

# **Guildford Philharmonic Choir**

with the

## **Forest Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Mendelssohn Overture: The Hebrides**

**Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2**

**Vaughan Williams A Sea Symphony**



**Saturday 12 May 2001**

**Guildford Cathedral**

**£1.50**

# Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 30 June 2001**

Brandenburg Sinfonia/Guildford Philharmonic  
Chamber Choir  
Vivaldi: Gloria, St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

**Saturday 3 November 2001**

Handel: Messiah, Guildford Cathedral

**Sunday 16 December 2001**

Mayor's Christmas Concert, Guildford Civic

## In Memory of Marcel Dupré

L'Eglise Notre Dame de France  
Leicester Square, London

**30 May 2001, 7.00pm**

Jeremy Filsell (organ)

Programme:

### **Marcel Dupré (1886 - 1971)**

Poème Héroïque Op. 33      Extracts from Le Chemin de la Croix Op. 29  
Annonciation Op. 56      Prelude et Fugue en Si (B) majeur Op. 7 No. 1  
Cortège et Litanie Op. 19      Souvenir Op. 65 bis

### **J S Bach (1685 - 1750)**

Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor BWV 5

# **Guildford Philharmonic Choir**

**President Sir David Willcocks CBE MC**

## **Mendelssohn**

*Overture: The Hebrides (Fingal's Cave)*

## **Rachmaninov**

*Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor*

**Jeremy Filsell      Piano**

*Interval*

## **Vaughan Williams**

*A Sea Symphony*

**Caroline Lenton-Ward    Soprano**

**Robert Rice                Baritone**

## **Forest Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Jeremy Backhouse**

Financially assisted by



The staging for this concert is owned by the Association of Surrey Chorus. To hire, please contact Stephen Jepson, tel: 01306 730383. It was purchased with financial assistance from the Foundation for Sport and Arts, PO Box 20, Liverpool.

**Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)**

**Overture: The Hebrides ('Fingal's Cave'), Op. 26**

Mendelssohn found his inspiration for the Hebrides Overture during a holiday in Scotland in 1829. After spending some time in Edinburgh, where he began the composition of his Scottish Symphony (No.3), he went on a walking tour, going up to Fort William and then across to the lonely Hebridean islands of Iona and Staffa. There he watched the relentless Atlantic waves pounding into the shoreline and could appreciate the grandeur of Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa. In August 1829 he wrote, 'In order to make you understand how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me, the following came into my mind there', and he quoted the opening theme of the overture. The short, restless figure with which it opens runs through the entire composition and evokes the ceaseless pounding of the waves upon the seashore. The noble grandeur of the scene is found in the rich second subject, heard first in the cellos and bassoons, but the pounding waves always return to haunt the listener.

**Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)**

**Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18**

*Allegro moderato*

*Adagio sostenuto*

*Allegro scherzando*

Rachmaninov's place in Russian music puts him outside the national school initiated by Glinka and followed by the 'Mighty Handful' of five composers under the leadership of Balakirev (1837-1910). They were mainly associated with St. Petersburg, whereas Rachmaninov's sympathies were almost entirely with the Moscow musical group who leaned strongly to the west, especially Germany, for their musical forms, mixed with their own individuality. Tchaikovsky (1840-93) was the most brilliant of these and gave considerable encouragement to the young Rachmaninov who, in turn, much admired his older compatriot.

Rachmaninov believed that music 'should be the product of the sum total of a composer's experience' including his emotional life, religion, books read and pictures seen. He lived well into the 20th century but remained uninfluenced by the new Viennese school and believed that, in music, melody should rule. As the composer himself said 'What I try to do, when writing down my music, is to make it say simply and directly what is in my heart when I am composing. Whether

there is love, or bitterness, or sadness or religion, these feelings become a part of my music and it becomes either beautiful or bitter or sad or religious'.

Although an outstanding pianist, he considered himself mainly a composer and when only twenty-two tackled that most challenging of forms, the symphony. Behind him were already his *Piano Concerto No.1*, a one-act opera, some songs and a Suite for two pianos. The first performance of the *Symphony No.1* took place in March 1897 in St. Petersburg and was a disaster. Rachmaninov was appalled by the ragged performance and the conductor's (Glazunov) poor understanding of the music. The St. Petersburg critics played havoc with the Moscow composer in their reviews and Rachmaninov, his confidence undermined, was unable to compose anything else of importance for two years. To encourage his return to composing, his friends introduced him to Dr Nikolei Dahl, who specialised in treatment by hypnosis. It appears that hypnosis was less important in the treatment than the conversations about music that took place between the two men, Dahl being an accomplished amateur musician. This was in 1900 and the treatment was so effective that Rachmaninov's creative powers returned, enabling him to start work on several projects, including the *Piano Concerto No.2*. It was duly completed and was a great success when first performed in Moscow in November 1901, with the composer at the keyboard. In gratitude he dedicated it to Dahl. His confidence restored, Rachmaninov went on to compose prolifically until he left Russia in 1917.

