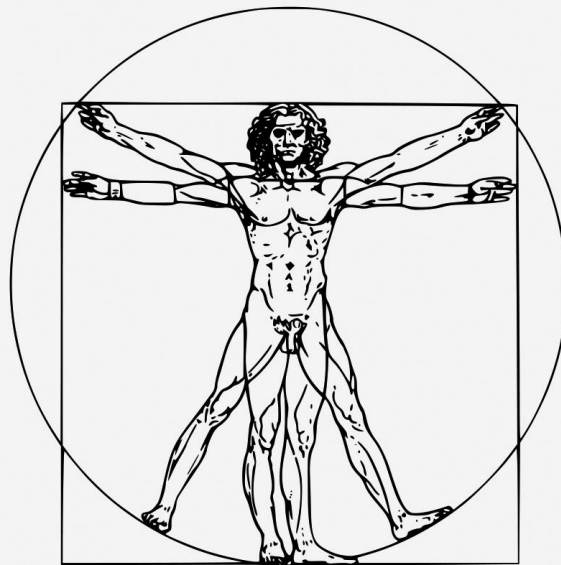
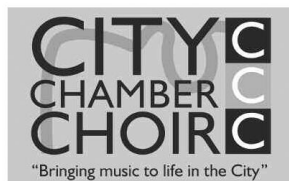


Cecilia McDowall
Da Vinci Requiem



Parry Songs of Farewell
Finzi Eclogue Op. 10



Stephen Jones conductor
Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra

Tamsin Raitt
Soprano

Thomas Isherwood
Baritone

Tom Jesty
Piano

7.30 pm, Tuesday, 21 March 2023
Holy Sepulchre, London

***City Chamber Choir would like to thank
The Sir Edward Lewis Foundation
for its continuing support***

Welcome to City Chamber Choir's spring concert. We are delighted to be returning to the splendid and spacious National Musicians' Church, Holy Sepulchre London, for our programme of British music. We begin and end the first half of the concert with the solemn and moving *Songs of Farewell* by **Parry**, which represent a pinnacle of choral writing from the early twentieth century. Gerald **Finzi**'s beautifully serene *Eclogue* for piano and strings moves us towards the middle of the century, and, after the interval, the 2019 *Da Vinci Requiem* brings us right up to date. This significant seven-movement work from **Cecilia McDowall**, City Chamber Choir's president, presents an imaginative pairing of extracts from *The Notebooks* of Leonardo da Vinci with texts from the Latin *Missa pro defunctis*. Da Vinci's reflective and penetrating insights into the nature of mortality and all that it encompasses cast new light on the familiar Requiem texts.

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

'Never, weather-beaten sail'

'I know my soul hath power to know all things'

'Lord, let me know mine end'

Gerald Finzi (1901–56) *Eclogue Op.10* for piano and orchestra

Parry Songs of Farewell

'At the round earth's imagined corners'

'There is an old belief'

'My soul, there is a country'

INTERVAL

Cecilia McDowall (b.1951) *Da Vinci Requiem*

C. HUBERT H. PARRY (1848–1918) *Songs of Farewell*

Parry was one of the great figures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who brought about the tremendous renaissance of British music at that time. His own compositions, which far transcended the standards achieved by British composers over the previous 200 years, and his work as a teacher of many of the leading native composers of the 20th century, assured him of an honoured place in the history of music.

In addition to being a leading composer, Parry was an influential author and an outstanding teacher. He also revelled in pursuit of many types of sporting activities and owned and sailed his own yacht, the *Wanderer*. In the last three years of his very active life, Parry wrote six unaccompanied motets, which were collected together under the title *Songs of Farewell*. These pieces are all of a deeply philosophical nature, dwelling on the transitory nature of human existence and the hope of a continuing life in another world.

