

# RODERICK WILLIAMS AND ROGER VIGNOLES

## BARITONE AND PIANO Knights and Legends

 **Tuesday 9 July**  **3pm – 4pm**  **St John's Church**

**Roderick Williams** is one of the most sought-after baritones with a wide repertoire spanning baroque to contemporary. He was awarded an OBE in June 2017, was Artist in Residence with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020-22, Artist in Residence at the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival and Singer in Residence at Music in the Round. He was also one of the featured soloists at the coronation of King Charles III in 2023. As a composer he won the Best Choral Composition at the British Composer Awards in 2016 and from 2022/23 he holds the position of Composer in Association of the BBC Singers.

**Roger Vignoles**, a distinguished song pianist and chamber musician, has appeared at all the world's principal venues and festivals. Among the singers he has partnered are names including Sir Thomas Allen, Barbara Bonney, Christine Brewer, Florian Boesch, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Dame Felicity Lott, Mark Padmore, Christoph Prégardien and Elisabeth Söderström. He is an Honorary fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Prince Consort Professor of Accompaniment at the Royal College of Music.

Despite their smaller canvas, songs can treat stories as effectively as opera and orchestral tone-poems. This opening group of English songs takes us to some magical places: Tennyson's enchanted landscape, evoked by Vaughan Williams, and the scented woods of Joan Trimble's 'Green Rain'. There is music, too: in Ina Boyle's De La Mare setting, as the poet recalls a song he once sang in a 'green-green wood', and Muriel Herbert's knight, rejected by the one he loves, compares himself to the legendary swan, singing as it dies. But unearthly creatures come with the territory, like the 'white-winged harp-player' of Vaughan Williams' Rossetti setting, and not even the birds are singing as Keats' knight-at-arms describes his encounter with La Belle Dame Sans Merci, set by Nicholas Marshall. A new commission by Cameron Biles-Liddell will be sung before the Vaughan Williams song 'Love's Minstrels'.

### The Splendour Falls

*words: Alfred, Lord Tennyson, from The Princess; music: Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

### Green Rain

*words: Mary Webb; music: Joan Trimble (1915-2000)*

### So by my singing am I comforted

*words: from the Benedictbeuern manuscript, translated by Helen Waddell; music: Muriel Herbert (1897-1984)*

### A Song of Enchantment

*words: Walter de la Mare; music: Ina Boyle (1889-1967)*

### La Belle Dame sans Merci

*words: John Keats; music: Nicholas Marshall (b. 1942)*

### Love's Minstrels, from The House of Life

*words: Dante Gabriel Rossetti; music: Ralph Vaughan Williams*

### SHORT INTERVAL

Forests, mountains and rivers are often enchanted places in German folklore. Folk-ballads, particularly from the Scottish borders, were hugely popular in the early 19th century, hence the version of Thomas the Rhymer's meeting with the Queen of the Elves set by Loewe. There are more strange encounters, with the witch Lorelei – unusually, in a forest in Schumann's Eichendorff setting, in her usual place, on a rock overlooking the Rhine, from where the boatman gazes at her, spellbound, in Clara Schumann's Heine song. Still by the Rhine, a statue of an old knight stares blindly down on a river-side wedding party, where the bride alone is weeping. In Brahms' Minnelied, the poet sees his feelings echoed in nature, and begs his girl to stay so that his heart may flower like the meadow. 'Ständchen' describes three students serenading a young girl beneath her window, and her drowsy response. The singer of Wolf's Goethe setting sings for the king and his court, but refuses the offer of a gold chain as a reward.



### Tom der Reime (Thomas the Rhymer)

*words: 18th-century Scottish ballad, translated by Theodor Fontane; music: Carl Loewe (1796-1869)*

### Waldesgespräch (Conversation in the forest) from Liederkreis, Op. 39 No. 3

*words: Joseph von Eichendorff; music: Robert Schumann (1810-1856)*

### Lorelei

*words: Heinrich Heine; music: Clara Schumann (1819-1896)*

### Auf einer Burg (On a mountain), Op. 39 No. 7

*words: Joseph von Eichendorff; music: Robert Schumann*

### Minnelied (Love song), Op. 71 No. 5

*words: Ludwig Höltz; music: Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)*

### Ständchen (Serenade), Op. 106 No. 1

*words: Franz Kugler; music: Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)*

### Der Sänger (The singer)

*words: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)*

### LONGER INTERVAL

The French sequence offers some typical examples of mediaeval and Renaissance courtly love. Machaut's knight swears he will stay true to his lady. Honegger and his poet celebrate the Gascony poet and ambassador Saluste du Bartas (1544–1590), describing his love for Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, and his journey to meet her. Mélanie Bonis sets Maurice Bouchor's dream of sailing to the 'happy, mysterious island' to join his lover, and his version of the lyric 'Take, O take those lips away', Mariana's lament for betrayed love from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. In *Chansons d'Orkenise*, Poulenc and Apollinaire describe a tramp and a carter amusing the sentries at the city gates with their different views of love. Ravel sets three songs for Cervantes' would-be knight, Don Quixote, to the lady of his fantasy.

### Foy porter, honneur garder (To keep faith and guard your honour)

*words and music: Guillaume de Machaut (c 1300-1377)*

### Saluste du Bartas, six villanelles by Bédat de Monlaur

**1. Le château du Bartas; 2. Tout le long de la Baise; 3. Le depart; 4. La promenade; 5. Nérac en fête; 6. Duo**

*words: Pierre Bédat de Monlaur; music: Arthur Honegger (1892-1955)*

### Chanson d'amour (Love song); Songe (Dream) Op. 94

*words: Maurice Bouchor; music: Mélanie Bonis (1858-1937)*

### Chansons d'Orkenise (Songs of Orkenise), from Banalités, S107

*words: Guillaume Apollinaire; music: Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)*

### Don Quichotte à Dulcinée (Don Quixote to Dulcinea)

**1. Chanson Romanesque (Romanesque song); 2. Chanson épique (Epic song); 3. Chanson à boire (Drinking song)**

*words: Paul Morand; music: Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)*