

## For Those We Loved– 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Review by Keith Horsfall

Central to the concert was the premiere of *Sound the Invisible Trumps* by Paul Spicer commemorating the deaths of Pauline Round and Mike Lloyd. It is an inspired work with a lovely mixture of choral contrasts and diverse emotional power, moments of soaring sopranos, counteracted by hushed choral interludes. Particularly moving were 'An Ancient Olive' and 'Beside an Altar of Stone' - soliloquies by impressive soloists Ed Ballard and Emily Matthews matched by restrained chorus responses. The optimism in the final 'Dance, my Heart' was energetically captured by the whole choir which had embraced the whole work with skill and dedication.

Flanking Spicer's work, and following a moving Prayer for Ukraine, were works by Vaughan Williams, Holst, Parry and Spicer. In Vaughan Williams psalm-like 'Lord, Thou hast been our refuge', a nicely matched solo group worked well in tandem with the full choir, contributing well to the work's powerful climax, although more might have been made of Jonathan Shepard's trumpet contribution.

The remarkable harmonies 'Prayer to the Father of Heaven' were well executed.

Ed Ballard again excelled in 'Five Mystical Songs'. Particularly lovely were the chorus's closing lines of 'I got me flowers' and 'Love bade me welcome'

Holst's 'Turn back O Man' felt a little prosaic in comparison but was nevertheless a fine performance, as was Parry's 'Blest pair of Sirens'.

Organist Martyn Rawles' accompaniment of the choir was impeccable also delivered an accomplished rendition of Spicer's Finale from Suite for Organ.

KEITH HORSFALL

3 / 4 / 2022



Keith Horsfall, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, is a very experienced conductor, teacher and cultural project manager/consultant.