

# CONCERTS

## AT THE UNIVERSITY

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*AUTUMN—WINTER 2014*

Friday 14 November 2014

1.10pm

McEwan Hall

### Edinburgh University Singers

**John Kitchen** · conductor and organ

**Calum Robertson** · conductor

Programme of works by **PARRY, STANFORD,**  
**BALFOUR GARDINER** and **FINZI.**



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Edinburgh College of Art

## **I was glad when they said unto me**

Hubert Parry (1848–1918)

Parry's celebrated anthem *I was glad when they said unto me* is a setting of verses from Psalm 122 and was first written for the coronation of Edward VII in 1901. It has been sung at each subsequent coronation, and is a splendid anthem for any significant occasion, full of grand musical gestures.

## **Magnificat for eight-part chorus Op. 164**

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

Stanford's settings of the canticles for morning and evening prayer, and for the communion service, are well known. Almost all liturgical choirs are familiar in particular with the evergreen evening canticles in B flat, C, G and A. Today's extended unaccompanied Latin setting in eight parts, however, is not a liturgical but a concert piece. It was written in 1918 and dedicated to the memory of Parry, who had recently died. [The relationship between Parry and Stanford was equivocal, at different times ranging from close friendship to bitter hostility.] Stanford's setting is reminiscent of Bach's eight-part motets, in particular *Singet dem Herrn*, which evidently inspired it. The musical and textural possibilities afforded by the two four-part choirs are exploited with considerable imagination and variety.

## **Evening hymn: *Te lucis ante terminum***

Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877–1950)

This effective and well-loved anthem is a setting of the old Latin hymn *Te lucis ante terminum* ('Before the ending of the day, Creator of the world we pray...') Balfour Gardiner wrote it in 1908, and it is virtually the only sacred piece in his output—rather ironically, given that it is probably also the best-known. Balfour Gardiner was extremely self-critical and destroyed many of his works; in the 1920s he gave up composition altogether and devoted the rest of his life—and his considerable personal wealth—to pioneering afforestation.

## **Two secular partsongs Op.17**

**Clear and gentle stream**

**My spirit sang all day**

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

Finzi was a particularly skilled writer of vocal music, both solo and choral. The *Seven Partsongs* Op. 17 (1934–7), settings of poems by Robert Bridges, are fine examples of his sensitive and individual response to words; we offer two of these today. In the songs Finzi demonstrates something of his admiration for Parry whose vocal works he much admired; the writing is rhythmically supple and beautifully lyrical.

## **Blest pair of sirens**

Hubert Parry

Parry's cantata, *Blest pair of sirens*, is a setting of an extended poem by John Milton; the piece was first performed by the Bach Choir in 1887 and dedicated to Stanford who conducted the premiere. As Stanford does in the *Magnificat* heard earlier, Parry handles his eight-part choir with complete assurance, relishing the contrapuntal and sonorous possibilities afforded by his forces, and responding imaginatively to the colourful text. The cantata should properly be performed with full symphony orchestra and organ, but works very well with organ accompaniment alone.

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This concert is the final one in a short series to mark the recent major restoration of the McEwan Hall Organ by Forth Pipe Organs.

The **Edinburgh University Singers** were founded in 1945, and have been conducted by John Kitchen since 1988. The choir performs a wide range of sacred and secular music: unaccompanied repertoire from the Renaissance to the present day, works with organ and orchestra, folk-song and Scottish song arrangements, new commissions and so on. The choir sings regularly at University ceremonies such as graduations, and on other important occasions in the McEwan Hall and in Old College. As well as giving concerts in Edinburgh and further afield in Scotland, the choir has visited Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Venice, Rome and Prague. A trip to Budapest is planned for June 2015. Follow the Singers' activities on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/eusingers](http://www.facebook.com/eusingers); website: [www.eusingers.co.uk](http://www.eusingers.co.uk).

sopranos Libby Atkinson, Sally Carr, Rhona Christie, Mary Davenport, Bryony House, Isabella Hughes, Hebe James, Sasha Mathers, Frances Skinner, Eleanor Smith, Eleanor Wolfe

altos Caroline Elliott, Nicola Farr, Eleanor Hemming, Helen Leigh, Cliona Logue, Catriona McDonald, Alexandra Maliphant, Sanny Mok, Haidee Ng

tenors Matthew Anastasis, Ross Kennedy, James Maroulis, Matthew Oddy, Dan Pyzer-Knapp, Jonny Weldon

basses Nicklas Brown, Dominic Corbett, James Emery, Thomas Grossi, Johannes Kassel, Tim Matson, Christoph Meßmer, Guy Richardson, Andrew Stevens, Sky Su

In July 2011 **Calum Robertson** graduated from The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama with a BMus Honours first class degree. In November 2012 he gained a Masters in Performance from The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland studying clarinet with John Cushing (Principal RSNO). During those five years he won The Mary D. Adams Prize for chamber music, The Classical Concerto Competition and The Governors Woodwind Recital Prize.

In January 2010 he performed Carl Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto* with The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra as part of a joint scheme with the RSAMD. In February 2010 he was interviewed and broadcast James MacMillan's solo work *From Galloway* on BBC Radio 3. In January 2014 he was awarded The Harriet Cohen Memorial Award for young musicians establishing careers.

In August 2013 he made his Edinburgh International Festival debut in a performance of *Pierrot Lunaire* with Scottish Ballet. He freelances with The Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the orchestra of Scottish Opera and The Royal Scottish National Jazz Orchestra. Recently he has played as guest principal clarinet with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

As organist Calum began lessons aged 14 at The Edinburgh Academy with Peter Backhouse. He began as Organ Scholar at Old Saint Paul's in July 2007 and became Assistant Organist in July 2012.