Of the six motets, 'My soul, there is a country' is the most well known, often sung by cathedral and large parish church choirs. It sets a text by Henry Vaughan that paints a picture of the blissful and tranquil world to come. This and 'I know my soul hath power to know all things' (a text by Sir John Davies) are for four-part choir; Campian's 'Never weather-beaten sail' is set for five-part choir; Lockhart's 'There is an old belief' for six parts; John Donne's 'At the round earth's imagined corners' for seven parts; and finally, 'Lord, let me know mine end', a biblical text, is for eight parts. This last motet, which is by far the most elaborate of the set, was written when Parry knew that his own end was near – he completed it just three months before his death – yet it ranks as one of his greatest achievements and one of the greatest works of its kind in British music.

This evening we shall be performing the motets in two sets of three.

Programme notes [adapted and abridged] provided by P.W.L. for Plymouth Philharmonic Choir, November 1989

Never, weather-beaten sail

Words by Thomas Campion (1567–1620)

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!

I know my soul hath power to know all things

Words by John Davies (1569–1626)

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.

Lord, let me know mine end

Words from Psalm 39, vv 5–15

Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days,
That I may be certified how long I have to live.
Thou hast made my days as it were a span long;
And my age is as nothing in respect of Thee,
and verily ev'ry man living is altogether vanity.
For man walketh in a vain shadow,
And disquieteth himself in vain,
He heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.
And now, Lord, what is my hope?
Truly my hope is even in Thee.
Deliver me from all mine offences
And make me not a rebuke to the foolish.
I became dumb and opened not my mouth
for it was Thy doing.
Take Thy plague away from me;
I am even consumed by means of Thy heavy hand.
When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin
Thou makest his beauty to consume away,
like as it were a moth fretting a garment;
Every man therefore is but vanity.
Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and with Thine ears consider my calling,

hold not Thy peace at my tears!
For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner
as all my fathers were.
O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength
before I go hence and be no more seen.

GERALD FINZI (1901–56) *Eclogue Op.10*

Piano: Tom Jesty

The English composer Gerald Finzi studied with Ernest Farrar and Edward Bairstow in Yorkshire, before moving to London to study with R.O. Morris. He moved in the circle of early 20th-century composers that included Vaughan Williams and Holst, becoming friends with Howard Ferguson and Edmund Rubbra. From 1930 to 1933, Finzi taught composition at the Royal Academy. In the late 1930s, however, now married to the artist Joyce Black, he happily left London to live in the countryside – Ashmansworth in Hampshire – where he spent the rest of his life, researching, composing, collecting poetry and growing rare varieties of English apples. His music is anchored in the traditions of Elgar, Parry and Vaughan Williams.

Finzi began work on this piece in 1929, with the intention that it be the slow movement of a piano concerto. The concerto, however, was never completed, and in the 1940s and 1950s Finzi returned to the slow movement, revising it as a stand-alone piece for piano and string orchestra. The title 'Eclogue' was given posthumously, with the agreement of those looking after Finzi's compositions. It calls to mind short pastoral poems of classical literature.

C. HUBERT H. PARRY *Songs of Farewell*

At the round earth's imagined corners

Words by John Donne (1572–1631)

At the round earth's imagined corners, blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go!
All whom the flood did and fire shall overthrow,
All whom war, dearth, 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.

There is an old belief

Words by John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854)

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.

My soul, there is a country

Words by Henry Vaughan (1622–95)

My soul, there is a country
far beyond the stars,
where stands a winged 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.

INTERVAL

CECILIA MCDOWALL (b.1951) *Da Vinci Requiem*

La Prospettiva de' perdimenti (The Perspective of Disappearance)

Baritone: Thomas Isherwood; Soprano: Tamsin Raitt

The British composer Cecilia McDowall has been described by the International Record Review as having 'a communicative gift that is very rare in modern music'. Her distinctive style speaks directly to listeners, instrumentalists and singers alike, and her most characteristic works fuse fluent melodic lines with occasional dissonant harmonies and rhythmic exuberance. McDowall has won many awards, including the 2014 British Composer Award and, in 2020, the prestigious Ivor Novello Award for 'Outstanding Works Collection'.

