

THE HYTHE SINGERS SUMMER CONCERT

PRIMA LE PAROLE

POULENC ~ DEBUSSY ~ RAVEL



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Summer Concert
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Prima Le Parole

The Hythe Singers Summer Concert

Saturday 11th July 2026, 7:30pm
at the Jurgens Centre, Englefield Green

(Patrons – Cecilia McDowall, Richard Mothersill and Ben Spencer)

Soprano

Alice Allan
Kate Brady
Ann Corfield
Demelza Coppin
Joan Hellyer
Jo Ive
Mary Morris
Myra Owen
Rebecca Saunders
Cathy Villiers
Carolyn Walters

Alto

Vivien Ambery-Smith
Eileen Bruce
Brídín Mills
Jessica Moore
Sarah Morris
Elaine Sturman
Chris Thomas
Susi Thornton
Jenni Whiteside

Tenor

Jason Crampton
Tony Dowson
David Moncur

Bass

Daniel Brown
Robert Buckley
Kiran Chatterjee
Rüdiger Schack

Musical Director: Richard Harker

The Hythe Singers is grateful for the support of the Humphrey Richardson Taylor Charitable Trust, which provides financial support to organisations for a range of musical activities in the geographical and historical areas of Surrey.

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www.hrtaylortrust.org.uk

Programme: Daniel Brown – Translations: Elaine Sturman

The Hythe Singers is a Registered Charity #1090818

PROGRAMME

Claude Debussy – Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans

Jean-Paul-Égide Martini – Plaisir D'Amour (Solo : Joan Hellyer)

Monroe – Regarde ! (Solo : Kate Brady)

Ernest Chausson – Le Colibri (Solo : Cathy Villiers)

Manning Sherwin – Un Rossignol Chant à Berkeley Square (Close Shaves)

Maurice Ravel – Trois Chansons

INTERVAL

Francis Poulenc – Huit Chansons Françaises (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8)

Henri Duparc – L'Invitation au Voyage (Solo : Rebecca Saunders)

Léo Delibes – The Frequent Flyer Duet (Soloists: Demelza Coppin & Myra Owen)

Louis Guglielmi – La Vie en Rose (Solo : Brídín Mills)

Trad. – French Nursery Rhymes (Solo: Sarah Morris)

Pierre Passereau – Il Est Bel Et Bon (Close Shaves et Amies)

Claude-Michel Schönberg & Alain Boublil – Les Misérables Medley

Prima la musica e poi le parole?

Which comes first – the music or the words? Salieri started this argument in 1786 with his opera of that name; and the movie world wrapped this into a (largely fictional) battle between Salieri and Mozart that became famous in *Amadeus*.

Our programme tonight includes French composers well known for their love of words. Debussy's care with poetry is clear in tonight's Chanson, as well as more broadly: his epic setting of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which includes Maeterlinck's prose essentially untouched, reinforces the point. Ravel caused a scandal in 1906 when his *Histoires naturelles* were published, requiring French to be sung as spoken, rather than as art-song convention. Poulenc was a devotee of the poets, especially Éluard, taking great care that his source texts were heard as their authors intended, with music fully in service of the word.

We finish with a medley from *Les Misérables*, which arguably transcends the divide between music and libretto – the songs of angry men are nothing without both words and music. Should the words come first, or the music? You decide.

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918) *Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans*

Debussy's texts for his *Chansons* were written while Charles, Duke of Orléans was held captive in England. Discovered unwounded under a pile of bodies after the Battle of Agincourt, he spent the next twenty-four years as a hostage, living the life of a (modestly confined) nobleman in various castles across England.

In this time, he wrote poetry, both in French and English. The *Chansons* – Debussy's only composition for unaccompanied choir – appear chosen for their patriotism, at a time when French cultural identity was still recovering from the Franco-Prussian war, reeling from the Dreyfus affair, and coming under renewed pressure from German dominance. The mistress that Charles adores in the first *chanson* is France herself.

