

Fri 19 Jan // 7.30pm  
RNCM Concert Hall

**Edvard Grieg**  
**Vocal Ensemble**  
and RNCM  
**Chamber Choir**

# Programme

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**Knut Nystedt** Immortal Bach Op 153 \*; O Crux \*

**Harald Sæverud** Sjø soli på Anaripigg ~

**David Wikander** Kung Liljekonvale ~

**Marianne Reidarsdatter** *Dåm* from Eriksen Etter Regnfallet ~

**Edward Bairstow** Jesu, the very thought of thee \*;  
Let all mortal flesh keep silence \*

**Torstein Aargaard Nilsen** Fem Elementer ~

*i. Ild*

*v. Tre*

**Charles Villiers Stanford** 3 Latin Motets Op 38 \*

*i. Justorum animae*

*iii. Beati quorum*

*ii. Coelos ascendit*

\*RNCM Chamber Choir and Edvard Grieg Vocal Ensemble

~ Edvard Grieg Vocal Ensemble Only

**Paul Robinson, Stuart Overington, Alexander**

**Rebetge** *conductors*

**Edvard Grieg Vocal Ensemble**

**RNCM Chamber Choir**

# Introductions

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## Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble and the Royal Northern College of Music, by Simon Kirkbride (General Director/CEO of Edvard Grieg Korene)

It is almost 10 years since EGV and the RNCM began working together with the aim of providing professional performing experience for young students from the RNCM. Almost every year since, students from the RNCM have regularly been involved in performances with EGV and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2018, Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble became 'ensemble in residence' at the RNCM working specifically on the art of A Cappella performance repertoire with the RNCM chamber choir.

This important work gives valuable experience to the students and has led directly to ex- RNCM students becoming regular guest artists with EGV as young professionals at the beginning of their careers.

For the BBC Proms Ligeti *Requiem* project in 2023 we took this collaboration much further, and the entire RNCM Chamber choir together with student conductors worked alongside EGV and our Chief Conductor, Edward Gardner on the Ligeti *Requiem* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This was an extraordinary experience for all of us, and it was a wonderful opportunity for the excellent RNCM Chamber Choir to perform with a world-class orchestra, conductor and choir at the very highest level of Classical Music making, and certainly a moment in their careers which we hope they will never forget!

*'The performance was absolutely astounding and I'm not alone in saying how remarkable it was to be in the (sold-out!) audience watching the madness/genius of Ligeti unfold. All of us at the RNCM can take a lot away from the amazing partnership we have with EGV - working with the group for this project has been inspiring for me so I can only imagine how the students feel having been singing alongside them.'* **Edgar Divver, Orchestras and Ensembles Assistant Manager, Royal Northern College of Music.**



## Introduction to the programme, by Paul Robinson (Music Director, Edvard Grieg Vocal Ensemble)

Celebrated composer anniversaries to fall this year include Anton Bruckner (b.1824); Arnold Schönberg and Gustav Holst (b.1874); and Giacomo Puccini and Gabriel Fauré who both died in 1924. After three days of hugely enjoyable rehearsals, the RNCM Chamber Choir and Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble mark some other composer anniversaries in this concert of British and Norwegian choral music.

The a cappella works of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford with their elegant Victorian ease, and Huddersfield-born Sir Edward Bairstow's epic *Let all mortal flesh keep silence* are staples of cathedral and college chapel evensongs up and down the country. Perhaps less familiar this evening will be works by the Norwegian composers. Knut Nystedt was a father-figure of Norwegian choral music. He founded the first professional choir in Norway, Det Norske Solistkor in Oslo in 1950, conducting it for 40 years. As a composer, he was a major figure in northern European choral music. One can hear how his luminous textures, block chords and modal canons have found their way into the vernacular of many of today's contemporary choral composers. Harald Sæverud was Bergen through and through and is most known for his orchestral works, including suites of music for *Peer Gynt*; nine symphonies; and for his many piano works including the beguiling *Rondo Amoroso*. Another with Bergen connections is Torstein Aargaard-Nilsen who has written many works for wind and brass ensembles (which have a particularly rich heritage in the Vestland area of Norway) and from whom EGV commissioned *Fem Elementer* in 2020. Marianne Reidarsdatter Eriksen studied composition at Birmingham Conservatoire and her many wonderful Norwegian folk music-infused pieces for choir include *kom regn, kom fred, kom trøst* which features on Uranienborg Vokalensemble's Grammy nominated recording "Himmelrand" in 2016. Lastly, there is the one interloper of the evening, Swede David Wikander who was organist at Stockholm's cathedral Storkyrkan and whose compositional output was modest but he produced a gem in the magical and otherworldly *Kung Liljekonvalje*.

