

JOURNEYS

Journeys are often jewels in our lives. Like jewels that have many facets, journeys have many aspects too. Some are happy, some sad, some thought provoking – but all are things that enrich our lives. In this concert we present a collection of songs that illustrate some part of a journey, through life, through love and through places.

Scotland has for many been a popular journeying place, and one with which the Southern Highlands has a spiritual connection. In this program we present three songs from Scotland, the first most appropriately being a tramping song, *The Road to the Isles*. Tramping the Scottish Highlands can often be a lonely experience and one that introduces contemplation. *Eriskay Love Lilt* allows us to consider this loneliness away from one's loved one. Finally, to journey through Scotland would be complete without a visit to Loch Lomond, regardless of whether one uses the high road or the low road!

When one's loves joins you on a journey, the journey takes on heightened pleasure. Even if the journey is short – such as a night on the town in *Steppin' Out With My Baby* – life can never feel so good. Indeed, such exquisite happiness is captured perfectly in Robert Bridges's text *My Spirit Sang All Day*, here set by the 20th century British composer, Gerald Finzi, although it is always possible that one is so overwhelmed by joy that one wishes only, "Fly Me To The Moon".

Journeys often take us to places where one longs, nostalgically, for home. For many Irish people, America was the promise of a better life. Often it came at a cost, as home and its traditions and simple pleasures were far away. *The Kerry Dance*, a song made famous by Australia's own Peter Dawson and here sung in four parts, ponders the effects of such a journey. One who made such a journey from his native land across the Atlantic to Canada was Healey Willan. Willan took part of the *Song of Songs*, *Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One*, and set it in a simple and moving work, itself an exhortation to embrace the journey of life seen in the onset of Spring.

Sometimes journeys take a path least expected. *She's Like The Swallow* considers the journey through love and how elusive it can be – hard to define and essentially intangible. *Bring Him Home*, one of the great numbers from the stage show *Les Misérables*, sees Jean Valjean begging God for the life of his adopted daughter's love, Marius. For Valjean, his life has been a journey of redemption and in this song we see the changed man, altered from the selfish thief at the beginning of the show to one whose only thought is the need of others. The pursuit of sanctuary was the dominant theme of *Les Misérables* as Valjean sought to escape Javert and the song *Adiemus*, from Karl Jenkins's *Songs of Sanctuary*, echoes this theme.

One of the most famous journeys was, of course, Moses' journey with the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness. *Moses Led his People* considers the liberation of the Israelites from Pharaoh's slavery. Arising from slavery of a different sort, *Wade in the Water* draws on this Biblical story in a Negro spiritual where relief from slavery, crossing the metaphorical Jordan, was often the only journey for which the slaves longed.

This final journey can be sad and it can be tragic. Elgar's beautiful setting of My Love Dwelt In A Northern Land echoes the sadness of someone forced to leave their loved one buried in a foreign land. Likewise, In Flanders Fields considers the many who journeyed to France's Western Front in World War I, never to journey home. For these, it was the final journey from the horrors of war to – we hope – Paradise, the contrasting beauty of which is so wonderfully captured in the In Paradisum from Gabriel Fauré's Requiem.

Often, no journey is complete without some means of conveyance. One of the most popular is, of course, the train. What is seldom considered is the train's view of the journey, for which the only reward after a hard life of travel and travail is the breaker's yard. In an anthropomorphic setting, I'm A Train for once does just this.

Serendipity: the choir hopes you have enjoyed this concert and as you journey away from the concert today, take with you a better understanding of life's journeys. And, as you depart, we wish you a pleasant and easy trip with, in the spirit of The Irish Blessing, the wind always at your back.

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Repertoire

My Spirit Sang All Day

Gerald Finzi

She's Like the Swallow

Newfoundland Folk Song arr. Strommen

My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land

Edward Elgar

The Road to the Isles

Patuffa Kennedy-Fraser

Moses Led His People

Craig Curry

Eriskay Love Lilt

Traditional Hebridean Folk Song

Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One

Healey Willan

Fly Me to the Moon

Howard arr. Arch

Bring Him Home

*Claude-Michel Schunberg (les
Miserables)*

Adiemus –

from Song of Sanctuary

Karl Jenkins

The Kerry Dance

J L Molloy

Loch Lomond

Traditional Scottish arr. Overton

Wade in the Water

arr. Edwin Fissinger

In Flanders Field

John Jacobson & Roger Emerson

I'm a Train

Albert Hammond & Mike Hazelwood

In Paradisum (from Requiem)

Faure

Steppin' Out with My Baby

Berlin arr. Shaw

Irish Blessing

Irish Poem arr. Katie Bart