1. *Dieu! Qu'il la fait bon regarder!*

*Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder!
La gracieuse bonne et belle;
Pour les grans biens que sont en elle
Chascun est prest de la louer.*

*Qui se pourroit d'elle lasser?
Tousjours sa beauté renouvelle.
Dieu qu'il la fait bon regarder,
La gracieuse bonne et belle !*

*Par de çà, ne de là, la mer
Ne scay dame ne damoiselle.
Qui soit en tous bien parfais telle.
C'est ung songe que d'i penser:*

Dieu ! qu'il la fait bon regarder!

2. *Quand j'ai ouy le tambourin sonner*

*Quant j'ai ouy la tabourin sonner,
pour s'en aller au may, en mon lit n'en
ay fait affray ne levé mon chief du
coissin ; en disant: il est trop matin,
Ung peu je me rendormiray.*

God! who has made her so fair to behold

God! who has made her so fair to behold.
She is graceful, good and lovely. For all
her many virtues, everyone is quick to
sing her praises.

Who could ever tire of her?
Her beauty never fades.

God! who has made her so fair to behold
She is graceful, good and lovely

Nowhere, neither here nor there across the
sea is there a maid or lady as perfect in
every way.

Just to think of her is a dream.

God! who has made her so fair to behold

When I heard the sound of the tambourine calling

When I heard the sound of the tambourine
calling us to go a-maying I paid it no
heed, nor even lifted my head from the
pillow, saying to myself:
I'll sleep for a while longer.

*Quant j'ay ouy le tabourin sonner,
pour s'en aller au may.*

*Jeunes gens partent leur butin;
De nonchaloir m'accointeray: a lui je
m'abutineray, trouvé l'ay plus
prouchain voisin: Quant j'ay ouy le
tabourin pour s'en aller au may en
mon lit n'en ay fait affray ne levé mon
chief du coissin.*

3. Yver, vous n'estes du'un villain

*Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain;
Esté est plaisant et gentil
En témoing de may et d'avril
Qui l'accompaignent soir et main.*

*Esté revet champs, bois et fleurs
De sa livrée de verdure
Et de maintes autres couleurs
Par l'ordonnance de nature.*

*Mais vous, Yver, trop estes plein
De nège, vent, pluye et grézil.
On vous deust banir en éxil.
Sans point flater je parle plein,
Yver, vous n'estes qu'un villain.*

When I heard the sound of the
tambourine calling us to go a-maying.

The lads and lasses are sharing their
spoils; nonchalantly, I will find
someone: through him I will win my
prize when I've found my next
neighbour. When I heard the sound of
the tambourine calling us to go a-
maying I paid it no heed, nor even lifted
my head from the pillow.

Winter, you are naught but a rogue

Winter, you are naught but a rogue;
Summer is pleasant and kind as
foreshown night and day by May and by
April.

Summer clothes fields, woods and
flowers in its livery of green and many
other colours, as nature ordained.

But you, Winter, you are filled with
snow, wind, rain and hail.
You should be banished into exile
In the plainest of words I say:

Winter, you are naught but a rogue.

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Trois Chansons

Ravel wrote the lyrics for these Chansons himself – in a style highly reminiscent of Charles d'Orléans – in 1915, while trying to enlist into the French army. Each is dedicated to someone he felt may help his cause: *Nicolette* to Tristan Klingor, who had military connections; *Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis* to Paul Painlevé, who became Minister of War in 1917; and *Ronde* to Sophie Clemenceau, daughter-in-law of Georges Clemenceau, twice Prime Minister of France.

The common theme across all three pieces is loss. *Nicolette*, a young girl picking flowers, escapes from a wolf and declines the advances of a young and handsome page, before falling into the arms of an older gentleman offering silver. The red, white, and blue birds in *Trois beaux oiseaux* represent the colours of the French flag, and hint that the subject of the song has died in battle; while *Ronde* covers the loss of respect by the young of the warnings of the old. The list of creatures was compiled with the help of friends as a parlour game during a dinner party.

