

CORO

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Sirens' Song

Finzi
Holst
Maconchy
Stanford
Sullivan
Vaughan Williams

Poetry in Music

In a journey covering six centuries of musical history, The Sixteen performs *a cappella* anthems with powerful texts by writers as varied as Edmund Spenser, Christopher Fry and W.H. Auden.

Good night, beloved

This beautiful album features a stunning selection of music spanning over 500 years. From exuberant early works to a new commission from Roderick Williams, this is truly music to escape to.

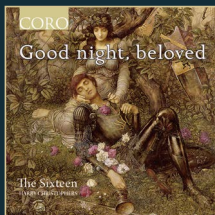
A Watchful Gaze

This programme explores Byrd's music, his influences, his colleagues and his pervading faith. His legacy is marked by the commission of two pieces from Dobrinka Tabakova, bringing his musical heritage firmly into the modern day.

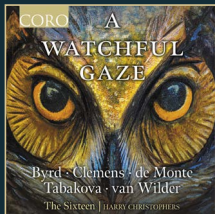
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The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS



Photograph: Marco Borggreve

Here at The Sixteen we spend the majority of our time performing sacred music: volumes of Renaissance motets, a variety of Purcell odes and anthems, countless Handel oratorios as well as excursions into more modern times with particular attention to the works of Poulenc, Britten and MacMillan. It is a wonderful catalogue of great music, but very rarely do we perform a whole programme of secular music. Finally, I am redressing that with this album of simply fabulous music from the last 100 or so years.

What would singing be without words? When you combine wonderful poetry with exquisite music, the result is magical. Until I was researching this programme I had no idea that Stanford's jewel, *The Blue Bird*, was one of a cycle of *Eight Partsongs* and also that this whole cycle was to the poetry of Mary Elizabeth Coleridge. Sadly, she died aged only 45 and many composers mourned the loss of a sensitive and kindred spirit. Her poetry is sparing yet infectious and ideal for setting to music. I also hadn't realised that Vaughan Williams' setting of *Silence and Music* was written "To the memory of Charles Villiers Stanford, and his Blue Bird".

Throughout the 20th century, the British Isles were blessed with an abundance of excellent song writers – Quilter, Gurney, Moeran and Britten to name a few – but it is Gerald Finzi who stands out in so many ways. His song cycle *A Young Man's Exhortation* and his larger work *Dies Natalis* for tenor and strings are milestones in his output. It is not surprising therefore that his *Seven Poems of Robert Bridges* are some of the finest unaccompanied partsongs of this period; they are quintessentially English with Bridges' lyrically descriptive writing ensuring Finzi is at his very best, with every syllable and every vowel so beautifully crafted for the voice, making them a joy to sing and so rewarding to perform.

I have been fascinated by the music of Elizabeth Maconchy for many years; I recall at university playing the clarinet in one of the early performances of her children's opera *King of the Golden River* and, when sifting through her music, I came across *Sirens' Song*. On the page it looked dreamy yet evocatively luring and, unsurprisingly, it did not disappoint. But it is *Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow* by Imogen Holst which has been a revelation to me. Scored for female voices and harp and set to verses of John Keats, the partsongs are idyllic. She writes so well for voices (how I wish she had written more) and captures the mood of each poem so brilliantly. Whether it be a song of opposites, one of sorrow or a lullaby, or an excursion into pastoral delights, she takes the listener into a world of charm and subtlety. Imogen Holst was a great advocate of "learning by doing"; we have learnt so much by performing all this wonderful music. Thank you poets, thank you composers.

