



SATURDAY 2 AUGUST 2008 AT 7pm

Wells Cathedral

SOMERSET CHAMBER CHOIR

"firmly established as among the best"

SOUTHERN SINFONIA

"one of our leading professional orchestras"

SONGS OF WAR & PEACE

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Dona nobis pacem

KODALY

Psalmus Hungaricus

POULENC

Gloria

Charlotte Ellett *soprano*

Andrew Staples *tenor*

Benedict Nelson *baritone*

GRAHAM CALDBECK *conductor*

PROGRAMME

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WELCOME FROM THE TRUSTEES OF

SOMERSET CHAMBER CHOIR

Thank you for coming to support us this evening and we hope you will join with us in welcoming our talented trio of soloists together with Southern Sinfonia, an orchestra which has gained a fine reputation both for its highquality performances and for its educational work.

As the choir approaches its 25th anniversary in 2009, we continue to enjoy and look forward to performing an amazing range of music. The choir aims to provide its members and audience with a rich musical experience, often mixing well known music with something less familiar. We hope that this evening's concert will prove a good example of this and that you may discover something this evening that will move you.

Other examples of the fascinating but less familiar can be found in our forthcoming concerts, of which you can find more details on the penultimate page and back cover:

- Our annual afternoon concert in Kings College Chapel, Taunton, on 15 February 2009 will focus on the very best of American choral music – if you are able to join us at this lovely venue, you will hear a feast of wonderful harmony, contained within music as beautiful as any ever written, together with more familiar settings of American Spirituals.
- Our 25th anniversary concert in Wells Cathedral on 25 July 2009 will feature some of the most popular Baroque music of all time, but with a wicked dash of 20th century music added, something the choir has done on numerous occasions in the past to popular acclaim. We hope you will enjoy, once again, something wonderful and new, alongside the most brilliant of Baroque.

Do join us for these exciting concerts!



We would love you to contribute to our continuing success by...

- recommending us to talented singers over the age of 16, encouraging them to visit our website at www.somersetchamberchoir.org.uk and apply for membership;
- sending us your contact details, if you wish to be kept informed about our concerts;
- bringing your friends to our concerts;
- Offering financial support, large or small! We are a registered charity and there are a number of ways you can support us:
 - you could join our Friends Scheme (see details later in this programme);
 - you could make an individual donation (under gift aid) or a business donation (tax relief and ticket packages available) towards a concert;
 - your business could consider placing an advert in a concert programme (rates start at just £35);
 - you or your business could offer to do something for us at a discount or for free (e.g. print our fliers or programmes, process some of our direct mail publicity through your company postroom, etc).
- Please contact us if you would like to help at: trustees@somersetchamberchoir.org.uk

We want to say a huge thank you to our Friends who give vital support to the choir we are extremely grateful to them all. We like to think of our Friends as very much part of the choir itself and we certainly would not be here without them. If you are not yet a Friend, we hope that this might be the year that you decide to join up we would be very pleased to give you a warm welcome!

Finally, we very much hope that you will enjoy our concert and will come to hear us again in the future. Don't forget, if you have a good time today, please tell others about the choir and encourage them to come to a concert there is no better way for us to spread the word about the choir than through your kind recommendation to others.

We look forward to seeing you all again soon

After the concert, the choir looks forward to meeting members of the Friends Scheme and their guests in Wells Town Hall, located in nearby Market Place

**WOULD YOU LIKE FUTURE
CONCERT INFORMATION
BY
E-MAIL?**

If you would like to receive advance details of our concerts by email, please send your email address to
email@somersetchamberchoir.org.uk.

We undertake to use your email address only to inform you of our future events we will not divulge your details to third parties without your prior consent for any reason. Joining the emailing list does not give you priority booking rights, for which you must join our Friends Scheme.



PROGRAMME ORDER

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

Dona nobis pacem (1936)

[c. 40 minutes]

Charlotte Ellett *soprano*

Benedict Nelson *baritone*

INTERVAL (10 MINUTES)

The audience are requested not to leave the cathedral during the interval and to return to their seats when the bell is sounded

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY (1882-1967)

Psalmus Hungaricus (1923)

[c. 20 minutes]

Andrew Staples *tenor*

FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)

Gloria (1959)

[c. 24 minutes]

Charlotte Ellett *soprano*

The right is reserved, without incurring liability, to substitute artists and to vary the programme for reasons beyond our control, although these details are correct at the time of going to print.

Please note that photography (with or without flash) and/or recording of any sort during the performance is forbidden without the prior written consent of the Dean and Chapter and the Somerset Chamber Choir.

Dona Nobis Pacem

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

I - Agnus Dei; II - Beat! beat! drums!; III – Reconciliation; IV - Dirge for Two Veterans;
V - The Angel of Death



About the composer

Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney. He was educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he was a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music, after which he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris.

At the turn of the century he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folksongs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy. As musical editor of *The English Hymnal* he composed several hymns that are now worldwide favourites (*For all the Saints, Come down O love Divine*). Later he also helped to edit *The Oxford Book of Carols*, with similar success.

Vaughan Williams volunteered to serve in the Field Ambulance Service in Flanders for the 1914–1918 war, during which he was deeply affected by the carnage and the loss of close friends such as the composer George Butterworth.

Before the war, he had met and then sustained a long and deep friendship with the composer Gustav Holst. For many years Vaughan Williams conducted and led the Leith Hill Music Festival, conducting Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on a regular basis. He also became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London.

In his lifetime, Vaughan Williams eschewed all honours with the exception of the Order of Merit which was conferred upon him in 1938. He died in August 1958 and his ashes are interred in Westminster Abbey, near Purcell.

In a long and productive life, music flowed from his creative pen in profusion. Hardly a musical genre was untouched or failed to be enriched by his work, which included nine symphonies, five operas, film music, ballet and stage music, several song cycles, church music and works for chorus and orchestra.

