

The West Somerset Singers



Saturday 16th April, 2011

*The West Somerset Singers
welcome you and present
A
Springtime Concert*

Programme

Mass in G — Franz Schubert

Nun Danket—Sigfrid Karg-Elert (organ solo performed by Alex Davies)

Laudamus Te — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (solo performed by Hilary Gooch)

— INTERVAL OF 15 MINUTES —

Lefébure-Wély—Andante “Choeur de voix humaines” (organ Solo performed by Alex Davies)

Requiem — John Rutter

Cantique de Jean Racine — Gabriel Fauré

Please join us for light refreshments after this evening's performance.

Programme Notes

These programme notes were supplied through Making Music's programme note service.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) ***Mass No. 2 in G, D 167***

Schubert wrote this simple but charming setting of the Mass in 1815 for his local church in Liechtenthal, a suburb of Vienna. He was just 18 years old. The original accompaniment was for strings and organ, but when it was published thirty years later, his brother Ferdinand added parts for wind and timpani.

This youthful work is a fine example of Schubert's lyrical skill, heard to particularly fine effect in the Kyrie and Benedictus. The setting owes its formal plan to Mozart's and Haydn's short Viennese Masses, especially in the Sanctus where a weighty opening section is followed by a lively, vigorous fugue. The Gloria, too, displays a contrast of mood but here a lyrical central section is framed by music of great fire. The Credo opens and closes quietly with the Crucifixus section providing a more forceful episode. The Agnus Dei, with its choral pleas interspersing the soloists' phrases, brings the work to a peaceful conclusion.

John Rutter (born 1945) ***Requiem***

1. *Requiem Aeternam (Chorus)*
2. *Out of the Deep (Chorus)*
3. *Pie Jesu (Soprano Solo and Chorus)*
4. *Sanctus (Chorus)*
5. *Agnus Dei (Chorus)*
6. *The Lord is my shepherd (Chorus)*
7. *Lux Aeterna (Soprano Solo and Chorus)*

This *Requiem* was written in 1985 and first performed in October of that year. Following the precedent established by Brahms and Faurè, amongst others, it is not strictly a setting of the Requiem Mass as laid

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down in Catholic liturgy but instead is made up of a personal selection of texts, some taken from the Requiem Mass and some from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

The seven sections of the work form an arch-like meditation on the themes of life and death: the first and last movements are prayers on behalf of all humanity, movements 2 and 6 are psalms, 3 and 5 are personal prayers to Christ and the central Sanctus is an affirmation of divine glory.

Gabriel Faure (1845-1924)

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11

Jean Racine (1639–99) was one of Europe's leading dramatists, and one of the few French classical playwrights to have had any success outside their own country. His other writings are less often remembered, and it is only because of Fauré that anyone except a literary specialist is aware that in 1688 he published translations of a series of Latin hymns for the days of the week. "Verbe égal au Très-Haut" is a free version of *Consorts paterni luminis*, the hymn for Tuesday matins, which was thought at the time to be by St Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan. Matins was sung, at least in strict monasteries, during the night and the words refer to breaking the night's silence with praise to God, putting to flight dark's evil spirits and driving away sloth, though Racine's classical phraseology is less specific than the original. Fauré wrote his setting in 1865 at the end of his student days and it won the composition prize at his college, the École Niedermeyer. It has a mature simplicity that most students would foolishly scorn!

Text and translation

*Verbe égal au Très-Haut,
Notre unique espérance,
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux,
De la paisible nuit,
Nous rompons le silence,
Divin Sauveur jette sur nous les yeux!
Repands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante,
Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix,*

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*Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante,
Qui la conduit al'oubli de tes lois,
O Christ sois favorable a ce peuple fidèle
Pour te bénir maintenant rassemble,
À ta gloire immortelle
Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.*

Word equal to the Most High, our only hope,
Eternal day of earth and sky, Of peaceful night,
We break the silence, Divine Saviour, cast Thine eyes on us!
Cast on us the fire of Thy mighty grace,
That all Hell may flee at the sound of Thy voice,
Cast sleep from a languishing soul
Thou who bears it to the limit of Thy laws,
O Christ, look favourably on this faithful people
Who gather now to bless Thee,
Receive the songs they offer To Thy immortal glory
And Thy gifts which they return manifold!