Harry
Anisimer,

Sirens' Song

Charles Villiers STANFORD

(1852-1924)

Eight Partsongs, Op. 119

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| [1] The Witch | 2.46 |
| [2] Farewell, my joy | 2.33 |
| [3] The Blue Bird | 3.28 |
| [4] The Train | 1.37 |
| [5] The Inkbottle | 1.48 |
| [6] The Swallow | 1.25 |
| [7] Chillingham | 2.08 |
| [8] My heart in thine | 2.18 |

Elizabeth MACONCHY

(1907-94)

| | |
|------------------|------|
| [9] Sirens' Song | 4.27 |
|------------------|------|

Imogen HOLST

(1907-84)

Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| [10] Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow | 1.53 |
| [11] Teignmouth | 1.47 |
| [12] Over the Hill and over the Dale | 1.09 |
| [13] O Sorrow | 3.11 |

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| [14] Lullaby | 2.44 |
| [15] Shed no Tear | 1.38 |

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

(1872-1958)

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| [16] Silence and Music | 5.08 |
|------------------------|------|

Gerald FINZI

(1901-56)

Seven Poems of Robert Bridges

| | |
|---|------|
| [17] I praise the tender flower | 2.07 |
| [18] I have loved flowers that fade | 2.41 |
| [19] My spirit sang all day | 1.47 |
| [20] Clear and gentle stream | 4.04 |
| [21] Nightingales | 2.47 |
| [22] Haste on, my joys! | 2.17 |
| [23] Wherefore to-night so full of care | 3.07 |

Arthur SULLIVAN

(1842-1900)

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| [24] The Long Day Closes | 4.09 |
|--------------------------|------|

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Total Running Time | 63.01 |
|---------------------------|--------------|

Enthusiasm for the partsong, and for a secular vocal idiom which promoted an extension of the lieder tradition as a choral genre (both accompanied and unaccompanied), and one in which the constituent components of melody and harmony (invariably in four parts) took precedence over contrapuntal ingenuity, undoubtedly began to gather momentum in the first half of the 19th century. The lifeblood of the English partsong more specifically (as with solo English song) was the abundant source of available poetry which nourished an increasingly intricate approach to the art form. By the end of the 19th century, the ethos of the partsong had become as equally challenging an idiom as that of sacred music, and the genre's promotion of the English language was now as much a vital component in the shaping of national style. Moreover, the demand for the art form was fuelled by the profusion of choirs, choral societies and competitive festivals who were always looking for new repertoire.

Arthur Duke Coleridge, a highly musical amateur lawyer and well known to musicians throughout England, was instrumental in the instigation of the first English performance of Bach's *Mass in B minor* in 1876 by the London Bach Choir. Singing in the choir at the time was his young aspiring friend, Hubert Parry, while another close friend, with whom he had spent much time in Germany, was the equally aspiring Charles Villiers Stanford. Coleridge's daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born in September 1861. Tutored privately by the former Eton schoolmaster and scholar William Cory, Mary was a fine linguist. After developing a modest reputation as a novelist, she began publishing poetry in 1896 with the support of Robert Bridges. In August 1907, after developing acute appendicitis on a family visit to Harrogate, she died unexpectedly and the Coleridges were joined in their mourning by many of their musical and literary friends. Though she published much of her poetry under the pseudonym 'Anodos', it

was not published under her real name until the end of 1907, thanks to the work of another admirer, Henry Newbolt. This collected edition of her verse became the focus for Parry in his ninth set of *English Lyrics* (1909) and Stanford, who composed *Eight Partsongs* (Op. 119) in her memory in 1910. The enigmatic poem ‘The Witch’, in a chilling C minor, captures the voice of a ghostly woman, ‘a little maiden’, who arrives at the door after an arduous winter’s journey on foot and persistently entreats to be let in (‘O lift me over the threshold’). In the third verse, more urgent in tempo, the voice changes to the bewitched party who allows her in, and we may only guess from Stanford’s pictorial gestures, the sudden dying of the flame in the hearth (which marks the climax of the song), at the consequences. In ‘Farewell, my joy’, the poet appears to renounce happiness (or even perhaps a lover). Stanford’s response, in a beautifully judged structure of strophic variation, is a passionate outburst in which he deploys the full expressive

