

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Directed by Michael Harris

Romantic Voices

Saturday 6th June 2009 8.00pm
St Giles' Cathedral, High Street, Edinburgh

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Director and organist: Michael Harris

C H H PARRY
(1848–1918)

SONGS OF FAREWELL
MY SOUL, THERE IS A COUNTRY
I KNOW MY SOUL HATH POWER
NEVER WEATHER-BEATEN SAIL
THERE IS AN OLD BELIEF
AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS

C V STANFORD
(1852–1924)

FANTASIA AND TOCCATA Op 57 (ORGAN)
THREE MOTETS FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHOIR Op 38
JUSTORUM ANIMAE
BEATI QUORUM VIA
COELOS ASCENDIT HODIE

I N T E R V A L of 15 minutes

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809–1847)

DREI MOTETTEN Op 69
JAUCHZET DEM HERRN, ALLE WELT
MEIN HERZ ERHEBET GOTT, DEN HERRN
HERR, NUN LÄSSEST DU DEINEN DIENER IN FRIEDEN FAHREN

C V STANFORD

MAGNIFICAT FOR EIGHT-PART CHORUS Op 164

Acknowledgement

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Programme notes

Charles Hubert Hastings Parry Songs of Farewell

Parry was one of the most influential figures in British music of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Acquainted with Samuel Sebastian Wesley, one of the driving forces behind the revival of standards in church music in the mid-nineteenth century, Parry pursued much of his musical education through study with Edward Dannreuther, who introduced him to the music of Brahms, Tchaikovsky and, most significantly, Wagner.

Parry first tasted public success with his choral work, *Blest pair of sirens*, which was written for the Bach Choir, directed by Stanford, but he also became significant as a musical scholar and teacher, writing more than one hundred articles for the first Grove Dictionary.

The *Songs of Farewell*, six motets in all, of which five are heard tonight, are in many ways a valedictory statement, and are very much the high point of his *cappella* oeuvre. The texts are from a variety of poets, and are intensely philosophical in nature. The first motet, *My soul, there is a country*, a setting of Henry Vaughan's *Peace*, is perhaps the most well-known. The most concise setting is the second, to the words of John Davies (1569–1626); the use of rests to punctuate lines and draw attention to the text is highly effective.

An increasing number of vocal parts are used as the set progresses, culminating in six-voiced writing, using two soprano and two bass parts in *There is an old belief*, and then seven voices, with all except the tenor line doubled in John Donne's *At the round earth's imagined corners*; this motet contains some of the most virtuosic and colourful writing of the group, all composed between 1916 and 1917, in the darkest days of the First World War.

Charles Villiers Stanford

Fantasia and Toccata for organ

Three Motets for unaccompanied choir

Born in Dublin, Stanford's career was marked by a meteoric rise as a student and his appointment as a Professor of Composition at the newly-founded Royal College of Music in 1883, followed by his election as Professor of Music at Cambridge University in 1887 at the age of only 35.

Though best known for his choral music and smaller organ works, his fine orchestral writing has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years. His *Fantasia and Toccata* Op 57 dates from the summer of 1894. The Fantasia centres on two main ideas: the first manifests itself as a bold but improvisatory opening figure, which is contrasted by a lilting allegretto theme. The movement ends quietly in the tonic major key before the Toccata is introduced in the pedals with a vigorous motif; a contrasting idea appears almost immediately in the manuals. The working of the motivic material is essentially all in a minor mode, with some striking chromatic modulations; only at the end does Stanford finally resolve on a major chord.

Stanford's *Three Motets for unaccompanied choir*, Op 38, were published in 1905, though they probably date from 1892 when Stanford relinquished his post as organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. Each is contrasted in character: *Iustorum animae*, with a text from the Book of Wisdom, is initially contemplative, before a more agitated and sometimes malicious central section intervenes. The six-voiced *Beati quorum via* is more reflective. The most exuberant is the Ascensiontide motet *Coelos ascendit hodie*, written for double choir, with its antiphonal effects between the choral forces and a bold concluding *Amen*.