[From the website of the RVW Society]

Dona Nobis Pacem

Many British composers at the turn of the century were fascinated by the poetry of the American poet, Walt Whitman (1819–1892). Whitman's poetry has been vividly described by Alain Frogley as '*fresh, big-boned verse, with startling diction and irregular rhythms*'. Delius's *Sea-Drift* (1903), Vaughan Williams's *Toward the Unknown Region* (1906) and *A Sea Symphony* (1910) and Holst's *Ode to Death* (1919) are among the finest musical settings at this time. In 1911, following the successful première of *A Sea Symphony*, Vaughan Williams began another Whitman setting, *Dirge for Two Veterans*, extracted from the American Civil War poem "Drum Taps".

However, the composer felt that this setting did not stand satisfyingly on its own, and so he put it away in a drawer. Twenty five years later he included this as the fourth movement of his largescale cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

Composed in 1936 for the centenary of the Huddersfield Choral Society, this new work was also a piece of propaganda, a commentary on the state of Europe as it moved inexorably towards another major war. In an article in 1912 Vaughan Williams wrote: "*We must cultivate a sense of musical citizenship. . . The composer must. . . live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community*". Now he was practising what he had preached, expressing the community prayer for peace in the light of the events in Germany in the 1930s. *Dona nobis pacem* was premièred in Huddersfield on 2 October 1936, with Renée Flynn and Roy Henderson as soloists, the Huddersfield Choral Society and the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. The libretto's texts include three Whitman poems, framed by words from the Latin Mass, the Old Testament prophets, and the famous House of Commons speech made during the Crimean War by John Bright. The idea of intertwining liturgical texts and modern war poems anticipates Britten's approach in his *War Requiem* 25 years later. An important musical inspiration for Vaughan Williams seems to have been Verdi's *Requiem*. Verdi's first number is echoed at several points in the opening section of *Dona nobis pacem*, for instance in the treatment of the word 'Dona' and similar parallels can be found in 'Beat! Beat! Drums', which Vaughan Williams treats as a kind of *Dies Irae*.

Skilfully though the libretto is compiled, *Dona Nobis Pacem* cannot be said to be a completely unified musical conception. However, the sheer quality of the music has meant that it has endured, outliving the occasion for which it was written. Sadly, however, the subject of war and the desire for peace is still profoundly relevant today.

I - Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.
(Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, grant us peace.)

After two bars of orchestral chromatic chords, the soprano enters *pianissimo* with the Latin prayer from the Liturgy, her '*Dona nobis pacem*', the work's principal *leitmotif*, being offered up three times. The chorus echoes this plea for peace and then, in a sudden discordant outburst, the soloist and chorus fling it to the heavens. Throughout the movement, the music seems to mix anguish with the sense of the potential for its resolution. As this climax subsides, the drums begin beating and the music flows without a break into...

II - Beat! beat! drums!

*Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows – through the doors – burst like a
ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet – no happiness must he
have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field, or
gathering in his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums – so shrill you
bugles blow.*

[Walt Whitman].

Trumpet calls over beating drums create a tense, edgy prelude to the chorus's words from Whitman's "Drum Taps", a declamatory description of the overwhelming effects of war on town and countryside. Short, harsh phrases convey the ruthlessness of war, as well as its hellish noise and pervasive disruption. Surely, the sound of the great artillery of *World War I* returned to haunt the composer in this movement. This leads into...

III - Reconciliation

*Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in
time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly,
softly, wash again and ever again this soiled world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies whitefaced and still in the coffin – I
draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in
the coffin.*

[Walt Whitman]

The stridency of the previous section is banished by strings high in their register and the musings of a solo violin, in a serene slow movement typical of Vaughan Williams. The words are again from "Drum Taps" and are sung by the baritone soloist, with his message of ultimate reconciliation sung to music of notable compassion. This section is repeated by the chorus, after which the soloist continues with the passage 'For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead'. This again foreshadows Britten's use of Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting" in the *War Requiem*. The chorus repeat the first section and the soprano quietly interjects her prayerful '*Dona nobis pacem*' to close the movement.

IV - Dirge for Two Veterans

*The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finished Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.*

*Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.*

*I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-keyed bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.*

*I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirling,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.*

*For the son is brought with the father,
In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans, son and father, dropped together,
And the double grave awaits them.*

*Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.*

*In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumined,
'Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter growing.*

*O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.*

*The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.*

[Walt Whitman]

Over a steady drum rhythm a solemn march tune introduces the Whitman wordpicture of the burial by moonlight of a father and son who have been killed in battle. The chorus sing this movement, setting the scene with a description of the rising of the moon and the arrival of the cortège at the double grave. The march is thundered out in C major, the chorus silent. The vocal writing now becomes modal before the intense climax and quiet ending. This movement's melodic directness is apposite to the directness of the message of this work, so it justifies its central position and, without knowing it, one would not guess the music's earlier date of composition. The great march of this movement shares motives with 'Beat! Beat! Drums' (or, rather, *vice-versa*, in terms of chronology of composition).

V - The Angel of Death

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old ... to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on.

[John Bright]

Dona nobis pacem

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land ... and those that dwell therein ...

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved ...

Is there no balm in Gilead?; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

[Jeremiah 8:15-22]

O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

(Daniel 10:19)

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former ... and in this place will I give peace.

[Haggai 2:9]

Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

And none shall make them afraid, neither shall the sword go through their land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them.

Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled; and let them hear and say, it is the truth.

And it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues.

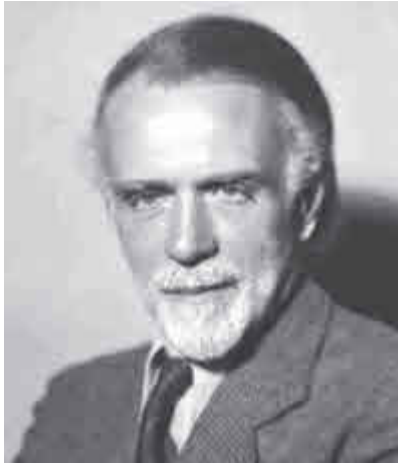
And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain for ever.

