

“*Four Choral Seasons*, an evocative choral cycle by Roxanna Panufnik, received a stunning world premiere to launch a superb concert by the Bach Choir at the Royal Festival Hall... Panufnik’s *Four Choral Seasons* attests to an original and distinctive creative voice, her vivid response to four gems of English poetry conveyed through idiomatic choral writing of engaging drama. Her accessible contemporary idiom comprises polytonal textures veering between lyrical lines and splendid plenitude, triadic harmonies enmeshed in complex clusters with kaleidoscopic effects.

Christina Rossetti’s *A Summer Wish* opens the cycle with each stanza connected through a magically delicate vibraphone and harp ritornello portraying the dew, whilst the choir’s tranquil chant-like melody unfolds in waves of intensity, its triadic harmony building to bitonal climaxes.... In Laurence Binyon’s ‘Now is the time for the burning of the leaves’, the rhapsodic choral lines gained in dramatic effect set over intrepid, ironic orchestra syncopations... The seamless switch to a more rollicking energy in Shakespeare’s ‘Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind’ introduced ingenious choral antiphonies with bitonal clashes of major and minor triads countered by unexpected ‘whistling’ of an eerie, plaintive melody....

The cycle was rounded off with a jubilant, lushly harmonised setting of Gerard Manley Hopkins’s *Spring*... David Hill conducted with commanding verve and finesse, eliciting the utmost coordination, fullness of tone, and ebullient projection of the text. The work as a whole conveyed an uplifting message, rewarded by the audience’s enthusiastic reception for the composer and the performers.”

Malcolm Singer, Musical Opinion