1. *Nicolette*

*Nicolette, à la vesprée,
S'allait promener au pré,
Cueillir la pâquerette,
la jonquille et le muguet,
Toute sautillante, toute guillerette,
Lorgnant ci, là de tous les côtés.*

*Rencontra vieux loup grognant,
Tout hérissé, l'œil brillant;
"Hé là! ma Nicolette, viens tu pas chez
Mère Grand?"*

*A perte d'haleine, s'enfuit Nicolette,
Laissant là cornette et socques blancs.*

*Rencontra page joli, Chaussées bleues et
pourpoint gris,
"Hé là! ma Nicolette, veux tu pas d'un
doux ami?"*

*Sage, s'en retourna, pauvre Nicolette,
très lentement, le cœur bien marri.*

*Rencontra seigneur chenu,
Tors, laid, puant et ventru
"Hé là! ma Nicolette, veux tu pas tous
ces écus?"*

*Vite fut en ses bras, bonne Nicolette.
Jamais au pré n'est plus revenue.*

Nicolette

*Nicolette, at eventide,
Went strolling in the meadow,
Picking daisies, daffodils and lily-of-the-
valley,
Skipping jauntily,
Looking all around her.*

*She met an old growly wolf,
All bristly, his eyes glinting.
'Good day, my Nicolette,
Won't you come to Grandma's house?'*

*Nicolette fled, quite out of breath,
leaving her cloak and her white clogs.*

*She met a handsome page boy,
In blue stockings and a grey tunic.
'Good day, my Nicolette, wouldn't you
like a fine young man?'*

*But sensible Nicolette turned her back
Ruefully and with a heavy heart.*

*She met a grizzled old man,
Bent, ugly, smelly and potbellied.
'Good day, my Nicolette, would you like
all this gold?'*

*She ran quickly into his arms, good
Nicolette, nevermore did she stroll in the
meadow.*

2. Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis

*Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis
(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis
Ont passé par ici.*

*Le premier était plus bleu que le ciel,
(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Le second était couleur de neige,
Le troisième rouge vermeil.*

*"Beaux oiselets du Paradis,
(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Beaux oiselets du Paradis,
Qu'apportez par ici?"*

*"J'apporte un regard couleur d'azur
(Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)"
"Et moi, sur beau front couleur de
neige, un baiser dois mettre, encore
plus pur."*

*Oiseau vermeil du Paradis,
(Mon ami z-il est à la guerre)
Oiseau vermeil du Paradis,
Que portez vous ainsi?*

*"Un joli coeur tout cramoisi"
(Ton ami z-il est à la guerre)"
Ah! je sens mon coeur qui froidit...
Emportez-le aussi."*

3. Ronde

Les vieilles:

*N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
Jeunes filles, n'allez pas au bois:*

Three beautiful birds of Paradise

Three beautiful birds of Paradise,
(My love is away at the war)
Three beautiful birds of Paradise,
Came flying this way.

The first was bluer than the sky,
(My love is away at the war)
The second was the colour of snow,
The third was crimson red.

Beautiful birds of Paradise,
(My love is away at the war)
Beautiful birds of Paradise,
What do you have for me?

'I bring you my blue-tinged gaze',
(Your love is away at the war)
'On your fair snowy forehead
I must plant an even purer kiss'.

Crimson red bird of Paradise,
(My love is away at the war)
Crimson red bird of Paradise
What do you have for me?

'A lovely heart of deepest red'.
(Your love is away at the war)
"Ah, I feel my heart turn to ice...
Take it too."

Round

The Old Women:

Do not venture into the woods of
Ormonde, young lasses. Nevermore:

Il y a plein de satyres, de centaures, de malins sorciers, des farfadets et des incubes, des ogres, des lutins, des faunes, des follets, des lamies, diables, diablots, diabolotins, des chèvre-pieds, des gnomes, des démons, des loups-garous, des elfes, des myrmidons, des enchanteurs et des mages, des stryges, des sylphes, des moines-bourrus, des cyclopes, des djinns, gobelins, korrigans, nécromants, kobolds...

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde, n'allez pas au bois.

Les vieux:

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde, Jeunes garçons, n'allez pas au bois:

Il y a plein de faunesses, de bacchantes et de males fées, garçons, n'allez pas au bois.

