

Review of FoSM Concert held at St Mary's on July 21st 2024 at 4pm

The Annual Friends of St Mary's Concert was held In St Mary's, Streatley-on-Thames on July 21st 2024. The Friends of St Mary's was established in 2011 to enable those residents, relatives and visitors who wish to contribute to St. Mary's church building and churchyard to keep them in good repair for future generations to enjoy, whilst not wishing to fund the ministry-based activities. Full details of the Charity can be found on the Goring Benefice or Streatley Parish Council websites.

It was a technically brilliant concert by Stephanie Bodsworth (soprano), Glynne Stackhouse (organ and piano) and Brian Thomas (trumpet) of mainly lyrical and happy pieces, very suitable for a Summer afternoon and all of which were clearly much enjoyed by the enthusiastic audience.

There was one piece for organ alone (Handel's Air and Variations from Suite No 5 in E major), two trumpet solos, six duet pieces for piano/organ and trumpet, ten duet pieces for piano and soprano and three trios featuring all the performers, which included the encore.

This was a very full, dazzling and variable programme including pieces by Zequinha Abreu, Beöllumann, Cole Porter, Elgar, Gershwin, Gurney, Handel, Lehár, Liszt, Edward MacDowell, Mozart, Purcell, Richard Strauss, Telemann and Giovanna Viviani. Whilst the programme included well-known works including Tico Tico by Abreu, To A Wild Rose by Macdowell (on which the pop song Am I Ready is based) and Summertime and Someone To Watch Over Me by Gerschwin, it also included less familiar pieces like Allerselen by Richard Strauss and Sleep by Ivor Gurney.

In a final surprise, the title piece of the Concert, Sound the Trumpets by Purcell, which was apparently originally written with no trumpet

parts included, did not appear in the programme, but it turned out to be planned as the encore featuring all the performers.

Stephanie is an outstanding soprano who projects emotions, colour and humour whilst making technically difficult pieces look easy. Brian is probably the best trumpeter I have ever heard; he is a virtuoso classical player and demonstrates the full range a trumpet can cover, again playing very difficult pieces with apparent ease. Our own Musical Director at St Mary's, Glynne, organist, pianist and composer, displayed a wide range of playing styles with his usual brilliance. Glynne had the most exhausting task as he played in nearly every piece.

My own favourite pieces from this concert were (I thought I had better choose three in this case) were the trio's performance of Let the Bright Seraphim by Handel, Chanson de Matin by Elgar (trumpet and piano, arranged by Glynne) and Vilia O Vilia by Lehar (soprano and piano).

Not forgetting the usual delicious post-Concert tea and cakes afterwards in the Morrell Room, for which thanks must go to the Concert organizer, John Rogers and his wonderful set of volunteer bakers, servers and washers-up, as well as those preparing the Church.

The next concert in St Mary's is "Echoes in Raindrops", a concert of violin and piano duets on Sunday September 22nd at 4pm.

Stella Robinson



