

Avebury Vocal Ensemble (AVE) is a Chamber Choir of some 30 singers, performing a wide range of serious and light-hearted choral music both *a capella* and accompanied. Each year one Christmas concert is held in Avebury, and the remaining five to six annual concerts each year take place – often by invitation - in churches and halls throughout North Wiltshire, including, on three occasions, the prestigious Summer School at Marlborough College. The choir has also travelled to France on two occasions to give concerts in the alpine towns South of Geneva. The choir prides itself on sight-reading (just four rehearsals before each concert) and ensemble. A CD, ‘Sing Ave Sing’ is available, one track of which immediately followed the Queens Speech on Christmas Day on Classic FM in 2009.

Sir Peter Beale has conducted AVE since its inception and has recently been a guest conductor in Swindon, Salisbury and Romsey. Between times he sings tenor, acting as a Deputy Lay Clerk in both Salisbury and Wells cathedrals as well as in several choral groups, chiefly in Wiltshire. As a tenor soloist, his rôles range from parts in Gilbert and Sullivan operas to oratorios such as Messiah and The Creation. From his early years, music was ingrained. Following six years as a chorister in St. Paul’s Cathedral, he became a Choral Scholar at Cambridge. He subsequently trained as a medical doctor, culminating in a career in the British Armed Forces for which he was knighted in 1992; but wherever he served he formed, conducted and took part in choirs when the care of his patients allowed. Now living in Avebury, he is delighted to be working with the singers from AVE.

Simon Dinsdale: A former Organ Scholar of Chichester Cathedral, Simon travels extensively throughout the UK as accompanist, continuo player and organist to a number of choirs, and regularly plays at cathedrals up and down the country. He has been sub-organist at The Royal Memorial Chapel, The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst since 2005 where he has the pleasure of playing week by week the largest Allen digital organ in the UK.

Avebury Vocal ENSEMBLE

Concert Programme

St Peter ad Vincula Church
Broad Hinton
Saturday 17 October 2015
7.30 pm

Conductor: Sir Peter Beale
Organist: Simon Dinsdale



INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

From Sir Peter Beale

From the very start AVE have been made most welcome by members of the St. Peter ad Vincula church at Broad Hinton. However there's an important ingredient here – it is nostalgia time! Years ago, before AVE was even formed, I was part of the Broad Hinton choir with a variable attendance of members from my own family. Some of the local members are still singing here and Jayne McLoughlin (nee Swadden) now sings with AVE. But what is more, this church choir won first prize for choirs in the Devizes Festival! As a result, tonight, I could not miss the opportunity of having AVE sing the prize-winning piece, Joseph Haydn's setting of the Te Deum which opens the second half of our programme.

Following a short Farrant motet at the beginning of the first half, we embark on five of Sir Hubert Parry's Songs of Farewell, the words of which are so meaningful and profound, dealing with the end of life and visions of the after-life, that we have included them in your programmes. After the first two, set for four voice parts, to each subsequent 'Song' another part is added so that 'Lord, let me know thine end' has eight parts – in two choirs of four. The whole cycle besides being Parry's, possibly, finest composition, is one of the best known in the choral repertoire, testing choirs, including ours (!) to the limit.

We end the first half with Cesar Franck's beautiful Panis Angelicus. After we have re-acquainted Broad Hinton with Haydn's delightful and pithy Te Deum, we begin relaxing with Brahms – 'How lovely are thy dwellings fair' from his German Requiem. Franz Schubert's Ständchen (Serenade) set for Alto soloist and four-part men's chorus reminds us how German choirs love their male sections. We are delighted then to insert Robin Nelson's setting of Ave Maria, a composition dedicated to AVE in 2011.

Finally, we have chosen two arrangements - one of Sir Arthur Sullivan's 'The Lost Chord', followed by another, of Cole Porter's 'Night and Day'.

There are two readings and we are very fortunate to have Simon Dinsdale as our loyal Organist to accompany us and play a Bach Fugue.

I became dumb and opened not my mouth,
for it was Thy doing.

Take Thy plague away from me:
I am even consumed means of Thy heavy hand.

When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin,
Thou makest his beauty to consume away,
like as it were a moth fretting a garment;
every man therefore is but vanity.

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and with Thine ears consider my calling;
hold not Thy peace at my tears!

For I am a stranger with Thee and a sojourner,
as all my fathers were.

O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength,
before I go hence and be no more seen.

FUTURE AVE CONCERTS

Wednesday 16th December: St Mark's Church Swindon

Sunday 20th December: St James' Church Avebury

Saturday 16 April Royal Wootton Bassett

Saturday 23 July Uffington

For details see www.aveburyvocal.org

There is an old belief

Words: John Gibson Lockhart (1794 – 1854)

There is an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more.

Beyond the sphere of Time and Sin, and Fate's control,
Serene in changeless prime of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll ne'er forgo:
Eternal be the sleep
If not to waken so.

Lord, let me know mine end

Words: Psalm 39 verses 5 – 15

Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days,
that I may be certified how long I have to live.

Thou hast made my days as it were a span long;
and mine age is as nothing in respect of Thee,
and verily every man living is altogether vanity.

For man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in
vain,
he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.

And now, Lord, what is my hope?
Truly my hope is even in Thee.

Deliver me from all mine offences
and make me not a rebuke to the foolish.

Programme

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake Richard Farrant (d 1581)

Songs of Farewell C Hubert H Parry (1848 – 1918)

*My soul there is a country
I know my soul hath power to know all things
Never, weather-beaten sail
There is an old belief*

Reading

Organ solo: Simon Dinsdale

Fugue in E flat, BWV 552 (St Anne), by JS Bach (1685 – 1750)

Songs of Farewell C Hubert H Parry (1848 – 1918)

Lord let me know mine end

Panis Angelicus César Franck (1822 – 1890)

----- **INTERVAL** -----

Te Deum Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)
for the Empress Marie Therese

Reading

How lovely are thy dwellings fair Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

Ständchen Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Ave Maria Robin Nelson

The Lost Chord (arr Peter Gritton) Arthur Sullivan (1842 – 1900)

Night and Day (arr. Andrew Carter) Cole Porter (1891- 1964)

Songs of Farewell by Hubert Parry

My soul, there is a country

Words: Henry Vaughan (1622 – 1695)

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars:

There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious friend,
And – O my soul awake! –
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flow'r of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

I know my soul hath power to know all things

Words: John Davies (1529 – 1626)

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet she is blind and ignorant in all:
I know I'm one of Nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a pain and but a span;
I know my sense is mocked in every thing;
And, to conclude, I know myself a Man,
Which is a proud and yet a wretched thing.

Never weather-beaten sail

Words: Thomas Campion (1567 -1620)

Never weather-beaten sail more willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest.

Ever blooming are the joys of Heaven's high Paradise,
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines, whose beams the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to Thee!