Des satyresses, des ogresses, et des babaïagas, des centaures et des diablesses, goules sortant du sabbat, des farfadettes et des démons, des larves, des nymphes, des myrmidons, hamadryades, dryades, naiades, ménades, thyades, follettes, lémoires, gnomides, succubes, gorgones, gobelines...

N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde.

Les filles / Les garçons:

N'irons plus au bois d'Ormonde, Hélas! plus jamais n'irons au bois.

They are full of satyrs, centaurs, wily wizards, leprechauns and evil spirits, ogres, pixies, fauns, sprites, monsters, devils, imps, gremlins, goat-footed Pans, gnomes, demons, were-wolves, elves, myrmidons, magicians, conjurors, witches, sylphs, wayward monks, cyclops, djinns, hobgoblins, gremlins, necromancers, kobolds...

Do not venture into the woods of Ormonde.

The Old Men

Do not venture into the woods of Ormonde, young lads. Nevermore:

They are full of she-fauns, bacchantes and wicked fairies, lads, do not go into the woods.

Satyresses, ogresses, and baba-yagas, centaures and she-devils, ghouls from covens, she-leprechauns and demons, grubs, nymphs, myrmidons, wood nymphs, dryads, naiads, maenads, thyades, sprites, lemurs, gnomes, succubesses, gorgons, goblins...

Do not venture into the woods of Ormonde.

The Lads and Lasses

We will nevermore venture into the woods of Ormonde. Alas! Nevermore.

Il n'y a plus de satyres, plus de nymphes ni de males fées.

*Plus de farfadets, plus d'incubes,
Plus d'ogres, de lutins, de faunes, de follets, de lamies, diables, diablots, diabolotins, de chèvre-pieds, de gnomes, de démons, de loups-garous, ni d'elfes, de myrmidons, plus d'enchanteurs ni de mages, de stryges, de sylphes, de moines-bourus, de cyclopes, de djinns, de diabloteaux, d'éfrits, d'ægyfans, de sylvains, gobelins, korrigans, nécromans, kobolds...*

*N'allez pas au bois d'Ormonde,
N'allez pas au bois.*

*Les malavisées vieilles, Les malavisés
vieux les ont effarouchés – Ah!*

There are no more satyrs, nymphs, nor wicked fairies.

No sprites, no incubuses, no ogres, no leprechauns, no fauns, no sprites, no monsters, devils, imps, gremlins. No goat-footed Pans, gnomes, demons, no faunesses, no! No were-wolves, elves, myrmidons. No magicians, no conjurors, no witches, no sylphs, no wayward monks, no cyclops, no djinns, no imps, no ghosts, no efreet, no aegyfans, wood nymphs, goblins, necromancers, kobolds...

Do not venture into the woods of Ormonde

The malevolent old men and women have frightened them all away – Ah!

INTERVAL

Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963)

Huit Chansons Françaises

During the Second World War, Poulenc channelled his energies into composition – including the *'Figure humaine'*, written in secret to be performed as France was liberated, and the Chansons, written in celebration of the end of the war.

Poulenc's texts reach far back into the French folk tradition. All of unknown author, and likely spanning centuries, they capture rural and vernacular tradition: Margoton going to the well; weaving, pounding grain, and so on. The musical setting captures traditional French folk melodies, but incorporating Poulenc's twin identities of the monk and the hooligan – the vivacity of dancing clogs contrasting with the quieter setting of the Belle waiting at the bottom of the tower.

1. *Margoton va t'a l'iau*

*Margoton va t'a l'iau avecque son
cruchon.*

Margoton goes to the well

Margoton goes to the well with her pitcher.

*La fontaine était creuse, elle est tombée
au fond:*

Aïe, aïe, aïe, aïe se dit Margoton.