The concerto is introduced with opening bell-like tollings, repeated over and over again. These chords grow in harmonic tension and dynamic force until the strings take over with the main theme, lifting off from the piano as though from a springboard. An unusual feature in the opening movement is the piano's role as accompanist to the orchestra. The orchestra is silent far less often than the soloist, and the piano plays in a concertante role with the orchestra, adding to the orchestral presence rather than holding the spotlight itself.

In the second movement, a tender intermezzo, the piano again begins as an accompanist, first to the flute, then to the clarinet. The music builds to a brief scherzando, allowing the piano a short cadenza before the flutes return to the opening theme. The closing moments, with the piano gently accompanying the full strings, also playing softly, is perhaps the loveliest passage of the concerto.

The third movement opens with a quick march, which acts as a bridge between the second movement and the grand entrance of the piano. Momentum builds as piano and orchestra toss the march theme back and forth, interspersed with appearances of the second theme, before the movement builds to an impassioned conclusion.

## **Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)** **A Sea Symphony (No.1)**

*A Song for All Seas, All Ships – Andante maestoso*  
*On the Beach at Night, Alone – Largo sostenuto*  
*Scherzo: The Waves – Allegro brillante*  
*The Explorers – Grave e molto adagio*

*A Sea Symphony* consists of a setting of words taken from 'Leaves of Grass' by the American poet Walt Whitman. Vaughan Williams was introduced to Whitman's poetry in 1892, the year of the poet's death, and he remained a life-long admirer of the man and his work. Whitman was an unconventional thinker, a humanitarian with spiritual vision that appealed to many British composers at the turn of the century, among them Stanford, Harty, Holst, Delius and Vaughan Williams.

*A Sea Symphony* is a homage to the English late Romantic choral tradition of Parry and especially of Elgar. Yet, the final movement, which describes mankind's voyage of the soul, points to something new in British music – a vision of the sort that Holst pursued so successfully.

*A Sea Symphony* had a long and difficult gestation, and was finally written for soprano, baritone, mixed chorus and orchestra. Although the traditional four-movement plan is adhered to, the outer movements are far removed from the traditional structure.

This work comes across as a hybrid – a mixture of cantata (as it was at the beginning of the century) and symphony. The composer said, in 1913: 'The plan of the work is symphonic rather than narrative or dramatic, and this may be held to justify the frequent repetition of important words and phrases which occur in the poem. The words as well as the music are thus treated symphonically. It is also noticeable that the orchestra has an equal share with the chorus and soloists in carrying out the musical ideas.'

To many, this piece is a flawed masterpiece, full of over-indulgence and revelling in the beauty of sound for its own sake. This is not a criticism as such since, in this way, it fully realises the implications of the Whitman text. The flavour of the sea is everywhere, but in the second and fourth movements in particular, there are moments for philosophical reflection. Whitman's text answers its own questions but Vaughan Williams' music dies away uneasily resolved (just as Strauss ends

Also *Sprach Zarathustra* or Ives his *Unanswered Question*, both written within seven years of the commencement of *A Sea Symphony*).

The opening is dramatic, with a brass fanfare preceding the entry of the choir and the broad swelling passage illustrating the sea itself, on which the ships of all nations sail. The soloists and chorus then contemplate the sailors and the perils of the sea.

The second movement is a brooding nocturne, in which the baritone soloist and chorus contemplate the enormity of the universe, while in the scherzo, the chorus describes the exhilaration of a stormy sea and the thrilling sight of a fine ship carving her way through the waves.

The lengthy last movement is a complete contrast, beginning with a rapturous and hushed vision of the planet 'swimming in space', progressing to the creation of man and reaching a climax with the arrival of the true Son of God. The soloists then sing a duet in which philosophy, spirituality and human love interact. Then comes the long, final voyage of the soul, concluding with a quiet coda which fades gently into the distance.

Just for interest: The premiere of *A Sea Symphony* was given as part of the Leeds Festival in 1910, with Vaughan Williams conducting. In the first part of the concert he conducted a performance of the Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto No.2*, with the composer at the piano!

