
The Enduring Melody by Michael Mayne (DLT, 2006; 0-232-52687-7), xx + 257 pp.; £10.95. Reviewed by Neil Broadbent of the Sozein Trust, a member of Council of CFPSS.

Michael Mayne was formerly the Dean of Westminster Abbey, prior to which he was Head of Religious Programmes (Radio) at the BBC. A gifted communicator, the book of his which has been most often referred to was written about his eighteen months incapacitated with ME, *A Year Lost and Found*. He has written elsewhere:

So what did my time of sickness teach me? Not much that I didn't know, but the difference was that I came to understand certain truths at a far more profound level, a shift from mind to heart (www.Guild-of-st-raphael.org.uk/m_e_html).

The Enduring Melody is his last book. Written in the light of his being diagnosed with cancer of the jaw, it is an autobiography of dying.

After a foreword by Gerard Hughes, the introduction states clearly the nature of this rarely attempted work. In Part I he spells out his *cantus firmus* – the firm ground of a melody that has been shaped and refined over the years. In Part II, this is set in the context of aging and the life of the spirit. Part III is a kaleidoscopic journal of seven months of cancer treatment. Michael sums up his book as 'a small – and sometimes quite risky – act of love'. A postscript is followed by full notes.

This delightful book, whilst parts of his diary are hard to read, is a sustained and glorious theological reflection on Christian growth and discipleship. It positively overflows with rich, apt and beautiful quotations from artists, poets, musicians, thinkers and fellow authors. *The Enduring Melody* is a treasure trove of hard won spiritual insights: 'Jesus' work is affirmation' (p.40); 'we are able to redeem ... through acts of transforming attention' (p.57); 'to be indwelt by music, art, literature is to experience the commonplace mystery of a real presence' (p.185). Any reader will find

plenty to mull over and enjoy. Here is 'Sight transfigured by insight' (p.198). This remarkable publication is 'heroic, humbling and inspiring', to quote Alan Bennett. 'It was brave to write it and it needs courage to read it but the benefits are enormous ... a wonderful achievement' wrote Ronald Blythe. This reviewer couldn't agree more.