

Nantwich Choral Society

In the Beginning
Aaron Copland

Variations on Good King Wenceslas
Petr Eben

Fantasia on Christmas Carols
Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Interval

Hodie Christus natus est

Wexford Carol arr. John Rutter

On Christmas Day
Patrick Larley

Joyce Tindsley- Mezzo-soprano John Powell- Baritone
Andrew Mildinhall- Organist
Conducted by Patrick Larley

Bunbury Parish Church
Saturday 4th December 2004 at 7.30 pm.

"In the beginning"

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland is regarded as a pioneering figure in American music. While studying in Paris in 1920s was influenced by the teaching of Nadia Boulanger, Stravinskian neo-classicism, popular music, and the developing European nationalist composing traditions. Upon return to USA, his modernism and use of jazz gave him a reputation as an enfant terrible. In the 1930s and 40s he established a characteristically American vernacular style, employing simple harmonies, folk melodies, and lucid orchestration endearing his work to the public through such pieces as *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Old American Songs*. Radical late works from the 1960s such as *Connotations* and *Inscape* adopt an individualised 12-tone idiom. As conductor and educator at Harvard and Tanglewood, and through radio and television broadcasts, he worked tirelessly to promote the works of other composers.

In the Beginning, a setting for unaccompanied choir and mezzo soprano soloist, of the Biblical text describing the Creation (Genesis Chap. 1), was composed for the Harvard Symposium on Music in 1947. Copland uses dramatic chromatic melody, dissonant harmonies and exciting syncopated rhythms revealing the influence of early American sacred music and folk music. (in the same way that Vaughan Williams' music reflects the music of Tudor England and the nation's traditional folksongs). The Harmony is often built on bare 4ths and 5ths creating subtle changes of atmosphere as the account moves through the seven days of Creation.

"A Festive Voluntary"

Variations on Good King Wenceslas

Petr Eben

Petr Eben was born in 1929 in Southern Bohemia. He has held various positions in Czech television and academic establishments including the Charles University, plus a busy career as pianist and organist. His compositions include Song Cycles, Cantatas, Symphonic and Chamber works, stage music and sacred compositions. The variations on 'Good King Wenceslas' were written in response to a commission from the Southern Cathedrals Festival for the re-opening of the Chichester

Cathedral Organ and was first performed on July 24th 1986. The composer writes 'I wanted to find something that would connect my country with Great Britain. This found in the person of our King and National Saint and the English Medieval tune based on the lovely carol 'Good King Wenceslas'

"The Fantasia on Christmas Carols"

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Fantasia on Christmas Carols was written for the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford in 1912 and dedicated to Cecil Sharp. It was written for soloist, mixed chorus, full orchestra and organ. As usual, though, Vaughan Williams prepared and authorised several alternative versions in order to bring his music within the range of most choirs, and tonight we perform with organ accompaniment only. The Fantasia is founded on the following traditional English Carols; The Truth sent from Above (Herefordshire) - words and melody; Come all you worthy gentlemen (Somerset) words and melody; On Christmas Night (Sussex) words and melody; There is a fountain (Herefordshire) tune only; together with fragments of other well known carol tunes - The first Nowell, A Virgin unspotted, and the Wassail Bough. The work has been described as 'this most happy and beautiful, hearty and mystical Christmas music'. Descants of one carol soar above the others, bells ring out and the chorus ends by wishing everyone a Happy New Year as their voices gradually recede into the distance.

"Hodie Christus natus est"

Plainsong

The plainsong Christmas antiphon used by Benjamin Britten as a processional and recessional in his *Ceremony of Carols*

"Wexford Carol"

John Rutter

John Rutter is a master of the carol arrangement and his sensitive setting of the Wexford Carol, a traditional Irish folk carol, is no exception. Complimentary modal harmonies in the chorus underpin and overlap a most delightful melodic line sung by the baritone and mezzo soprano soloists in turn.

"On Christmas Day"

Patrick Larley

On Christmas Day is a 7- movement sequence for mezzo-soprano, choir and organ using stanzas from Thomas Traherne's poem of the same title, George Herbert's poem Christmas, anonymous Medieval words, and two traditional Sussex carols.

1. Shake off thy sloth (Traherne)
2. Let us gather (Anon)
3. 'Twas Thou that gavest (Traherne)
4. On Christmas Night (English traditional)
5. Christmas (Herbert)
6. The sun in the morning (Traherne)
7. At break of day (Traherne)

It was composed for The Bognor Regis Choir in Sussex and received it's first performance in December 2002. As with the other two main works of this concert homage is paid to the modal style of harmony though this is countered by **Patrick Larley's** characteristically subtle use of dissonance - especially in the Herbert poem which is set for soloist and choir. The final movement is a joyful peal of bells declaiming:

"At break of day O how the bells did ring,
To Thee my King the bells did ring,
To Thee the angels sing.....to such a King!"

