

Minehead Choral Society, Saturday 13th April 2024

Programme Notes

Faure **Requiem**

1. Introit – Kyrie	Chorus
2. Offertorium	Baritone Solo/ Chorus
3. Sanctus	Chorus
4. Pie Jesu	Soprano Solo
5. Agnus Dei	Chorus
6. Libera Me	Baritone (bass) Solo / Chorus
7. In Paradisum	Chorus

INTERVAL

Howard Goodall “**Eternal Light**” a requiem.

1. Requiem: Kyrie: Close now thine eyes.
2. *Revelation: Factum est silentium*
3. Litany: Belief
4. Hymn: Lead kindly light
5. Lacrymosa: do not stand at my grave and weep
6. Dies Irae: In Flanders Fields.
7. Recordare: Drop, drop slow tears.
8. *Revelation: Tum angelus tertius claxit*
9. Agnus Dei
10. In paradisum: Lux aeterna.

Programme Notes:

Tonight we present two beautiful and contrasting Requiems, Fauré’s written in 1888 and “Eternal Light” by Howard Goodall 120 years later in 2008. Neither are huge and dominating but both are extremely tuneful, thought provoking and, ultimately consoling. The serene setting by Faure departs from the usual liturgical text and includes new sections that highlight its sweetness and poignancy. Similarly Goodall’s work combines the traditional Latin texts with English poems draws on a variety of texts It is wonderful to be performing again with the superb Taunton Sinfonietta and I am delighted to welcome back the extremely talented Soprano soloist, Stephanie Berner, tonight supported by the Baritone Jamie Rock .

Gabriel Faure (1845 - 1924)

Requiem

From the age of nine Fauré studied music at the École Niedermeyer, the ‘École de musique religieuse et classique’, where Saint-Saëns was a member of staff. Saint-Saëns was regarded as a progressive teacher, introducing his pupils not only to the music of Bach and Mozart but also to controversial composers such as Wagner and Liszt. Unlike most major French composers, Fauré did not attend the Paris Conservatoire but continued his studies with Saint-Saëns, who greatly encouraged him by putting work his way and helping him to get his music published. The two became lifelong friends and Fauré later said that he owed everything to Saint-Saëns.

Fauré was a fine organist and in 1896 was appointed to the prestigious Madeleine church in Paris. He was also an excellent teacher, and perhaps because of his renowned expertise as organist and teacher only slowly gained recognition as a composer. He eventually became professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, and its Director from 1905 to 1920. Although he wrote

several works involving a full orchestra, his particular talent lay within the more intimate musical forms – songs, piano music and chamber music. His more impressionistic style contrasts markedly with the music of the Austro-German tradition which dominated European music from the time of Beethoven until well into the twentieth century.

The subtlety of Fauré's music, and his concentration on the small-scale, led many to criticise him for lacking depth, a judgement based on the mistaken premise that the bigger and bolder a composer's music the more worthwhile it must be. Fauré deliberately avoided the grander kind of orchestral music that could easily have brought him fame and fortune. He preferred instead to embrace an elegant and subtle musical language that has won him increasing numbers of admirers, particularly as a composer of songs.

The *Requiem* was composed in 1888, when Fauré was in his forties, quite probably in response to the recent death of his father. Shortly after its first performance, Faure's mother also died, giving the work an added poignancy. The score is marked with a sweetness and a delicacy. Whilst it includes solemn moments, the tone of the Requiem is best described as serene as opposed to sorrowful. Faure himself referred to it as a "lullaby of death".

In its sequence of movements the *Requiem* departs significantly from the standard liturgical text. Fauré included two new sections, the lyrical Pie Jesu and the transcendent In Paradisum, with its soaring vocal line and murmuring accompaniment. He also omitted the Dies Irae and Tuba Mirum - for most composers an opportunity to exploit to the full the dramatic possibilities of all the available choral and orchestral forces. Consequently the prevailing mood is one of peacefulness and serenity, and the work has often been described, quite justly, as a Requiem without the Last Judgement.

