

Review of Take A Peaceful Moment concert with Rachel Neiger in St Mary's Church Streatley on Thames July 20th 2025 at 4pm

This concert was a leap into a different format for St Mary's. Many people currently feel stressed with global news, the weather, stress in their own lives and the concert was aimed to be a peaceful and restoring experience through classical music interspersed with poetry.

I felt it fully succeeded in these aims as everyone I spoke to after the concert was smiling, happy and relaxed, including myself!

The very varied program, all around the same theme, was *Kim Stafford – For the bird singing before dawn* **Elgar Chanson de Matin**, *James Barry Benediction*, **Beethoven Moonlight Sonata 1st movement**, *Wendell Berry – The Peace of Wild Things*, **Bach C major prelude BWV 846**, *John Jarman - El Alamein*, **Grieg**

Arietta, *W H Auden - In memory of W B Yeats*, **Pachelbel's Canon**, *Ogden Nash - The Hippopotamus*, **Robert Schumann Kinderzenen No 1 & No 7**, *W B Yeats – The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, **Satie Gnossienne No 1**, *Roger Robinson – A Portable Paradise*, **Einaudi – I Giorni**, and *Thomas Hardy – Wessex Heights*.

My personal favourite piece was the gentle and lullaby-like Grieg Arietta.

For those who enjoyed it and for those who missed it a similar event is in the pipeline for next year.

Huge thanks to the very accomplished Rachel Neiger who agreed to play for us at very short notice and still produced a polished program of music and a brilliant performance. Despite being more used to playing in large London concert venues she was enchanted with St Mary's and hopefully will be back to play for us again next year. Also huge thanks to Beverley, John, Linda and Rosemary who chose and read the poems so well! The tea and cakes and social time that followed the concert in the Morrell Rooms, courtesy of Friends of St Mary's, was, as always, an excellent finish to a pleasurable afternoon. Many thanks are due to John Rogers for doing so much hard work as always to make the concert happen and to John and his willing volunteers and cake makers for the tea. Finally, as always, thank you to our audience for being there even though the weather had reverted from the extreme heat of the last concert to the more customary torrential rain.

We wish Janet Pound, who was originally going to give this concert, well and hope she feels much better soon.

Stella Robinson

