

BUSHES & BRIARS

PRESENTED BY POLYPHONIC VOICES ON SUNDAY 12TH MAY, 3:00PM

PROGRAM

Seven Poems of Robert Bridges, Op.17

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

- I. I Praise the Tender Flower
- II. I Have Loved Flowers That Fade
- III. My Spirit Sang All Day
- IV. Clear and Gentle Stream
- V. Nightingales
- VI. Haste on, My Joys!
- VII. Wherefore To-Night So Full of Care

Three Shakespeare Songs

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

- I. Full Fathom Five
- II. The Cloud-Capp'd Towers
- III. Over Hill, Over Dale

The Vagabond

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Interval – 15 minutes

Ave Maria

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Bushes and Briars

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Nunc Dimittis

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Mass in G minor

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

- I. Kyrie
- II. Gloria
- III. Credo
- IV. Sanctus & Benedictus
- V. Agnus Dei

THE PERFORMERS

Soprano

Kristy Biber
Hannah Hornsby
Katherine Norman
Phoebe Thomson
Ailsa Webb
Jane Wiebusch

Tenor

Peter Campbell
Jonathan Glenning
William Lennie
Robin Parkin
Daniel Riley

Alto

Amelia Ballard
Elizabeth Chong
Stephanie Firth
Renée Heron
Cailin Molinari
Alex Ritter

Bass

Lucien Fischer
Tim Matthews Staindl
Lachlan McDonald
Joshua McLeod
Alex Owens
Steve Treloar

Michael Fulcher – Conductor & Artistic Director

Michael is currently Director of Music at Christ Church, South Yarra and Vice-President of the National Council of the Australian National Choral Association (ANCA). Prior to moving to Melbourne in June 2013, Michael held positions at St John's Cathedral Brisbane, the University of Queensland, English National Opera and St Paul's Cathedral in Wellington, NZ. Michael completed his BMus in Organ Performance in Brisbane, after which he undertook further extensive training and employment in Australia and in Europe as an organist, an orchestral conductor, an opera repetiteur, and a vocal coach.

Polyphonic Voices is a Melbourne-based chamber choir formed in 2013 under the artistic direction of Michael Fulcher, and since its inception has become renowned for its polished, innovative and engaging performances in non-traditional concert venues, often combined with multi-media elements. The choir prides itself on presenting a wide variety of music – both accompanied and unaccompanied – from the classical choral tradition, but also arrangements of music from jazz, pop, folk and other alternative genres. Polyphonic Voices' collaborations have included performances with the Hilltop Hoods, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Patti LuPone, renowned Indian film composer AR Rahman, and various local ensembles, freelance musicians and visual artists.

PROGRAMME NOTES

For a long time, the singers of Polyphonic Voices and I had been eager to present Vaughan Williams' monumental *Mass in G minor* in concert. I had always wanted to devise a programme of music by Vaughan Williams and his composer friends, of works both well-known and rarely heard. In terms of the latter, it's been a treat to prepare such delicious and well-crafted pieces as *Bushes and Briars* and *The Vagabond* for four-part tenors and basses, as well as the Holst *Ave Maria* for eight-part sopranos and altos alone. And so this programme of entirely *a cappella* music was conceived.

What did Vaughan Williams, Finzi and Holst have in common? All were friends; all had a common experience of wartime England, of the associated grief and sorrow, both personal and national; all wrote music eventually considered to be of the English Pastoral school; all had a strong affinity with vocal music, and with folksong; all were happy to write music for amateur performance; and all wrote church music despite being agnostic or even unconventionally religious.

Written in 1921 and premiered in 1922 by the City of Birmingham Choir, Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G minor* was dedicated to Gustav Holst, a dear friend, and the Whitsuntide Singers of Thaxted, north Essex, where Holst resided for many years. Despite its concert premiere it was intended for liturgical performance, its debut by the Westminster Cathedral Choir under R. R. Terry. Monumental, iconic, amazing, dramatic, and lyrical are just some of the words often used to describe it. Perhaps this comes from the large-scale architecture of its formal construction, the scoring for double four-part choirs and solo quartet, or from Vaughan Williams' characteristic symphonic concept of harmony. The widest possible spacing of the harmonies at the end of the *Agnus Dei*, the interplay of the double choir texture in the *Gloria* and *Credo*, the eight-part fugal splendour of the "Pleni sunt caeli," the many beautiful intimate moments throughout, and Vaughan Williams' harmonic 'thumbprint' all demonstrate his mastery of the choral medium with his idiomatic and stylish text setting. In my experience, it is as rewarding for the

choir to sing as for the audience to hear. Its firm place in the international choral repertoire is well-earned.

Gerald Finzi, although born in London, of German Jewish and Italian Jewish heritage, became regarded as a quintessentially English composer. He was well-known for vocal music both choral and solo, with notable settings of Thomas Traherne, Shakespeare, John Milton, Christina Rossetti, Thomas Hardy and Robert Bridges. The first work of this programme is a setting of seven of the Bridge's poems, the best-known of which is *My Spirit Sang all Day* for Finzi's memorable setting. Finzi's mastery of the imitative style of the 16th century is evident throughout and is another aspect that the three composers have in common. Our singers have particularly enjoyed preparing these beautiful settings.