Of the many settings of the *Requiem*, this is probably the most widely loved. In comparison with the large-scale masterpieces of Verdi, Brahms and Berlioz, Faure's setting seems gentle and unassuming, yet it is this very quality of understatement which contributes so eloquently to the work's universal appeal. It is impossible not to be moved by the ethereal beauty of this humble masterpiece.

Eternal Light:

Howard Goodall (1958)

Howard Goodall is an EMMY, BRIT, Gramophone and BAFTA award-winning composer of choral music, stage musicals, film and TV scores, a highly respected broadcaster and an energetic campaigner for music education. In January 2007 he was appointed as England's first ever National Ambassador for Singing. His settings of Psalm 23 and Love Divine are amongst the most performed of all sacred music in the UK and have featured on numerous platinum-selling CDs. He is also Composer-in-Residence for Classic FM.

This Requiem was written as a choral-orchestral-dance piece in 2008 as a commission for the London Musici to celebrate its 20th anniversary, working with the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford and the Rambert Dance Company. It subsequently earned Howard Goodall a Classical BRIT award for Composer of the Year.

Below are some notes written by the composer:

"Most requiems are based, one way or another, on the medieval church's Mass for the Dead, which is made up of a series of sections ('movements') beginning with the 'Kyrie Eleison' (Greek meaning Lord have mercy) and ending with 'In Paradisum' (Into paradise). Although the traditional requiem text calls for 'eternal peace, rest and light' for those who have died, it also emphasises judgement and everlasting

damnation for anyone who transgresses the Roman Catholic Church's code of behaviour, as seen from the perspective of the Middle Ages.

I did not feel at ease with this approach to the appalling pain of loss and grief, so in an attempt to provide some solace for the living that mourn, I stripped down the old Latin texts to a few phrases in each movement and laid beside them words from English poems from across the last 500 years. The movements are arranged like this:

1. Requiem aeternam (everlasting peace) – Kyrie Eleison – ‘Close now thine eyes and rest secure, thy soul is safe enough, thy body sure’

2. Revelation I: a passage from the Bible depicting the end of the world (Apocalypse)

3. Litany: Belief. ‘I have to believe that you still exist somewhere, That you still watch me Sometimes, That you still love me Somehow. I have to believe That life has meaning Somehow, That I am useful here Sometimes, That I make small differences Somewhere. I have to believe That I need to stay here For some time, That all this teaches me Something, So that I can meet you again Somewhere.

4. Hymn: ‘Lead, kindly light amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on...’

5. Lacrymosa (Tears): ‘Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep...’

6. Dies Irae (That terrible day): ‘In Flanders Fields the poppies blow, Between the crosses row on row...’

7. Recordare (Remember us, sweet Jesus): ‘Drop, drop, slow tears...’

8. Revelation II

9. Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

10. In Paradisum – Lux Aeterna (In paradise, eternal light & everlasting peace)"

Howard Goodall, composer

Words:

Note that the text that Fauré set for the Requiem is not the standard Requiem text:

Introit et Kyrie

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

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem:
exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Grant eternal rest to them, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.
A hymn befits you, God in Zion,
and a vow to you shall be fulfilled in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer, for unto you all flesh shall come.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Offertoire

O Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
libera animas ... defunctorum
de poenis inferni, et de profundo lacu:

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory,
free the souls of the dead from infernal
punishment, and from the deep abyss.

libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum....

Hostias et preces tibi,
Domine, laudis offerimus:
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus:
fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam,
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini ejus.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Domine Deus Sabaoth,
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis!

Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine,
dona eis requiem,
requiem sempiternam.

Agnus Dei et Lux Aeterna

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

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

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

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.

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

Libera Me

Libera me, Domine,
de morte aeterna,
in die illa tremenda:
Quando caeli movendi sunt et terra:

Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.
Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo,

Free them from the mouth of the lion,
do not let Hell swallow them up,
do not let them fall into the darkness.

Sacrifices and prayers of praise
we offer to you, O Lord.
Receive them for the souls of those
whom we commemorate today.
Lord, make them pass from death to life,
as you once promised to Abraham, and to his
seed.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts,
the heavens and earth are filled with your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!

Merciful Lord Jesus,
grant them rest, eternal rest.

