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the Master and fellows



## Trinity Singers

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 | 2pm

Trinity College Chapel

Damien Macedo ..... director

Sumei Bao-Smith ..... soprano

Jonathan Lee ..... organ

*Please hold any applause until the end of each section of this evening's programme*

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PROGRAMME

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### Songs of Gladness and Praise

HUBERT PARRY I was glad (Psalm 122)  
(1848–1918)

SAM GRAY Dominus regnavit (Psalm 92)

HEALEY WILLAN Great is the Lord  
(1880–1968)

HUBERT PARRY Chorale Prelude on Martyrdom  
(1848–1918)

### The Beauty of Holiness

RALPH VAUGHAN O taste and see (Psalm 34)  
WILLIAMS  
(1872–1958)

JOHANNES BRAHMS Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen  
(1833–1897) from *Ein deutsches Requiem*

### Suffering and Succour

SAM GRAY De Profundis (Psalm 130)

SAMUEL By the Waters of Babylon (Psalm 137)  
COLERIDGE-TAYLOR  
(1875–1912)

ARTHUR SULLIVAN Yea, though I walk  
(1842–1900)

HERBERT HOWELLS Psalm Prelude Set 2, No.1 (De Profundis)  
(1892–1983)

FELIX MENDELSSOHN **As the Hart Cries**  
(1809–1847) Wie der Hirsh schreit (Psalm 42)

- I. Chorale: Wie der Hirsch schreit
- II. Aria: Meine Seele dürstet nach Gott
- III. Recitative and Chorale: Meine Tränen  
sind meine Speise—Denn ich wollte gern  
hingehen
- IV. Chorale: Was betrübst du dich, meine  
Seele
- V. Recitative: Mein Gott, betrübt ist meine  
Seele
- VI. Quintet: Der Herr hat des Tages  
verheißen
- VII. Final Chorale: Was betrübst du dich,  
meine Seele

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PROGRAMME NOTES

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The Psalms of David have inspired countless musical interpretations, and, in crafting this evening’s programme, I aimed to select works that expressed a variety of sentiments, both musical and textual. The title of this evening’s programme comes from the King James Version’s translation of Psalm 98, which begins, “O sing unto the Lord a new song.” In keeping with that theme of newness, outgoing TCMS Artistic Director Sam Gray has kindly composed two works for the Trinity Singers which receive their premiere this evening.

The concert opens with Parry’s famous I was Glad, composed in 1902 for the coronation of Edward VII and performed regularly since then, both in concerts and in religious contexts. Another work synonymous with great pomp, though far less well-known, is Willan’s Great is the Lord, written for the diocesan synod of 1952 in Toronto, Canada. Taking its text from a variety of Psalms, it bears many trademarks of Willan’s compositional style, including imitation between the voices and parallel first-inversion chords over a dominant pedal in the bass. An optional fugue at the conclusion of the work, setting the word “Alleluia,” is omitted this evening in keeping the traditions of Lent. Between these two works, we hear Sam Gray’s

Dominus regnavit, which compares God to raging floods, calling on his aid when we face difficulties.

Parry's gentle Chorale Prelude on Martyrdom ends this section of the programme with a hymn melody usually associated with the text "As pants the hart for running streams," foreshadowing the central work of this evening.

Vaughan Williams's charming setting of O Taste and See is a stark contrast in character to the Psalms that opened the programme, with its gentle descending opening figure illustrating the descent of heavenly grace to earth. Brahms's setting of Psalm 84 furthers this sentiment of grace, and is arguably the most oft-excerpted movement of his monumental German Requiem. With its memorable accompaniment and plaintive melodies, it is one of the most stirring works on the programme—and my personal favourite. Translation: How lovely are thy dwelling places, Lord of Hosts. My soul longs and pines for the courts of the Lord; my heart and body cry out to the living God.

Sam Gray's setting of Psalm 130, De profundis, gives the altos a hauntingly simple melody to introduce the darker sentiments of the work with the text "Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord," a melody that returns at the end of the piece after the more optimistic middle section where the sopranos sing, "For there is mercy with thee" over the accompanying lower voices. Coleridge-Taylor's works are receiving something of a revival, especially in Trinity College Chapel. His setting of By the waters of Babylon uses a plaintive theme, repeated multiple times throughout the piece while expressing the sorrows and torments of exile. The final piece in this section, Sullivan's Yea, though I walk, comes from his oratorio The Light of the World, which has largely fallen out of popularity since it was first performed in 1873. It offers us the hope of succour in times of trouble, and is a charming end to this portion of the programme.

The organ music of Herbert Howells requires no introduction, but it is worth noting that his second set of Psalm Preludes, from which tonight's second organ solo comes, was composed in the interbellum period of the 1930s. It starkly contrasts light and darkness, with some harsh dissonances,

many different colours, and a particularly memorable pedal line.

Mendelssohn's cantata sets Psalm 42, one of the most popular Psalms among composers from Palestrina to Howells, from Lassus to Distler. In multiple movements including soprano arias and a stirring quintet between the soloist and the lower voices of the choir, *Wie der Hirsch schreit* is a hidden gem of the choral repertoire.

### **Text for Psalm 42**

1. As the hart cries for fresh water, so cries my heart for you, my God.
2. My soul thirsts for God, even for the living God! When shall I come before the face of God?
3. My tears are my nourishment day and night because people say to me daily, "Where is now thy God?" When I look within myself, I pour out my heart: how I would like to go with the multitude into the house of God, with rejoicing and thanks with the crowd celebrating there.
4. Why do you trouble yourself, my soul, and why are you so disquieted within me? Wait for the Lord! He is my helper and my God, so I will thank him.
5. My God, my soul is troubled within me, therefore have I thought of you! A flood rushes along, so that here is a depth and there is a depth, and all of your waters rise and waves pass over me. My God, my soul is troubled within me.
6. The Lord has assured us of his goodness in the day, and I sing to him in the night and I pray to the God of my life. My God, my soul is troubled within me. Why have you forgotten me? Why must I be sorrowful? My enemy threatens me.
7. Why do you trouble yourself, my soul, and why are you so disquieted within me? Wait for the Lord! Wait for the Lord! He is my helper and my God, so I will thank him. Praised be the Lord, the God of Israel, from now and until eternity.

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