

# FINAL RECITAL

## *Programme*

16<sup>th</sup> June, 2018. St Anne's Anglican Church, Strathfield

Behold, the tabernacle of God.....	<i>William H. Harris (1883 – 1973)</i>
Exsultate justi in Domino.....	<i>Ludovico da Viadana (c.1560 – 1627)</i>
Greater love hath no man.....	<i>John Ireland (1879 – 1962)</i>
Audivi, media nocte.....	<i>Thomas Tallis (c. 1505 – 85)</i>
Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks.....	<i>Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)</i>
Magnificat, Collegium Regale.....	<i>Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)</i>
KYRIE, Missa aedis Christi.....	<i>Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)</i>
CREDO, Missa aedis Christi.....	<i>Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)</i>
SANCTUS, Missa aeterna Christi munera.....	<i>G.P. da Palestrina (1525 – 1594)</i>
BENEDICTUS, Missa aeterna Christi munera..	<i>G.P. da Palestrina (1525 – 1594)</i>
AGNUS DEI, Missa aeterna Christi munera.....	<i>G.P. da Palestrina (1525 – 1594)</i>

## THE MUSIC

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### **Behold, the tabernacle of God (1954)**

Harris is probably better known for his two large *a capella* works for double choir; “Faire is the heaven” and “Bring us, O Lord God”. But this shorter work has all the class and poise of the composer at his best. In 1954, the Royal School of Music moved to their new location in Croydon, London. At this time, Harris was Organist and Choirmaster at St George’s Chapel, Windsor (think royal wedding!) where he was arguably his most productive – *Behold* was written for the RSCM’s move and uses the words of the Sarum Antiphon for the dedication of a church.

### **Exsultate justi in Domino**

“Rejoice! you fair people, in the Lord”, this up-beat, dance-like motet from the Italian composer Viadana seems to do just that; the swift triple time feel gives it a seemingly inexhaustible energy. The words are taken from psalm 32 (vv.1-3).

### **Greater love hath no man (1912)**

Ireland, we’re told, was an introspective and self-critical man, who lost both parents in early life and cherished the bonds with his closest friends. Like Harris and Howells, he taught composition at the Royal College of Music, where one of his pupils was Benjamin Britten. Today’s work was written, rather portentously, two years before the outbreak of the First World War, and utilises passages of scripture to reflect on the ultimate act of love to give up one’s life for another.

### **Audivi, media nocte**

Tallis is identified with one of the most unstable periods of English history; a period that saw much oscillation between Protestantism and Catholicism as successive monarchs came and went. He managed to avoid most of the religious fallout, however, by conforming to the musical style dictated by each. He is seen today as one of England’s greatest composers. *Audivi...* – “I heard in the middle of the night” as a literal translation, yet the title is a composite of the whole antiphon “I heard a voice coming from heaven”: the 8<sup>th</sup> responsory at Matins on the feast of All Saints, Jeremiah 40:10 and Matthew 25:6. Tallis sets parts of the text to a full choral texture with imitative polyphony, whilst other parts simply intone the chant.

### **Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks (1941)**

Howells has a unique musical language. Influences can be traced to Vaughan Williams, Elgar and Delius, and according to John Rutter, he represents perhaps the last of the true English Romantics. This musical language can appear confronting to performers at first, but once fully immersed, becomes truly natural. It is bold in its treatment of dissonance yet yields beauty in equal measure. Sir Thomas Armstrong succeeded William Harris as Organist at Christ Church, Oxford and during his time there Howells dedicated four anthems to him, of which *Like as the heart* is one. The words are drawn from Psalm 42 (vv.1-3).

In his book, *Howells* (1998), Paul Spicer relates a formative experience in Howells’ early career. During the premier of Vaughan Williams’ *Fantasia on a theme of*

*Thomas Tallis*, at the Three Choirs Festival in 1910, Howells sat next to the composer, and did so for the rest of the concert, at one point sharing his score of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. The Tudor composers, such as Tallis, were from henceforward set to be another strong influence in his music. He went on to co-edit with R.R. Terry in the 1920s the first substantial edition of Tudor church music published by Oxford University Press.

### **Magnificat, from Collegium Regale (1945)**

In 1925, Howells was subjected to a particularly out-spoken and hostile critic during the performance of his second piano concerto. From here, he withdrew significantly from his composing and produced very little until a move to Cambridge during the Second World War reinvigorated it. Although *Collegium Regale* (King's College) is the only full set of canticles he wrote, it, along with many other works, stems from this fruitful period.

### **Missa aedis Christi (1958)**

The title translates from Latin to 'Mass of the Shrine of Christ', but *aedis* can also mean of the tomb or house and is related to *aedificium* – 'building' (recall Umberto Eco). It comes to us as Christ's Church, and was written for Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Written at perhaps the peak of his art; the 1950s where one of Howells' most productive periods. The mass, apart from the Kyrie, uses the words from the Book of Common Prayer and showcases the composers consummate skill in creating floating, ethereal textures with soft dissonance along with crunching moments of awe-inspiring magnificence and grandeur. A forward-thinking use of harmony, sometimes more related to jazz than sacred music, creates moments of dramatic intensity.

I've chosen today to contrast the Howells mass with some of the parts from a Palestrina mass written four centuries prior, to create more diversity in the programme.

### **Missa aeterna Christi munera (c.1590)**

The title of this mass by Palestrina translates to 'the eternal gifts of Christ' and is one of his later works. It utilises a four-line hymn whose beginnings can be traced as far back as the twelfth-century. Palestrina incorporates the melody of this hymn as themes throughout the work and shows himself at his finest. The length and shape of the phrases, the transparent polyphony and the ingenuity of modification

to which the various themes are subjected is unmatched. As Henry Washington points out in the preface to his 1953 edition, the work has evoked the admiration of composers from Bach to Debussy.

## THE PERFORMERS

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### **Sopranos**

Roberta Diamond

Amber Johnson

Joanna Swadling

### **Basses**

Patrick Baker

Ross Cobb

Jack Stephens

### **Altos**

Aleta King

Vicki Kourkoumelis

Jenny Moriarty

### **Organ**

Joshua Ryan

### **Conductor**

David Taylor

### **Tenors**

James Doig

David Larkin

Anthony Pasquill

My sincere thanks to these talented performers, giving up their time for nothing to help me put on this recital. Also to the Acting Rector Mark Harding and the wardens of St Anne's for generously allowing me to use the building.

Lastly, thank you to the staff at the Conservatorium of Music for their support, along with my long-suffering supervisors Jennifer Rowley and Neil McEwan.

### **Exsultate justi**

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just; praise befits the upright.

Give praise to the Lord on the harp; sing to him with the psaltery, the instrument of ten strings.

Sing to him a new canticle, sing well unto him with a loud noise.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye just; praise befits the upright.

### **Audivi, media nocte**

I heard a voice coming from heaven: come all wisest virgins;

fill your vessels with oil, for the bridegroom is coming.

In the middle of the night there was a cry: behold the bridegroom comes.