

Hyfrydol



No. 129

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

March 2025

March

March begins with a choir social event, hosted by our organist, seemingly well recovered from his recent sojourn with the orthopaedic fraternity. The social takes place on Saturday evening, 1 March, in the lounge at Swiz. Ladies may contribute hors d'oeuvres, men may contribute liquid refreshments of any and all sorts. Choristers and their partners are all welcome.

Later in the month, we present our first Evensong of the year, for Lent.

A draft program for the rest of 2025 may be found at the end of this issue of *Hyfrydol*.

Why, you may ask, do we call this publication *Hyfrydol*? *Hyfrydol* is the name of a very well-known hymn tune. We sing it to texts by William C Dix (*Alleluia, sing to Jesus*) and Francis Rowley (*I will sing the wondrous story*), and any text really with an 8 7 8 7 D format. It was composed by Rowland Huw Pritchard, quite early in the 19th century. He lived all of his life in North Wales. He was an amateur musician with a good singing voice, and he was appointed precentor in his church at Graienyn, near Bala. He laboured throughout his life in the cause of music and congregational singing. In 1844 he published *Cyfaill y Cantorion (the singer's friend)*, which contained about forty hymn-tunes, most of them composed by himself, and including *Hyfrydol*, which he wrote when he was 20. *Hyfrydol* translates into English as *pleasant and melodious*. No better reason for our title really.

Last month

We mentioned previously Helen Booth's funeral at which the choir sang in January. That was followed by another two funerals in early February; the earlier one for Yvonne Mellor and the later one for a well-loved Swiz parishioner, Rev. David Duchesne.

Rehearsal emphasis in February was on Andréé Greenwell's *On Wings Like Eagles* which we haven't sung for some time.



On Wings Like Eagles

The Australian Music Centre website lists the following work:

"On Wings Like Eagles / Andréé Greenwell; text: Isaiah 28-31 (*sic. This should read Isaiah 40: 28-31*).

Work Details

Year: 2017

Instrumentation: SATB choir, organ.

Duration: 3 min.

Difficulty: Medium — suitable for experienced amateur and professional choirs

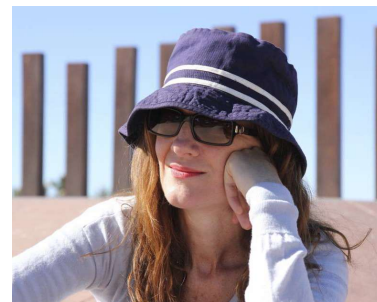
Commission note: Commissioned by the family of Richard and Jenny Kaan to celebrate the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, 17th February, 1968 (2018)

First performance: 17 Feb 2018.

The composer has noted the following styles, genres, influences, etc. of this work:

Contemporary anthem, Eric Whitacre, Arvo Pärt.

Written for St Swithun's Anglican Church Choir, Pymble, Sydney."



Andréé Greenwell is a multi-award-winning composer and performance maker, who works across the Australian performing arts, screen and radio. Her catalogue of over 100 scores includes credits for

Australia's leading performing arts organisations including Sydney Theatre Company, Symphony Australia, Australian Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir and Queensland Music Festival.

As Artistic Director and Composer of Green Room Music, Andrée is a leading force in the creation of independent music theatre, chamber opera and multidisciplinary works in Australia. Here, she has championed many Australian women writers, creative artists, vocalists and musicians.

The text comes from Isaiah 40:28-31 in the New International Version. Charles Jennens selected the early verses of chapter 40 for the opening of his Messiah libretto: "Comfort ye, my people, saith your God the voice of one crying in the wilderness make straight in the desert a highway," etc. By verse 27, Isaiah is prophesying the end of the Babylonian exile and exhorting Israel to trust in God, and wait in faith for Him to deliver his people. We know now that Isaiah was also prophesying the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Just for the record, the first performance of the anthem was not 17 February 2018, the date of the Kaan's anniversary, but a week later at our Lenten Evensong on Saturday 24 February, 2018. Andrée Greenwell was present in the congregation. The second performance came shortly after that. The third performance is scheduled for the 9 am service on Sunday 9 March 2025.



Amazing Music and Musicians

When COVID-19 forced the choir to suspend its rehearsals and forced the church to suspend live Sunday services, one of our pastoral imperatives was to keep in contact with each other. We did that in several ways. One suggestion was to send everyone on the choir list a recommended YouTube musical video to watch and listen to, together with some comments about the music and the performers.