powers of diatonic dissonance to convey the regret of loss, yet, through this act of self-sacrifice, the joy of others. One of Stanford’s acknowledged masterpieces, ‘The Blue Bird’, which most originally combines metrical homophony with freer recitative-like declamation, has rightly been admired for its numinous treatment of the supertonic seventh, a harmony heard as a form of ‘motto’ throughout the song (‘The lake lay blue’), including the visionary, unresolved conclusion. This is inseparably linked with the soprano’s plaintive rejoinder, ‘blue’, on E flat, the assonance of which perfectly and repeatedly embodies the eschatological inferences of the text. The tranquillity of ‘The Blue Bird’, in a luxuriant G flat major, contrasts graphically with the rhythmical, onomatopoeic energy of ‘The Train’ in B minor. Back in C minor, ‘The Inkbottle’ is a somewhat cynical and vociferous attack on the written word, ‘full of flattery and reviling’, probably aimed at journalists and critics. This is surely summarised in the last two lines, ‘Truth lies not, the truth

to tell, At the bottom of this well!’ and the ironic *Tierce de Picardie*. The fleeting setting of ‘The Swallow’ is little more than an aphorism of 22 bars, yet, even within its two short verses, Stanford’s legerdemain is discernible in such telling gestures as the subtly varied alto melody and sonorous ninth harmonies. For ‘Chillingham’ (inspired by the famous Northumberland castle), Stanford took only the second section of the poem to form a gentle evocation of a pastoral landscape, and for the final love song, ‘My heart in thine’, Stanford’s technique of tonal and harmonic variegation, keenly felt in the second verse, is masterly.

Robert Bridges, who had helped to promote Mary Coleridge’s poetry, was himself an author of lyric verse as well as of larger, more epic poetical canvases designed for large-scale choral works. Both Parry and Stanford had set his work in song, ode and oratorio. Later generations were inspired by his eloquence, among them MacCunn, Holst,

Gurney and Gerald Finzi. His *Seven Poems of Robert Bridges*, composed between 1931 and 1939, bear all the hallmarks of a composer whose style had crystallised (he was, in 1939, in the throes of completing his masterpiece, *Dies Natalis*, for the Three Choirs Festival). This can be sensed in the transparent diatonicism of ‘I praise the tender flower’ with its typical opening upward melodic trajectory, the characteristic ‘echoes’ distributed among the voices and an inclination towards counterpoint, much of it inspired by his love of the 18th-century baroque. These characteristics are even more apparent in the unusual three-part ‘I have loved flowers that fade’ for soprano, alto and tenor. Perhaps the best known of the collection is ‘My spirit sang all day’, an outpouring of love’s joy (and almost certainly referring to Finzi’s wife, Joy). Of particular note here is the dexterous reworking of the phrase ‘O my joy’ which permeates the entire through-composed structure. ‘Clear and gentle stream’, at the centre of the collection,

has a touching Wordsworthian nostalgia (which Finzi would later explore more fully in *Intimations of Immortality*) and a strong hint of Parry in its use of falling sevenths. Nostalgia also haunts ‘Nightingales’, in five parts, though this is effectively counterbalanced by ‘Haste on, my joys!’ in a quicker tempo, depicting the fleeting rapture of youth. The last song, ‘Wherefore to-night so full of care’, which finds redemption in the face of life’s regrets, demonstrates Finzi’s consummate ability to write flexible vocal prose, a skill he would bring to the even more challenging verse of Thomas Hardy.

