

Birmingham Bach Choir, April 2022, St Philip's Cathedral

For Those We Loved. A concert to remember

Review by Rosemary Philips

Paul Spicer's programme promised a wonderful evening of music making to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Ralph Vaughan Williams' birth and to commemorate all who have died during the pandemic. Paul's new work, *Sound the Invisible Trumps*, was commissioned by the Choir with funds from a legacy left by the Choir's past President, Pauline Round, in memory of her and Mike Lloyd, husband of soprano, Merryn Lloyd.

The Choir sang so musically throughout with great commitment to the text and the phrasing. The opening *Prayer to Ukraine* was very moving, followed by the equally moving, *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge*. Ed Ballard sang with a beautiful baritone quality and such sensitivity to the poems in the glorious *Five Mystical Songs* by Vaughan Williams. Martin Rawles, organist, played magnificently throughout the concert, excelling in Paul Spicer's *Finale from Suite for Organ*. *Sound the Invisible Trumps* in 7 movements was a musical triumph from the dark first movement to the joyful final movement sung with such drama by the Choir. Ed Ballard sang unaccompanied so movingly, *An Ancient Olive*, and the high soprano voice of Emily Matthews was so effective in *Brief is Our Life* and *Beside an Altar Stone*. *Blest pair of Sirens* was a magnificent conclusion to such a moving concert.

Rosemary Phillips



After studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Rosemary established a career teaching singing and directing choirs of all ages and abilities. She is music director of the choir 'Viva Musica' which she founded in 1989. She is a Trustee of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Association of which she was Chair for 9 years