The notes in this programme were based on material supplied through the Programme Note Bank of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies.

## **A Song For All Seas, All Ships**

Behold, the sea itself,  
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships;  
See, where their white sails, bellying in the wind, speckle the green and blue,  
See, the steamers coming and going, steaming in or out of port,  
See, dusky and undulating, the long pennants of smoke.  
Behold, the sea itself,  
And on its limitless, heaving breast, the ships.

To-day a rude brief recitative,  
Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,  
Of unnamed heroes in the ships – of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye  
can reach,  
Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,  
And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,  
Fitful like a surge.  
Of sea-captains young and old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,  
Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay,  
Picked sparingly, without noise by thee, old ocean, chosen by thee,  
Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest the nations.  
Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,  
Indomitable, untamed as thee.

Flaunt out, O sea, your separate flags of nations!  
Flaunt out visible as ever the various flags and ship-signals!  
But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above  
all the rest,  
A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,  
Token of all brave captains and of all intrepid sailors and mates,  
And of all that went down doing their duty,  
Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old,  
A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,  
All seas, all ships.

## **II. On The Beach At Night Alone**

On the beach at night alone,  
As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,  
As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef of the universes  
and of the future.  
A vast similitude interlocks all,  
All distances of space however wide,  
All distances of time,  
All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different,  
All nations, all identities that have existed or may exist,  
All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,  
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spanned,  
And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose them.

### III. The Waves

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,  
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,  
Below, a myriad, myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,  
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,  
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,  
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,  
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant with curves,  
Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaced the surface,  
Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully flowing,  
The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and frolicsome under the sun,  
A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many fragments,  
Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.

### IV. The Explorers

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,  
Covered all over with visible power and beauty,  
Alternate light and day and the teeming spiritual darkness,  
Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon and countless stars above,  
Below, the manifold grass and waters,  
With inscrutable purpose, some hidden prophetic intention,  
Now first it seems my thought begins to span thee.

Down from the gardens of Asia descending,  
Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after them,  
Wandering, yearning, with restless explorations,  
With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish, with never-happy hearts  
that sad incessant refrain, *'Wherefore unsatisfied soul?  
Whither O mocking life?'*

Ah who shall soothe these feverish children?  
Who justify these restless explorations?  
Who speak the secret of impassive earth?

Yet soul be sure the first intent remains, and shall be carried out,  
Perhaps even now the time has arrived.  
After the seas are all crossed,  
After the great captains have accomplished their work,

After the noble inventors,  
Finally shall come the poet worthy that name,  
The true son of God shall come singing his songs.

O we can wait no longer,  
We too take ship O Soul,  
Joyous we too launch out on trackless seas,  
Fearless for unknown shores on waves of ecstasy to sail,  
Amid the wafting winds (thou pressing me to thee, I thee to me, O Soul).  
Caroling free, singing our song of God,  
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

O Soul thou pleasest me, I thee,  
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,  
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death, like waters flowing,  
Bear me indeed as through regions infinite,  
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,  
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,  
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O thou transcendent,  
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,  
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them.  
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,  
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,  
But that I, turning, call to thee O Soul, thou actual me,  
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,  
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,  
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space.

Greater than stars or suns,  
Bounding O Soul thou journeyest forth;  
Away O Soul! hoist instantly the anchor!  
Cut the hawsers – haul out – shake out every sail!  
Sail forth – steer for the deep waters only,  
Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.  
O my brave Soul!  
O farther, farther sail!  
O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail!



**Jeremy Filsell** is one of only a few virtuoso performers on both the piano and the organ and enjoys an extensive concert and recording career on both instruments. He has performed as a solo pianist in Russia, the USA and across the UK, appearing regularly at St John's Smith Square and the Wigmore Hall in London. His concerto repertoire encompasses Mozart and Beethoven through to Rachmaninov, Shostakovich and John Ireland. His compelling advocacy of early twentieth

century British repertoire has led to particular renown as an interpreter of the piano music of Ireland, Moeran and York Bowen. In recent years, he has recorded (for the *Guild* label) the solo piano music of Eugene Goossens, Herbert Howells and Bernard Stevens, of which *Classic CD* magazine commented "Filsell is extremely accomplished technically. He nonetheless does not attract for his virtuosity but for his ability to make the music unfold with irresistible logic and clarity; music making of the highest calibre."

