



Brahms

Requiem

and

Strauss Four Last Songs

Soprano: Rebecca Lea
Baritone: Richard Latham
Pianists: Paul Ayres, Paul Plummer

Conductor: William Petter

Saturday 19th March 2016 at 7.30pm

St John the Divine, Kew Road, Richmond, TW9 2NA,
Registered Charity No 1112448



Geistliches Lied	Brahms
Vier letzte Lieder	Strauss
Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen	Mahler
Um Mitternacht	Mahler

Interval

Ein Deutsches Requiem	Brahms
------------------------------	---------------

This evening's concert is, sadly, William's last with us. He has decided to focus on his singing commitments, teaching, and creating more time for his family. William's time as our Musical Director been very rewarding for the choir and we feel very fortunate to have been able to benefit from his musicianship. Thank you, William, for nearly five years of inspirational and enjoyable music-making! It has been uplifting to hear you sing when demonstrating at rehearsals, as well as in your memorable performances in concerts.

Geistliches Lied

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Geistliches Lied, or Sacred Song, was written when Brahms was twenty-three. His choice of text was a poem by Paul Fleming, an early 17th Century writer known for his contemplations on God's solace in times of adversity and the unique way in which he conveyed depth of feeling. At the time of its composition, Brahms's dear friend Robert Schumann was close to death and it is possible that the sentiments of the poem reflected his own personal feelings.

In that year (1856), Brahms had been exchanging exercises in counterpoint with the violinist Joseph Joachim (to whom he dedicated his violin concerto), in order to share expertise and advance their musical scholarship. Geistliches Lied was one such "exercise" – an exceptionally clever double canon, the distance of imitation being the interval of a ninth between the soprano and tenor and the bass and alto lines. In three sections with short, Bach-like organ interludes, the piece concludes with a sublime "Amen" passage evoking the music of the Renaissance composers whom Brahms had studied and revered.

On hearing of the scholarly nature of the composition, Clara Schumann had expressed concern that "the effect might prove stiff". This concern was unfounded - in Geistliches Lied Brahms transcends the mastery of counterpoint with the sheer beauty of musical expression.

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren mit
Trauren, sei stille, wie Gott es fügt,
so sei vergnügt mein Wille!

Do not be sorrowful or regretful;
Be calm, as God has ordained,
and thus my will shall be content.

Was willst du heute sorgen auf morgen?
Der Eine steht allem für,
der gibt auch dir das Deine.

What do you want to worry about from
day to day? There is One who stands
above all who gives you, too, what is
yours.

Sei nur in allem Handel ohn Wandel,
steh feste, was Gott beschleußt,
das ist und heißt das Beste.
Amen.

Only be steadfast in all you do,
stand firm; what God has decided,
that is and must be the best.
Amen

Vier letzte Lieder

Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

Richard Strauss, born in Munich in 1864, lived through the devastations and privations of two world wars. In his long life, he witnessed huge changes in music from the late 19th Century Romanticism of Brahms and Wagner (whom he greatly admired and whose influence can be heard in early works) through to the modernism of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. In spite of the musical innovations of 20th Century, Strauss found his own voice – Romantic, expressive and complex.

Strauss grew up in a musical household (his father was the principal horn player at the Munich Court Opera for many years) and he received a thorough musical education from his father's orchestral colleagues studying theory, violin, orchestration and conducting. He wrote his first song aged six and by the age of sixteen his Violin Concerto and Serenade for Wind Instruments had already been performed. Strauss went on to achieve fame as a conductor and a composer of over two hundred songs (including nearly forty with orchestral accompaniment), operas, instrumental works and symphonies. To the orchestral repertoire he introduced the tone poem (a composition in one movement inspired by extra-musical ideas), for example Don Juan (1888).

In 1894 Strauss married the soprano Pauline de Ahna, variously described as outspoken, eccentric and even cantankerous. By all accounts the marriage was a happy one and Strauss consistently drew inspiration from her powerful presence and talent, accompanied her in concerts and wrote some of his most powerful music for the soprano voice. The marriage lasted until the composer's death, aged eighty-four. Pauline outlived him by just eight months.

By 1945, Strauss had become deeply depressed by the wider devastations of the war and in particular the destruction of the German and Austrian opera houses. It was in these buildings that his father had performed for 49 years, where as a young man he had been captivated by the music of Wagner and where ten of his own operas had been performed. Strauss and his wife decided to move to Switzerland and there he was able to concentrate his energies on composing once more.

