

FAURÉ REQUIEM and SACRED SONGS BY KARL JENKINS

Ryde Chorus, Director Jurgita Leistrumaite

Tressa Lambert, soprano

Aaron Briggs, baritone

Kirstie Robertson, violin

Christine Ward, violoncello

Danielle Clarke, Harp

James Longford, piano/organ

Saturday, 8th July 2023 at 7.00pm, St. Catherine's Church, Ventnor

Ryde Chorus provided an evening of sacred music from Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924) and the modern composer Karl Jenkins (b. 1944) whose music was performed at the coronation of King Charles III earlier this year.

The concert began, by contrast, with a fascinating performance by James Longford on the piano, of William Byrd's Pavan and Galliard, "Passing Measures." This piece couldn't have illustrated more clearly the evolution of European music over the past 400 years, and was an illustration of the extensive florid ornamentation developed by the composer and his contemporaries. It was ably performed, demonstrating some impressive fingerwork.

Ryde Chorus then performed a selection of Karl Jenkins' Sacred Songs. Choir and soloists rose to the occasion, performing with a delicacy and balance that was a pleasure to hear. From the lovely final Amen in the Ave Verum to the deceptively simple Benedictus, with its climactic *fortissimo* Hosanna, the choir demonstrated precision and balance, particularly in the dynamic control when accompanying soloist and solo instrumentalists. The first half ended with a splendidly exact series of the staccato phrase "pa-ra-di-sum".

Then, Fauré's sublime Requiem. Well! It was an arrangement for organ, harp, solo violin and solo 'cello which, although obviously much smaller forces than the more common full orchestra, still retains much of the sonority and lyricism of the composition. This work is emotionally laden, especially in the solo passages, when the choir fulfils the role of the "chorus" in classical Greek theatre – commenting and elaborating on what the soloist is singing.

The Requiem is another of those deceptively simple works that can ambush a choir with difficult entries, pitching and timing. To deliver such pieces requires hard work, and the quality of the performance demonstrated that the choir and their director had indeed put in that work. Inevitably there were occasional hiccups, but my verdict is that Ryde Chorus is on the road forward.

Toby Wallis, 8th July 2023