

## **The King's Men - Saturday 3 February 2018**

We are very blessed at St Andrew's, not least because over the last 13 years we have been able to hear some of the best music around being performed in our church. On a winter night you might not want to travel too far, and on Saturday 3 February, we were fortunate that The King's Men – not Shakespeare's acting company, but a close harmony group made up of Choral Scholars of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge – joined us after singing Evensong in King's College Chapel. The concert was an outstanding success, and a fitting tribute to Chris Bissell to whom the evening was dedicated.

The choir consisted of 8 singers (plus an organist, who performed one of Bach's Prelude and Fugues) – and as the concert progressed we got to know something of their personalities and occasionally their Cambridge Footlights humour: half way through the opening group of songs, they stopped and said that they had not introduced themselves – promptly then turning to each other and shaking hands, perhaps a joke inspired by the fact that the group is in a constant state of flux.

Before the interval we were treated to a varied mixture of traditional folk and art song; and after to a mix of more contemporary pieces of pop and jazz. It proved to be one of those evenings when everyone present could find something particularly to their taste, whether that be for a prayer of King Henry VI or for a pop song by Michael Bublé. I will only pick out what seemed to me to be the highlights of the performance. The programme opened with a fine rendering of Henry VIII's 'Pastime with Good Company,' also called 'The King's Ballad'. This was followed by a beautiful 'Beata Viscera' – a motet by William Byrd on a Marian communion text, and Claude Debussy's wonderful setting of Charles D'Orléans' love poem, 'Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder!' Many of the audience would have enjoyed the Pierre Passereau's rustic chanson 'Il est bel et bon', with its imitation of chicken noises! The sea shanty 'O What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor', and especially the ballad 'Scarborough Fair', were very popular with the audience and wonderfully sung. Then there was described as a world premier of The King's Men's version of the famous comic song, 'Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah'.

After the interval, we were treated to Louis Jordan's 'Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?', 'A Nightingale sang in Berkeley Square', Stevie Wonder's 'Isn't She Lovely', 'Everything' by Michael Bublé, and a notably sung version of Adele's 'Rolling in the Deep'. Perhaps the highlight of the second half was 'Autumn Leaves', made popular by Nat King Cole, and proving very popular with the audience. The concert ended with Randy Newman's 'When She Loved Me' from Toy Story.