The Vier letzte Lieder, Four Last Songs, originally written for soprano with orchestral accompaniment, were completed in 1948, less than a year before the composer's death. Strauss did not know that they were to be his last songs and

left no indication that they should be published as a set or an intended order of performance. In fact, *Im Abendrot*, now performed last, was the first to be composed. It was Strauss's friend and publisher Ernest Roth who arranged them in the order in which they are performed today, an order which reflects the cycle of new life to death.

Strauss chose poems – three by Herman Hesse (1877-1962) and one by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857) - which are linked by themes of human mortality and the passage of time. The music is Romantic in style, with ecstatic, soaring melodies and lush, tonal harmonies resulting in songs that are heart-rending in their expressiveness. Strauss wrote them with the Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad in mind but sadly he was never to hear them performed. The Four Last Songs were given their premiere by Flagstad in London in May 1950, accompanied by the Philharmonia Orchestra under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwangler. Many listeners are of the opinion that Strauss saved his best music until the last.

1. Frühling (Spring)

Text: Hermann Hesse

In dämmrigen Grüften
träumte ich lang von
deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
Von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.
Nun liegst du erschlossen
In Glanz und Zier
von Licht übergossen
wie ein Wunder vor mir. Du kennst
mich wieder,
du lockst mich zart,
es zittert durch all meine Glieder
deine selige Gegenwart!

In shadowy crypts
I dreamt long of
your trees and blue skies,
of your fragrance and birdsong.
Now you appear
in all your finery,
drenched in light
like a miracle before me.
You recognize me,
you entice me tenderly.
All my limbs tremble at
your blessed presence!

2. September

Text: Hermann Hesse

Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.

The garden is in mourning.
Cool rain seeps into the flowers.
Summertime shudders,
quietly awaiting his end.

Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
In den sterbenden Gartentraum.
Lange noch bei den Rosen
bleibt er stehn, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die müdeword'nen
Augen zu

Golden leaf after leaf falls
from the tall acacia tree.
Summer smiles, astonished and feeble,
at his dying dream of a garden.
For just a while he tarries beside the
roses, yearning for repose.
Slowly he closes his weary eyes.

3. Beim Schlafengehen (Going to sleep)

Text: Hermann Hesse

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
wie ein müdes Kind empfangen. Hände
laßt von allem Tun
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
wollen sich in Schlummer senken. Und
die Seele unbewacht
will in freien Flügen schweben,
um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
tief und tausendfach zu leben.

Now that I am wearied of the day,
my ardent desire shall friendly receive
the starry night
like a sleepy child. Hands, stop all your
work.
Brow, forget all your thinking.
All my senses now
yearn to sink into slumber. And my
unfettered soul
wishes to soar up freely
into night's magic sphere
to live there deeply and thousandfold.

4. Im Abendrot (At sunset)

Text: Joseph von Eichendorff

Wir sind durch Not und Freude
gegangen Hand in Hand;
vom Wandern ruhen wir
nun überm stillen Land.

We have gone through sorrow and joy
hand in hand;
Now we can rest from our wandering
above the quiet land.

Rings sich die Täler neigen,
es dunkelt schon die Luft.
Zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
nachträumend in den Duft.

Around us, the valleys bow;
the air is growing darker.
Just two skylarks soar upwards
dreamily into the fragrant air.

Tritt her und laß sie schwirren,
bald ist es Schlafenszeit.

Come close to me, and let them flutter.
Soon it will be time for sleep.

Daß wir uns nicht verirren
in dieser Einsamkeit.

Let us not lose our way
in this solitude.

O weiter, stiller Friede! So tief im
Abendrot.

O vast, tranquil peace,
so deep at sunset!

Wie sind wir wandermüde—
Ist dies etwa der Tod?

How weary we are of wandering—
Is this perhaps death?

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

The music of Gustav Mahler, the late-Romantic Austrian composer, represented a bridge between the 19th Century Austro-German tradition and the modernism of the 20th Century. Growing up in the small town of Iglau where his early musical influences were military bands, folksongs and cafe music, the young Mahler showed musical talent. He was accepted at Vienna University and later the Conservatoire where he studied composition with Anton Bruckner. Throughout his career, Mahler earned his living mostly from conducting, but devoted as much time as he could to composing – often large-scale works requiring symphonic choruses and operatic soloists as well as extra orchestral forces.

