

# TRURO 3 ARTS

Classical Music Society is pleased to continue in association with Truro College to promote professional music in the region.

Truro Three Arts is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies and is a registered charity, Number 283130.

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Proprietor Alex Taylor welcomes you to the Cutting Edge Salon, Falmouth.

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## Music Therapy in Cornwall

Through partnership schemes, the aim of the Music Therapy Trust is to support those suffering from mental or physical illness, those living with disabilities or with emotional or behavioural problems, or those in need of rehabilitation as a result of illness, by the provision of music therapy.

[www.cornwallmusictherapy.org.uk](http://www.cornwallmusictherapy.org.uk)

# TRURO 3 ARTS

Classical Music Society



In association with

**Mylor Theatre – Truro College**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

## Roderick Williams

baritone



**Iain Burnside**  
piano



## Roderick Williams baritone



**Iain Burnside**  
piano

Roderick Williams encompasses a wide repertoire, from baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and in recital. On 13 September 2014 Roderick was soloist at the Last Night of the Proms for the first time. In the course of the evening, he performed in the Richard Strauss cantata, Taillefer, sang his own arrangements of two songs, and was the soloist in "Rule Britannia". Roderick is also a composer and has had works premièred at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio. He will be the Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder+ in April 2016.

Iain Burnside has a unique reputation as a pianist and broadcaster and has an extensive recording portfolio straddling an exuberantly eclectic repertoire ranging from Beethoven to Judith Weir with a special place reserved for the highways and byways of English Song. After presenting the Cardiff Singer of the World competition, Iain became a presenter on Radio 3, for many years fronting the weekly song-orientated show Voices for which he won a Sony Radio Award. He also wrote the musical play A Soldier and a Maker on the life of Ivor Gurney, premièred in 2012.

Roderick and Iain have made several acclaimed recordings together and are regular performers at the Endellion Festivals and worldwide. Their programme contains songs by post-First World War poet and composer Ivor Gurney, and Britten's evocative song cycle "Songs and Proverbs of William Blake", with Roderick ably and amply delivering the requisite levels of stamina. Also here are seven of the Rellstab settings from Schubert's "Schwanengesang" D.957, displaying enormous musical variety, emotion and virtuosity, as appropriate a "swan song" as could be for one of the greatest song composers of all time.

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014

## Joseph Tong & Waka Hasegawa "Piano 4 Hands"

*Franz Schubert ~ Fantasie in F minor D.940*

*Claude Debussy ~ La mer L.109*

*John McCabe ~ Two Scenes from Edward II Ballet Music*

*Igor Stravinsky ~ The Rite of Spring*

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These two pianists, together on one piano, call themselves "Piano 4 Hands" and are one of the best piano duos in the world. Their début CD of Debussy piano duets was chosen as Album of the Week in The Independent and received 5 stars in BBC Music Magazine. Subsequent recordings of Schubert duets and piano music by John McCabe have met with similar critical acclaim including glowing reviews in the Sunday Times, Gramophone and International Record Review.

They will perform the formidable and exciting programme of Schubert's Fantasie in F Minor D.940, Debussy's original version of "La Mer", two scenes from the Edward II ballet music by John McCabe, and Stravinsky's own duo arrangement of "The Rite of Spring".

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**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014, 6 - 7.30pm**

**Kenwyn Theatre, Truro College**

A message from David Fryer, Chairman, Truro 3 Arts,  
and Trustee of **Cornwall Music Therapy Trust (CMTT)** and of Cornwall  
Music Service Trust

I would be really pleased if you could find time to come along to a launch event for potential supporters of this fine cause. CMTT was established in 2006 to oversee and help fund development and research into music therapy in Cornwall. The Trust has provided significant funding for a team of professionally qualified music therapists who work at RCHT, Special and Mainstream schools, childrens' centres, and with adults in various settings. If you cannot come but are still interested then please contact the CMTT Administrator, Sue Pearce: [info@cornwallmusictherapy.org](mailto:info@cornwallmusictherapy.org). More information is on the CMTT Website: [www.cornwallmusictherapy.org](http://www.cornwallmusictherapy.org)

Thank You.

proverb the variation motif is developed in the voice, but it continues into the final song, its shape becoming the basis of the accompaniment of the song. The figure finally finds resolution at the close of the cycle, dwelling in the 'Realms of day'.

