St James Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL
Thursday 7 July 2011 at 7.30pm

An Eclectic Evening of English Music sung by the English Chamber Choir with special guest artist Rick Wakeman at the piano

Guy Protheroe conductor
Ian Curror organ

Featuring music by Elgar, Parry, Percy Grainger, Edward German, John Gardner, Paul Reade and, of course, Rick Wakeman

Tickets: £25, £20, £17.50 (reserved), £15, £12 (unreserved) from St Martin-in-the-Fields box office Tel: 020 7766 1100 or online at www.smitf.org

Merrie England

Programme

Hubert Parry I was glad
Paul Reade Seascapes
Rick Wakeman Noah
Percy Grainger Brigg Fair
I’m seventeen come Sunday
Edward Elgar There is sweet music
John Gardner 5 Philanders
Edward German excerpts from Merrie England

And a few surprise items too!

The English Chamber Choir will be celebrating its Fortieth Anniversary next season, and in anticipation this annual programme of English music has a strong ’revival’ element — two works originally commissioned by the choir are joined by a third which has also not been heard since its first performance in 1975.

Rick (with his sons Adam and Oliver and daughter Gemma) and members of the ECC take a bow at Marlborough College

The ECC and Guy Protheroe have worked with Rick Wakeman for over 30 years. Rick composed Noah for the Choir’s 25th anniversary in 1997: a grumpy old man’s distinctly merrie take on the story of the flood. Seascapes by Paul Reade includes St Brendan and the Fishes, originally written for the ECC. Paul achieved considerable success with his ballet scores for David Bintley and the Birmingham Royal Ballet - notably Hobson’s Choice, but he was better known for his many television scores - including the signature tune to the BBC’s Play School programme, which entertained children for decades! When performing with Rick at Hampton Court a couple of years ago, the Choir included a set of a cappella pieces which included a small gem called Rejection by John Gardner. This was one of a set called 5 Philanders; it proved so popular that the Choir set about finding the other 4 numbers. Also featured is the music of Percy Grainger (he of Country Gardens fame). Grainger was known as “the jogging pianist” for his habit of racing through streets to a concert, where he would bound on stage at the last minute - a bit like Rick really! These nautical and pastoral aspects of England are complemented by a more ‘patriotic’ strand, represented by Elgar, Parry and, last but by no means least, Edward German, whose robust choruses from his Operetta Merrie England brought the house down at the conclusion of last year’s St George’s Day concert at St James’.

For more information please visit www/englishchamberchoir.com and www.rwcc.com