

MUSICAL POETRY

After this year's Summer School, Hannah Davies (Chairman of BMEMF, who made her first pilgrimage to Ambleside, sent me a copy of the poem which follows, written by a friend, Malcolm Bell, who, she tells me, "now lives in Leeds and sang in York with the conductor of one of my choirs. He read it at a reunion and I asked if I could share it with people who would value it and if I could also put it in our newsletter. For me, it expresses so well, the feelings which I had at special moments during our week."

Malcolm's permission to reproduce the poem in these pages has naturally been sought, and he asked that this information could be included: "Malcolm has sung for as long as he can remember. He sang for seventeen years with the Chapter House Choir in York and before that with Divertimento in Leamington Spa. The poem was written when he decided to leave Chapter House Choir at the end of 2006. He is currently looking around for new singing experiences."

My own feeling, on reading the poem, is that, with exquisite sensitivity, it expressed what so many, possibly all, of us feel as we make music, instrumental as well as vocal, in groups large and small, or on our own. Malcolm would be happy to receive comments from people who have read the poem: these can be sent to him at M.Bell@leedsmet.ac.uk; otherwise I will be happy to pass on comments to his postal address for those readers who do not have internet access. Roger Wilkes

Now let the poem speak for itself...

Inside the sound

To be the voice that sings the song within,
To be the note that makes the radiant chord
Fly beyond the notes it sings
And catch the muse beyond the stave.
To be more than all that can be found,
To be the song inside the sound.

How do we find the voice we sing?
How do we read the rules that others made?
Where lies the line inside the dots we join,
The life we touch or the light we shine?
How do we know to where we are bound,
Except we seek inside the sound?

There is cleverness in what is done by we who know.
As when two keys, sung to be felt as one
Suggest a master craftsman fusing wood
And challenging others to see the join.
But lest in cleverness we are drowned,
Please; do not lose the beauty in the sound.

Where is our skill in joining notes that move
And heal, and feel, and run as living sand?
How lies our hope to move and be as one,
To be the single voice that finds our song?
How do we seek for that immortal ground
Where music soars inside the sound?

I do not know the music on the page
Until it lives within the vibrant air.
Nor do I see the time or know the key
Until it springs from voices felt as one.
For there is no beauty more profound
Than to be the voice inside the sound.