McDowall is often inspired by extra-musical influences, as evidenced in some of the works previously heard in City Chamber Choir concerts, such as *Night Flight*, which celebrates the pioneering flight of the American aviatrix Harriet Quimby across the English Channel; *Standing as I do before God*, a reflection on the execution of Edith Cavell; and *Good News from New England*, about the early experiences of the Mayflower Pilgrims.

Of tonight's piece, McDowall writes:

'I have brought together my chosen Latin texts for this Requiem with extracts from *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, editions of which have been in my family for over seventy years. Leonardo da Vinci's extraordinary philosophical writings cast reflective and penetrating insights into the nature of mortality and all that it encompasses. The Requiem, structured in seven movements, advances from a dark, contemplative opening to hopeful luminosity in the final movement, "Lux aeterna". In the closing bars all voices drift upwards,

folding into silence, an allusion to Leonardo's concept of "The Perspective of Disappearance".'

'The human bird shall take his first flight, filling the world with amazement, all writings with his fame, and bringing eternal glory to the next whence he sprang.' Leonardo da Vinci

The *Da Vinci Requiem* was first performed at the Royal Festival Hall, London, by Wimbledon Choral Society on 7 May 2019 to resonate with the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death.

Note on text and translations:

The Latin texts are from the *Missa pro defunctis*, with an English translation shown here in italic type. Unless otherwise stated, the English texts are by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), taken from 'The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci' arranged, rendered into English, and Introduced by Edward MacCurdy' (Jonathan Cape, London, 4th impression, 1945).

1. Introit and Kyrie

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
et tibi redettur votum
in Jerusalem:

exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

*A hymn, O God, becometh thee in Sion,
and a vow shall be paid to thee
in Jerusalem:*

*hear my prayer;
all flesh shall come to thee.*

*Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

O Leonardo, why do you toil so much?

Because movement will cease before we are weary of being useful.

Shadow is not the absence of light: merely the obstruction of luminous rays by an opaque body.

We are all exiled living within the frame of a strange picture.

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

2. The Virgin of the Rocks

Mother, is this the darkness of the end,
The Shadow of Death? And is that outer sea
Infinite imminent Eternity?

And does the death-pang by man's seed sustained
In Time's each instant cause thy face to bend

Its silent prayer upon the Son, while He
Blesses the dead with His hand silently
To His long day which hours no more offend?
Mother of grace, the pass is difficult,
Keen as these rocks, and the bewildered souls
Throng it like echoes, blindly shuddering through.
Thy name, O Lord, each spirit's voice extols,
Whose peace abides in the dark avenue
Amid the bitterness of things occult.

For 'Our Lady of the Rocks', by Leonardo da Vinci Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82)

3. I obey thee, O Lord (*Lacrimosa*)

I obey thee, O Lord, first because of the love which I ought to bear thee: secondly, because thou knowest how to shorten or prolong the lives of men. Tears come from the heart, not from the brain. Our body is subject to heaven, and heaven is subject to the spirit.

Lacrimosa dies illa
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce Deus:
Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.
Amen.

*Full of tears will be that day
When from the ashes shall arise
The guilty man to be judged;
Therefore spare him, O God:
Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them eternal
rest. Amen*

4. Sanctus and Benedictus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who cometh in the name of
the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

5. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem, sempiternam requiem.

*Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of
the world, grant them rest, eternal rest.*

One sees the supreme instance of humility in the lamb.

6. O you who are asleep

O you who are asleep, what thing is sleep? Sleep resembles death.

Ah, why then do you not work in such a way that after death you might resemble yet a perfect life, when, during life, you are in sleep so like the hapless dead?

What is it that is much desired by men, but which they know not while possessing?
It is sleep.

Since a well-spent day makes you happy to sleep, so a well-used life makes you happy to die.