Felix Mendelssohn Drei Motetten

Mendelssohn's three Op 69 motets were composed in the last year of his life; this was a time of hectic activity for the composer, and the motets were completed in Switzerland in June of that year. Op 69 No 1 and 3, the *Nunc Dimittis* and *Magnificat* respectively, were dated mid-June, but the *Jauchzet dem Herrn* setting was written on 5 April, which was Easter Monday that year. Mendelssohn had just made what was to be his last conducting appearance in Leipzig, directing his oratorio *St Paul* on Good Friday, and was about to embark on an exhausting tour of England, conducting a number of performances of *Elijah* in the course of it.

All three motets are essentially for four-voiced *cappella* ensemble, with occasional divisions. *Jauchzet dem Herrn*, one of a number of settings he made of the Psalm 100 text is predominantly syllabic in style, only departing from the four-voiced texture in the doxology, which contains a typically Mendelssohnian *Amen*.

The *Magnificat* setting makes use of alternating tutti and semi-chorus sections, in a kaleidoscopic variety of styles, for the most part reflecting the spirit of the text. The motet concludes with a long double fugue at *Er gedenket der Barmherzigkeit* (He remembering his mercy), followed by a *Grave* setting of the *Gloria* doxology, which brings the work to a reflective conclusion. A similar use of solo and tutti groupings is used in the *Nunc Dimittis* setting, *Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren*, which opens with a polyphonic series of entries, and remains restrained in manner until the appearance of the rhythmically incisive motif at *daß er ein Licht* (to be a light).

Stanford Magnificat for eight-part chorus

Through his studies abroad, Stanford managed to avoid the insularity of many of his contemporaries and, although his name is often linked to that of Hubert Parry, it was Stanford who probably had the more lasting influence, especially through his students, among whom were numbered Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland and Howells. Unfortunately, posterity has not been so kind, particularly to the neglected instrumental music: there are, for instance, seven symphonies and four concertos, not to mention six organ sonatas and eight string quartets.

His *a cappella* Latin *Magnificat* Op 164 is a choral tour-de-force, harmonically owing a considerable amount to Brahms and the German Romantic tradition. It was composed in 1918, and was dedicated to Parry with a Latin inscription "This work, which death prevented me from giving Charles Hubert Hastings Parry in life, I dedicate to his name in grief. C.V.S.". The grief was all the greater for the fact that Stanford and Parry had fallen out not long before the latter's death and had never had the opportunity to make up their differences.

The setting makes full use of the double choir forces, with a main theme of great vitality, and many examples of word-painting, the mighty being put down from their seat at *Deposuit potentes* with considerable vigour. Stanford then executes a very deft harmonic turn at *Et exaltavit* to lead into a lilting ballad-style section at *Esurientes implevit bonis*, where the hungry are filled with good things both harmonically and spiritually. The conclusion is reached through an extended crescendo, leading to the *Gloria* where the opening material returns. Stanford has one last surprise in the final *Amen*, which takes a turn in the key of C flat major before finally resolving on the tonic of B flat major.

Texts and translations

PARRY: SONGS OF FAREWELL

My soul, there is a country

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry
All skilful in the wars:
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend,
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695)

I know my soul hath power

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet she is blind and ignorant in all:
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.
I know my life's a pain and but a span;
I know my sense is mock'd in ev'rything;
And, to conclude, I know myself a Man,
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.

Sir John Davies (1569–1626)

Never weather-beaten sail

Never weather-beaten sail
more willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs
affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs
to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord,
and take my soul to rest.
Ever-blooming are the joys
of Heaven's high Paradise,
Cold age deafs not there our ears,
nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines,
whose beams the blessed only see;
O come quickly, glorious Lord,
and raise my sprite to Thee!

Thomas Campion (1567–1620)

There is an old belief

There is an old belief,
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief
Dear friends shall meet once more.
Beyond the sphere of Time and Sin
And Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul.
That creed I fain would keep
That hope I'll ne'er forgo,
Eternal be the sleep,
If not to waken so.

