

# Hyfrydol



No. 120

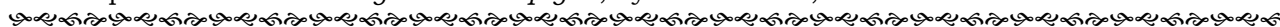
St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

May 2024

## This month

The special choir event for this month will be choral Evensong for Ascension, to be sung on Saturday evening, 11 May, at 5 pm. The music for this service includes:

- Introit – *Lift thine eyes*, by Felix Mendelssohn;
- Preces & responses by Peter Hamilton;
- Psalm 47 to a double Anglican chant by an anonymous composer;
- Anthem – *God is gone up with a merry noise*, by William Croft;
- Hymns by Christopher Idle, Edward Plumtre and Thomas Kelly, all to well-know tunes;
- Vesper – *The Lord bless you and keep you*, by John Rutter;



## April

Last month we sang at three memorial/funeral services, two of which involved past members of the choir. Barbara Dein arrived in the parish when her husband Terry Dein accepted the position of locum tenens while the rector was away with us in Dublin. The Deins became permanent parishioners when Terry finally retired from his post as Archdeacon for the northern region of the Sydney Diocese. Barbara joined the choir and sang with us until her health deteriorated to the stage when she could no longer participate. Everyone loved her and she loved everyone in return. The church was packed to overflowing for her funeral.

The next service was taken by past-Rector Roger Chilton for a past, occasional, parishioner Scott Benton. We supported the congregation by singing one hymn.



The third such event was for our Patron, Allin Cousens. Allin was associated with the choir from the time he arrived in Sydney from New Zealand in 1970. His lasting legacy is through his inspired leadership of the first two international choir tours, first to Winchester in 2001 and then to Lincoln in 2004. He set the standard for all of our five later trips, and the present strength of the choir is, in no small part, down to the regular overseas expeditions in our choir calendar.

Allin was our fourth *Choir Patron*. He followed a line of patrons that began back in the early 1990s when a very fine chorister, living within Mowl Village, decided to retire from the alto line. The choir wanted Alice Hancox to keep in touch, so named her "Patron of the Choir". Upon her passing, the Patron's crown was passed to Enid Watt, wife of the very popular Rev. Brian Watt who was appointed Acting Rector while a new rector was being sought in the later 1990s. The Watts remained in the parish when Roger Chilton became the new Rector. Brian and Enid travelled with the choir on that first trip abroad to Winchester Cathedral.

Enid eventually resigned her Patron's post, pleading an inability fulfil her duties as she saw them, and the crown passed to Ros Holmes, a retired soprano, struck down by a debilitating condition that prevented her from singing with us. Ros eventually went to be with the Lord. And Allin was declared Patron, but not until he had actually retired from singing with the choir.

His passing at the noble age of 92 years was marked by a very moving service. The church was packed, the choir stalls were full. It was said during the service that Allin had been singing in church choirs since he was 11. To be still singing when he was in his late 80s meant that he had a remarkable choral career, including some 50 years with the Swiz Choir. Three hymns and Rutter's *Clare Benediction* were sung. But our most memorable choral contribution was the hymn *Search me O God*, sung to the *Maori Farewell*, with a verse sung in the Maori language after tutoring sessions with Allin's daughter Dale. God speed, Allin.



## Psalm 47

The Psalm we shall sing at our Ascension Evensong service this month will be Psalm 47. We shall actually sing it more than once; first to an Anglican double chant selected by Organist Peter Hamilton, then verses 5, 6 and 7 again, as the anthem, to music composed by William Croft.

Miles Coverdale's translation, as used in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, is the version we shall sing:

- 1 O clap your hands together, all ye people: O sing unto God with the voice of melody.
- 2 For the Lord is high, and to be feared: he is the great King upon all the earth.
- 3 He shall subdue the people under us: and the nations under our feet.
- 4 He shall choose out an heritage for us: even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.
- 5 **God is gone up with a merry noise: and the Lord with the sound of the trump.**
- 6 **O sing praises, sing praises unto our God: O sing praises, sing praises unto our King.**
- 7 **For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.**
- 8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat.
- 9 The princes of the people are joined unto the people of the God of Abraham: for God, which is very high exalted, doth defend the earth, as it were with a shield.

Orlando Gibbons and William Croft each composed settings for this psalm. Gibbons set the whole psalm while Croft set only the highlighted verses. The choice of anthem was made easier because the choir library carries only the Croft setting.

Our study Bible notes that Psalm 47 identifies the God who reigns in Zion as "the great King over all the earth." It dates from the period of the monarchy and was composed for use in the temple liturgy on one of the high festival days, possibly the Festival of Tabernacles. Later Jewish usage employed this psalm in the synagogue liturgy for Rash Hoshanah – the New Year festival. The Christian church has appropriately used it in the celebration of Christ's ascension.



## Mass in D Minor, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

The Swiz choir, plus friends, will present this Mass at the Foundation Concert in October. Because of the costs associated with such an event, it is imperative that we have a full church for the occasion. To this end, we provide some in-depth information about the concert pieces so that readers may enthuse relatives and friends about it.



