

REDBRIDGE MUSIC SOCIETY

'AN EVENING OF SONG WITH NATASHA PAGE'

**Tuesday 28th October 2014 8 pm
Lambourne Room, Redbridge Town Hall**



**Natasha Page: Soprano
Christopher Benham: Accompanist**

This evening's recital is dedicated to the memory of Pat Waddle (Hon. Secretary 1998 – 2009) and Jack Waddle (Vice-President) as a mark of our respect and appreciation for their many years of loyal service and dedication to Redbridge Music Society.

PROGRAMME

Gentle Morpheus O Delle Mie Speranze Il Primo Ardor	G.F Handel (1685 – 1759) Francesco Cavalli (1602-76) G F Handel
Lied Der Mignon Die Forelle Romanze aus Rosamunde	Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)
Romance (L'ame Evaporee)	Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)
Psyche	Emil Paladilhe (1844 – 1926)
Die Sprode Die Bekehrte Verborgtheit	Hugo Wolf (1860 – 1903)

INTERVAL

Mein Herr Marquis	Johann Strauss II (1825 – 99)
Five Popular Greek Melodies	Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)
If There Were Dreams to Sell I Have Twelve Oxen	John Ireland (1879 – 1962)
Since we Loved	Gerald Finzi (1901 – 56)
Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal Love's Philosophy	Roger Quilter (1872 – 1953)
My life belongs to you	Ivor Novello (1893 – 1951)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Handel, although born in Germany, made his name in London largely by writing Italian operas, one of the finest being *Ariodante*. It is set in Scotland and in Act One Dalinda reveals her love for the unscrupulous Polinesso in her aria "**Il primo ardor**" ("The first flame"). Handel's semi-opera *Alceste* was written as incidental music to a lost play by Tobias Smollett and tells of Alceste's self-sacrifice to save her dying husband, King Admetus, and of Hercules' journey to Hades to bring Alceste back to the world of the living. In the aria "**Gentle Morpheus**", Calliope (goddess of poetry) offers consolation to Admetus.

Emile Paladilhe was born in Montpellier and was a child prodigy. One of his best-known songs, "**Psyche**", was composed in 1887 and made famous in the 1930s by Dame Maggie Teyte accompanied by Gerald Moore (Redbridge Music Society's first president). The text of the song is taken from Moliere and Corneille's *Psyché* (written in 1670) in Act Two of which

there is dialogue between Psyche and Cupid who has been sent by Venus to make Psyche fall in love with an ugly monster, but who instead falls in love with her himself.

“O Delle Mie Speranze” is from the Italian composer Francesco Cavalli’s opera *La Doriclea* first performed at the Teatro San Cassiano, Venice in 1645.

Schubert was the master of the German “art song” (“lied”) and wrote over 600 of these, many telling of adventures and journeys (of the soul rather than the body). The tradition was continued by Schumann and Hugo Wolf, and later by Richard Strauss and Mahler. Tonight we hear three each of Schubert’s and Wolf’s songs – perhaps the most famous being Schubert’s **“Die Forelle”** (“The Trout”).

The French composers Ravel and Debussy were the prominent figures of impressionist music. However, although they had the same musical heritage they differed in varying degrees with their approach to the music. Ravel’s **“Five Popular Greek Melodies”** were composed between 1904 and 1906 and were based on texts translated from Greek by his friend Calvocoressi, a Greek-born writer. Ravel orchestrated the first and last songs himself, and the French composer and conductor Manuel Rosenthal arranged the others in 1935. The Debussy song this evening is **“L’ame Evaporee”** (“The vanishing soul”) composed in 1891. It is also known by its poem’s title **“Romance”** and is part of Debussy’s *Two Romances*. It is a perennial favourite for recitals due to its beautiful arching lines.