John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854)

At the round earth's imagined corners

At the round earth's imagined corners blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go!
All whom the flood did, and fire shall overthrow,
All whom war, death, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slain; and you, whose eyes
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space;
For, if above all these my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if Thou'dst sealed my pardon with Thy blood.

John Donne (1572–1631) *Holy Sonnet VII*

STANFORD: THREE MOTETS FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHOIR

Justorum animae

*Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,
Et non tanget illos tormentum malitiae.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,
Illi autem sunt in pace.*

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of
God, and the torment of malice shall not touch
them: in the sight of the unwise they seemed
to die, but they are at peace.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1, 2a, 3b

Beati quorum via

*Beati quorum via integra est:
qui ambulat in lege Domini.*

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
who walk in the law of the Lord.

Psalms 119:1

Coelos ascendit hodie

*Coelos ascendit hodie
Jesus Christus Rex gloriae. Alleluia!
Sedet ad Patris dexteram,
gubernat coelum et terram. Alleluia!
Iam finem habent omnia
Patris Davidis carmina. Alleluia!
Iam Dominus cum Domino
sedet in Dei solio,
In hoc triumpho maximo. Alleluia!
Benedicamus Domino,
laudatur Sancta Trinitas,
Deo dicamus gratias.
Alleluia! Amen.*

Today into the heavens has ascended
Jesus Christ, the King of glory. Alleluia!
He sits at the Father's right hand,
and rules heaven and earth. Alleluia!
Now have been fulfilled all of
patriarch David's songs. Alleluia!
Now is the Lord with his Lord
and sits upon the royal throne of God,
in this his greatest triumph. Alleluia!
Let us bless the Lord;
Let the Holy Trinity be praised;
Let us give thanks to the Lord.
Alleluia! Amen.

Anonymous, from the Cowley Carol Book

MEDELSSOHN: JAUCHZET DEM HERRN. ALLE WELT

Jauchzet dem Herrn, alle Welt!

Dient dem Herrn mit Freuden und kommet vor sein Angesicht mit Frohlocken!

Er ist Gott, unser Herr, er hat uns gemacht, und nicht wir selbst, zu seinem Volke und zu Schafen seiner Weide.

O geht zu seinen Toren ein mit Danken, zu seinen Vorhöfen mit Loben; gehet ein, danket ihm!

Denn der Herr ist freundlich, und seine Gnad und Wahrheit währet ewig.

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohne und dem heiligen Geist; wie es war zu Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands!

Serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Psalm 100

MEDELSSOHN: MEIN HERZ ERHEBET GOTT, DEN HERRN

Mein Herz erhebet Gott, den Herrn, und es freuet sich mein Geist Gottes, meines Heilands; Denn er hat die Niedrigkeit seiner Magd freundlich angesehen. Sieh, mich preisen selig alle Kindeskinde von nun an.

Denn er, der da mächtig ist, daß Name heilig ist, hat Großes an mir getan.

Und Barmherzigkeit erzeigt der Herr an allen, die ihn fürchten.

Mit der Gewalt seines Arms hat er alle zerstreut, die im Herzen hoffärtig sind; von ihrem Stuhle stößt er die Gewaltigen von ihrem Stuhle stößt er sie, und richtet auf die elend und niedrig sind.

Er erfüllet die Hungrigen alle mit Gütern, und die Reichen gehen leer von ihm hinweg.

Er gedenket der Barmherzigkeit und hilft seinem Diener Israel auf, wie er zugesagt mit seinem Worte, Abraham und seinem Samen ewiglich.

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohne und dem heiligen Geist; wie es war zu Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Luke 1: 46–55

MEDELSSOHN: HERR, NUN LÄSSEST DU DEINEN DIENER IN FRIEDEN FAHREN

Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren wie du gesagt hast,

denn meine Augen haben deinen Heiland gesehen, welchen du bereitet hast für allen Völkern, ein Licht zu erleuchten die Heiden, und zum Preis deines Volks Israel.