[Adapted from Micah 4:3, Leviticus 26:6, Psalms 85:10 and 118:19, Isaiah 43:9 and 56:18-22, Luke 2:14]

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.

To a sparse accompaniment, the baritone declaims John Bright's words about the Angel of Death, spoken in the House of Commons in 1855 in a debate on the Crimean War. The soprano soloist and chorus renew their anguished cry for peace, the chorus following this with man's perennial despairing question "Is there no balm in Gilead?". Vaughan Williams suggests that there is, for the baritone sings an assurance of peace. Now the orchestra begins to glow radiantly with a beautiful passacaglialike melody, as the chorus sing of nations at peace with one another. As this vision intensifies, the vocal and orchestral writing become contrapuntal in texture and the bells begin to peal. To the passacagliatune, a new heaven and a new earth are invoked and finally the Christmas message of peace and goodwill toward men. The last three words are reiterated emphatically, followed by a coda in which the chorus reaffirm the soprano's final entreaty, '*Dona nobis pacem*', which brings the cantata to a quiet and peaceful ending in a final impression of optimism.



About the composer

Zoltán Kodály was an Hungarian composer, ethnomusicologist, educator, linguist, and philosopher. He was one of the first people to undertake the serious study of folk tales, and became one of the most significant early figures in the field of ethnomusicology. From 1905 he visited remote villages to collect songs, recording them on phonograph cylinders and, in 1906, he wrote his thesis on Hungarian folksong ("Strophic Construction in Hungarian Folksong"). Around this time, Kodály met fellow composer Béla Bartók, whom he took under his wing and introduced to some of the methods involved in folksong collecting. The two became lifelong friends and champions of each other's music.

After gaining his PhD in philosophy and linguistics, Kodály went to Paris where he studied with Widor – while there, he discovered and absorbed various influences, notably the music of Debussy. In 1907, he moved back to Budapest, and gained a professorship at the Academy of Music there. He continued his folk music collecting expeditions throughout *World War I* without interruption.

Due to the outbreak of the *First World War* and subsequent major geopolitical changes in the region, and partly because of personal shyness, Kodály had no major public success until 1923 when his *Psalmus Hungaricus* premièred at a concert to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of the cities of Buda, Pest and Óbuda (Bartók's *Dance Suite* and Dohnányi's *Festive Overture* were also commissioned to mark the occasion). Following this success, Kodály travelled throughout Europe to conduct his music.

Kodály was very interested in the problems of music education, and wrote a good deal of educational music for schools, as well as books on the subject. His work in this field (sometimes known as the 'Kodály Method') had a profound effect on musical education both inside and outside his home country.

Subsequent works include the *Dances of Marosszék* (1930), *Dances of Galanta* (1933), the *Peacock Variations* (1939) and the *Missa Brevis* (1944). The suite from his opera *Háry János* (1926) also became well known, though few productions of the opera itself take place.

Kodály remained in Budapest through World War II, retiring from teaching in 1942. In 1945 he became the president of the Hungarian Arts Council, and in 1962 received the Order of the Hungarian People's Republic. His other posts included a presidency of the International Folk Music Council (succeeding Vaughan Williams), and honorary presidency of the International Society for Music Education. He died in Budapest in 1967, one of the most respected and well known figures in the Hungarian arts.

Psalmus Hungaricus

"If I had never studied ancient Hungarian literature, I would never have had the idea of composing the *Psalmus*", Zoltán Kodály said in a 1963 interview. The name of preacher Mihály Kecskeméti Vég was unknown outside philological circles, and only his 1561 translation of the 55th psalm has come down to us. Kodály set the psalm's powerful text, enriched with allusions to Hungarian circumstances, during a period of scant creative activity. However, in spite of the celebratory occasion for which the work was written, the music is sombre in mood. The troubled history of the country, which continued even after the achievement of independence in 1918, is reflected in Kodály's choice of text. Although he uses no actual folk melodies, their characteristic idiom can be felt very strongly. This profoundly Hungarian work has become one of the most frequently performed of Kodály's compositions around the world.

The work is in rondo form with six interludes. After an orchestral prelude, the first tenor solo is preceded by the chorus *ritornello*. This soft choral singing provides a framework for the whole work it appears during the soloist's complaint, in the orchestral accompaniment to the lamentation motif (sung to 'Ah'), as a preparation for the climax, as well as closing the work. The piece contains huge contrasts – from soft, murmured chorus writing, to fullscale operatic passages for the solo tenor; from grand orchestral statements to intimate, almost chamber musiclike passages. But always there is warmth, emotional depth and a real passion of utterance.

Choir - refrain

Mikoron Dávid nagy búsultában,
Baráti miatt volna bánatban,
Panaszolkodván nagy haragjában,
Ilyen könyörgést kezdte ő magában.

Tenor soloist

Istenem Uram! kérlek tégedet,
Fordítsad reám szent szemeidet,
Nagy szökségemben ne hagyj engemet,
Mert megemészti nagy bánat szívemet.

Csak sívok, rívek nagy nyavalyámban,
Elfogyatkoztam gondolatimban,
Megkeseredtem nagy búsultomban,
Ellenségemre való haragomban.

Hogyha énnékem szárnyam lett volna,
Mint az galamb, elröpöltem volna.
Hogyha az Isten engedte volna,
Innét én régen elfutottam volna.

Akarok inkább pusztában laknom,
Vadon erdőben széjjelbujdosnom;
Hogynem mint azok között lakoznom,
Kik igazságot nem hagynak szólanom.

Choir - refrain

Mikoron Dávid nagy búsultában...

Tenor soloist

Éjjel és nappal azon forgódnak,
Engem mi módon megfoghassanak,
Beszédem miatt vádolhassanak,
Hogy fogságomon ők vígadhassanak.