The second half of this evening’s recital includes the art of the English song and features three English composers, John Ireland, Gerald Finzi and Roger Quilter. Ireland was born in Bowdon near Manchester in 1879 and began to make his name in the early 1900s as a composer of songs and chamber music. As a young man he was strongly influenced by Debussy and Ravel and as a result he developed his own brand of “English Impressionism” moving away from the folk-song style that had prevailed in English music.

Gerald Finzi was born in 1901 in London, became one of the most characteristically “English” composers of his generation and, although an agnostic, wrote some particularly inspiring Christian choral music. He was much affected by the poetry of Traherne, Hardy, Rossetti and Wordsworth some of which he began to set to music. Throughout his life he was much attracted by the recurrent motif of the innocence of childhood corrupted by adult experience.

Roger Quilter was born in Hove, Sussex, in 1877 and studied for five years at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt with composers Percy Grainger and Cyril Scott. His reputation in England rests largely on his light music (eg. the famous “Children’s Overture”) and songs - of which he wrote over a hundred. **“Love’s Philosophy”** is one of his most popular songs. **“Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal”** is one Quilter’s early songs and is a setting of verses from Tennyson’s poem of the same name. Quilter influenced several English composers, in particular Peter Warlock.

The second half of the recital starts and finishes with two lighter and popular songs – **“Mein Herr Marquis”** (“My dear Marquis”)) from Johann Strauss’s Viennese operetta *Die Fledermaus* and Ivor Novello’s **“My life belongs to you”** from one of his most popular musicals *The Dancing Years*. The first production of *The Dancing Years* in London’s West End was in 1939 and was the most popular show of WWII; it is set in Vienna and tells of the life of a penniless composer and his love for two women! *Die Fledermaus*, also set in Vienna, needs little introduction. Adele’s ‘laughing song’ aria **“Mein Herr Marquis”** is a great showpiece for the soprano, with its coloratura passages and a playful character.

NATASHA PAGE - SOPRANO

Natasha Page is a classical soprano currently studying for an undergraduate degree at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff with Gail Pearson and is already making a name for herself as a soloist in opera, oratorios and in the concert hall.

She has performed as a soloist with the Hertford Choral Society, Caerphilly Ladies Choir and Porthcawl Choral Society and last year performed on stage alongside internationally renowned soprano Elin Manahan-Thomas in scenes from Purcell's 'The Fairy Queen'. Natasha has taken part in several operas, including Opera Ddraig's production of Orpheus and the Underworld and Mid-Wales Opera's production of Acis and Galatea. She has sung solo live on BBC Radio 3 and has given many solo recitals in All Saints Church, Hertford and other churches in the Hertfordshire area.

Natasha has a strong interest in choral music. She is a member of the Rodolfus Choir, led by Ralph Alwood, and has been offered a place in the newly formed National Portrait Gallery Choir in Residence as an Associate Member. She also performs with Island Opera.

In the future, Natasha hopes to be able to train and perform more specifically in early music and historical performance.

CHRISTOPHER BENHAM - PIANIST

Christopher Benham began his musical education as a chorister at Wymondham Abbey, Norfolk. He continued his musical studies at the Colchester Institute School of Music and after graduating, joined the Institute's staff as a piano accompanist.

In 1989 he trained for the teaching profession and subsequently held posts in Harlow and Hertford. At this time he was appointed as Assistant Organist at All Saints Church, Hertford and continued his organ studies with Michael Frith. In 1996 he became Organist and Director of Music at All Saints' and he continued to develop the strong choral tradition, introduced regular lunchtime recitals and managed the overhaul of the fine Willis organ.

He is now a teacher of music and the Chapel Organist at St. Edmund's College, Ware, England's oldest Catholic school.

Redbridge Music Society's next event is on Tuesday 9th December 2014 8 pm at the Lambourne Room and is an evening of **Christmas Music** and seasonal readings with **Chorale Cantando**. This will be followed by our annual Christmas Party

For information about Redbridge Music Society and for details about membership, please contact Malcolm Billingsley (Secretary) Tel: 020 8504 6340 Email: filmview@talktalk.net

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