As an organist, during the summer of 1998 Jeremy performed the complete organ works of Marcel Dupré in nine critically acclaimed weekly concerts in London. This was a UK first, and a project committed to CD (*Guild*) in the USA in October 1998, subsequently released throughout 1999 and 2000. *Classic CD* featured Volumes 1 & 2 as Discs of the Month in June 1999, adding "... a definitive series – superbly insightful playing and outstanding recording". Jeremy has recorded extensively for the BBC Radio 3 in solo, concerto and accompanist roles and has championed the music of Dupré and Grunenwald on CD and in concert in the UK, France, Germany, Russia and the USA. In 1992 a disc of Vierne and Widor Symphonies (*Herald*) was a Gramophone Critic's choice that year and more recently the same accolade was awarded the Dupré Integrale Volume 7 (*Guild*) in 2000.

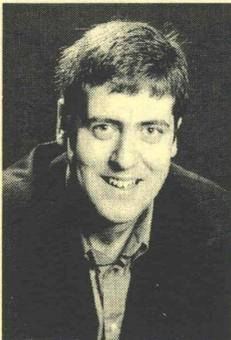
Jeremy was an FRCO Limpus prize-winner aged 19, his formative teachers including Nicholas Kynaston and Daniel Roth. An Oxford graduate (Organ Scholar at Keble college), he subsequently studied Piano Performance under David Parkhouse and Hilary McNamara at the Royal College of Music. He currently teaches at the London Oratory School, is an Academic Studies Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and a Lay Clerk at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.



**Caroline Lenton-Ward** was educated in Leeds and continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music where she was awarded the Charles Norman Prize. On leaving the RAM, she was granted awards from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust for further studies with Jessica Cash, with whom she still studies.

Caroline has appeared with the Royal Opera, Opera North, Kent Opera and the D'Oyly Carte, and performs regularly with many leading ensembles, including the BBC Singers, Sinfonietta Voices and London Voices.

Recent concert appearances have included performances at the Bridgewater Hall and the Philharmonic Hall with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic conducted by Kurt Masur, Mozart's *Mass in C minor* at the Barbican, *Messiah* with Sir David Willcocks, the role of the Virgin in Honegger's opera *Joan of Arc* and Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* (both with the RLPO, conducted by Libor Pesek), Verdi's *Requiem* in Ely Cathedral, and Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* for the BBC. She recently completed a second tour of the USA performing music for soprano and organ, and was the soloist in TV Times' *Christmas with the Stars* at the Royal Albert Hall. Caroline also pursues a busy teaching career and finds time to run her own business in providing musical entertainment for any and every occasion! Her future plans include numerous performances of her Songs from the Shows programme, Verdi's *Requiem* and a recording of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*.



**Robert Rice** was educated at Tiffin School, Kingston-upon-Thames and at King's College, Cambridge, where he held a choral scholarship. In 1997 he graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with the prestigious DipRAM, having studied under Mark Wildman and won many prizes. He now studies with Richard Smart.

Robert is in great demand as a concert artist throughout the British Isles and abroad. He has worked as soloist with many distinguished conductors, including Sir David Willcocks, Tamas Vasary and Walter Weller, and with such well-known orchestras as the CBSO and the Philharmonia. Last year he made his debut at London's Royal Festival Hall and gave recitals in London and

Birmingham. This season's engagements have included Mozart's *Requiem* at St John's Smith Square, Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Oxford and Cambridge, and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* for the Guildford Philharmonic Choir.

On stage, his experience includes much contemporary repertoire; he made his South Bank debut two years ago as the King in Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, shortly thereafter appearing in György Ligeti's *Aventures/Nouvelles Aventures* at the Bonn Chance festival. In 1999 he also covered the role of Borilee in *Les Boreades* (Rameau) for the Salzburg Festival under Sir Simon Rattle. He will shortly appear in *The Martyrdom of St Magnus*, also by Peter Maxwell Davies, for The Opera Group.

In addition to his many radio appearances, Robert recently took part in a BBC Masterclass recording with Barbara Bonney, to be televised in the autumn, whilst in May of this year he sang 2nd rock baritone in a live broadcast of Leonard Bernstein's music theatre work *Mass* for BBC Music Live. Robert is also increasingly in demand as an arranger of vocal music, which is shortly to be published by Novello.



**Jeremy Backhouse** began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was Head Chorister, and later studied music at Liverpool University. He spent five years as Music Editor at the Royal National Institute for the Blind, where he was responsible for the transcription of print music into Braille. In 1986 he joined EMI Records as a Literary Editor and since April 1990 he has combined his work as a Consultant Editor for EMI Classics with his career as a freelance conductor

and record producer.