Translation: Louis Dunn
Author: Clifford Bartlett (1991)

Biographies

Musical Director—Nick Thomas

Nick retired last year from his post as Head of Music at Kingsmead School, Wiveliscombe to spend more time on his own wide and varied musical interests. He is a multi instrumentalist concentrating mainly on flute, piano and piano accordion. He was, until recently, musical director and organist at St George's C of E Church, Wilton. He has performed and worked with many groups in the Taunton area including Orchestra West, and many local operatic societies.

Nick regularly plays accordion, flute and whistle with his folk band *Tranterns Folly*. He greatly enjoys making music, and in particular bringing out the best in other performers - be they adults or young people. He teaches flute at King's College, Taunton and singing and violin for Somerset Music.

Organist—Alex Davies

Alex Davies studied at Trinity College of Music London where his organ teachers included John Winter and Sean Farrell. On completion of his BMus he was awarded a scholarship to pursue post graduate studies in organ with Roger Sayer at Rochester Cathedral. Whilst studying at college he won the Cardnell organ prize and was organ scholar to St Augustine's Queens Gate and St. Alfege in Greenwich. He has performed in concerts, and given recitals at venues throughout London including; Marylebone Parish Church, Royal Naval College Chapel, Royal Festival Hall, Southwark Cathedral. In 2003/4 he worked at Blackburn Cathedral as organ scholar assisting the busy music department, accompanying services and playing in concerts and recitals.

Alex is the organist at St Michaels Parish Church, Lyme Regis, a member of the Lyme Regis organ appeal committee and director of Lyme Bay Chorale.

Biographies

Soprano—Hilary Gooch

As a child Hilary sang for many years in her Church choir in the village of Alne, North Yorkshire. She read English at Somerville College, Oxford but always retained her love of singing. She now lives in Somerset. She has sung in a number of operas with local amateur opera groups, including Eurydice in 'Orpheus in the Underworld', Anna in 'Nabucco', Adina in 'L'Elisir D'Amore' and Adele in 'Die Fledermaus'. She has also sung leading roles in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Hilary is a frequent soloist with the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir, travelling to different venues in the South West.

Hilary has taken part in Masterclasses with Donald Maxwell, and she is currently studying singing with Margaret Kingsley.

Tenor – Christopher Ball

Christopher has been active in the music life of the Taunton area for over 30 years. As a singer he has made numerous appearances on stage, in churches and in the concert hall. He has conducted a diverse range of pieces from Mozart to Sondheim for operatic societies in Wellington and Taunton and is currently Musical Director of Somerset Opera.

Orchestra

Cello — Tamar Dewbery (King's College Taunton)

Flute — Jenny Kilbey (Wellington School)

Oboe — Bethany Kilbey (Wellington School)

Timpani — Karen Paul (Deputy Music Director, King's College Taunton)

Harp (keyboard) — Rachel Robinson

Acknowledgements

*The West Somerset Singers would like to thank **Taunton Baptist Church** for their hospitality.*

Our thanks to also to **Rachel Robinson** for accompanying the choir during their Monday evening rehearsals.

*Thank you to **Somerset Performing Arts Library** and **Oxford University Press** for supplying the music copies and **Making Music** for programme notes.*

Why Not Join Us?

The West Somerset Singers are looking for new members (particularly tenors!) to join them in the Autumn term. At present we do not hold auditions and whilst the ability to read music is helpful it is not an essential requirement.

We meet on Monday evenings for two terms in the Gwyn Williams room at Taunton School. Our next rehearsal will take place on Monday September 12th 2011 at 7.30pm when we'll begin work on a varied Christmas programme.

For an informal chat please call our Secretary, Sue Sutton on (01823) 432157 or visit our website for further information
www.westsomersetsingers.org.uk