Egész ez város rakva haraggal,
Egymásra való nagy bosszúsággal,
Elhíresedett az gazdasággal,
Hozzá fogható nincsen álnoksággal.

Female Chorus

Ah....

Tenor soloist

Gyakorta köztök gyűlések vannak,
Özvegyek, árvák nagy bosszút vallnak,
Isten szavával ők nem gondolnak,
Mert jószágukban felfuvalkodtanak.

Choir - refrain

Mikoron Dávid nagy búsultában...

*When as King David sore was afflicted,
By those he trusted basely deserted,
In his great anger bitterly grieving,
Thus to Jehovah pray'd he within his heart.*

*God of my fathers, bow Thine ear to me,
Turn not away the light of Thy countenance,
Leave me not lonely in my misery,
Sore is my heart and sorrow o'erwhelmeth me.*

*O hear the voice of my complaining!
Terrors of death are fallen upon me,
Hide not Thyself from my supplication,
Hatred and wrath of wicked men oppress me.*

*O that I had but wings like a dove!
I would fly away far into the wilderness;
If to my prayer, Lord, Thou hadst attended,
Long, long ago far hence I would have wander'd.*

*Better it were to dwell in the desert,
Better to hide me deep in the forest,
Than live with wicked liars and traitors,
Who will not suffer that I should speak the truth.*

When as King David sore was afflicted....

*Nightly and daily go they about me,
Seeking how they may take me in the snare,
And by false witness seek to destroy me,
Make me a prisoner; then would they shout with joy!*

*Violence and strife rage fierce in the city,
Mischief and malice, envy and sorrow,
Boasting of riches, pride of possession;
Ne'er in all the world saw I such deceivers!*

Ah....

*They take their evil counsel in secret,
Fatherless children slay they and murder;
God's high commandment they have despised,
Swollen with substance, drunken with lust and pride.*

When as King David sore was afflicted....

Tenor soloist

Keserűségem annyi nem volna,
Ha ellenségtől nyavalyám volna,
Bizony könnyebben szenvedtem volna,
Magamat attól megóhattam volna.

De barátomnak azkit vélek volt,
Nagy nyájasságom kivel együtt volt,
Jó híremnevem, tisztességem volt,
Fő ellenségem, most látom, hogy az volt.

Keserű halál szálljon fejére,
Ellenségemnek ítéletére.
Álnokságának büntetésére,
Hitetlenségnek kijelentésére.

Choir

Ah....

Tenor soloist & choir

Én pedig, Uram, hozzád kiáltok,
Reggel és délben, este könyörgök,
Megszabadulást tetőled várok,
Az ellenségtől mert én igen tartok.

Orchestral Interlude

Tenor soloist

Te azért lelkem, gondolatodat,
Istenben vessed bizodalmaidat,
Rólad elveszi minden terhedet,
És meghallgatja te könyörgésedet.

Choir

Igaz vagy Uram, ítéletedben,
A vérszopókat ő idejökben,
Te meg nem áldod szerencsésjökben,
Hosszú életök nem leszen a földön.

Az igazakat te mind megtartod,
A kegyeseket megoltalmazod.
A szegényeket felmagasztalod,
A kevélyeket aláhajigálsz.

Ha egy kevéssé megkeseríted,
Az égő tűzben elbétaszítod,
Nagy hamarsággal onnét kivonszod,
Nagy tisztességre ismét felemeled.

Szent Dávid írta az zsoltárkönyvben,
Ötvenötödik dicséretében,
Melyből az hívek keserűségben,
Vígasztalásért szörzék így versekben.

*I could have borne so sore an affliction,
Were it an enemy that had reproach'd me,
Yea, in truth I could then have endur'd it,
For then I could have hidden myself from him.*

*But it was Thou, my friend whom I trusted,
Did we not take sweet counsel together?
Thou whom I reckon'd true friend and faithful,
Thou art the man whose hand would have struck me down!*

*Smite them with destruction, O Lord, and slay them,
And let Thy judgment fall heavy on them,
Cut down this people, Lord, in Thine anger,
Send out Thy truth, let unbelievers perish!*

Ah....

*I give Thee honour, Lord, and worship Thee,
Evening and morning and at the noonday,
Thou that abidest, Thou art my helper,
When those that hate thee sorely do oppress me.*

*So in Jehovah I will put my trust,
God is my stronghold and my comforter;
I cast my burden alway on the Lord,
He will not suffer the righteous to be mov'd.*

*Thou art our One God, righteous in judgment,
Vengeance is Thine for those that do evil,
Thou shalt not bless them, trusting in vain things,
Thou shalt take them away as with a whirlwind.*

*As for the righteous, Thou dost preserve them,
They that shew mercy shelter find in Thee.
Those that are humble Thou dost raise on high.
Those that are mighty scatter'st and destroyest.*

*Whom for a space Thy wrath has chastised,
And has like silver tried in the furnace,
Forth from the fire Thou suddenly tak'st him,
Once more in honour Thou wilt raise him on high!*

*These words King David wrote in his Psalter,
Fifty and fifth of his songs of praising,
And for the faithful bitterly grieving,
For consolation, I from it made this song.*

[Translation by Edward J. Dent]

I – Gloria; II - Laudamus te; III - Domine Deus; IV - Domine Fili unigenite; V - Dominus Deus, Agnus Dei; VI - Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris



About the composer

Francis Poulenc was one of a somewhat notorious group of young French composers who became known as 'Les Six', an epithet clearly derived from the earlier 'Russian Five'. The aims of the French group were to break away from the twin influences of Germanic formality and French impressionism, and to employ a direct and simple style in their own music. Of the six composers (Auric, Durey, Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc and Tailleferre), Poulenc was by far the most successful.