During the summer of 1901 and following a period of illness, Mahler experienced a burst of creativity in which he managed to complete his Fourth Symphony and to start work on his Fifth. He was also working on songs with texts by the German poet, Friedrich Ruckert (1788-1866) which included Kindertotenlieder and the five known collectively as the Ruckert Lieder, two of which are being performed this evening. In the writing of this Romantic poet, Mahler found a voice that resonated with his own.

The five songs were not necessarily intended to be performed together, or as a cycle, and there is no linking narrative or prescribed order for performance. It could be said however that they are linked by their sensibility in that all are highly personal, reflective and intimate. Originally written with piano accompaniment, Mahler was later to orchestrate the songs.

The musical form of each song is largely conditioned by the structure of the poems. Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen has a comparatively long introduction which is later heard either as an interlude or in counterpoint with the soloist. The song captures the spirit of the Romantic artist - solitary and withdrawn

from the distractions of the world - and has been described as one of Mahler's most beautiful songs.

Although the poem *Um Mitternacht* has five regular, six-line stanzas, Mahler chose to set each one differently. Musical unity is achieved through recurring key phrases and patterns - particularly the three-note dotted figure and the descending scale of the opening bars. The poet's battle with darkness (both literal and figurative) gradually intensifies until the moment of transcendence in the final verse.

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen

Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen, Mit der ich sonst viele Zeit verdorben, Sie hat so lange nichts von mir vernommen, Sie mag wohl glauben, ich sei gestorben!	I am lost to the world with which I used to waste so much time, It has heard nothing from me for so long that it may very well believe that I am dead!
---	--

Es ist mir auch gar nichts daran gelegen, Ob sie mich für gestorben hält, Ich kann auch gar nichts sagen dagegen, Denn wirklich bin ich gestorben der Welt.	It is of no consequence to me Whether it thinks me dead; I cannot deny it, for I really am dead to the world.
---	--

Ich bin gestorben dem Weltgetümmel, Und ruh' in einem stillen Gebiet! Ich leb' allein in meinem Himmel, In meinem Lieben, in meinem Lied!	I am dead to the world's tumult, And I rest in a quiet realm! I live alone in my heaven, In my love and in my song!
---	--

Um Mitternacht

Um Mitternacht Hab' ich gewacht Und aufgeblickt zum Himmel; Kein Stern vom Sternengewimmel Hat mir gelacht Um Mitternacht.	At midnight I was roused and looked up to heavens; No star in the entire sky smiled down upon me at midnight.
---	--

Um Mitternacht
Hab' ich gedacht
Hinaus in dunkle Schranken;
Es hat kein Lichtgedanken
Mir Trost gebracht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I cast my thoughts
out beyond the dark limits.
No vision of light
Brought me solace
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Nahm ich in Acht
Die Schläge meines Herzens;
Ein einz'ger Puls des Schmerzens
War angefacht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I was rapt
to the beats of my heart;
One single pulse of pain
welled up
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Kämpft' ich die Schlacht
O Menschheit deiner Leiden;
Nicht konnt' ich sie entscheiden
Mit meiner Macht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I fought the battle,
of your passion, o humankind;
I could not resolve it
with my strength
at midnight.

Um Mitternacht
Hab' ich die Macht
In deine Hand gegeben:
Herr über Tod und Leben,
Du hältst die Wacht
Um Mitternacht.

At midnight
I commended my strength
into your hands!
Lord, over death and life
You keep watch
at midnight!

Programme notes by Jane Purser

INTERVAL

Ein Deutsches Requiem

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

For many years Brahms had been preoccupied with the idea of composing a Requiem, but only in 1866, when he was 33, did he begin serious work on it. It was completed the following year with the exception of the fifth movement, which he added later in order to achieve a more balanced structure. In its incomplete form Ein Deutsches Requiem was first heard in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868. The final version was performed the following year at Leipzig's famous concert-hall, the Gewandhaus.

Brahms may have written the Requiem in memory of his mother, who died in 1856; it is equally possible that he had in mind his great friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whose madness and tragic death had profoundly affected the young Brahms. The composer himself gave no indication of whose memorial the Requiem might be, if indeed it was any one person's. As with all great music, the universal message of its vision transcends the circumstances of its conception.