Imogen Holst’s *Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow*, a fresh and attractive set of six partsongs for harp and female voices, was the result of a commission for the 1950 Aldeburgh Festival. The very sound of the female voices and transparent harp accompaniment is reminiscent of Britten’s *Ceremony of Carols* of 1942, but one can also point to the important precedent of Gustav Holst’s ground-breaking *Hymns from*

the Rig Veda (Op. 24) which date from before the First World War. In addition, Imogen Holst’s choice to use words by John Keats emulated that of her father whose *First Choral Symphony* of 1925 was entirely devoted to the same poet. The songs maintain a diatonic simplicity of texture enabling access by amateurs as well as professionals (a ‘democratic’ educational ideal Imogen had pursued as a teacher at Dartington Hall in the 1940s) and this simplicity is epitomised by a range of methods not dissimilar to those pioneered by Gustav Holst in many of his vocal and instrumental works. Ostinati and elements of bitonality contribute significantly to ‘Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow’, ‘Teignmouth’, the mercurial scherzo ‘Over the Hill and over the Dale’, and the gentle, sombre, yet magical ‘Lullaby’. Several of the songs – ‘Welcome Joy’, ‘Lullaby’ and ‘Shed no Tear’ – are predicated on extended pedal points which are left unresolved at their conclusions. Others depend for their musical arguments on the detailed

working out of specific intervals. The dissonant semitonal material of the harp’s introduction in ‘O Sorrow’ forms the basis of the harp accompaniment (which owes something to Britten’s ‘In freezing winter night’) while the first and last songs originate much of their material from the double pedal points (dominant and submediant) established by the harp in the opening bars.

In 1953, ten British composers were commissioned to compose *A Garland for the Queen* for Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation. Vaughan Williams, by then 81, produced a setting of ‘**Silence and Music**’ by Ursula Wood whom he also married that year. The partsong was dedicated “to the memory of Charles Villiers Stanford [the centenary of whose birth, much to Vaughan Williams’s chagrin, had been inconspicuously commemorated the previous year], and his Blue Bird”. Although the piece was composed as a tribute to the new monarch, *Silence and Music* was clearly

intended as a gesture of homage to his former teacher and to the particular genius evinced in Stanford’s setting of Mary Coleridge’s ‘The Blue Bird’. The parallels with Stanford’s masterpiece can be discerned at the beginning of the song in the prominence of the unsupported soprano part, its extended melody, and the manner in which it ethereally dissolves at the end. Vaughan Williams also clearly aspired to reproduce the mystical atmosphere of Stanford’s partsong, though in this context he chose to refer to the unsettling finale of his Sixth Symphony with its shifting second-inversion harmonies (one he had also explored in ‘The cloud-capp’d towers’ of the *Three Shakespeare Songs* of 1951).

Another partsong to feature a prominent role for sopranos is the setting of the Jacobean William Browne’s ‘**Sirens’ Song**’ (from his masque *Ulysses and Circe* of 1615) for soprano solo and SSATB chorus by one of Vaughan Williams’ most distinguished pupils,

Elizabeth Maconchy. Composed in 1974, it was dedicated to Louis Halsey and the Louis Halsey Singers who commissioned it. Freely adapted from Browne's two verses, the text imparts the fate of mariners as they are tempted on shore (to destruction) by the sound of the sirens' song, with appropriate emphasis on words such as 'steer' or 'steer hither'. In keeping with this narrative, the rich, multi-divided female voices (solo soprano, sopranos and altos) portray the enticing sirens, the male voices (tenors and basses) the doomed mariners, a differentiation of forces reinforced by Maconchy's stipulation that, in performance, the two groups of singers should be positioned at a small distance from each other. The dream-like ethos of the partsong is largely generated by the intervallic properties of the octatonic scale, a technique typical of the composer's manner of creativity. *Sirens' Song* was first performed by the Louis Halsey Singers at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 23 November 1974.

After collaborating with the music critic Henry Fothergill Chorley on the masque *Kenilworth* in 1864, and his first (unperformed) opera, *The Sapphire Necklace*, in 1867, Sullivan also set Chorley's poem "**The Long Day Closes**" as part of *Seven Part-Songs*, published in 1868. Of all his partsongs this work has been the most enduring, both in its original version for men's voices and the later arrangement for mixed choir. One of the principal attractions of Sullivan's setting is the skilful manipulation of Chorley's words to form a modified ternary scheme, the last verse of which is a climactic reworking of the first. Owing to the poem's mood of mourning, another has been its suitability for occasions such as funerals and memorial services (the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, of course closely associated with Sullivan, often used to sing it at the funerals of its members).