# Translations

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**KNUT NYSTEDT** Immortal Bach  
after J.S. Bach (BWV 478)

Komm süßer Tod, komm sel'ge Ruh!  
Komm, führe mich in Friede.

Come sweet death, come blessed rest!  
Come, lead me into peace.

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**KNUT NYSTEDT** O Crux  
Text: Venantius Fortunatus (530-609)

O crux splendidior cunctis astris,  
Mundo celebris  
Hominibus multam amabilis  
Sanctior universis,  
Quae sola fuisti Digna  
Portare talentum mundi.  
Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,  
Dulcia ferens pondera.  
Salva, praesentem catervam  
In tuis hodie, laudibus, congregatam

O Cross, more radiant than the stars,  
Celebrated throughout the earth,  
Beloved of the people.  
Holier than all things,  
Which alone was found worthy  
To bear the light of the world:  
Sweet wood, sweet nails,  
That bore the sweet burden,  
Save the flock which today  
Is gathered to praise you.

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**HARALD SÆVERUD** Sjå soli på Anaripigg Op 35  
Text: Embret Hougen

Sjå soli på Anaripigg!  
No går ho dit som ho om notte ligg;  
men fyst ho me  
og stein og tre  
og alle te  
for gylle lyt.

Budeie skvattar frå sitt sæl:  
«Men mon-tru kue kjem no tå se sjøl?  
Hu-lu-li-lu  
Hu-lu-li-lu!  
Mi syte ku  
er grumast støtt».

Bjöllunn dumt bak om Haugom tona,  
klonken rart att i bergom ljoma,  
bækkjin sillar som tårar stilt.  
Eg er hug-ilt.  
Ko reint forunderleg au lell,  
mitt hjerta hoppar upp i meg i kvell!

Ko rart de er,  
når fjelli tek  
sin afske me  
sin kjære gut!  
På Høvrings vakre sæterstul  
i dag vist siste gongi helt me jul,

de hende fleir  
at alder meir  
døm såg sit reir,  
når døm flaug ut.  
Alder gjentunn så vakkert hullad',  
bergljom, bækkjin og bjöllunn sullad'

Detti spår meg vist einkvort ilt; - eg er hug-ilt.

Shepherd's Farewell  
(Harald Sæverud's choice of title in English)

See the sun on Anaripigg!  
Now she descends to where she rests at night,  
But first she will gild me,  
and stone and tree,  
and everything.

The milkmaid calls from her cottage:  
"I wonder if the cow will return home by itself?  
Hululilu! My sweet cow is always true".  
The cowbell sounds muffled behind the hill,  
The haunting melody echoes in the mountains,  
The brook runs like quiet tears.  
I am heartbroken.  
Yet how remarkable it is, my heart leaps in my chest tonight.  
How strange it is when the mountain bids their dearest boy  
farewell.  
At Høvrings beautiful farm hut, we celebrate Christmas  
today for the last time.  
Many never saw their home again after having flown the  
nest.

Never sang the girls so beautifully,  
Mountain echo, brook, and bell all hum.  
This suggests something ominous.  
I am heartbroken.

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**DAVID WIKANDER** Kung Liljekonvalje  
Text: Gustaf Fröding

Kung Liljekonvalje av dungen,  
kung Liljekonvalje är vit som snö,  
nu sörjer unga kungen  
prinsessan Liljekonvaljemö.

Kung Liljekonvalje han sänker  
sitt sorgsna huvud så tungt och vekt,  
och silverhjälmén blänker  
i sommarskymningen blekt.  
Kring bårens spindelvävar  
från rökelsekaren med blomsterstoff

# Translations

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en virak sakta svävar,  
all skogen är full av doft.

Från björkens gungande krona,  
från vindens vaggande gröna hus  
små sorgevisor tona,  
all skogen är uppfylld av sus.

Det susar ett bud genom dälden  
om kungssorg bland viskande blad,  
i skogens vida välden  
från liljekonvaljernas huvudstad.

King Lily of the Valley

King Lily of the valley is white as snow,  
now the young king is mourning the maiden princess Lily of  
the valley.  
King Lily of the valley is lowering his sorrowful head, so  
heavy and weak,  
and his silver helmet shines pale in the summer twilight.

Around the spider's web of the bier  
from the incense plates with flower powder  
a resin incense slowly floats,  
the whole forest is filled with scent.

From the swaying crown of the birch  
from the rocking green house of the wind  
little songs of sorrow are sounding,  
the whole forest is filled with sighing.

A message is whispered through the little valley  
about royal mourning among whispering leaves,  
in the wide realms of the forest  
from the capital of the lilies of the valley.