The work's title reflects Brahms' use of the Lutheran Bible rather than the customary Latin one. He compiled the text himself from both Old and New Testaments, and from the Apocrypha. It has little in common with the conventional Requiem Mass, and omits the horrors of the Last Judgement - a central feature of the Catholic liturgy - and any final plea for mercy or prayers for the dead. It also makes only a passing reference in the last movement to Christian redemption through the death of Jesus. Not surprisingly, the title of "Requiem" has at times been called into question, but Brahms stated intention was to write a Requiem to comfort the living, not one for the souls of the dead. Consequently the work focuses on faith in the Resurrection rather than fear of the Day of Judgement. Despite its unorthodox text, the German Requiem was immediately recognised as a masterpiece of exceptional vision, and it finally confirmed Brahms' reputation as a composer of international stature.

The similarity of the opening and closing movements serves to unify the whole work, while the funeral-march of the second is balanced by the triumphant theme of the resurrection in the towering sixth movement. Similarly, the baritone solo in the third, 'Herr, lehre doch mich', is paralleled in the fifth by the soprano solo, 'Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit'. The lyrical fourth section, 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen', is therefore at the heart of the work, framed by the solemnity of the first three movements and the transition from grief to the certainty of comfort in the last three.

This carefully balanced architecture is matched by an equally firm musical structure based on two principal ideas which Brahms skilfully uses in a variety of subtle guises throughout the work. The most important of these occurs at the opening choral entry and consists of the first three notes sung by the sopranos to the words 'Se-lig sind'. Brahms uses this musical cell as the main building block of the whole piece, subjecting it to a variety of transformations, including upside-down and back-to-front versions, both of which play as significant a role as the original form. The other important musical idea is a chorale-like melody played by the piano at the very beginning. Its most obvious re-appearance is in the second movement, now in a minor key, as an expansive melody sung by the choir in unison. Brahms had recently discovered the cantatas of J.S.Bach, and there seems little doubt that this theme was derived from a very similar chorale melody in Bach's Cantata No.27.

The opening movement, the text of which is one of the beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, begins in hushed and sombre mood, reflected in the sparseness of the accompanying piano part. As the music proceeds, however, mourning is transformed into comfort.

The second movement, in the dark key of B flat minor, is centred on the heavy rhythms of a funeral-march, with the chorus proclaiming the inevitability of man's fate, 'Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras'. A lighter central episode provides some brief respite before the funeral-march returns. Eventually, at 'Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit', an energetic allegro merges, once more transfiguring darkness into light and leading to a glorious conclusion.

In the third movement, the baritone soloist and chorus begin by pondering the transience of human existence. The soloist then asks 'wes soll ich mich Trösten?' and the reply, 'Ich hoffe auf dich', wells up from the depths in a rising crescendo of affirmation. This leads seamlessly into a broad, imposing fugue, remarkable for its omnipresent pedal D which, whilst creating considerable tension during the fugue itself, also provides an unshakable foundation for the final resolution.

After the intensity of the first three movements, the pivotal fourth - a serene pastorale - provides the opportunity for contemplation and rest. This is music of exceptional beauty, and it is hardly surprising that this movement is so widely known and loved.

The fifth movement features a sublime soprano solo with a lyrical piano accompaniment. The chorus, too, plays an accompanying role. Whereas the baritone soloist in the third movement sung of grief and doubt, the soprano's message here is one of maternal consolation.

Brahms reserves his most dramatic music for the imposing sixth movement. It begins in reflective mood, but soon the baritone soloist introduces the familiar verses 'Wir warden nicht alle entschlafen, wir warden aber alle verwandelt werden ... zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune', at which point the music explodes into a blaze of sound and energy. The intensity builds up until 'Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?' where a majestic fugue ensues. In the middle of this fugue two fortissimo climaxes grow out of an exhilarating musical Jacob's ladder that reaches up to heaven as it passes from the piano's lowest register right up to its highest. The movement ends with a final powerful statement.

The last movement begins with a radiant melody from the sopranos, followed by the basses. The moving final section is a subtle reworking of music from the very opening, and the Requiem reaches its peaceful conclusion at the same word with which it began: 'Selig'.

Programme Note by **John Bawden**

The version of Brahms Requiem being performed tonight is not simply a piano reduction of the orchestral score but a version specifically written by Brahms for piano which brings out the piano colour. The arrangement for two players allows a degree of intimacy, precision and contrapuntal clarity that cannot be achieved in the orchestral version. It was first performed for the Requiem's English premiere in 1871 and is known as the 'London Version'.

I. Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,
denn sie sollen getröstet werden.
Die mit Tränen säen,
werden mit Freuden ernten.
Sie gehen hin und weinen
und tragen edlen Samen,
und kommen mit Freuden
und bringen ihre Garben

Blessed are they that mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
They who sow in tears,
shall reap in joy.
Go forth and cry,
bearing precious seed,
and come with joy
bearing their sheaves

II. Denn alles Fleisch ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.

For all flesh is as grass,
and the glory of man
like flowers.
The grass withers
and the flower falls.

So seid nun geduldig, lieben Brüder,
bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn.
Siehe, ein Ackermann wartet
auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde
und ist geduldig darüber, bis er empfahe
den Morgenregen und Abendregen.

Therefore be patient, dear brothers, for
the coming of the Lord.
Behold, the husbandman waits
for the delicious fruits of the earth
and is patient for it, until he receives the
morning rain and evening rain.

Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit.

But the word of the Lord endures for
eternity.

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder
kommen, und gen Zion kommen mit
Jauchzen; ewige Freude wird über ihrem
Haupten sein;
Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen
und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg
müssen

The redeemed of the Lord will come
again, and come to Zion with a shout;
eternal joy shall be upon her head;
They shall take joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing must depart

III. Herr, lehre doch mich,
daß ein Ende mit mir haben muß,
und mein Leben ein Ziel hat,
und ich davon muß.

Lord, teach me
That I must have an end,
And my life has a purpose,
and I must accept this.

Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit
vor dir, und mein Leben ist wie nichts
vor dir.
Ach wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen,
die doch so sicher leben.

Behold, my days are as a handbreadth
before Thee, and my life is as nothing
before Thee.
Alas, as nothing are all men,
but so sure the living.

Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen,
und machen ihnen viel vergebliche
Unruhe;

They are therefore like a shadow,
and go about vainly in disquiet;

sie sammeln und wissen nicht
wer es kriegen wird.
Nun Herr, wess soll ich mich trösten?
Ich hoffe auf dich.

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes
Hand und keine Qual rühret sie an

IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen,
Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet sich
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
in dem lebendigen Gott.

Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause
wohnen, die loben dich immerdar

V. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
aber ich will euch wieder sehen
und euer Herz soll sich freuen
und eure Freude soll niemand von euch
nehmen.

Sehet mich an:
Ich habe eine kleine Zeit Mühe und
Arbeit gehabt
und habe großen Trost funden.

Ich will euch trösten,
wie Einen seine Mutter tröstet

VI. Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende
Stadt, sondern die zukünftige suchen
wir.

they collect riches, and do not know
who will receive them.
Now, Lord, how can I console myself?
My hope is in Thee.

The righteous souls are in God's hand
and no torment shall stir them

How lovely are thy dwelling places,
O Lord of Hosts!
My soul requires and yearns for
the courts of the Lord;
My body and soul rejoice
in the living God.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;
they praise you forever

You now have sorrow;
but I shall see you again
and your heart shall rejoice
and your joy no one shall take from you.

Behold me:
I have had for a little time toil and
torment,
and now have found great consolation.

I will console you,
as one is consoled by his mother

For we have here no continuing city,
but we seek the future.

Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis:
Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen,
wir werden aber alle verwandelt
werden; und dasselbige plötzlich, in
einem Augenblick, zu der Zeit der
letzten Posaune.

Denn es wird die Posaune schallen,
und die Toten werden auferstehen
unverweslich, und wir werden
verwandelt werden.

Dann wird erfüllet werden
das Wort, das geschrieben steht:
Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg.
Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?
Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg?

Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen
Preis und Ehre und Kraft,
denn du hast alle Dinge geschaffen,
und durch deinen Willen haben sie
das Wesen und sind geschaffen

VII. Selig sind die Toten,
die in dem Herrn sterben,
von nun an

Ja der Geist spricht,
daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit;
denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach

Behold, I show you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep,
but we all shall be changed
and suddenly, in a moment,
at the sound of the last trombone.

For the trombone shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised
incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Then shall be fulfilled
The word that is written:
Death is swallowed up in victory.
O Death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?