Although Poulenc saw himself as primarily a composer of religious music, it was not in fact until 1936, following his return to Catholicism, that he produced his first sacred work. A steady stream of religious pieces then flowed from his pen, including a Mass and a series of motets. His first largescale choral work, the *Stabat Mater*, appeared in 1950, and the *Gloria* in 1959, only four years before his death. Both employ the same forces chorus, soprano solo and large orchestra and both enjoyed immediate acclaim.

Poulenc's very distinctive style relies principally on strong musical contrasts. The harmony moves between Stravinskian dissonance and lush, sensuous chord progressions; vigorous counterpoint in clipped, angular phrases alternates with lyrical melodic writing; dynamics frequently range from a hushed *piano* to an emphatic *forte* within the space of a bar or two. Poulenc skilfully uses this colourful musical palette to express a wide range of emotions, from lyrical serenity to unashamed glee.

Gloria

The *Gloria* was commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation of America. The work is divided into six short movements and the words from the Mass are set to music of an unmistakable freshness and vivacity. However, some critics at the time of the work's premiere suggested that it bordered on the sacrilegious.

Poulenc's sense of humour and love of life shine through all his music, however solemn the text might be. The *Gloria* brilliantly expresses these characteristics, with its captivating mixture of solemnity and mischievous exuberance.

[John Bawden, Musical Director (1994 2006), Fareham Philharmonic Choir]

Poulenc on Gloria, and his other church music

"I think I put the best and the most authentic side of myself into my choral music...I believe that it is truly in this domain that I have contributed something new."

"First, they asked me for a symphony. I told them I was not made for symphonies. Then they asked me for an organ concerto. I told them I had already written one and I didn't want to write another. Finally they said: 'All right, then do what you like!'"

[On his commission from the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation in a talk in the Club des Trois Centres in Paris, a year before his death]

"When I wrote this piece, I had in mind those frescoes by Gozzoli where the angels stick out their tongues; and also some serious Benedictine monks I had once seen revelling in a game of football."

"a problem work ... I am working and reworking each bar in every conceivable way."

[Letter about Gloria to Pierre Bernac, August 1959]

"When I played you those few bits from it, your reaction encouraged me a great deal. I badly needed this as no other work has posed so many problems for me."

[Letter to Geneviève Sienkiewicz, December 1959]

"... as for the Gloria, if I had not come here, what peculiar music would have been heard! Dear, adorable, exquisite Charlie [Münch] had understood precisely nothing ... "

"Arriving late for the first rehearsal of the choir, I heard something so unlike me that my legs almost failed me on the staircase ... all those worthy Protestants were singing sharp and shrill (especially the women) as they do in London, with that 'Oh! My good Lord' quality. All Münch's tempi were wrong—all too fast naturally ... I tell you, I wanted to run a mile."

And two days later:

"The rehearsal yesterday was extraordinary. Münch suddenly inspired: as for (soprano soloist) Adele Addison, she drives you wild, she is sheer heaven, with that warm Negro purity.. Everyone was full of enthusiasm ... The Gloria is without doubt the best thing I have done. The orchestration is marvellous (the ending, among other things, is astonishing) ... It has given me a confidence that I badly needed."

[In letters to Bernac from Boston's Sheraton Plaza Hotel ,
January 1961]

"...very clear, primary colours—rude and violent like the Provence chapel of Matisse"

[Describing his Gloria setting to an American journalist]

"With the Gloria and the Stabat Mater, I think I have three good religious works. May they spare me a few days of purgatory, if I do narrowly avoid going to hell."

Shortly after writing his final choral work, the *Sept répons des ténèbres*

As others saw him...

'le moine et le voyou'—'half bad boy, half monk'

[Claude Rostand, 1950]

"Take Chabrier's dominant sevenths, Ravel's major sevenths, Fauré's straight triads, Debussy's minor sixths, Mussorgsky's augmented fourths. Filter them, as Satie did, through the added-sixth chords of vaudeville ... blending a pint of Couperin with a quart of Stravinsky, and you get the harmony of Poulenc"

"The sum of his obvious parts— dapper and ungainly, wicked and pious, a slipshod perfectionist"

[Ned Rorem 1977]



I - Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

*Glory be to God on high
And on earth peace, goodwill towards men*

After a brief introduction, the chorus enters with a prominent dotted figure to the word 'Gloria', which forms the basis of this movement.

II - Laudamus te

Laudamus te, Benedicimus te,
Adoramus te, Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

*We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee, we glorify thee
We give thanks to thee, for thy great glory*

The animated second movement, 'Laudamus Te', reveals Poulenc in playful mood, with the chorus for the most part divided into pairs of voices sopranos and tenors; altos and basses exchanging a series of short, pithy phrases.

III - Domine Deus

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

*O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.*

In the expressive third section, 'Domine Deus', the soprano soloist is heard for the first time with a typically yearning melody, whilst the chorus is allocated a supporting role.

IV - Domine Fili unigenite

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ;

We are then abruptly whisked back to the playground for the brief and chirpy 'Domine Fili Unigenite'.

V - Dominus Deus, Agnus Dei

Domine Deus, agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
rex coelestis
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.

*O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, king of
heaven,
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.*

The soprano soloist returns for this exquisite movement, with soloist and chorus sometimes combining and sometimes exchanging lyrical phrases.

VI - Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
Tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe,
Cum sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

*Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy;
Thou only art the Lord;
Thou only, O Christ,
with the Holy Ghost art most high
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.*

In the sixth movement a short, majestic opening soon gives way to an animated section at the words 'Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris'. Peace and serenity suffuses the radiant closing pages of the work but, characteristically, Poulenc cannot resist a last, loud interjection at the first 'Amen', where he briefly recalls the dotted 'Gloria' figure of the very opening, before calm is restored for the final 'Amen'.