## **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828)

### **Rellstab Lieder from Schwanengesang, D.957**

The final months of Franz Schubert's life were a remarkably fertile period of creativity, composing most notably his last three piano sonatas and the String Quintet in C. In May 1829, six months following Schubert's death in November 1828, his publisher issued a collection of songs under the sentimental title *Schwanengesang* ('Swan song'). Although its published form might suggest it to be a cycle, in the manner of Schubert's masterpieces of 1823-4 and 1827, *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*, the posthumous publication in fact presented three different works as a single span: a set of seven songs completed in August 1828 to words by Ludwig Rellstab; a set of six songs completed in the same month to words by Heinrich Heine; and a single song to words by Johann Seidl, — Schubert's last song, composed in October 1828. It is evident that Schubert intended the Heine and Rellstab sets to be issued separately. The collation by the publisher was a canny piece of marketing.

The poems by Rellstab set by Schubert were originally given by the poet to Beethoven, in 1825, with the hope of interesting him in setting them to music. Upon Beethoven's death in 1827 they were passed by Beethoven's secretary to Schubert. Where the cyclical Heine set within *Schwanengesang* builds on the dark intensity of *Winterreise*, Schubert's Rellstab lieder are only loosely linked and are very much lighter in tone.

The set opens in a familiar territory for Schubert: one of Schubert's 'brook' songs, in which the flowing stream conveys a message of love to a distant beloved. The episodic second song, *Kriegers Ahnung*, finds the singer ill at ease in a night filled with fear of coming battles and thoughts of his love, from whom he is parted by war. The final stanza perhaps more likely is a premonition of the soldier's death than an intimation of his at last falling into a quiet sleep. After this foreboding, the restlessness of *Frühlingssehnsucht* sees the singer unable to find peace in the outpourings of spring, not knowing where to turn to quell his urgent longing for his love. The vulnerability of *Ständchen*, a melancholic serenade accompanied by a plucked guitar or lute, gives way to *Aufenthalt* — a song of a more desperate loneliness and overwhelming sorrow. The singer's isolation is affirmed when he, broken-hearted, foresakes all of the world in *In der Ferne*. The final farewell to the world (*Abschied*) is one of Schubert's merriest songs of farewell. The singer is apparently determined not to show any sorrow at this parting, nor to show any weakness or sense of having been betrayed by love.

## **Programme**

**Henry Purcell** / ~ "Let the Dreadful Engines of Eternal Will"  
**Benjamin Britten**

**Ivor Gurney** ~ *Four Songs*

**Benjamin Britten** ~ *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake Op.74*

**Franz Schubert** ~ *Seven Rellstab Settings from Schwanengesang D.957*

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*Programme notes by kind permission, Philip Lancaster, Wigmore Hall.*

## **Henry Purcell** (1659-1695)

### **"Let the Dreadful Engines of Eternal Will" (realised Benjamin Britten)**

In 1959 Benjamin Britten wrote that in practically every recital that he and Peter Pears had given together over the previous twenty years, across three continents, they had included a group of songs by Henry Purcell. Audiences more used to the work of their native composers, be it Schubert, Wolf or Fauré, would cheer and applaud the work of a composer who, at that time, was little known even in his native England. Purcell's songs were published only as vocal line and a figured bass, over which the fuller piano part would have been improvised, and so for these performances Britten 'realised' Purcell's accompaniments. Unusually, *Let the dreadful engines of eternal will*, was realised by Britten not for Pears but for the baritone John Shirley Quirk.

*Let the dreadful engines* was written as incidental music for one of the first stagings of the famous Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes, *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*. The novel tells of the adventures of Alonso Quixano, who adopts the name of Don Quixote and sets out to revive the noble art of chivalry, taking with him his neighbour, Sancho Panza, as his squire. In 1694 Thomas D'Urfey dramatised the work for the stage in three parts, and Purcell's song occurs in act iv, scene 1 of the first of these parts. The scene is the mountain of Sierra Morena. Sancho Panza, bruised from recent escapades, is cursing chivalry as the 'devil of a profession' to Don Quixote, whose accidents are 'a plague on't of your own making'. Off-stage is heard a song, at which Sancho exclaims, 'I believe here's another Adventure coming, and I hope 'twill end better than the last, because it begins Musically.' There enters Cardenio in ragged clothes, who 'in a wild posture' sings this song in which he rails against women, and leaves. Don Quixote observes, 'By the matter delivered in this song, I perceive this poor Gentleman's Distress was

occasioned by Love; therefore 'tis fit I follow and relieve him.' Sancho questions this wisdom, arguing that he needs a 'Braincurer', not a Knight Errant, to minister to his ills. Quixote goes in pursuit. Reluctantly, expecting to see himself 'well thrash'd again', Sancho follows.