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Charles Villiers STANFORD **EIGHT PARTSONGS, Op. 119**

Words: Mary Elizabeth Coleridge (1861-1907)

1 **I. *The Witch***

I have walk'd a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wander'd over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!
The cutting wind is a cruel foe.
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still,
My little white feet are sore.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!
Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came – she came – and the quivering flame
Sunk and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at the door.

2 II. Farewell, my joy

Farewell, my joy! For other hearts the Spring,
For other eyes the roses; but for me
The iron gate, the shadowy cypress-tree,
The solemn dirge that cloistered voices sing.
Farewell, my joy! Alas, I loved thee well!
For no light matter had I let thee go.
I cherished thee in rain, and wind, and snow.
I bound thee to my breast with many a spell.
Hail and farewell, my joy! If I might give
To one sweet friend the rapture that I miss,
Read in her eyes that ecstasy of bliss,
Tho' death were in my own, I yet should live.

3 III. The Blue Bird

The lake lay blue below the hill,
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue,
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew.

4 IV. The Train

A green eye, and a red, in the dark.
Thunder, smoke, and a spark.
It is there, it is here, flashed by.
Whither will the wild thing fly?
It is rushing, tearing thro' the night,
Rending her gloom in its flight.
It shatters her silence with shrieks.
What is it the wild thing seeks?
Alas! for it hurries away
Them that are fain to stay.
Hurrah! for it carries home
Lovers and friends that roam.
Where are you, Time and Space?
The world is a little place,
Your reign is over and done,
You are one.

5 V. The Inkbottle

Well of blackness, all defiling,
Full of flattery and reviling,
Ah, what mischief hast thou wrought
Out of what was airy thought,
What beginnings, and what ends,
Making and dividing friends!

Colours of the rainbow lie
In thy tint of ebony;
Many a fancy have I found
Bright upon that sombre ground;
Cupid plays along the edge,
Skimming o'er it like a midge;
Niobe in turn appears,
Thinning it with crystal tears.

False abuse and falser praise,
Falsest lays and roundelays!
One thing, one alone, I think,
Never yet was found in ink; –
Truth lies not, the truth to tell,
At the bottom of this well!

6 VI. The Swallow

Low-flying swallow, tho' the sky be fair,
The sunshine soft,
Thou sleekest not with love the upper air,
Soaring aloft;
Thy sharp and gleamy wing goes flashing by me.
Thy dusky white and blue thou'lt not deny me!

Thy nest's a bit of mine, thy little home
Set in the eaves.
When the roses leave the wall, where wilt thou roam,
When summer leaves?
Not lightly, flying friend, can I forego thee,
The longest day is all too short to know thee!

7 VII. *Chillingham*

O the high valley, the little low hill,
And the cornfield over the sea,
The wind that rages and then lies still,
And the clouds that rest and flee!

O the gray island in the rainbow haze,
And the long thin spits of land,
The roughening pastures and the stony ways,
And the golden flash of the sand!

O the red heather on the moss-wrought rock,
And the fir-tree stiff and straight,
The shaggy old sheep-dog barking at the flock,
And the rotten old five-barred gate!

O the brown bracken, the blackberry bough,
The scent of the gorse in the air!
I shall love them ever as I love them now,
I shall weary in Heav'n to be there.

8 VIII. *My heart in thine*

Thy hand in mine, thy hand in mine,
And through the world we two will go,
With love before us for a sign,
Our faces set to ev'ry foe.

My heart in thine, my heart in thine,
Thro' life, thro' happy death the same.
We two will kneel before the shrine,
And keep alight the sacred flame.
My heart in thine, my heart in thine.

9 Elizabeth MACONCHY

Sirens' Song

Words: William Browne (1591-c.1643)

Soli: Julie Cooper *soprano*, Joshua Cooter *tenor*

Steer, hither steer your winged pines,
All beaten mariners!
Here lie Love's undiscovered mines,
A prey to passengers.