BIOGRAPHIES



GRAHAM CALDBECK is one of Britain's leading conductors of amateur choirs, known for his wideranging musical skills, innovative programming and stylish performances. He studied music at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was a Choral Scholar under Richard Marlow, and has sung with the Cathedral Choirs of Guildford and Winchester. He holds both the Fellowship and Choir Training diplomas of the Royal College of Organists, is a former Assistant Organist at St. Martin in the Fields and is currently Director of Music at St Mary The Boltons, SW10. For fifteen years, Graham held senior positions at the Royal College of Music and he now pursues a freelance career as conductor, organist, vocal coach and teacher.

Graham has conducted Somerset Chamber Choir since 1990, working with many of the UK's most talented instrumentalists and soloists. He is also conductor of the Nonsuch Singers, a London-based chamber choir whose concerts are regularly highlighted by the national press, and the Mayfield Festival Choir in East Sussex. Last December, Graham conducted

Nonsuch Singers in music by Monteverdi, Brahms and Gabriel Jackson as part of the Spitalfields Winter Festival in London, and in March 2008 gave the world premiere of a new work for choir and shakuhachi by Roxanna Panufnik, in St. John's, Smith Square, both concerts being attended by the contemporary composers involved. He directed a sellout performance of Monteverdi's *Vespers* as part of this year's Mayfield festival in May, and in June conducted a programme of music from England's 'Golden Age' with Dame Emma Kirkby, lutenist Jakob Lindberg and the Nonsuch Singers in the newly refurbished St Martin in the Fields.

Outside Somerset, future projects include concerts of American and German music with Nonsuch Singers in St Martin in the Fields and St George's, Bloomsbury in October and January, works by Mozart and Vaughan Williams in Mayfield in November and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in Southwark Cathedral in December.



CHARLOTTE ELLETT *soprano* studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio. She began her career at Glyndebourne Festival where her roles included Frasquita (*Carmen*) and First Bridesmaid (*Le nozze di Figaro*). As an Associate Artist at Welsh National Opera she sang the Angel (*Jephtha*), Barbarina and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Frasquita (*Carmen*) and Karolka (*Jenufa*) which she subsequently recorded for Chandos under Sir Charles Mackerras. Charlotte's other operatic roles include Miss Wordsworth (*Albert Herring*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Despina (*Così fan Tutte*), Iphis (*Jephtha*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), and Musetta (*La Bohème*).

Charlotte regularly performs oratorio and recitals. She has sung Mozart's *Requiem* at the Bridgewater Hall and Royal Festival Hall, *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall with Sir David Willcocks, Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* at King's College Cambridge and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Her repertoire also includes Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*.

Charlotte recorded Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* as the Chorus soloist under Kent Nagano, and Rawsthorne's *Second Symphony* for the Naxos label. At St David's Hall, Cardiff, she performed as part of their lunchtime recital series.

Among her recent engagements Charlotte has performed Amor (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*), Musetta and Frasquita for Welsh National Opera, Hermia (*Fleurette*) in Offenbach's (*Barbe Bleue*) at Buxton Festival, Chair (*The Chair in Love*) by John Metcalf in Montreal with a subsequent tour in the UK, and the leading role of Vespina in Haydn's *Country Matters* with English Touring Opera. Most recently Charlotte has sung Pamina and Gretel for Welsh National Opera, with whom she will sing Karolka (*Jenufa*) later in the year. Other future engagements include a second UK tour as Chair (*The Chair in Love*) and a tour as the soprano soloist in a new work by Hector Parra with Ensemble Intercontemporaine.



ANDREW STAPLES sang as a chorister in St Paul's Cathedral before winning a Choral Scholarship to King's College Cambridge, where he gained a degree in Music. Andrew was the first recipient of the RCM Peter Pears Scholarship, sponsored by the Britten Pears Foundation, at the Royal College of Music and subsequently joined the Benjamin Britten International Opera School. He studies with Ryland Davies.

His concert engagements include Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* with the Swedish Radio and Daniel Harding, John Tavener's *The Veil of the Temple* in New York, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings* with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Mozart's *Requiem* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra both conducted by Andrew Manze, the Gävle Symphony and Robin Ticciati, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra and Daniel Harding.

On stage he has performed Aret in Haydn's *Philemon und Baucis* for the 2003 Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria, conducted by Trevor Pinnock. He performed the role of Haliarte in the Royal College of Music production of Handel's *Sosarme* in conjunction with the London Handel Festival, conducted by Laurence Cummings and Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) with Andrew Parrott and the London Mozart Players. For the Benjamin Britten International Opera School at the Royal College of Music he sang Male Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) and Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*). He has also sung Nencio (Haydn's *L'Infedeltà delusa*) for English Touring Opera.

His concert plans include performances with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle. He made his Royal Opera House debut as Jacquino (*Fidelio*) and returned for First Armed Man (*Die Zauberflöte*). His opera engagements include his first Tamino for Opera Holland Park, Belfiore (*La Finta Giardiniera*) for the National Theatre in Prague and Narraboth (*Salome*) for the Royal Opera.



BENEDICT NELSON baritone was born in London and began his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama as an undergraduate in 2002. He has just completed his final year on the Opera Course and remains under the tutelage of Robert Dean. He has been generously supported in his studies by The Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers, as well as receiving an Independent Opera Voice Fellowship, Sybill Tutton Awards and a Countess of Munster Musical Trust Scholarship. He is also a scholar of the distinguished Samling Foundation.

In 2007 Benedict won second prize in the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Awards and was runnerup in the Guildhall Gold Medal Award. Following this he performed Brahms *Requiem* at the Royal Albert Hall, played Masetto in Sir Thomas Allen's production of *Don Giovanni* at the Sage in Gateshead, before taking the part of Sid in British Youth Opera's *Albert Herring*.

At just 24, Benedict has amassed a considerable number of operatic roles, including Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), Count Almaviva and Figaro (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Masetto and Don Giovanni (*Don Giovanni*), Sprecher (*Die Zauberflöte*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Demetrius (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Mr Gedge and Sid (*Albert Herring*), and Baron Gondremarck (*La Vie Parisienne*). He has also performed in a variety of prestigious venues including the Wigmore, Barbican, Cadogan, and Royal Albert Halls, the Grossfestspielhaus in Salzburg and the Philharmonie in Berlin under the batons of conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle, Sir David Willcocks, Sir Neville Marriner and Thomas Zehetmair. Benedict has worked in masterclasses with Sir Thomas Allen, Sir John Tomlinson, Philip Langridge, José Cura and Isobel Buchanan.

