



Hyfrydol



No. 134

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

August 2025

August

The month begins with an RSCM weekend:

RSCM Choral weekend 1-2 August

The weekend features British composer Joanna Forbes l'Estrange, one of the most versatile and experienced choral directors in the world today.

Friday 1 August: The Famous Midwinter Dinner

6 pm Evensong in St Andrew's Cathedral, sung by
St Andrew's Cathedral Choir.

7-10 pm Dinner in the Upper Chapter House

Guest speaker, Joanna Forbes l'Estrange

\$85 per head; book through Trybooking on <https://www.trybooking.com/DCAGA>

Please note that this is a BYO drinks event.

Saturday 2 August: Choral festival

9:30 am Registrations and refreshments in the
Upper Chapter House

10 am Rehearsal with Joanna Forbes l'Estrange

12:30 pm Lunch (bring or buy your own)

1:30 pm Rehearsal

4:30 pm Festival service in St Andrew's Cathedral

Registration RSCM members \$40 (St Swithun's choir members are all RSCM members through the choir's affiliation with RSCM NSW Branch). Book through <https://www.trybooking.com/DCAHG>.



Saturday 28 August: the annual Foundation Concert

The rest of the month will be filled with rehearsals for the concert, and then the concert itself.



Last month

Huguenot service

We have been contributing to the annual Huguenot service since (at least) 2013 when Meg Matthews directed us in Scot's Church, Margaret Street, Sydney. The service moved to St Swithun's in 2016 and has been here ever since. Our French pronunciation has been improving every year since 2015 when we started singing the Huguenot marching song *La Cévenole*. This year we were particularly brave and sang two verses of it in French. A smaller group also sang the first verse of *Thine be the glory* in French (and many of the rest of the choir sang the French text under their breath); perhaps next year we will all sing it that way.

It was heartening to have a sizeable congregation, and have many stay on afterwards for the generous afternoon tea provided by the Huguenot Society.

St Andrew's Cathedral

Each Thursday evening, St Andrew's hosts a choral Evensong service, sung by the Cathedral choir during school term times. During school holidays, guest choirs are invited to fill the choir pews. It was our turn on Thursday 17 July. We rehearsed in the choir stalls for an hour. The service began at 5:15 pm and we had a choir of 24 voices, 8 soprs, 8 altos, 4 tenors and 4 basses (including Ross Cobb, the Cathedral's Director of Music). We sang Peter Hamilton's *Responses*, part of Psalm 89, canticles by Herbert Brewer, John Rutter's *I will sing with the spirit* and one hymn – *The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended*. Without our own Parish camp-followers, the congregation would have been small. Our thanks to all who came to support us.

Trial by Jury

Rehearsals for the Foundation Concert continued through the month.

Trial by Jury

In 1875 Joël Richard wrote:

Gilbert and Sullivan both, and together, experimented when composing *Trial by Jury*; they playfully blurred the boundaries between articulate language and harmonious music on the one hand and, on the other hand, mere sounds and maybe even noises.

One could study some of such instances, starting with a simple case where the rhyming quality of the libretto—an expected feature—is used by Gilbert to create a little sequence with foreign sounds gradually taking precedence over the very meaning of the sung words. As the Counsel is presenting Angelina's case to the Jury and Judge, he narrates the sad amorous fate of his client, the 'victim of a heartless wile', because of the gradual detachment of the Defendant who tried to delay the wedding day. In the midst of his aria, the sudden, unexpected irruption of Balkan and French words and references, albeit transparent for the audience, creates an interesting plurilingual effect making 'otto' rhyme with the painter's name 'Watteau' and finally 'trousseau'—a joint evocation of a rose-petal scent from the Balkans, the French pastoral mood and the continental aura surrounding love and marriage, the whole thing musically tied together by the insistent, recurring sound rendered phonetically as [əʊ].



SCENE FROM "TRIAL BY JURY," AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

Leslie Bailey, in *The Gilbert & Sullivan Book*, 1952, wrote:

This (*Thespis*) is the opera that everybody has forgotten. So much so that *Trial by Jury* is frequently misquoted as the first collaboration of Sullivan and Gilbert. *Thespis* has never been seen since the first run in 1871-2, and it can never be seen again because all the music has disappeared, except one song, *Little Maid of Arcadee*, which was published as a separate ballad, and one chorus, *Climbing over Rocky Mountain*, which was served up again in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Why was *Thespis* a

failure? In the absence of living witnesses, the only evidence is the recorded comments of those who wrote, produced, and saw the opera in 1871.