## **Ivor Gurney** (1890-1937)

### **Twilight Song ('Desire in Spring')**

#### **On the Downs**

#### **Reconciliation**

#### **Lights Out**

The return of the Gloucester composer and poet Ivor Gurney from the battlefields of Picardy and Flanders was not an easy one. Shot and gassed in 1917, he returned home and spent some months moving between hospitals, also attempting suicide in 1918. While Gurney had composed a handful of songs whilst serving in the Front Line, following the war he returned to music with a great vigour, from 1919 resuming his studies at the Royal College of Music. The four songs heard here were all composed within a year of the end of the First World War: *Twilight Song* ('Desire in Spring') is a setting of a poem by the Irish poet Francis Ledwidge, who was killed in action in July 1917. The song was sketched whilst walking on Gurnard's Head, Cornwall, on 27 December 1918, during a holiday at St. Ives with the novelist Ethel Voynich. While John Masefield's poem *Up on the Downs* witnesses the circling of raptors seeking their prey, the burning of the gorse, and recalls the ritual sacrifice of former ages that may have taken place on the downs surrounding Masefield's then home, one cannot help but think that Gurney might have been drawn to the poem for its echoes of his recent experience. When setting the poem in September 1919 Gurney may perhaps have imagined not the downs of Berkshire, but of Picardy, where the fires, smoking, choking and sacrifice gain a new pertinence. The final cry of something passing by may be the sound of a shell falling, perhaps to find its human prey.

The work of Walt Whitman played an important role in Gurney's return from the trenches and his post-war conciliation. His as yet unpublished setting of Whitman's *Reconciliation*, composed in June 1919, is a remarkable song which brings both solace for the earth, washed clean after being marred and mired by war, and a reconciliation between the 'foes' of battle – such a meeting as was re-imagined in Wilfred Owen's famous *Strange Meeting*.

The last of Gurney's songs heard here is one his most intensely ecstatic: a setting of another poet killed in 1917, Edward Thomas, whose work had a profound influence upon Gurney's post-war work, both poetically and musically. *Lights Out* was composed in March 1919, shortly after the death

of one of the greatest loves of Gurney's life, to whose memory the song is dedicated, Margaret Hunt.

## **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976)

### **Songs and Proverbs of William Blake Op.74**

Moving from Purcell, at the start of this programme, to Benjamin Britten, it is easy to see how the earlier composer influenced Britten's vocal works, in its vocal and accompanimental shapes and manner. This is perhaps particularly evident in *The Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*, composed in 1965 for the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. The words for the cycle were selected by Peter Pears from the writings of the 18-19th century English visionary artist and poet, William Blake, from his collections *Songs of Experience*, *Auguries of Innocence* and *Proverbs of Hell*. Fischer-Dieskau wrote that he was 'especially taken with the terseness, the British understatement, the intellectual concentration, and the enigmatic smile of these dense, linguistically original sayings.' Blake's poems and aphorisms are certainly dense and, ranging as they do from the metaphorical to the provocatively cynical, they take some thought to ascertain the meanings within. The result is one of Britten's most sombre song cycles; a work that questions the human condition, our relationships both human and eternal, and the folly of man's preoccupations; and while the words were written nearly two centuries ago, Britten's music seems to make them feel contemporary; fresh and relevant for the present time.

*Songs and Proverbs of William Blake* is, unusually for Britten, set as one continuous piece. However, the seven proverbs, as well as providing links between the poems, act as unifying markers throughout the work. These starkly set proverbs are each based on the same four note melodic motif; a set of variations akin to the series of variations that form the interludes between scenes in Britten's 1954 chamber opera, *The Turn of the Screw*.

In the first two songs of the cycle the chimney sweeper in particular seems to become the personification of woe, with Blake's play upon the crying of his wares, '[s]weep', embodying the sorrow, half-hidden behind Britten's imagining of the sweep's melancholy dance. At the heart of the cycle is the most substantial song of the cycle, 'A Poison Tree', a setting of a poem which seems to echo the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, and in which the chromatic snaking of the vocal line seems to depict the singer's wrath wrapping itself ever tighter within his being. Britten's accompaniment in 'The Tyger' seems to portray the tiger's growls in the first of two songs in which Blake's comparisons of man with beast and insect ask questions as to our common origins and aspirations, asking whether we are in fact all that different.

The final proverbs and songs contemplate time and eternity, the variation of Proverb VI notably developed to sound the knells of time. In the last