His future plans include Tarquinius for *Britten-Pears Young Artists* in Aldeburgh and Morales (*Carmen*) at the Royal Albert Hall in 2009. Benedict will take a place at the National Opera Studio later this year.



SOUTHERN SINFONIA'S reputation continues to grow as a leading Chamber Orchestra in the South of England. Its unique ability to play music from the 1600s to the present day, at the correct pitch and with informed playing style, puts it in huge demand – as does its commitment to contemporary and new music. As well as full orchestra concerts the organisation has two highly successful chamber and solo recital concert series. The orchestra was established in 1990 and is based in Newbury, holding a residency at the Corn Exchange where it plays a regular Subscription Series, with David Hill as its Chief Conductor. The group also strives to bring concerts and recitals to a wide area of the south of England – including Winchester, Canterbury, Dorchester (Oxford) and Cambridge. Their new recording with period instruments of the Monteverdi *Vespers* was recently released by Signum and was well reviewed in Gramophone Magazine. As well as these regular orchestral concerts the organisation runs a biannual Young Musician of the Year competition and provides a performance platform for the Hampshire Singer of the Year Competition winner.

Education is at the forefront of the ethos of the group, our Berkshire Junior Schools Programme has been running now for five years and thousands of children have been on the programme. We work regularly with secondary schools in Berkshire and have begun recently a very special relationship with the pupils and staff of Testbourne School, Whitechurch. In Spring this year our Patron, Sir Roger Norrington, joined Tom Seligman and the Hampshire County Youth Chamber Orchestra in a weekend of rehearsal and concert based around Beethoven Symphony No 5. Our specialist work with autistic young people continues, and a new programme with MENCAP will start next season.

Our most recent collaboration, with Hampshire Music Services and June Boyce Tillman with the University of Winchester, enabled five hundred children from across Hampshire to sing, dance and play a variety of instruments in the Anvil, Basingstoke.

We need everyone's support to help us continue all our projects. Please call our office on 01635 580035, where Kay or Anita will be pleased to talk about sponsorship, donations or joining the Friends of Southern Sinfonia.



SOMERSET CHAMBER CHOIR was founded in 1984 by former members of the Somerset Youth Choir. It is firmly established as one of the most exciting choirs in the area and continues to recruit from among the most talented singers in the region. The choir is renowned for its innovative and eclectic programmes of music devised by its conductor, Graham Caldbeck, and it regularly performs with many of the UK's top professional soloists and orchestras.

We are a very friendly choir and place a great emphasis on having fun while, at the same time, working hard to prepare the music we have to sing. We do not hold weekly rehearsals, but instead run six full rehearsal weekends in midSomerset every year. If you now live outside the County, don't be deterred – the choir is also suitable for those formerly based in the area but who are now at university, or who work outside the County – many of our members travel hundreds of miles to attend rehearsals, perhaps combining their weekend with a visit to family or friends a fact that perhaps speaks louder than words.

Later this year, the choir will be holding a Residential Course at Halsway Manor, in the Quantock Hills, to work on new music and to enjoy voice training and other musical workshops, including African Drumming.

Would you like to sing with us?

If so, we should love to hear from you. We place a strong emphasis on encouraging young people, or those who are no longer quite so young but still have puresounding voices, to join our ranks. Currently we particularly welcome applications from sopranos, although other voice parts will nearly always be considered for membership too.

For further details, please talk to any member of the choir, visit our website at www.somersetchamberchoir.org.uk or e-mail us at: recruitment@somersetchamberchoir.org.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Emily Dingle
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Rebecca Elderton
Jane Harris
Emma Killick
Veronica Lee
Judy Male
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Jill Rogers
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Alto

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[This list was correct at the time of going to print, but may not include members who only recently applied to join the choir]

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If you would like to volunteer to help us in any way, please leave a message on our Box Office voicemail on 01275 349010 and we will contact you.

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We look forward to meeting you soon!

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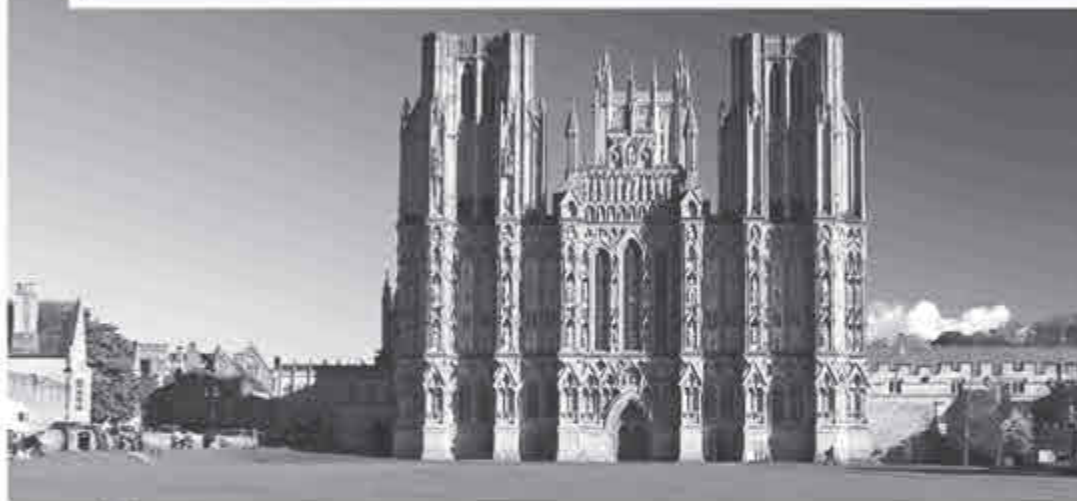
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FROME FESTIVAL CHORUS 2009