Gilbert: *Thespis* was put together in less than three weeks, and was produced at the Gaiety Theatre after a week's rehearsal. It ran 80 nights, but it was a crude and ineffective work, as might be expected, taking into consideration the circumstances of its rapid composition.

.....
Richard D'Oyly Carte was indeed an out-of-the-rut young man. He was only 31 when he brought Sullivan and Gilbert together again.

.....
The scene of the rekindling was the Royal Theatre in Soho. The bills outside announced that the operetta *La Périchole* starring Madame Selina Dolaro, was being performed. There was no great crush at the doors, and in his office Madame Dolaro's manager, Mr D'Oyly Carte, looked glumly at the box-office returns. *La Périchole* was gay enough and should be popular—it was very French, it was by Offenbach, but it was rather short as an evening's entertainment, and Mr Carte had the notion that what the Royalty needed was something even shorter to fill out the bill with *La Périchole* ... something very English and just as gay as Offenbach. Mr Carte's thoughts dwelt on the problem. He remembered *Thespis*. And then, whether by design or accident we do not know, Mr Gilbert called at the Royalty Theatre. He was shown into the office and found himself facing a dark, alert little fellow whom he knew to be a shrewd and successful businessman

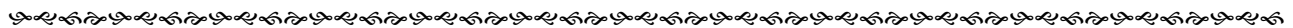
.....
And now, in 1875, Mr Gilbert glared down upon Mr Carte, who had barely mentioned his invitation to write a short opera when Gilbert said the libretto was already written! Gilbert explained that seven years previously *Fun* had published a ballad of his called *Trial by Jury*. More recently Gilbert had expanded it into a sort of musical mock trial with the idea of Mr Carl Rosa doing the music and his wife, Madame Parepa-Rosa, appearing in the leading part at Drury Lane Theatre. Madame Rosa's death had put the manuscript back in a pigeon hole in Gilbert's desk. Would Mr Carte like to see it? And Gilbert fished it out of his pocket.

Mr Carte liked it very well, but suggested that Sullivan should set it, not Carl Rosa. Sullivan was certainly the only English composer who could stand beside Offenbach.

Gilbert went straight round to Sullivan's house, and over a blazing fire he read *Trial by Jury* aloud, apparently full of a chilling apprehension that Sullivan would not be interested, for Sullivan himself says:

'Gilbert came to my rooms and read it through to me in a perturbed sort of way with a gradual crescendo of indignation, in the manner of a man considerably disappointed with what he had written. As soon as he had come to the last word he closed up the manuscript violently; apparently unconscious of the fact that he had achieved his purpose, inasmuch as I was screaming with laughter the whole time.'

So, *Trial by Jury* wasn't the first G & S collaboration, but it was the first under the D'Oyly Carte banner.



The first hymn

In Egypt in 1897, two Oxford scholars uncovered the oldest known Christian hymn containing lyrics and musical notation among a vast collection of ancient manuscripts now known as the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Ever since, the fragile fragment has been held by Oxford University.

Rev. Dr. John Dickson didn't want it to stay that way. While studying the papyrus fragment of the ancient Greek hymn at Oxford in 2016, he thought: What if we bring the hymn back to life?

Dickson has now met with producers and directors to begin the process of sharing the story of the hymn through film. The documentary highlights the initial discovery in Egypt, discusses how the fragment has been preserved in Oxford, and unpack ancient Greek music to better demonstrate the significance of the hymn, which was composed in a popular music style for Greek-speaking Romans in third-century Egypt.

Musicians Chris Tomlin and Ben Fielding wrote a modern rendition of the hymn. The film uncovers the original hymn's story, and also features the "resurrected song for a new generation."

The film is in limited release early this month. The Tomlin/Fielding version of the hymn itself may be seen and heard at <https://youtu.be/WiA-YdrKaxI>.

Take my life

This hymn, written by Frances Ridley Havergal, will be sung during the 9 am Communion service on Sunday, 24 August, immediately following the Foundation concert.

John Telford wrote about the hymn:

Written at Areley House (near Kidderminster in Worcestershire), February 4, 1874, and published in her *Loyal Responses*, 1878, in eleven verses of two lines.