In 1795 Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy, Haydn's employer at Eisenstadt, commissioned him to compose a new setting of the Mass each year to mark the name-day (12 September) of his wife, Princess Maria. At that time the Viennese Mass was generally a relatively straightforward affair with organ accompaniment and perhaps a small group of strings. Haydn's early masses were mostly of this type but now, in his sixties and still alert to any opportunity for innovation, he proceeded to expand the format, integrating the orchestral and vocal forces in an extended symphonic choral work.

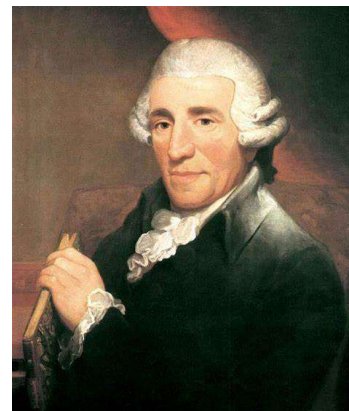
### Prince Nikolaus II of Austria

The D minor Mass is a work that was written at a time of intense fear for the future of Austria, whose citizens were not in the best of spirits. In 1797-1798 Napoleon Bonaparte had defeated the Austrian army in four major battles, even crossing the Alps and threatening Vienna itself.

### Joseph Haydn

Martin Pearlman, American conductor and creator of the first permanent Baroque orchestra in the USA, wrote:

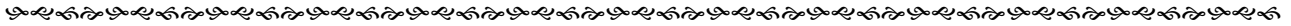
In the summer of 1798, Haydn suffered from extreme exhaustion after having completed and premiered his great oratorio *The Creation*. On his doctor's orders, he was confined to his rooms, but confinement for Haydn meant that he had time to compose the mass that he needed to write for the name day of the Princess Esterházy, the wife of his patron. And thus, instead of the three months that it normally took him to write a mass, he was able to stay home and complete this work, one of his greatest compositions, in a little over one month. It is remarkable that a composer in his mid-60s,



then considered an advanced age, could immediately follow a brilliant oratorio with a mass on an equally high level of inspiration.

Another reviewer, Haydn's chief biographer, H. C. Robbins Landon, has written that this mass “is arguably Haydn's greatest single composition.”

More next month!



**Lift thine eyes**

The introit to be sung at this month’s Ascension Evensong will be the chorus for ladies’ voices composed by Felix Mendelssohn, *Lift thine eyes*. The piece comes from Mendelssohn’s great oratorio, *Elijah*. In the oratorio’s second part, the prophet’s friend Obadiah tells him to flee for his life. Elijah goes into the wilderness, where he longs for death. An a cappella chorus of women portrays angels comforting him, singing “*Lift thine eyes*.” The angels’ text is inspired by Psalm 121; “I will lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.”

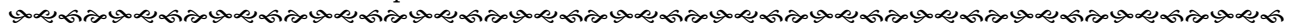
The concert in October will also feature choruses from this work. Again, more next month.



**Choir Calendar for 2024**

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Saturday	11 May	5 pm	Swiz	Ascension Evensong
Saturday	1 Jun	1-5 pm	Swiz	Nelson Mass rehearsal
Saturday	8 Jun	1-5 pm	Swiz	Nelson Mass rehearsal
Sunday	16 Jun	2 pm	Swiz	Huguenot Service
Saturday	17 Aug	5 pm	Swiz	Celebrating Psalms
Saturday	14 Sep	5 pm	Swiz	Evensong
Wednesday	25 Sep	6 pm	St James, King Street	Evensong
Saturday	26 Oct	7:30 pm	Swiz	Foundation Concert
Saturday	30 Nov	5 pm	Swiz	Advent Evensong
Monday	9 Dec	12:30 pm?	RNSH?	Carols
Sunday	22 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Lessons & carols
Tuesday	24 Dec	10 pm	Swiz	Christmas Eve
Wednesday	25 Dec	8:30 am	Swiz	Christmas Day

The Nelson Mass rehearsals in June will involve the sopranos and altos from 1 to 3 pm each afternoon, and the basses and tenors from 3 to 5 pm. Peter Gilkes will direct these.



**Choir members’ welfare collection**

The choir keeps a small kitty for those occasions when one of our choir family might be indisposed, hospitalised, or experiencing a difficult period in life. We like to demonstrate that we are thinking and praying for them. And at the end of every year, we present small gifts to our organist and choir director.

To maintain the kitty, every now and then we need to ask for contributions. The last time we called for funds was a couple of years ago. The tin is now empty and we need to re-fill it.

So that we keep this call for donations quite separate from our regular monthly contributions to Music Sir, the teacher at St Andrew’s School in Hyderabad, we shall pass the hat round for the choir account on the second and subsequent Thursdays in May. Contributions are, of course, voluntary, but might we suggest \$20?

