

An Exploration of Pre-Raphaelite Song

with David Owen Norris and student singers and accompanists, who learn the songs in advance of coaching sessions with DON, which culminate in a public performance.

Looking well beyond the familiar territory of Scott & Tennyson, the selection of songs treats the same topics as the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood – the recreation of an idealized Middle Ages, the celebration of Nature and of manual labour, the necessity of salvation, and above all, the telling of a story in a single image.

Some of the songs pre-date the formation of the PRB, and show how its members seized upon ideas that were already gaining currency. Unusually, technical parallels between music and painting can be traced: Loder's use of the Mixolydian mode in *Father Francis* (unforgettably reprised in Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*), and the generally lyrical style of melody, pursue the same end as the PRB's interest in directness and apparent simplicity, while Thomas Haynes Bayly's relocation of the 'T' of his songs from the race-courses, cities and seas inhabited by the characters created by Charles Dibdin to the Victorian drawing-room creates the same contemporary psycho-drama conveyed by a painting like Holman Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience* (which he exhibited as a companion piece to *The Light of the World*).



These technical changes can be demonstrated very simply by comparing Bayly's *Isle of Beauty* with *The Emigrant* by James Hook (1746-1827). Both songs deal with the same topic as Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England*: Hook's prosaic title speaks volumes on its own. Finally, the manipulation of a melody through various verses is, in the hands of a master like Sullivan, an excellent parallel to telling a story in a single image. This exploration will define Pre-Raphaelite Song as a genre.



The Last of England

David Owen Norris has recently concluded his complete recordings of the songs of Sir Arthur Sullivan, on Chandos. His other recorded surveys of nineteenth-century English Song include the complete songs of Sir William Sterndale Bennett (Sullivan's teacher) and of Edward Lear (whose setting of Tennyson's *Tears, idle tears* lies on the floor in Hunt's picture above). He has devised and presented song recitals for the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, the National Gallery in London, the Manchester Art Gallery, and the Laing in Newcastle.

The project comprises two stages, independent of each other. The first includes simple songs, easy to sing and play; the second, slightly more demanding repertoire. Each stage can exist independently, or both could be undertaken at once, depending on the resources available. There are songs by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), Alexander Lee (1802-1851), Edward Loder (1809-1865), John Liptrot Hatton (1809-1886), Henry Smart (1813-1879), Willoughby Weiss (1820-1867), Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900), Sir Hubert Parry (1848-1918), Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934) and Alice Millais (1862-1936).

STAGE ONE

Mediaeval character-poems by W.H. Bellamy (1798-1862?)

Edward Loder	Father Francis
Henry Smart	The Lady of the Lee
JL Hatton	Simon the Cellarer
Edward Loder	Martin the Man-at-Arms
Edward Loder	Philip the Falconer

Story-Songs by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839)

Oh no! We never mention her
 We met – 'twas in a crowd
 Isle of Beauty
 (with a verse from Hook's *The Emigrant*, for comparison)
 I'll be no submissive wife (music by Alexander Lee)

Worker's Realism

W.H.Weiss The Village Blacksmith (a setting of Longfellow)

STAGE TWO

Poems by Thomas Ingoldsby (R.H. Barham 1788-1845)

Sir Hubert Parry	There sits a bird on yonder tree
Sir Arthur Sullivan	There sits a bird on yonder tree
Sir Edward Elgar	As I laye a-thynkyng

Two Songs by Alice Millais

(Mrs. Charles Stuart-Wortley, Sir John Millais' daughter and Elgar's 'Windflower' Muse)

Somewhere or other	Christina Rossetti
Ah! si vous saviez	Sully Prudhomme

Three more Sullivan songs

The First Departure	Edward Monro (an esteemed colleague of John Keble)
The Mother's Dream	A picture of the afterlife by William Barnes
Guinevere!	A mediaeval portrait by Lionel Lewin



Ford Madox Brown: *Work*