Lord, Thou art worthy to receive all
praise, honor, and glory,
for Thou hast created all things,
and through Thy will
they have been and are created

Blessed are the dead
that die in the Lord
from henceforth

Yea, saith the spirit,
that they rest from their labors,
and their works shall follow them

Rebecca Lea

Rebecca Lea grew up in Macclesfield and attended the King's School before going on to study at The Queen's College, Oxford, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and latterly the Royal Northern College of Music. She has appeared as a soloist in concert and on BBC Radio 3 with Manchester Camerata, Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Ensemble 10/10, Psappha, and the NDR Radio Choir, Hamburg. Recent performances include Purcell's King Arthur in the Laieszhalle, Hamburg; Louis Andriessen's Dances with Ensemble 10/10 in Liverpool; Judith Weir's The Consolations of Scholarship at The Sage, Gateshead; King Harald's Saga at the Wigmore Hall; recitals at the Lake District and Chester Summer Music Festivals; and William Bolcom's Cabaret Songs at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the BBC Proms Lates Series. She also works as a consort and ensemble singer with the BBC Singers, The Sixteen, Britten Sinfonia Voices, Exaudi, Stile Antico, The Choir of the Enlightenment, and Platinum Consort. Rebecca is Artistic Director of the award-winning music theatre company Re:Sound (www.resoundmusictheatre.co.uk). Recent work includes After Party, a new production about the life of composer Franz Schubert at the Oxford Lieder Festival and Battles Within and Without, a staged performance of Judith Weir's choral masterpiece Missa del Cid, performed in London, Manchester and the Lake District. Rebecca lives in London with her husband William (our musical director) and baby daughter Rose.

Richard Latham

Richard Latham was organ scholar at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and choral scholar at King's College. After working in New York as an organist he trained as a singer at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

On the concert platform he has performed as a soloist in Schumann's Szenen aus Goethes Faust with Stephen Cleobury and the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and Fauré's Requiem with the Philharmonia Chorus. He works regularly with Richard Egarr and the Academy of Ancient Music and appears as a soloist on recordings of St John Passion, verse anthems by Christopher Gibbons and, most recently, Bach's St Matthew Passion. Richard has also recorded solo roles in L'Orfeo with the Taverner Consort and Players, conducted by Andrew Parrott. Other operatic roles to date include: Pastore II in L'Orfeo (Academy of Ancient Music, Barbican); Papageno The Magic Flute

(Garsington Opera, West Green House); Mercurio Atalanta (Cambridge Handel Opera) and Corydon Fairy Queen (Bury Court Opera).

Last year he revived his role in L'Orfeo with the AAM for a production in Bucharest and appeared as Anfinomo in Il ritornello d'Ulisse in patria at the Barbican. He also played the role of Liberto in Poppea at the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice.

Paul Plummer

Paul Plummer was organ scholar at New College, Oxford before moving to London to study piano accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He was also a Junior Fellow of the Royal College of Music and attended courses at the Tanglewood Music Center and Britten-Pears Young Artists' Programme. Whilst in London, he accompanied many recitals and recordings for BBC Radio 3, major British music festivals, and the recording label SOMM. He was also Director of Music at St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, where he started the weekly Rush-Hour Recital series, and was Conductor of The Hythe Singers.

In 2008 he moved to Germany to take up a repetiteur position at the opera house in Kiel; and then in 2010 was invited to work as Head of Music (Studienleiter) for Ks. Brigitte Fassbaender's last two years managing the theatre in Innsbruck. He also worked for a year as a vocal coach at the conservatoire in Frankfurt, and in 2012 began his continuing work as Head Coach of Lyric Opera Studio Weimar.

In 2013 he returned to London to build his work as a freelance coach; he worked regularly for the Jette Parker Young Artists at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and for NYIOP.com, an international opera casting organisation of which he continues to be Artistic Consultant. Since September 2015, he has been employed by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Glasgow) as full-time coach and co-ordinator of the Opera School.

Paul Ayres

Paul Ayres was born in London, studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist.

His works have been awarded prizes in composition competitions in Canada, Croatia, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. Paul is a prolific arranger, and has also “re-composed” classical works by Handel, Fauré and Purcell (Messiah, 4A Wreck and Purcell’s Funeral Sentence). Commissions for 2016 include: The Singers (Association of Music in International Schools, Luxembourg), O laud the Lord (Savannah River Winds, Georgia), an arrangement of It’s Raining Men (Les Sirènes, Glasgow), The quality of mercy (Badger State Girl Choir, Wisconsin), Prelude on Du laesst den Tag (Carus Music Publishers, Germany), Storm and Tide (St Peter-ad-Vincula, Roydon) and an arrangement of None of the Above (London Humanist Choir).