Jeremy is also the conductor of the Vasari Singers, widely acknowledged as one of the finest chamber choirs in the country. Since winning the prestigious Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1988, they have performed regularly on the South Bank and at St John's, Smith Square in London, as well as in the cathedrals of Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Hereford, Ely and Peterborough. In 1998, he took the Vasari Singers on a fascinating and highly successful tour of Tuscany, singing in churches and cathedrals connected with Giorgio Vasari, performing in the church in Arezzo in which Vasari is buried and in the Duomo in Florence.

In January 1995, Jeremy was appointed Chorus Master of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir, working closely with conductors such as Jonathan Willcocks, En Shao and Vernon Handley, as well as regularly conducting concerts with the

choir and orchestra alike. In 1998, he conducted a memorable performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Guildford's Civic Hall, the first public performance to be promoted by the choir itself, and in March 1999 gave a "masterly" performance of Bruckner's *Mass in E minor* and Mahler's *Symphony No.2* in Guildford Cathedral.

He has worked with a number of the leading choirs in the country, including the Philharmonia Chorus (preparing for Sir Colin Davis), the London Choral Society (for Ronald Corp) and the Brighton Festival Chorus (for Carl Davies). In September 1998, Jeremy became the Music Director of the Wooburn Singers, only the third conductor in the distinguished 30-year history of the choir, following Richard Hickox and most recently, Stephen Jackson.

The **Forest Philharmonic Orchestra** was founded in the London Borough of Waltham Forest in 1962 and has since become this country's leading community orchestra. Rivalling the highest professional standards, it uniquely combines the talents of London's best amateur musicians with those of its up-and-coming music students. The orchestra has been joined by many international artists, such as pianists John Lill and Ronan O'Hora, violinists Gyorgy Pauk and Tasmin Little, cellists Robert Cohen and Natalie Clein, and singers Lesley Garrett, Della Jones and Patricia MacMahon.

The Forest Philharmonic Orchestra is also regularly invited to perform around the country, acting as an ambassador for the Borough of Waltham Forest and broadening the orchestra's repertoire of orchestral and choral works.

The **Guildford Philharmonic Choir** was founded in 1947 by the Borough of Guildford to perform major works from the choral repertoire with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra. Since this time, the Choir has grown both in stature and reputation and can now rightly claim its place as one of the foremost Choruses in the country. The Choir is now independent from the Borough of Guildford but still maintains close links with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, with joint performances such as the one this evening. The Choir grew to prominence under the batons of such eminent British musicians as Sir Charles Groves, Vernon Handley and Sir David Willcocks. Sir David remains in close contact with the Choir as its current President.

Notable achievements in recent years include Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with the Freiburger Bachchor in Freiburg in May 1998 and an outstanding performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Guildford Civic Hall in March 1998. In March 1999 the Choir gave a widely acclaimed performance of two works which

must surely rank among the greatest choral works of all time, Mahler's *Symphony No.2 – Resurrection* and Bruckner's *Mass in E minor*.

The Choir has enjoyed a challenging and exciting concert programme for the 1999/2000 season. On 20 November 1999 it performed Haydn's *Creation* with the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and in March 2000 it held a gala performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with its twin choir, the Freiburger Bachchor. In the 2001 series, the choir has continued to perform major works, such as Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*.

The Choir is always searching for new members to maintain its high standard and auditions are held throughout the year. For further details about joining the Choir or for any information about any of our future concerts, please contact Noreen Ayton, tel: 01932 221918. Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings throughout term time in central Guildford and prospective members are most welcome to attend rehearsals on an informal basis before committing to an audition.

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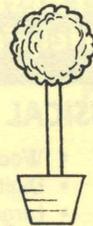
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[www.surreyweb.net/wsivc](http://www.surreyweb.net/wsivc)

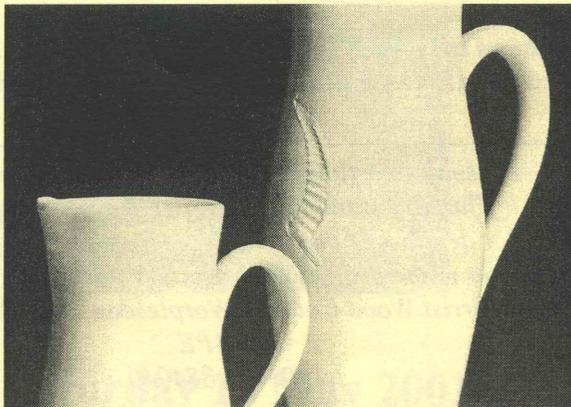


Open the door to an active social life!

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