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohne und dem heiligen Geist; wie es war zu Anfang, jetzt und immerdar und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Luke 2:29–32

STANFORD: MAGNIFICAT

Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo; quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius, et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae,

sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name, and his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

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Luke 1: 46–55

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Since its formation in 1968, the **Scottish Chamber Choir** has performed throughout Scotland and Northern England to great acclaim. Each season the choir presents four concerts in Edinburgh, climaxing with an appearance at the Festival Fringe. These are usually supplemented by a Christmas concert and guest appearances at local Music Societies and Festivals throughout the year, keeping members quite busy!

The choir sings both shorter items from the chamber choir repertoire and more extended works, such as the Bach *St John Passion* at our Festival Fringe concert in 2004. Whilst some concerts are given a *cappella*, at others we are joined by a variety of instrumental forces, making possible an exceptional freedom of programming and great interest for both participants and audience.

The choir's hallmark has always been its breadth of repertoire, encompassing a wide range of music from the 16th century to the present day, with music by living composers featuring in programmes during most seasons. Often there is a thread linking a series of concerts, encouraging regular attendance – the highly successful and critically praised Silver Jubilee season, for example, concentrated on 20th century British music, and was recognised by an Enterprise Award from the Performing Rights Society, one of only three such awards in Scotland. Our 40th Anniversary season has been marked by the commission of a new work *Father and Son* by Kenneth Dempster, which was supported by an award of a £5,000 lottery grant from the Scottish Arts Council via Awards for All, and received its first performance at our concert last November.

From time to time, vacancies occur in all sections of the choir. Any singer interested in obtaining further details should contact Michael Harris, our Musical Director, by phone on 0131 556 1759 or by email at info@scottishchamberchoir.org.uk. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings in the Ian Tomlin School of Music at Napier University's Craighouse campus.

Michael Harris received his earliest musical education as a chorister of Gloucester Cathedral. He was Organ Scholar of St Peter's College, Oxford, and continued his studies at the Royal College of Music. Michael has been Organist and Master of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, since November 1996; he is also a Lecturer at the Ian Tomlin School of Music in Napier University, Edinburgh. Prior to moving to Edinburgh he held posts as Sub-Organist of Leeds Parish Church and Assistant Organist of Canterbury Cathedral.

As Organist of St Giles' Cathedral he hosts many organ concerts on the famous Rieger organ (built in 1992) and his work has involved him in numerous recordings and broadcasts, both for television and radio. Under his direction the Cathedral Choir has visited the USA and Greece, and most recently, in October 2006, they undertook a short tour of southern France. In July 2009 they will be touring Canada for the first time, with concerts and services in Ontario.

His solo recordings include *The Organ at St Giles'*, and he has directed the Cathedral Choir in a number of CD recordings, including *An Edinburgh Celebration* to mark their first tour of the USA in Autumn 2004, and *I was glad*, released in 2008.

Michael has given recitals at many venues in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Poland, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the UK, where he has played in many of the major venues. He has been Musical Director of the Scottish Chamber Choir since 1998.

He is also much involved in organ and choral education. He has led a number of study tours to Germany, with a special interest in the organs of Thüringen and Saxony. His Napier University duties include supervision of final-year performance students, and directing the University Chamber Choir.

The Scottish Chamber Choir

Sopranos	Harriet Atkinson	Kate Rigg
	Lorraine Fraser	Sasha Salinasova
	Jenny Mackenzie	Adriana Skaraas
	Pauline McClellan	Milda Zinkus
Contraltos	Julie Morrice	
	Anne Barker	Guen Innes
	Bridget Beagan	Marjory Lobban
	Jean Brodie	Alison McCleery
Tenors	Myra Brown	Susan White
	Stuart Mitchell	James Verge
	Andrew Polson	Ross Wilson
Basses	Mike Arthur	Alex McDonald
	Wilf Krause	James McDonald
	Frank Lucas	Martin Tarr

Keep in touch with the Scottish Chamber Choir – visit our web site at:

www.scottishchamberchoir.org.uk

You will find there our plans for the season, details of forthcoming concerts and useful links, plus an archive of our programmes back to 1993.

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