

The Pearl

George Herbert

Roxanna Panufnik

$\text{♩} = 96$

p

Soprano 1
I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, _____

p

Soprano 2
I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I know, I

pp

Organ

Verse 1

4

mp

— I know the ways of learn-ing, — learn-ing; — both the head And pipes that

mp

know, I know the ways of learn-ing; — — both the head And pipes that

p

PROGRAMME NOTE

When I was approached by Salisbury Cathedral to write a 30th anniversary anthem for their Girl Choristers, I immediately thought of the traditional 30th wedding anniversary symbol – a pearl. When George Herbert was also requested, it was incredible serendipity that he had actually written a poem of that title: *The Pearl. Matthew 13:45*. This was inspired by the very short parable which compares the immense value of the Kingdom of Heaven to the most exquisite pearl a merchant could sell: a merchant seeking goodly pearls, on finding one of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Herbert expands ‘all that he had’ to include things of worldly worth such as learning, honour and pleasure, but concludes that there is an immeasurably greater and more priceless gift: the costly love of Christ which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

I worried that a poem claiming knowledge of some quite grown-up things might not be suitable for the girls, but their luminescent ageless sound and their incredibly mature attitude in rehearsal dispelled that fear. They gave me a list of things they’d like included in the piece – I managed nineteen out of twenty-three requests: smooth, soft, strong, high, staccato, triplets, semiquavers, minor keys, suspension, high parts, gentle bits, two part harmony, medium pace, soft but nice, quick and music telling a story.

I am very grateful to John and June Chichester and the Salisbury Cathedral Girl Choristers’ Foundation for this prestigious and exciting commission, to David Halls and Precentor Anna Macham for their musical and theological collaboration throughout the creative process and especially to the girl choristers themselves, for suggesting me for the job.

RP

24th March, 2020