I have compiled these 26 emails into a free booklet – its electronic format means the embedded links take you easily to the YouTube videos.

And here is the dropbox link . . .

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/y3mqekfvslh48jmttaqa6/Amazing-Music-and-Musicians.pdf?rlkey=c8gh8a6neyhwdrezh3gbvsgdi&st=6j7gni22&dl=0>

so you can download the booklet and save it on your laptop or whatever so you can access it at any time.

This is offered as my thank you gift for your wonderful support during the excitement of getting my shiny new hip: I am so grateful for your visits and phone calls and cards.

With best wishes

Peter



Be still, my soul

This hymn is scheduled to be sung at the morning service on Sunday 9 March. It is not one of those printed in *Hymns for Today's Church*, but most of us are very familiar with the words:

Be still, my soul, the Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change he faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, thy best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

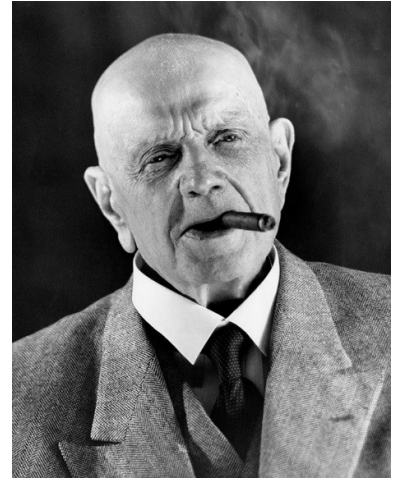
The author was an evangelical Lutheran, Katharina Amalia Dorothea von Schlegel (born 1697). She lived in Köthen in the Principality of Anhalt, near Leipzig in what is now Germany. Little is known of her, except that she seems to have been attached to a small ducal court in the town, perhaps the same one where Johann Sebastian Bach was musical director from 1717 until 1723. Katharina is said to have written 29 hymns. Her writing was shaped by the Pietist tradition of a deep personal



relationship with, and commitment to, Jesus and a deep grounding in the Scriptures. The hymn text we know as ‘*Be still my soul*’ first appeared in a publication in 1752 as ‘*Stille, meine wille, dein Jesus hilft siegen*’, in a collection of hymns for clergy. This appears to have been the only one translated into English.

Her translator was Jane Laurie Borthwick, a nineteenth century Scottish hymn writer and translator of German hymns.

And now to the hymn music. In 1899 Finnish composer Jean Sibelius wrote a musical score for six historical tableaux in a pageant that celebrated and supported the Finnish press against Russian oppression. In 1900 he revised the music from the final tableau into *Finlandia*, a tone poem for orchestra. The chorale-like theme that emerges out of the turbulent beginning of this tone poem became the hymn tune.



Jean Sibelius

Finlandia was first used as a hymn tune by the Scottish Presbyterians. The melody features several repeated and varied melody lines. It is clearly an instrumental tune, but with diligent leadership by organists, congregations can sing the various cadential tones to their proper length. Because of the long lines, accompanists must work to keep the tempo moving. The tune is a glorious setting for harmony singing by choirs.

From Psalter Hymnal Handbook



Draft Choir Calendar for 2025

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Sat	1 Mar	7 pm	Swiz	Choir social evening
Sat	15 Mar	5 pm	Swiz	Lenten Evensong
Thu	20 Mar	7:30 pm	Swiz	Messiah rehearsals commence
Sat	12 Apr		Swiz	Messiah presentation
Fri	18 Apr	9 am	Swiz	Good Friday service
Sun	20 Apr	9 am	Swiz	Easter Day Communion
Sat	31 May	5 pm	Swiz	Evensong
Sat	14 Jun		All Saints, Bathurst	Celebrating Psalms
Sun	15 Jun		All Saints, Bathurst	Two services
Sun	22 Jun		Swiz	Huguenot annual service
Fri	1 Aug			RSCM Midwinter Dinner
Sat	23 Aug		Swiz	Foundation concert
Sat	13 Sept	5 pm	Swiz	Evensong
Wed	24 Sep	6:15 pm	St James, King Street	Evensong
Sat	18 Oct		Swiz	Celebrating Psalms
Sun	26 Oct		St Albans, Leura	Celebrating Psalms
Sat	29 Nov	5 pm	Swiz	Advent Evensong
Sun	21 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Lessons & carols
Wed	24 Dec	10 pm	Swiz	Christmas Eve service
Thu	25 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Christmas Day service

Most of the fixtures after Easter in the above table are yet to be confirmed.