*Par là passèrent trois jeunes et beaux
garçons...*

*Que don'rez-vous la belle qu'on vous
tir' du fond...*

*Tirez d'abord, dit-elle, après ça nous
verrons...*

*Quand la bell' fut tirée commence une
chanson...*

*Ce n'est pas ça la bell' que nous vous
demandons...*

*C'est votre petit cœur savoir si nous
l'aurons...*

*Mon petit cœur, messir's, n'est point
pour greluchons...*

2. La belle se sied au pied de la tour

*La belle se sied au pied de la tour, qui
pleure et soupire et mène grand dolour.*

*Son père lui demande: fille, qu'avez-
vous? Volez-vous mari ou volez-vous
seignour ?*

*Je ne veuille mari, je ne veuille
seignour, je veuille le mien ami qui
pourrit en la tour.*

*Par Dieu, ma belle-fille, alors ne
l'aurez vous, car il sera pendu demain
au point du jour.*

The well was dry, she fell right to the
bottom.

Aïe, aïe, aïe, aïe said Margoton.

Three handsome young men were
passing that way...

What will you give us, fair maiden, if we
pull you out?

Pull me out first and then we'll see...

When she was pulled out, the fair maid
began to sing...

That is not what we wanted from you
fair maiden...

We want to know if we have captured
your little heart...

My little heart, good sirs, is not for
scallywags such as you...

The fair maid sits at the foot of the tower

The fair maid sits at the foot of the
tower, crying and sighing in mortal
anguish.

Her father asks: what is the matter?
Would you like to be married? Would
you like a fine gentleman?

I want no fine gentleman, I want my true
love, who languishes in the tower.

By God, my fair daughter, you will
never have him, for he will hang
tomorrow at break of day.

*Père, si on le pend, enfouyé-moi
dessous; ainsi diront les gens, ce sont
loyales amours.*

3. Pilons l'orge

*Pilons l'orge, pilons l'orge, pilons
l'orge, pilons-la.*

*Mon père m'y maria, (pilons l'orge,
pilons-la), À un vilain m'y donna
(tirez-vous ci, tirez-vous la).*

*À un vilain m'y donna (pilons l'orge,
pilons-la), qui de rien ne me donna
(tirez-vous ci, tirez-vous ça), qui de
rien ne me donna, (pilons l'orge,
pilons-la).*

*Mais s'il continue cela, (tirez-vous ci,
tirez-vous la), mais s'il continue cela,
pilons l'orge, pilons-la,*

*Battu vraiment il sera, tirez-vous ci,
tirez-vous la.*

4. Clic, clac, dansez sabots

*Clic, clac, dansez sabots, et que crèvent
les bombardes, Clic, clac, dansez sabots,
et qu'éclatent les pipeaux.*

*Mais comment mener la danse quand
les belles n'y sont pas?*

*Allons donc quérir les filles, ben sûr
qu'il n'en manquera pas?*

*Ben bonjour messieux et dames,
donn'ez vous la bell' que v'la?*

Father, if he hangs, bury me under the
ground: then folk will say that this was
true love.

Thresh the grain

Thresh the grain, thresh the grain, thresh
it well

My father had me married (thresh the
grain, thresh it). He gave me to a wretch.
(pull this way, pull that way)

He gave me to a wretch (thresh the
grain, thresh it) who gives me nothing in
return. (pull this way, pull that way)
who gives me nothing in return (thresh
the grain, thresh it)

But if it continues like this, (pull this
way, pull that way), but if it continues
like this (thresh the grain, thresh it)

He will be soundly beaten. He will be
pulled this way and that.

Click, Clack, Dancing Clogs

Click, clack, dancing clogs, let the
canons explode, Click, clack, dancing
clogs, let the pipes ring out.

But how can we have a dance when
there are no fair maidens here?

Let's go and seek some lasses, there are
sure to be plenty?

Good day, ladies and gentlemen, will
you let us have the fair maids we see
here?

Le Père:

Les filles c'est fait pour l'ménage et pour garder la maison.

Ouais mais pour fair' mariage vous faudra ben des garçons.

Vous n'en avez point fait d'autre, vous patronne et vous patron.

Le Père:

Allez donc ensemble au diable, ça s'ra ben un débarras.

Ah! Patron et vous patronne, qu'on s'embrasse pour de bon.

Le Père:

Clic, clac, dansez sabots, et que crèvent les bombardes.