The compass love shall hourly sing,
And as he goes about the ring,
We will not miss
To tell each point he nameth with a kiss:
Then come on shore,
Where no joy dies till Love hath gotten more.

Imogen HOLST

WELCOME JOY AND WELCOME SORROW

Words: John Keats (1795-1821)

Harp: Sioned Williams

10 I. *Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow*

Welcome joy, and welcome sorrow,
Lethes' weed and Hermes' feather,
Come today, and come tomorrow,
I do love you both together,
Welcome joy, and welcome sorrow.

Nightshade with the woodbine kissing;
Serpents in red roses hissing;
Cleopatra regal dress'd,
With the aspic at her breast;
Dancing music, music sad,
Both together, sane and mad.

Muses bright, and muses pale;
Sombre Saturn, Momus hale;
Laugh and sigh, and laugh again.

11 II. *Teignmouth*

Here all the summer could I stay,
For there's Bishop's teign
And King's teign
And Coomb at the clear Teign head
Where close by the stream
You may have your cream
All spread upon barley bread.

There's arch Brook
And there's larch Brook
Both turning many a mill;
And cooling the drouth
Of the salmon's mouth
And fattening his silver gill.

There's the Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in,
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee,
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

And O, and O
The daisies blow
And the primroses are waken'd,
And violets white
Sit in silver plight
And the green bud's as long as the spike end.

12 III. *Over the Hill and over the Dale*

Over the Hill and over the Dale,
And over the Bourn to Dawlish,
Where gingerbread wives have a scanty sale,
And gingerbread nuts are smallish.

13 IV. *O Sorrow*

O sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The natural hue of health, from vermeil lips?
To give maiden blushes
To the white rose bushes?
Or is't the dewy hand the daisy tips?

O sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye?
To give the glow-worm light?
Or, on a moonless night,
To tinge, on siren shores, the salt sea-spray?

O sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning tongue?
To give at evening pale
Unto the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dew among?

O sorrow,
Why dost borrow
Heart's lightness from the merriment of May?
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep of day.

14 V. *Lullaby*

Moon! keep wide thy golden ears!
Hearken, stars! and hearken, spheres!
Hearken, thou eternal sky,
I sing an infant's lullaby,
A pretty lullaby.
Listen, listen, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby.

Though the rushes that will make
Its cradle still are in the lake,
Though the linen that will be
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree
Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep
Listen, starlight, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby.

15 **VI. *Shed no Tear***

Shed no tear, O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.

Weep no more, O weep no more!
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.

Dry your eyes, O dry your eyes,
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies.

Shed no tear, O shed no tear!
The flower will bloom another year.

Adieu, Adieu
I fly, adieu,
I vanish into heaven's blue.

16 **Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**
Silence and Music

Words: Ursula Wood (1911-2007)

Silence, come first: I see a sleeping swan,
Wings closed and drifting where the water leads,
A winter moon, a calm where wisdom dreams,
A hand outstretched to gather hollow reeds.

The four winds in their litanies can tell
All of earth's stories as they weep and cry;
The sea names all the treasures of her tides,
And birds rejoice between the earth and sky:

Voices of grief and from the heart of joy,
So near to comprehension do we stand
That wind and sea and all of winged delight
Lie in the octaves of man's voice and hand

And music wakes from silence as from sleep.

Gerald FINZI
SEVEN POEMS OF ROBERT BRIDGES

Words: Robert Bridges (1844-1913)

17 **I. *I praise the
tender flower***

I praise the tender flower,
That on a mournful day
Bloomed in my garden bower
And made the winter gay.
Its loveliness contented
My heart tormented.
I praise the gentle maid
Whose happy voice and smile
To confidence betrayed
My doleful heart awhile:
And gave my spirit deploring
Fresh wings for soaring.
The maid for very fear
Of love I durst not tell:
The rose could never hear,
Though I bespake her well:
So in my song I bind them
For all to find them.

