de tes dons  
Qu'il retourne comblé.

Word of God, the Most  
High, our sole hope,  
Eternal light of the earth  
And the heavens,  
we break the silence of  
the peaceful night;  
Divine Saviour,  
Cast your eyes upon us.

Pour on us the fire  
Of your mighty grace,  
That all hell may flee  
At the sound of your voice;  
Banish the slumber  
Of a weary soul,  
That brings forgetfulness  
Of your laws!

O Christ, look with favour  
Upon your faithful people  
Now gathered here  
To praise you;  
Receive their hymns  
Offered to your immortal  
glory;  
And may they return  
Laden with your gifts.

“Bide with us, for evening shadows darken and the day will soon be over” (Luke 24:29) The text of *Abendlied* comes from the point on the road to Emmaus when two of Jesus’ disciples meet the risen Christ and, not realising who he is, press him to stay with them because night is falling. Rheinberger took these words out of context, not using their scriptural meaning but rather creating a beautiful Evening Song which is now his best-known choral composition. He was in fact a prolific composer, producing twelve masses, a Requiem, lots of chamber and choral music, several operas and symphonies and around 100 organ works.

**Sleep** Eric Whitacre  
(b.1970)

*Chosen by: Neil and Alix Latchford, Chloë Robson, Kate Spence, Andy Button, Miranda Bradshaw*

The music for *Sleep* was originally set to Robert Frost’s beautiful poem ‘Stopping by woods on a snowy evening’, and Whitacre spent a long time on the composition, getting it just right. The piece was a runaway success but disaster then struck when Whitacre realised he hadn’t secured permission to use the text, and the Robert Frost estate refused to grant it. Crushed, Whitacre asked poet Charles Anthony Silvestri to set new words to the existing music, incorporating certain aspects of the original poem (like the word ‘sleep’ which is so integral to the music). Silvestri worked wonders, creating an exquisite poem with a completely different message from the original.

**The seal lullaby** Eric Whitacre  
(b.1970)

*Chosen by: Charles Hobson and Neil Latchford*

The words of *The seal lullaby* appear as a poem at the start of ‘The White Seal’, a story from Rudyard Kipling’s ‘The Jungle Book’. In 2004 Whitacre was asked by Dreamworks to write the music for a film based on the story, and, very excited, said that this piece ‘came gushing out of him’. He sent it off and waited eagerly for a response, but none was forthcoming. When he finally called them, they said “Oh, we decided to make *Kung Fu Panda* instead”!

## Programme

**My spirit sang all day** Finzi

### *Two madrigals:*

**The silver swan** Gibbons

**Lay a garland** Pearsall

### *Three part-songs:*

**Linden Lea** Vaughan Williams

**There is sweet music** Elgar

**The blue bird** Stanford  
soprano: Julie Kench

### *Interlude*

**Automne** Fau-  
ré  
soprano: Julie Kench

### *Two pieces of remembrance:*

**Come away, death** Mäntyjärvi

**The Kontakion** Lang  
organ: John Cobb, tenor: Andy Button,  
baritone: Patrick Moore, soprano: Tamsyn Wilson

### *Interval*

**Alleluia** Thompson

### *Three sacred pieces:*

**Beati quorum via** Stanford

**Cantique de Jean Racine** Fauré  
organ: John Cobb

**Crown my heart** Whitbourn  
organ: John Cobb

### *Two folk-songs:*

**Bushes and Briars** Trad. arr. James  
soprano: Miranda Bradshaw  
baritone: Jeremy Robson

**She moves thro’ the fair** Trad. arr. Arch

### *Interlude*

**Autumn in New York** Vernon Duke  
soprano: Tania Pratt

### *Three evening songs:*

**Abendlied** Rheinberger

**Sleep** Whitacre

**The Seal Lullaby** Whitacre  
piano: Alison Wilkins

## Notes on the programme

### **My spirit sang all day** Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

*Chosen by: Judith Creighton*

Born in London, Finzi was one of the most characteristically "English" composers of his generation. In his thirties, he moved to Wiltshire and then Berkshire, devoting himself to composing and apple-growing, saving a number of rare English apple varieties from extinction. He is best known for his song cycles, his big choral anthems and his cello concerto, but this piece comes from a set of seven part songs set to poems by Robert Bridges, and is one of his best-loved choral works.

### **The silver swan** Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

*Chosen by: Frank Clark, Miranda Bradshaw, Jane Robson*

Gibbons was a leading composer of his day. Very versatile, he wrote keyboard works, instrumental works and many madrigals, of which *The silver swan* is the best-known. He was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and served as organist there and at Westminster Abbey. He died of 'apoplexy' at only 41 and there is a rather wonderful report of his death on Wikipedia, for anyone who's interested! The words to this madrigal are probably Gibbons' own, and the final line, 'More geese than swans now live, more fools than wise', is likely a comment on the demise of the English madrigal form.

### **Lay a garland** Robert Pearsall (1795-1856)

*Chosen by: Alison Beavan, Miranda Bradshaw*

Opinion is divided as to whether this piece is a part song or a madrigal. Certainly it was written in 1840, over 200 years after Gibbons was lamenting the demise of the English madrigal, but it was composed as a means of reviving the madrigal era in Pearsall's unique pastiche style. Pearsall was mainly self-taught, making this sublime piece all the more remarkable.