7. Lux aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis,

Domine:

cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,

quia pius es.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,

et lux perpetua luceat eis:

cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,

quia pius es.

May light eternal shine upon them,

O Lord,

with thy saints for ever,

for thou art merciful.

Eternal rest give to them, O Lord,

and let perpetual light shine upon them:

with thy saints for ever,

for thou art merciful.

Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,

et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Eternal rest give to them, O Lord,

and let perpetual light shine upon them.

STEPHEN JONES conductor

Stephen has enjoyed a rich and varied career as a musician of many talents. He won his first piano competition at the age of seven, sang in a close harmony quartet which appeared on television and radio, sang in London's cathedrals, and was a tenor soloist specialising in Renaissance and Baroque repertoire. He has played piano, fortepiano, harpsichord, harmonium and organ in all the major London venues, and was a scriptwriter, presenter and pianist on BBC Schools Radio.

In 1987 Stephen founded the City Chamber Choir, and in 1994 became Musical Director of Hertfordshire's Aeolian Singers, and he remains conductor of both choirs. He has been accompanist and assistant conductor of Goldsmiths Choral Union since 1978. Stephen has also taught for many years, first as a music specialist in primary and secondary schools, and then as a choral animateur for various organisations including the British Federation of Young Choirs and the BBC Singers, and now as a singing teacher working privately and for Hertfordshire Music Service. Stephen continues to be a busy conductor, singer, accompanist, teacher and performer.

THOMAS ISHERWOOD baritone

Thomas began his musical training at the Watford School of Music. After performing with local dramatic societies and the National Youth Music Theatre, he went on to train at the Royal Northern College of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal College of Music. He currently studies with Timothy Evans-Jones and Caroline Dowdle. In 2015 he made his professional debut with Grange Park Opera alongside Sir Bryn Terfel in *Fiddler on the Roof* and returned the following year to perform the role of Happy in *La Fanciulla del West*. Following two years of professional work, he joined the Royal College of Music's International Opera Studio and in 2018 performed the role of Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* directed by Sir Thomas Allen.

Thomas has since performed as a member of the chorus and featured soloist for Grange Park Opera, and in 2022 he made his debut appearance with Glyndebourne Festival Opera for *The Wreckers*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *La Bohème* and Mozart's *Requiem* on tour, as well as performing solo excerpts from the *Requiem* for local schools as part of Glyndebourne's community outreach work. In 2023 he returns to Grange Park Opera in the roles of Sciarone (*Tosca*) and Steuermann (*Tristan und Isolde*).

TOM JESTY piano

Tom Jesty sang as a treble in the Winchester College Chapel Choir, touring widely and winning the BBC Radio 2 Choirboy of the Year competition. While at Winchester, he gained an FTCL diploma in piano performance and performed Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no.2. After his final year, Tom conducted a week's run of Bernstein's *West Side Story* in the Theatre Royal, Winchester. Tom went on to study music at St Peter's College Oxford, during which time he performed Beethoven's Piano Concerto no.4.

Tom is currently studying for a masters in piano accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has played in recitals of Spanish song, music from the Great American Songbook, songs by contemporary composer Stephen Hough, and solo and vocal repertoire by Benjamin Britten. Tom has recently worked on lesser-known repertoire by Russian composers Nikolai Roslavets and Arthur-Vincent Lourié under the tuition of Iain Burnside, as well as George Crumb's *Apparition*, and a programme of German Lieder, for which he received coaching from Graham Johnson. Tom is currently studying with Pamela Lidiard.

Prior to moving to London, Tom worked as a piano teacher and accompanist in Winchester. He also accompanies for the Hampshire Youth Choirs and City Chamber Choir.

TAMSIN RAITT soprano

Tamsin started her musical studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she was supported by the Rachel Barry Bursary awarded for 'The Most Promising Young Singer' at the North East of Scotland Music Festival. She went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of Kathleen Livingstone and Iain Ledingham. During her time there, Tamsin was a chorus member for the Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series and the proud receiver of the 2017 Arthur Burcher Memorial Prize for the highest mark in her third year recital.