BATH ABBEY

Saturday 24 January



WELLS CATHEDRAL

Saturday 23 May



TOUR TO CHINA

31 May 8 June

Conductor - Jason Thornton Chorus Master - Gavin Carr

Singers are invited to enrol now for the 2009 Season

Winter School at Bath Abbey, 24 January 2009

Wells Cathedral, 23 May 2009

ELGAR DREAM OF GERONTIUS

Tour to China, 31 May-8 June 2009,

Performing in Beijing & Shanghai

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FORTHCOMING CONCERTS CONDUCTED BY GRAHAM CALDBECK

Tuesday 21 October at 7.30pm
St Martin-in-the-Fields, London WC2N 4JJ

American Classics

Outstanding music from the USA for choir and piano

Choral works by Copland, Barber, Lauridsen, Whitacre, Harris and Howells
plus piano works by Rachmaninov & Gershwin

Martin Cousin *piano*
Nonsuch Singers

Box Office 020 7766 1100 Online www.smitf.org

Sunday 23 November at 7.30pm
Mayfield Parish Church, E. Sussex

Vaughan Williams
Holst
Vaughan Williams
Mozart

The Old Hundredth; O Clap Your Hands
St. Paul's Suite
Five Mystical Songs
Mass in C Minor

Mayfield Festival Choir
London Primavera

Andrew Benians *organ & piano*
Sarah Jane Brandon *soprano* ~ Madeleine Pierard *soprano*
Alex VeareyRoberts *tenor* ~ Aaron McAuley *baritone*

Box Office: Mayfield Festival Choir, PO Box 324, Mayfield, East Sussex, TN20 6WA

Friday 5 December 7.00pm
Southwark Cathedral, London SE1

BACH *Christmas Oratorio* *(parts 13 & 6, in German)*

Nonsuch Singers
Canzona

Rebecca Outram *soprano* ~ Andrew Radley *countertenor*
Thomas Hobbs *tenor* ~ Stuart MacIntyre *bass*

Tickets on sale at the door

DETAILS OF FUTURE SOMERSET CHAMBER CHOIR CONCERTS ON FOLLOWING TWO PAGES

SPREADING THE WORD

If you enjoy this afternoon's concert, please tell others about the choir and encourage them to come to our concerts....

Somerset Chamber Choir - Future concerts

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, TAUNTON

Sunday 15 February 2009 at 3pm

This Amazing Day

with **Charles Ramirez** guitar

Morten Lauridsen:

O Magnum Mysterium

Ubi caritas et amor

Barber:

Heaven-Haven

To be sung on the water

Matthew Harris:

Shakespeare Songs

Eric Whitacre:

Thank You God for most

this amazing day

Three Flower Songs

Water Night

with Spiritual arrangements by Toppett and others, plus solos for Guitar

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to leave your details and we will send you further information as it becomes available.

Alternatively, you could sign up for our e-mailing list by sending your e-mail address to email@somersetchamberchoir.org.uk. Information will also be published at www.somersetchamberchoir.org.uk

Next February we go American!

Two American choral composers, **Eric Whitacre** and **Morten Lauridsen**, have taken the choral world by storm in recent years - recordings of their music have become best-sellers and the two composers' works have rapidly entered the repertory. The *Los Angeles Times* has described Whitacre's music as having '*electric, chilling harmonies; works of unearthly beauty and imagination*' and his *Water Night* has become one of the most popular choral works of the last decade and is one of the top-selling choral publications of all time. Lauridsen has been described as "*the only American composer in history who can be called a mystic, (whose) probing, serene work contains an elusive and indefinable ingredient which leaves the impression that all the questions have been answered ...*" By the year 2000, Lauridsen had become the most frequently performed American choral composer, his best-known work probably being the Christmas motet, *O magnum mysterium*.

We will also perform two beautiful short works by **Samuel Barber**, plus some jazzy and vibrant Shakespeare settings by another up-and-coming American composer, the Juillard-trained **Matthew Harris**, whose highly popular choral works have been commissioned or premièred by leading American choirs and sung by countless school and community choirs across America.

We are fortunate that the brilliant guitarist **Charles Ramirez**, who is a professor of guitar at the Royal College of Music, joins us for this concert. Charles was born in Gibraltar and became a prize-winning student at the Royal College, where he was the first guitarist ever to play a concerto with a College orchestra. He often gives duo recitals with his wife, Helen Kalamuniak, herself a former RCM student and pupil of John Williams.

'Over the years the choir has firmly established itself as among the best...lauded by press and public alike...one of the finest groups of singers in the region' Somerset County Gazette

Somerset Chamber Choir - Future concerts

Saturday 25 July 2009 at 7pm

WELLS CATHEDRAL

25th Anniversary Concert



Brilliant Baroque!

Charpentier: Te Deum

Handel: Dixit Dominus

Vivaldi: Gloria RV589

plus music to celebrate the 70th birthday of the influential British composer, Jonathan Harvey

Next summer in Wells we shall be performing an exciting programme of works from the French, German & Italian Baroque, plus a 'taster' of the *a cappella* music of Jonathan Harvey. **Charpentier's *Te Deum*** is one of his most famous and thrilling works and follows on from the French Baroque music that the choir performed in 2007. The choir last sang **Handel's *Dixit Dominus*** in 1992 so it is high time that we revisited this wondrous piece in the year that marks the 250th anniversary of Handel's death. **Vivaldi's *Gloria*** is, of course, an alltime favourite that never fails to reward both choir and audience alike, especially when performed with a Baroque spring in its step! We hope you will join us to hear this wonderfully exciting programme, to be performed in the choir's 25th anniversary year, which mixes music old and new, we think, in a fascinating way, as well as showcasing the huge variety of musical styles encompassed within the Baroque period.

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