### **Linden lea** Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

*Chosen by: Rosemary Hodgkinson, Tim Beavan*

In 1904, at the age of 32, Vaughan Williams discovered English folk songs, which were fast becoming extinct, the oral tradition by which they were traditionally being passed on being overtaken by the printed word. For the rest of his life, they were a passion for him, and he travelled the country transcribing and preserving them. He came late to composition, and the irony is that *Linden lea* was his first publication, and it was written in 1902, two years before he commenced his folk song crusade. The words are by William Barnes, a Dorset vicar and philologist, and the poem was originally written in the Dorset dialect.

### **There is sweet music** Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

*Chosen by: Stephen Blinman*

Written in 1907 as the first in a set of four, *There is sweet music* is an unusually complex part song. It is essentially scored for double choir, but unlike the usual formation of two four-part mixed choirs, Elgar splits the choir into men and women. To further complicate matters, each choir sings in a different key, one semi-tone apart - the men in G major and the ladies in A-flat major. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, all you really need to know is that it's complicated and difficult (especially for the rehearsal pianist whose two hands have to play in different keys!) However, the end result is hauntingly effective. The words are taken from Tennyson's *Song of the Lotos Eaters*.

### **The bluebird** Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

*Chosen by: Judith Creighton*

Stanford was a prolific composer of large-scale works, including seven symphonies, nine operas, concertos and string quartets; his output comprises 200 works, and in his lifetime he was an eminent and respected musical figure. After his death, much of his music was quickly forgotten, with the exception of his Church music and one or two secular pieces, of which the best known is *The blue bird*, with words by Mary Coleridge.

### **Come away, death** Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b.1963)

*Chosen by: Heidi Cherry*

Mäntyjärvi is a Finnish translator, who dabbles in composition on the side! A choral singer himself, most

of his works are for choir. *Come away, death* is the first in his 1984 set of Four Shakespeare Songs - his earliest published composition. The words are one of the songs of Feste, the fool in *Twelfth Night*.

### **The Kontakion** Rupert Lang (b.1948)

*Chosen by: Leon McArdle, Nick Hards*

*The Kontakion* is a form of hymn from the Eastern Orthodox Church, based on words from the Burial service. It is more a generic poem than any particular text, and is often a dialogue between the Minister and the choir or congregation. In this setting, the refrain is sung by the choir, and the verses by either a soloist or one section of the choir. Rupert Lang is Organist at Vancouver Cathedral, and composed this piece in 2001 as a commission for a Remembrance Day concert.

### **Alleluia** Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

*Chosen by: Neil Latchford*

In 1940, Thompson was commissioned to write a fanfare for the opening of the Berkshire Music Center, a summer music academy in Massachusetts. Inspired by WWII, Thompson produced this quiet and introspective piece, rather than the joyous work that was expected; he felt that a festive piece would be inappropriate. The piece became his most popular and enduring work.

### **Beati quorum via** Charles V. Stanford (1852-1924)

*Chosen by: Lara Savory, Tim Beavan*

"Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 119:1). *Beati quorum via* is the third of Three Latin Motets, written five years before *The blue bird* in 1905. It is part of the legacy of Church anthems for which Stanford is chiefly remembered.

### **Cantique de Jean Racine** Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

*Chosen by: Jenny Stanier, Nick Hards, David Davidson*

Fauré was 19 years old when, as a student at a college for future Church musicians, he composed the *Cantique* and entered it for the school's composition prize, which, of course, it won. Jean Racine (1639-99) was one of France's three great 17th-century playwrights (along with Molière and Corneille). He translated much of the Roman Breviary from Latin into French, including this text, a hymn from the Tuesday Matins service. See over for the English translation.

### **Crown my heart** James Whitbourn (b.1963)

*Chosen by: Anne Owen*

*Crown my heart* is based on 'Cherub Song', the theme music for Janet Street-Porter's BBC 2 series 'Cathedral Calls' from 1999. Whitbourn's international reputation as a composer developed from his early career as a programme maker at the BBC and his TV credits include the music for the Queen Mother's funeral. He has written several large-scale choral works and oratorios.

### **Bushes and briars** Trad. arr. Donald James

*Chosen by: Kate and Chris Horton*

In December 1903, Vaughan Williams attended a tea-party in Brentwood, Essex, at which he collected 26 folk songs, including *Bushes and Briars*. This song came from a 70-year-old labourer, who said 'if you can get the words, the Almighty will send you the tune'. When Vaughan Williams heard it, he remarked "I feel I have known it all my life".

### **She moves thro' the fair Arch** Trad. arr. Gwyn

*Chosen by: Chloë Robson*

This folk song was collected in Donegal in Ireland in the early 20th century by Irish poet and novelist Padraic Colum. He heard the song and then 'wrote' most of the words, although it would probably be more accurate to say that he simply 'improved' a well-known traditional song which had at that time splintered into many versions throughout Ireland. The song is in the mixolydian mode, which means if you played it on the piano starting on G, you wouldn't need any black notes.

### **Abendlied** Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)

*Chosen by: Tim Beavan*