



## Sunlight and Stars: A journey of love through time

### Llwybrau cariad: O doriad dydd hyd oleuni'r nos

On 20 May, Stuart Castledine and Sara Chandler attended the MA Final Recital of Ffion Thomas, at the Royal Academy of Music. Ffion is the recipient of an award from the Livery Company. Ffion had chosen 15 songs which spoke of love in different ways, languages and contexts. Starting out in Italian with 'Un cenno leggiadretto' by Handel, we were immediately transported by Ffion's interpretation of the music. This was followed by three songs from French poems set to music by Pauline Viardot, Cecilé Chaminade and Pierné. One of the love poems was written in 1553 by Pierre de Ronsard. Ffion then sang three songs by William Walton which were full of jazz and modern music influences, and witty, playful poetry. The songs were in English, and were: 'Daphne', 'Through Gilded Trellises' and 'Old Sir Faulk' and great fun.



After the interval, we were treated to four songs in German, starting with Carl Maria von Weber's: 'Kommit ein schlanker bursch gegangen' where a young woman cheers up her cousin who is troubled by dark premonitions before her wedding. Then, three songs by Richard Strauss: 'All mein gedanken', 'Gefunden' and 'Standchen' which tell the story of a lover travelling like a bird towards their lover, and then a wanderer finds a flower in the forest and replants it in their garden, symbolising a love that should not die and the third is a serenade with Strauss' s flowing accompaniment and expressive melodic line.

Eric Coates's: 'Birdsong at eventide' followed where the singer longs for their beloved as the day comes to an end. Dilys Elwyn Edwards: 'The cloths of heaven', with text by William Butler Yeats with the memorable line: 'Tread softly because you tread on my dreams'. The last two songs in Ffion's production were in Welsh. 'Pan ddaw'r nos' (When night comes) by Meiron Williams of the text by Elfed. The beautiful melody guided us through to 'Oh how gently Glides our vessel thro' the night, born along by hallow'd breezes Homeward to the Land of Light'. Ffion ended her concert with Haydn Morris's 'Hei-ho' in Welsh, the song of a Romany wanderer as 'on my gipsy rounds I go'. Ffion's exceptional soprano voice is known to members of the Livery as she has sung for us before. It was a privilege to hear her final recital of her Master's course. We were proud to be there. She will study Opera in Cardiff in the Autumn and there will be a great future for Ffion, one of our successful awardees.