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## MARIANNE REIDARSDATTER

*Dåm* from Eriksen Etter Regnfallet  
Poem: from *mold* by Hilde Myklebust

tid har kome  
tid har gått  
utan at eg har skjøna det

no tyngest huset av ein innestengd dåm

eg står opp  
opnar vindauget  
eg opnar dørar denne spede morgonen  
eg finn frukta og ber ho ut

Odour

time has come  
time has gone  
without me realising it

now the house is weighed down by a trapped odour

I get up  
open the window  
I open doors on this early morning  
I find the fruit and carry it out

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## EDWARD C BAIRSTOW

Jesu, the very thought of Thee  
Text: Edward Caswall

Jesu, the very thought of Thee,  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far  
Thy face to see,  
And in thy presence rest.

---

## EDWARD C BAIRSTOW

Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Let all mortal flesh keep silence  
and stand with fear and trembling,  
and lift itself above all earthly thought.

For the King of kings and Lord of lords,  
Christ our God,  
cometh forth to be our oblation,  
and to be given for Food to the faithful.

Before Him come the choirs of angels  
with every principality and power;  
the Cherubim with many eyes, and wingèd Seraphim,  
who veil their faces as they shout exultingly the hymn:  
Alleluia!

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## TORSTEIN AARGAARD NILSEN Fem Elementer

(five elements)  
Text: Malin Kjelsrud

Ild:  
Vi har fanget vår respektløse venn  
Nå kan vi fredfullt stirre inn i temmede Flammer

Fire:  
We have captured our disrespectful friend  
Now we can peacefully stare into tamed flames

Tre:  
Av tre bygges tomme hus og hjerterom  
Levende styrke - vakker, livsnødvendig symbiose

Wood:  
Empty houses and heart-rooms are built of wood  
Living strength – beautiful, vital symbiosis

# Translations

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## CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD Three Latin motets Op.38

### Justorum animae Op 38 No 1

Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,  
et non tanget illos tormentum mortis.  
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,  
illi autem sunt in pace.

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,  
and the torment of death shall not touch them.  
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die;  
but they are in peace.

### Beati quorum via Op 38 No 3

Beati quorum via integra est,  
qui ambulant in lege Domini.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,  
who walk in the law of the Lord.

### Cœlos ascendit hodie Op 38 No 2

Coelos ascendit hodie  
Jesus Christus Rex Glorïae:  
Sedet ad Patris dexteram,  
Gubernat coelum et terram.  
Iam finem habent omnia  
Patris Davidis carmina.  
Iam Dominus cum Domino  
Sedet in Dei solio:  
In hoc triumpho maximo  
Benedicamus Domino.  
Laudatur Sancta Trinitas,  
Deo dicamus gratias,  
Alleluia. Amen.

Today into the heavens has ascended  
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, Alleluia!  
He sits at the Father's right hand,  
and rules heaven and earth, Alleluia!  
Now have been fulfilled all of  
Father David's songs,  
Now God is with God, Alleluia!  
He sits upon the royal throne of God,  
in this his greatest triumph, Alleluia!  
Let us bless the Lord:  
Let the Holy Trinity be praised,  
let us give thanks to the Lord,  
Alleluia! Amen.

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# Personnel

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## **EDVARD GRIEG VOCAL ENSEMBLE**

### **SOPRANOS**

Hilde Veslemøy Hagen  
Ingvill Holter

### **ALTOS**

Eva B. Landro  
Daniela Iancu Johannessen

### **TENORS**

Tyler Ray  
Paul Robinson

### **BASSES**

Ørjan Hartveit  
David Hansford

## **RNCM CHAMBER CHOIR**

### **SOPRANOS**

Ruby Magee  
Elena Whiteley  
Eve Codman  
Clementine Thompson  
Elise Morton  
Madeleine Wickham-Brown  
Niamh O'Connor  
Kelsey Thomas

### **ALTOS**

Siân Davies  
Eibhlín Eddy  
Amelia Gray  
Nia Edwards  
Kamea Nemeth  
Sophie Illiaifar

### **TENORS**

Jacob Parker  
Aaron Peters  
Sam Yuen  
Barney Fildes  
Johnny Derbyshire  
Sam Rose

### **BASSES**

Cyrus Chiu  
Ben Finnie  
Nick Simper  
George Elson  
Alex Peart  
Lewis Reardon



# Biographies

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## EDVARD GRIEG VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble (EGV) is one of Norway's leading vocal ensembles – the ensemble has gained national and international recognition. EGV is based in Bergen and has since 2013 been the resident ensemble at Edvard Grieg's home, Troidhaugen.

The vocal ensemble performs as an eight-part a cappella ensemble led by musical director Paul Robinson. EGV has been commissioned to perform a number of works and arrangements, including by composers Marianne Reidarsdatter Eriksen, Torstein Aagaard-Nilsen, Kim André Arnesen, Jonathan Rathbone and David Lang. Voces8, Barokkanerne, Manchester Camerata and Barokksolistene are among the leading ensembles EGV has collaborated with, and the choir has achieved critical acclaim for its recording on Chandos, *Edvard Grieg Kor sings Grieg*. EGV is resident ensemble at Trollhaugen and at the RNCM.