Miss Havergal wrote, "Perhaps you will be interested to know the origin of the consecration hymn, *Take my life*. I went for a little visit of five days [to Areley House]. There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted, but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, "Lord, give me all this house!" And He just *did*! Before I left the house everyone had got a blessing.

.....

"The last night of my visit, it was near midnight. I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration; and these little couplets formed themselves, and chimed in my heart one after another, till they finished with *Ever*, ONLY, ALL for Thee!"

Just prior to her death in 1879, Frances prepared a small devotional book which was an extended commentary on her hymn. Each chapter expanded on a couplet from the hymn. For example, the opening chapter begged the question:

"Take my life!" We have said it or sung it before the Lord, it may be many times; but if it were only once whispered in His ear with full purpose of heart, should we not believe that He heard it? And if we know that He heard it, should we not believe that He has answered it, and fulfilled this, our heart's desire? Have we not been wronging His faithfulness all this time by practically, even if unconsciously, doubting whether the prayer ever really reached Him? And if so, is it any wonder that we have not realized all the power and joy of full consecration? By some means or other He has to teach us to trust implicitly at every step of the way.

Her original words have been re-imagined in *Hymns for Today's Church (HTC)*.

Compare:

Havergal

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and 'beautiful' for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, ALL for Thee.

Jubilate Hymns

Take my life and let it be
all you purpose, Lord, for me;
consecrate my passing days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of your love;
take my feet, and let them run
with the news of victory won.

Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my king;
take my lips, let them proclaim
all the beauty of your name.

Take my wealth – all I possess,
make me rich in faithfulness;
take my mind that I may use
every power as you shall choose.

Take my motives and my will,
all your purpose to fulfil;
take my heart – it is your own,
it shall be your royal throne.

Take my love – my Lord, I pour
at your feet its treasure-store;
take myself, and I will be
yours for all eternity.



Francis Ridley Havergal

Our hymnal, HTC, sets her words to a tune entitled *Nottingham*. This tune is an arrangement derived from the Kyrie at the opening of Mozart's *Twelfth Mass*. It is possible that the tune took its name because it was arranged by an un-named musician living in Nottingham. In several hymn books, including ours, the tune (sometimes known as *Mozart*) is still attributed to Mozart, whilst in others it is attributed to Wenzel Müller, to whom the *Twelfth Mass* is now widely attributed.

Frances Havergal's father, William Havergal, was a composer of church music. When Frances wrote her text in 1874, she probably had one of her father's melodies, *Patmos*, in mind, or at the very least, she would have been involved in choosing *Patmos* as her preferred tune when her hymn was first published. This is confirmed by a letter she wrote to another publisher in 1878:

"The only tune I do not like, and cannot possibly sanction, in your *Songs of Peace and Joy*, is the setting of my Consecration hymn, "Take my life," to that wearisomely hackneyed kyrie of Mozart. It does not suit the words either, and I was much vexed with Mr. Mountain for printing it with it in his *Hymns of Consecration*, and it would just spoil your book to let it pass. I particularly wish that hymn kept to my dear father's sweet little tune, PATMOS, which suits it perfectly."

We sing her hymn to the very tune which she detested! For the record, this is *Patmos* which William Havergal composed for *Thine forever, God of love*. It fits Frances's words very well.

No. 147. **Patmos.** 77, 77. W. H. H., 1869.

Thine for ev - er! God of love, Hear us from Thy throne a - bove;

Thine for ev - er may we be, Here and in e - ter - ni - ty. A - men.

Choir Calendar for 2025

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Fri	1 Aug	6 pm	St Andrew's Cathedral	RSCM Midwinter Dinner
Sat	2 Aug	9:30 am	St Andrew's Cathedral	RSCM Choral Festival
Wed	13 Aug	10:30 am	Swiz	Osbourne Memorial
Sun	17 Aug	1-4 pm	Swiz	Concert rehearsal
Wed	20 Aug	7:30-10 pm	Swiz	Concert rehearsal
Thu	21 Aug	7:30-10 pm	Swiz	Concert rehearsal
Sat	23 Aug	3 pm	Swiz	Concert rehearsal
Sat	23 Aug	7 pm	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



This is what church organists take away on holidays to allow themselves a decent break.