Lamb of God, who removes the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Lamb of God, who removes the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Lamb of God, who removes the sins of the world,
grant them eternal rest.

May eternal light shine on them, Lord,
with your saints, for eternity,
for you are merciful.

Grant eternal rest to them, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.

Free me, Lord,
from eternal death,
on that day of dread,
when the heavens and earth shall move,

when you shall come to judge the world by fire. I
am made to tremble, and to fear,

dum discussio venerit,
atque ventura ira.

Dies illa, dies irae,
calamitatis et miseriae,
dies magna et amara valde.

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

when destruction shall come,
and also your coming wrath.

O that day, that day of wrath,
of calamity and misery,
the great and exceedingly bitter day.

Grant eternal rest to them, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.

In Paradisum

In Paradisum deducant te Angeli;
in tuo adventu
suscipiant te martyres,
et perducant te
in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem,
Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat,
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.

May angels lead you into Paradise.
At your coming
may martyrs receive you,
and may they lead you
into the Holy City, Jerusalem.
May the chorus of angels receive you,
and with Lazarus, who once was a pauper,
may you have eternal rest.

Howard Goodall: Eternal Light – a Requiem

2nd movement – Revelation: factum est silentium (Revelations 8 1, 2, 6 – 13)

8th movement – Revelation: tum angelus tertius clanxit (Revelations 8 10 – 13)

vs 1

Factum est silentium in coelo.

vs 2

Et vidi septem illos angelos

Qui adstant in conspectu Dei;

Quibus datae sunt septem tubae.

vs 6

Et septem angeli qui habebant tubas Praeparaverunt se ut clangerent.

vs 7

Primus igitur angelus clanxit,

Et facta est grando et ignis mistaque sanguine, Projectaque sunt in terram:

Et tertia pars arborum exusta est,

Et omne gramen viride exustum.

vs 8

Deinde secundus angelus clanxit,

Et quasi mons magnus igne ardens

Projectus est in mare:

Factaque est tertia pars maris sanguis;

vs 9

Et mortua est tertia pars

Creaturarum quae errant in mari,

Animantia dico;

Et tertia pars navium perit.

vs 10

Tum angelus tertius clanxit,

Et cecidit e coelo stella magna,
Ardens velut lampas,
Ceciditque in tertiam partem fluminum,
Et in fontes aquarum;

vs 11

Nomen autem stellae dicitur Absinthium:
Versa est igitur tertia pars aquarum
In absinthium;
Et multi homines mortui sunt ex aquis,
Quod amarae factae essent.

vs 12

Deinde quartus angelus clanxit,
Et percussa est tertia pars solis,
Et tertia pars lunae, et tertia pars stellarum;
Ita ut obscuraretur tertia pars eorum,
Et diei non luceret pars tertia, et noctis similiter.

vs 13

Et vidi, et audivi unum angelum
Volantem per medium coeli, Dicentem voce magna,
Vae, vae, vae incolis terrae
A reliquis sonis tubae
Trium illorum angelorum, qui clangent!

English Translation:

There was silence in heaven.
And I saw the seven angels Who stood before God;
And to them were given seven trumpets
And the seven angels which had the trumpets Prepared themselves to sound.
The first angel sounded,
And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, And they were cast upon the earth:
And the third part of trees was burnt up,
And all green grass was burnt up.
And the second angel sounded,
And as it were a great mountain burning with fire Was cast into the sea:
And the third part of the sea became blood;
And the third part died
Of the creatures which were in the sea,
And had life;
And the third part of the ships was destroyed.
And the third angel sounded,
And there fell a great star from heaven, Burning as it were a lamp,
And it fell upon the third part of the rivers And upon the fountains of waters;
And the name of the star is called Wormwood: And the third part of the waters
Became wormwood;
And many men died of the waters, Because they were made bitter.
And the fourth angel sounded,
And the third part of the sun was smitten,
And the third part of the moon and the stars; So as the third part of them was darkened, And the day
shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.
And I beheld, and heard

An angel flying through the midst of heaven, Saying with a loud voice,
Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth By reason of the other voices of the trumpet Of the three
angels, which are yet to sound!