Likewise, we are pleased to again have the opportunity to present Vaughan Williams' *Three Shakespeare Songs* of 1951. There is a certain Impressionist approach in all three songs, which are a well-established in the repertoire today. Conversely, *The Vagabond* is a rarely heard setting of one of the *Songs of Travel* for Baritone and piano of 1904, rearranged by the composer for unaccompanied four-part male choir. For the same forces is Vaughan Williams' melancholy 1908 setting of Essex folksong *Bushes and Briars*.

Gustav Holst is best known for the justly famous orchestral suite *The Planets* of 1916. However, Holst also wrote many operas, mostly unsuccessful, alongside a small amount of sacred music including the much-loved *Nunc Dimittis*, and the lesser-known but equally beautiful setting of *Ave Maria* for eight-part sopranos and altos, written for girls of St Paul's Girls School in London, where Holst taught for many years. Like the *Mass in G minor*, the *Nunc Dimittis* was first performed in Westminster Cathedral.

- Michael Fulcher
Artistic Director, Polyphonic Voices

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

SEVEN POEMS OF ROBERT BRIDGES, OP.17

Gerald Finzi

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.

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!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

THREE SHAKESPEARE SONGS

Ralph Vaughan Williams

I. Full Fathom Five (*The Tempest*, Act 1, Scene 2)

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them, – ding-dong bell.

II. The Cloud-Capp'd Towers (*The Tempest*, Act 4, Scene 1)

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind: We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

III. Over Hill, Over Dale (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2, Scene 1)

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire
I do wander everywhere.
Swifter than the moonè's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

AVE MARIA

Gustav Holst

Ave Maria, gratia plena. Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui Iesus.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. Amen.

THE VAGABOND

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above,
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, pray for us. Amen.*

BUSHES AND BRIARS

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Through bushes and through briars I lately took
my way; All for to hear the small birds sing and the
lambs to skip and play.

I overheard my own true love, her voice it was so
clear, 'Long time I have been waiting for the
coming of my dear.

Sometimes I am uneasy and troubled in my mind,
Sometimes I think I'll go to my love and tell to him
my mind.

And if I should go to my love, my love he will say
nay, If I show to him my boldness, he'll ne'er love
me again.'

NUNC DIMITTIS

Gustav Holst

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace.
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium
populorum. Lumen ad revelationem gentium,
et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

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

MASS IN G MINOR

Ralph Vaughan Williams

I. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

II. Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, agnus Dei, Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.

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

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

*Which thou hast prepared before the face of all
people. To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.*

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

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

*Glory be to God on high,
and in earth peace, good will towards men.*

We praise thee. We bless thee.

We worship thee. We glorify thee.

We give thanks to thee for thy great glory,

O Lord God, heavenly king,

God the Father almighty.

O Lord the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ.

O Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father.

*Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.*

*Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.*

For thou only art holy.

Thou only art the Lord.

Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

III. Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem caeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum.
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia secula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero.
Genitum, non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines,
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de caelis,
et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria virgine: et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis:
sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est.
Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum scripturas.
Et ascendit in caelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
iudicare vivos et mortuos:
cuius regni non erit finis.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum, et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit,
qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et
conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per prophetas.
Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam
ecclesiam.
Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem
peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,
et vitam venturi saeculi.
Amen.

IV. Sanctus & Benedictus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

V. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi:
dona nobis pacem.

*Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.*

*I believe in one God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds.
God of God, light of light,
very God of very God.
begotten not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men,
and for our salvation,
came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the virgin Mary, and was made man.
He was also crucified for us:
under Pontius Pilate he died and was buried.
He rose again according to the scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.
to judge both the quick and the dead:
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And he shall come again with glory
And in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life,
who comes from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is
adored and glorified;
who spoke through the prophets.
And in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
church.
I confess one baptism for the remission
of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.*

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

*O lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.*

*O lamb of God,
that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.*

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

SCHUBERT MASS

Polyphonic Voices joins the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra to perform Franz Schubert's beautiful Mass in G, in a program that also features J.S Bach's *Violin Concerto in E* and Schubert's *Symphony No.3*.

Saturday 27th July, 2:00pm – The Clocktower Centre, Moonee Ponds

Sunday 28th July, 2:30pm – Melbourne Recital Centre, Southbank

Thursday 1st August, 7:30pm – Iwaki Auditorium, Southbank

Tickets available now from www.polyphonicvoices.com/schubert

AMERICAN MOTETS

Polyphonic Voices' final program for 2019 takes the listener on a journey through some of the most exquisite and influential choral writing of North America.

Friday 22nd November, 7:30pm – Melbourne (venue TBC)

Saturday 23rd November, 7:30pm – St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Bendigo

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CONCERTS AT WWW.POLYPHONICVOICES.COM

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Polyphonic Voices