18 **II. *I have loved flowers
that fade***

I have loved flowers that fade,
Within whose magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents:
A honeymoon delight,
A joy of love at sight,
That ages in an hour –
My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
Before their charm is writ
Along a liquid sky
Trembling to welcome it.
Notes, that with pulse of fire
Proclaim the spirit's desire,
Then die, and are nowhere –
My song be like an air!

(continued over)

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Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom –
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
‘Twas thine love’s tender sense
To feast; now on thy bier
Beauty shall shed a tear.

19 **III. *My spirit sang all day***

My spirit sang all day
O my joy.
Nothing my tongue could say,
Only my joy!
My heart an echo caught
O my joy
And spake,
Tell me thy thought,
Hide not thy joy.
My eyes gan peer around,
O my joy
What beauty hast thou found?
Shew us thy joy.
My jealous ears grew whist;
O my joy
Music from heaven is’t,
Sent for our joy?
She also came and heard;
O my joy,
What, said she, is this word?
What is thy joy?
And I replied,
O see, O my joy,
‘Tis thee, I cried, ‘tis thee:
Thou art my joy.

20 **IV. *Clear and gentle stream***

Clear and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day;
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray,
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

Many an afternoon
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon,
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

21 *V. Nightingales*

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

22 *VI. Haste on, my joys!*

Haste on, my joys! your treasure lies
In swift, unceasing flight.
O haste: for while your beauty flies
I seize your full delight.

Lo! I have seen the scented flower,
Whose tender stems I cull,
For her brief date and meted hour
Appear more beautiful.

O youth, O strength, O most divine
For that so short ye prove;
Were but your rare gifts longer mine,
Ye scarce would win my love.

Nay, life itself the heart would spurn,
Did once the days restore
The days, that once enjoyed return,
Return, ah! nevermore.

23 *VII. Wherefore to-night so full of care*

Wherefore to-night so full of care,
My soul, revolving hopeless strife,
Pointing at hindrance, and the bare
Painful escapes of fitful life?
Shaping the doom that may befall
By precedent of terror past:
By love dishonoured, and the call
Of friendship slighted at the last?
By treasured names, the little store
That memory out of wreck could save
Of loving hearts, that gone before
Call their old comrade to the grave?
O soul, be patient: thou shalt find
A little matter mend all this;
Some strain of music to thy mind,
Some praise for skill not spent amiss.
Again shall pleasure overflow
Thy cup with sweetness, thou shalt taste
Nothing but sweetness, and shalt grow
Half sad for sweetness run to waste.
O happy life! I hear thee sing,
O rare delight of mortal stuff!
I praise my days for all they bring,
Yet are they only not enough.

24 Sir Arthur SULLIVAN

The Long Day Closes

Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808-72)

No star is o'er the lake,
Its pale watch keeping,
The moon is half awake,
Through gray mist creeping,
The last red leaves fall round
The porch of roses;
The clock hath ceased to sound,
The long day closes.

Sit by the silent hearth
In calm endeavour,
To count the sounds of mirth,
Now dumb for ever,
Heed not how hope believes
And fate disposes:
Shadow is round the eaves,
The long day closes.

The lighted windows dim
Are fading slowly.
The fire that was so trim
Now quivers lowly.
Go to the dreamless bed
Where grief reposes;
Thy book of toil is read,
The long day closes.

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS stands among today's great champions of choral music. In partnership with The Sixteen, the ensemble he founded over 40 years ago, he has set benchmark standards for the performance of everything from late medieval polyphony to important new works by contemporary composers. His international influence is supported by more than 150 recordings and has been enhanced by his work as Artistic Director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and as a guest conductor worldwide.