As an organist, Paul has particularly enjoyed creating classical transcriptions, arrangements and adaptations of popular titles (Whiter Shade of Pale, Mission Impossible, Over the Rainbow, Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Variations on a theme of Paganini, Beatles tunes and Happy Hardcore tracks), many of which will feature on a new CD to be released by Priory Records in autumn 2016.

Paul is the regular conductor of City Chorus and the choirs at London College of Music (University of West London), accompanist of Concordia Voices, and associate accompanist of Crouch End Festival Chorus. He has led many music education workshops for children, and played piano for improvised comedy shows and musical theatre. Please visit www.paulayres.co.uk to find out more.

William Petter

William Petter is a freelance choral director, tenor and singing teacher based in London. He began his musical life as a chorister at New College, Oxford, under the direction of Edward Higginbottom. Whilst studying for a degree in Neuroscience at University College, London, he started singing as a tenor, and went on to study as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music, for which he gained the highest award, distinction with DipRAM.

He has been musical director of Concordia Voices since 2011, and also directs the professional choir of St Magnus the Martyr, and chamber choir Sine Nomine Singers. He previously directed the Orpington and District Free Church Choir, performing many great works with them including Bach Easter Oratorio, Handel Messiah, Stainer Crucifixion, Mendelssohn Elijah, as well as Mozart Requiem, Solemn Vespers K339, Piano Concerto no 23 in collaboration with Forest Philharmonic.

As a singer, he has sung oratorios for groups including Oxford Bach Choir, Oxford Harmonic Society, Hull Bach Choir, Queens Park Singers, Chigwellian Singers and Benson Choral Society. He gives recitals and has performed Die Schöne Müllerin in Oxford, Petts Wood and Burgh House, Hampstead, and an English song recital in Oxford, for which he was given an award by the John Ireland trust. In 2015 he gave the premiere of a new song cycle *The Light Walking* by Paul Ayres, and a solo recital in the London Festival of Contemporary Church music. He also enjoys consort work, working with groups including The Sixteen, the Choir of the Enlightenment, Philharmonia Voices, Britten Sinfonia Voices, London Voices, Westminster Abbey Choir, Westminster Cathedral Choir and other London church choirs.

Concordia Voices

The choir was founded in 2000 and is currently directed by William Petter. Our regular accompanist is the composer and arranger Paul Ayres.

The choir performs regularly in south-west London where it is based. We have also toured abroad and to other locations in the UK as well as taking part in local musical events. Concordia Voices enjoy performing music from a wide repertoire ranging over 4 centuries and the choir has a keen interest in performing the work of contemporary composers, including Jonathan Dove, James MacMillan, Morten Lauridsen, John Tavener and Naji Hakim.

Concordia Voices rehearse on Sunday evenings from 6:45 to 9pm in St. James's Church, Hampton Hill. We are a small, friendly choir and new singers are warmly welcome. If you are interested in joining us please contact our secretary for more information at, secretary@concordiavoices.org,

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>Alto</i>	<i>Tenor</i>	<i>Bass</i>
Jackie Allen	Lindsey Baldwin	Colin Flood	Alan Baldwin
Lynda Beament	Rebecca Bevan	Clive Hall	Adam Brown
Margaret Fraser	Julie Hall	Charles Nettleton	Chris Edwards
Anne Gooding	Susannah Nettleton	Rodney Taylor	Jo Foley
Anusha Hesketh	Jane Newman		Martin Hinckley
Prill Hinckley	Barbara Orr		Graham Hunton
Julia Lavery	Jane Purser		Tim Rice
Margaret Lord	Anne Rowett		Tim Rowett
Rosie Oxborrow	Janet Taylor		
Ruth Parker	Shelagh Testar		
Fiona Rowett			
Bessie White			

Future Concerts

With guest conductor: Paul Ayres

Saturday, July 2nd 2016, St Mary with St Alban, Teddington

A concert celebrating the work of William Shakespeare in collaboration with the Richmond Shakespeare Society.

To include excerpts from Purcell's Fairy Queen

Saturday, December 10th 2016, St John the Divine, Richmond