Clic, clac, dansez sabots, et qu'éclatent les pipeau.

8. Les Tisserands

Les tisserands sont pir' que les évêques,

Tous les lundis ils s'en font une fête

Et tipe et tape et tipe et tape, est-il trop gros, est-il trop fin, et couchés tard, levés matin, en roulant la navette le beau temps viendra.

*Tous les lundis ils s'en font une fête
Et le mardi ils ont mal à la tête.*

*Et le mardi ils ont mal à la tête,
Le mercredi ils vont changer leur pièce.*

The Father

The maids are here to do the housework and to look after the house.

Indeed, but to make a marriage you do need lads

You surely did the same, father and mother.

The Father

Go to the devil, all of you and good riddance.

Ah, mother and father, let's kiss and make up once and for all.

The Father

Click, clack, dancing clogs, let the canons explode.

Click, clack, dancing clogs, let the pipes ring out.

The Weavers

Weavers are worse than bishops:

On Mondays they have a holiday

Refrain: And tip and tap, is it too fat, is it too thin? And late to bed, early to rise, by rolling the shuttle good times will come.

On Mondays they have a holiday, and on Tuesdays they have a headache.

On Tuesdays they have a headache, and on Wednesdays they change their cloth.

*Le mercredi ils vont changer leur pièce,
Et le jeudi ils vont voir leur maîtresse.*

*Et le jeudi ils vont voir leur maîtresse,
Le vendredi ils travaillent sans cesse.*

*Le vendredi ils travaillent sans cesse,
Le samedi la pièce n'est pas faite.*

*Le samedi la pièce n'est point faite,
Et le dimanche il faut de l'argent,
maître.*

On Wednesdays they change their cloth,
and on Thursdays they see their masters.

On Thursdays they see their masters,
and on Fridays they work non-stop.

On Fridays they work non-stop.
On Saturdays the cloth is not finished.

On Saturdays the cloth is not finished,
And on Sundays they must pay the
master's fine.

Claude-Michel Schönberg (b. 1944)

Les Misérables

Lyrics: Alain Boublil, Jean-Marc Natel & Herbert Kretzmer

Les Misérables premiered in Paris in 1980, but it is the Cameron Mackintosh / Royal Shakespeare Company production in 1985 that is most well known. The English version – rewritten, more than translated by Kretzmer – became an hour longer than the French original, and individual songs changed substantially. “*Castle on a Cloud*” began life as “*My prince is already on his way*”, conveying a far more Disneyfied sentiment of longing. In 1991, a second French-language version was created that included many of the new, and now famous English lyrics translated back into French.

Richard Harker (Musical Director)

Richard is musical director of The Hythe Singers, Henley Choral Society and Henley Youth Choir. He is a Chorus Master at Opera Holland Park and works as a music teacher in schools. Richard is an organist and accompanist, and graduated with an MA in Choral Conducting from the Royal Academy of Music. Richard read music at, and was organ scholar of, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

At Opera Holland Park Richard has worked on *Pagliacci*, *La Bohème*, *La Traviata*, *Eugene Onegin* (Assistant Conductor & Chorus Master), *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*; *Manon Lescaut* and *Un ballo in maschera* (Chorus Master), *Ruddigore* and *Pirates of Penzance* (Chorus Master and Assistant Répétiteur). Other operatic engagements have included *L'Elisir d'amore* for West Green House Opera (Chorus Master), *HMS Pinafore* for Windsor and Eton Opera (Conductor), Terterian's *Fire Ring* at the Grimeborn Festival with London Armenian Opera (Conductor).

Sing with The Hythe Singers

An Amateur Chamber Choir based in Englefield Green
Rehearsals Wednesdays, 7:30pm



New altos, tenors and basses welcome!
Find out more: www.thehythesingers.com

THE HYTHE SINGERS AUTUMN CONCERT

**KODÁLY – MISSA BREVIS
BRITTEN – CEREMONY OF CAROLS
JANÁČEK – OTČENÁŠ**

**SAT 28 NOVEMBER – 7.30PM
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, THORPE**



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