The Sixteen's soundworld, rich in tonal variety and expressive nuance, reflects Christophers' determination to create a vibrant choral instrument from the blend of adult professional singers. Under his leadership The Sixteen has established its annual Choral Pilgrimage to cathedrals, churches and other UK venues, created the *Sacred Music* series for BBC television, and developed an acclaimed period-instrument orchestra. Highlights of their recent work include an Artist Residency at Wigmore Hall, a large-scale tour of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, and the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Symphony No. 5, 'Le grand Inconnu'*; their future projects, meanwhile, comprise a new series devoted to Purcell and an ongoing survey of Handel's dramatic oratorios.

Harry served as Artistic Director of the Handel and Haydn Society for 13 years, and has recently been appointed their Conductor Laureate. He was also appointed as Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Granada Orchestra in 2008 and has worked as guest conductor with, among others, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsches Kammerphilharmonie. Christophers' extensive commitment to opera has embraced productions for English National Opera and Lisbon Opera and work with the Granada, Buxton and Grange festivals.

He was appointed a CBE in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours for his services to music. He is an Honorary Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and has Honorary Doctorates in Music from the Universities of Leicester, Northumbria, Canterbury Christ Church and Kent.

§ The Sixteen

Whether performing a simple medieval hymn or expressing the complex musical and emotional language of a contemporary choral composition, The Sixteen does so with qualities common to all great ensembles. Tonal warmth, rhythmic

precision and immaculate intonation are clearly essential to the mix. But it is the courage and intensity with which The Sixteen makes music that speak above all to so many people.

The Sixteen gave its first concert in 1979 under the direction of Founder and Conductor Harry Christophers CBE. Their pioneering work since has made a profound impact on the performance of choral music and attracted a large new audience, not least as 'The Voices of Classic FM' and through BBC television's *Sacred Music* series.

§ The Sixteen

| SOPRANO | ALTO | TENOR | BASS |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Emma Brain-Gabbott * | Daniel Collins | Jeremy Budd | Ben Davies |
| Julie Cooper | Stephanie Franklin | Joshua Cooter | Eamonn Dougan |
| Angharad Gruffydd Jones * | Rebecca Leggett | Mark Dobell | Tim Jones |
| Katy Hill | Martha McLorinan | George Pooley | Rob Macdonald |
| Alexandra Kidgell | Edward McMullan | | |
| Victoria Meteyard | Simon Ponsford * | | HARP |
| Charlotte Mobbs | Kim Porter | | Sioned Williams * |
| Emilia Morton | | * Tracks 10 to 15 only | |

The voices and period-instrument players of The Sixteen are at home in over five centuries of music, a breadth reflected in their annual Choral Pilgrimage to Britain's great cathedrals and sacred spaces, regular appearances at the world's leading concert halls, and award-winning recordings for The Sixteen's CORO and other labels.

Recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Symphony No. 5, 'Le grand Inconnu'*, commissioned for The Sixteen by the Genesis Foundation, an ambitious ongoing series of Handel oratorios, and a debut tour of China.

SIONED WILLIAMS' eclectic career includes international recital tours, concerti, recordings, lectures, teaching and masterclasses; her extensive repertoire includes rediscovered gems and countless premieres.

As Principal Harpist of the BBCSO, she worked with the most respected conductors and composers, regularly broadcasting on BBC Radio 3 and television. She has performed in concert, on disc and on radio and television with Michael Chance, Martyn Hill, Steven Isserlis, Neil Mackie, Aurèle Nicolet, Mark Padmore, Roderick Williams, Jeremy Huw Williams, James Galway, Lisa Milne, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Frederica von Stade and the Brodsky Quartet.

Aside from her collaborations with The Sixteen (including a recording of Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*), Sioned also performs with the BBC Singers, Holst Singers, Cantamus, Tenebrae, Winchester Quiristers, Oxford Voices, and the choirs of Westminster Cathedral and Abbey, King's College, Cambridge and St Paul's Cathedral.

Sioned pioneered integrated harp courses in Britain, was President of the UK Harp Association, and the first Welsh board member of the World Harp Congress. She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music.