Tamsin is currently a Fellow of St Martin's Voices at St Martin-in-the-Fields where she performs regularly. Her next performance with the Fellowship is Bach's *St John's Passion*. Tamsin performs regularly for oratorio works and has sung in venues such as Cadogan Hall and De Montfort Hall. Upcoming engagements include Bach's *Magnificat*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat* and Brahms' *Requiem*. When not performing, Tamsin runs the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust – a charity which exists to bring chamber music to young people.

CITY CHAMBER CHOIR

City Chamber Choir, a well-established amateur group of 25–30 singers working to professional standards, was founded by Stephen Jones in 1987 to explore neglected repertoire, especially British twentieth-century works. Since that time it has given many performances of little known, but beautiful and worthwhile music. As a result, the choir has been awarded PRS Choral Enterprise Awards on six occasions, has been invited to record by the British Music Society and reached the semi-finals of the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition. Highlights of recent years include a successful tour of the Netherlands; running regular choral workshops in Ripe; recording the music for productions at the Park Theatre (*Revlon Girl*) and the National Theatre (*Love the Sinner*); and singing with the English National Ballet and Orchestra in St Paul's Cathedral for the City of London Festival. The choir has also released three CDs, including *City Chamber Choir at Christmas* and *A Century of Song*. For further details about the choir and dates of future concerts, please visit its website, www.citychamberchoir.org.uk.

Sopranos – Kathryn Beecroft, Laura Brockway, Laura Cusick, Kate Gould, Selina Haniff, Mirjam James, Hania Laganowski, Liz Robinson, Eleanor Steele

Altos – Frances Button, Helen Godwin, Joan Hester, Fiona Macnab, Christine Petch

Tenors – Carl Figueiredo, Jeremy Hill, Ross Johnston, Simon Worley

Basses – William Avery, Dominic Evers, David Flinter, Stuart Jenkins, John Stevens

COVENT GARDEN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra (CGCO) has long been part of the musical life of London, playing in venues and festivals across the city and the south east for many years. Its members come from many different professions, including architecture, arts administration, the BBC, IT, law, media, medicine, publishing, finance and education. They are drawn together by a deep commitment to music-making of the highest possible standard, and the desire to create and share great music.

Each season CGCO performs a series of concerts in the beautiful Victorian church of St Peter's Notting Hill, working with different conductors and artists to constantly enliven the orchestra's approach. It also plays in other London venues, as part of arts festivals, and with a number of choral partners. It has a well-deserved reputation for bold programming, performing unusual and extraordinary gems alongside contemporary repertoire as well as much-loved chamber orchestra staples.

FRIENDS OF CITY CHAMBER CHOIR

City Chamber Choir is grateful to all supporters, particularly our Friends, who have provided loyal encouragement over many years. Our thanks to you all!

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Becoming a Friend of City Chamber Choir is a great way to support the choir and keep in touch. For a minimum subscription of £30 per annum you will receive:

- Regular updates about the choir and its activities
- Advance notice of concerts
- Priority for the purchase of tickets
- A free glass of wine for you and a friend at our concerts, where possible
- Your name in concert programmes, if you wish

For more details, please contact our Friends' Secretary, Kathryn Beecroft
kabeecroft@uksingers.com

Cover design by Kathryn Beecroft; programme by Frances Button

www.citychamberchoir.org.uk and twitter @CChamberChoir



The logo for the City Chamber Choir features the words "CITY", "CHAMBER", and "CHOIR" stacked vertically in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text are three stylized, overlapping shapes in shades of blue and purple, resembling a choir or musical notes. The entire logo is set against a light grey background.

DIRECTOR Stephen Jones
PRESIDENT Cecilia McDowall
PATRON Bob Chilcott
www.citychamberchoir.org.uk
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