

Salisbury Musical Society Concert
Salisbury Cathedral 18.11.17

The concert began in reflective mood with *Lady Radnor's Suite*, six dance movements for strings by Hubert Parry, originally conducted at Longford Castle, Salisbury in 1894 by the work's dedicatee, the wife of the 5th Earl.

The main work was *A Sea Symphony*, a setting of Walt Whitman's poems by Ralph Vaughan Williams. At the 1910 premiere its listeners heard not only the composer's first symphony but the first ever that was fully choral and orchestral. *Behold, the sea itself* is the opening assertion, powerfully voiced by Salisbury Musical Society under David Halls' direction. The choir did justice to this wide-ranging and demanding work that depicts the oceans and honours all ships and their sailors.

Baritone Gareth Brynmor John was particularly eloquent in *On the Beach at Night, Alone*, and Jane Irwin's wide soprano and mezzo range matched him well, especially in the climax of the last movement. Occasionally the Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra dominated the voices, but their fine playing overall fittingly celebrated the 40th anniversary of their association with SMS.

John Cox