EGV regularly collaborates with Bergen International Festival (FiB), KODE, Griegakademiet, and Bergen Kirke Autunnale, and continues to establish new collaborative projects with other Norwegian cultural organizations such as Siste Kapittel and OseanaLive.

EGV also works with amateur choirs through the Møt Koret (Meet the Choir) programme. In addition to their busy concert calendar, the singers in EGV work as mentors and instructors for the EGK Children and Young people activities.



## RNCM CHAMBER CHOIR

The RNCM Chamber Choir is an auditioned ensemble of up to 24 voices and is open to students of all Schools of Study – you don't need to be a Principal Study singer, although many are. Unusually for an RNCM ensemble, the Chamber Choir's personnel is fixed for the entire academic year, allowing the choir to develop a real personality and sense of homogeneity throughout the different projects they undertake. Under the guidance of director Stuart Overington, the Chamber Choir perform several times a year, ranging from core repertoire to contemporary music, including regularly premiering new choral works, both by RNCM students and established composers.

The Chamber Choir regularly participates in projects with a variety of professional ensembles, such as the Hallé Orchestra, the Edvard Grieg Kor, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. With the LPO and EGK, they performed Ligeti's *Requiem* at the 2023 BBC Proms as part of the 'A Space Odyssey' Prom. The Chamber Choir's close relationship with the Edvard Grieg Kor, a professional vocal ensemble based in Bergen, Norway, has resulted in many substantial projects over many years. In 2019 the Chamber Choir travelled to Bergen to perform Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* with the EGK and Bergen Philharmonic under the baton of Thierry Fischer, and have hosted EGK regularly in Manchester, most recently in January 2023, with EGK next visiting in January 2024. Alongside the Hallé, the Chamber Choir performed recently as the semi-chorus in Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and alongside the chorus in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Choir also performed a solo pre-concert at The Bridgewater Hall in October 2023 as part of the Hallé's 2023-24 season.

# Biographies

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## PAUL ROBINSON

Paul Robinson was both a boy chorister and a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, where he read music. He continued his studies at the Royal College of Music and was the inaugural holder of the Mills Williams Junior Fellowship.

Solo concert performances have included Bach's *St John Passion* for the London Bach Festival and with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* in Vancouver; and his debut at the Wigmore Hall with Malcolm Martineau.

Paul has performed Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with the Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra; Purcell's *Indian Queen* and *Dioclesian* with Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music; Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music* with Sir Simon Rattle and CBSO and Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* and Handel's *Messiah* with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

His recordings include Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia* and Mendelssohn's version of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for Radio della Svizzera Italiana (RTSI) and a setting of *Psalm 91* on the Hyperion Schubert series.

Other solo engagements have included Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem* in King's College, Cambridge; Haydn's *Missa Sancti Nicolae* and Schubert's *Magnificat* with the Philharmonia at the Royal Festival Hall; Britten's *Cantata Misericordium* with the Bochum Symphoniker; Handel's *Solomon* and *Theodora* in Darmstadt and Frankfurt, and concerts in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Shizuoka, Japan.

He joined Edvard Grieg Vocal Ensemble at the start of 2015 and singing 2nd tenor. He is the Musical Director of the Vocal Ensemble and an artistic director of Edvard Grieg Korene.

## STUART OVERINGTON

Stuart Overington is an accomplished conductor, vocal animator and composer working between Manchester and London, UK. Having trained as a singer and conductor at the Royal Northern College of Music he is known for his engaging, informative and inclusive style and works with a wide and diverse range of ensembles.

Stuart has established and directed a number of junior, youth and community choirs across the country. He is currently the director of choirs at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Hallé Orchestra's Youth Choirs director and Chetham's School of Music Chamber choir as well as regularly running community choir workshops and events across the country.

## ALEXANDER REBETGE

Alexander Rebetge started his musical career as chorister at the Munich Boys Choir. He studied Church Music at the University of the Arts Berlin (UdK Berlin) with Leo van Doeselaar (organ), Wolfgang Seifen (improvisation), Kai-Uwe Jirka (choral conducting) and Harry Curtis (orchestral conducting).

Between 2017 and 2022 Alexander held the position of Assistant Director of Music, vocal coach and repetiteur at the Windsbacher Knabenchor, one of Germany's leading boys' choirs. During his time at Windsbach, he specialised in choral a-cappella and oratorio repertoire. Furthermore, he assisted several oratorio productions with renowned orchestras such as the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker, the Freiburger Barock Orchester, the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. In 2022 he was appointed Director of Music at St. Ann's Church in Manchester and studies conducting with Mark Heron at the RNCM. In Summer 2023 he initiated the Manchester Bach Festival based at St Ann's Church.



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