Joyce Tindsley

Joyce Tindsley was born in Lancashire. After graduating with a Bmus(Hons) from UCNW, Bangor, where she studied composition with William Mathias, she went to the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester to study with Barbara Robotham and Christopher Underwood. Since leaving she has studied with Sally Burgess and Opera North's Wyn Davies.

Whilst at college she appeared as Hermia in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Marcellina in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Arnalta in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. After leaving College she sang the part of Olga in Tchaikowsky's *Eugene Onegin* for Clonter Opera and was invited to sing with English National Opera.

Concerts have included Vivaldi's Gloria with the Manchester Camerata at the Royal Northern College of Music; Rutter's *Magnificat* in Ripon Cathedral; Haydn's *Nelson Mass* for the National Federation of Music Societies; Bach's *St John Passion* with the Goldberg Ensemble at the Ryedale Festival and *St Matthew Passion* at Manchester Cathedral with the Manchester Camerata; Dvorak's *Requiem* at Coventry Cathedral for the International Church Music Festival; Mozart's *Requiem* with Sir Georg Solti; she has sung in the Wigmore Hall and in 2002 she was asked to sing the role of Herodias in Strauss's *Salome* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. Joyce is no stranger to the recital platform performing mainly in the North-West, and in the summer of last year was filmed as part of a documentary about Kathleen Ferrier.

Joyce's career also includes much work for the BBC. As a member of the Britten Singers, formerly the BBC Northern Singers, she has been involved in radio broadcasts on radio, recordings, and performances at music festivals both at home and abroad including singing at Aldeburgh, working with Sir Charles Groves, and more recently Sir Richard Hickox. Since 1995 Joyce has been a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers broadcasting live several days each week both as a member of the choir and as a soloist.

Joyce also teaches singing at her home in Longridge and runs courses and workshops for singers in the North West.

John Powell

Born in London and educated in Somerset and at Cambridge University, John Powell has spent much of his life in Manchester. His musical activities have always centred around choirs and singers and he devotes most of his time to conducting, singing and teaching. Until 1988 he was head of Choral Music at Chetham's School of Music. He now teaches privately at Bolton school as well as being a tutor with the National Youth Choir of Great Britain.

John was, for fifteen years, Director of the Bolton Chamber Choir and has also been a Guest Conductor with Fleetwood Choral Society. He conducts his own chamber choir, the John Powell Singers, and works with various other groups, including Bolton Festival Choir. Last summer he was responsible for training 300 singers from the North West for a performance of Mahler's 8th Symphony at the Bridgewater Hall.

A member of the BBC Northern Singers since 1975, and a founder member of the Britten Singers, John has sung on radio, television and disc, and at the Proms, Aldenburgh and Harrogate Festivals as well as touring extensively abroad. He also sings with the BBC Daily Service Singers. He performs in recitals and oratorio and particularly enjoys exploring new repertoire.

Writing music for choirs is a growing part of John's musical activities - several of his folksong arrangements for chamber choirs have recently been published. A new work for girls' voices was premiered in July 2001 at the RNCM.

Patrick Larley

Patrick Larley has been Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society since 1997 and holds a similar post with Ludlow Choral Society in Shropshire. During this time he has widened the choir's horizons by adding new and challenging works to the standard repertoire, leading the choir in performances with prestigious orchestras such as the Manchester Camerata, Orchestra of the Golden Age and His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, and by encouraging the performance of unaccompanied choral music.

Patrick, a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, studied Organ, Singing and Choral training at the RNCM, and since then he has worked with a number of leading professional orchestras in the North-West as conductor, keyboard player and singer, and has taken part in many of country's major music festivals including Aldeburgh, Chester, Paisley, York and the Proms. He is also founder and director of his own orchestral ensemble - *Consort*, the vocal ensemble *Chudleigh's Company*, and the children's choir, *Ludlow Young Voices*.

Many of Patrick's compositions have been recorded on CD and broadcast on Radio 3 and have been performed widely throughout the UK and in America. Recordings include *The Rose of Peace* - music for a cappella voices, and *On a Fine Morning* - music for solo voice and piano. *A Mass of a Thousand Ages* was commissioned by NCS for the millennium celebrations and premiered on April 8th 2000 in St. Mary's Church, Nantwich. Patrick's joyful anthem, *Sing to the Lord* was commissioned by Berkshire County Youth Choirs and Orchestra to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and received its premiere performance in St. Georges Chapel Windsor Castle on July 9th 2003. *Columcille*, a musical sequence on the life of St. Columba, was commissioned by Opus Anglicanum for their programme 'The Island' and was first performed in the Glasgow Cathedral Festival 2004.

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 18th December 2004, 7.30pm

St. Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich

RING OUT! WILD BELLS - Family Carols

Andrew Mildinhall - Piano / Organ

The Waverton Handbell Ringers

Saturday 12th March 2005, 7.30pm

St. Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich

NELSON MASS - Haydn

REQUIEM - Rutter

Julie Thomas - Soprano, Victoria Shone - Alto

Christopher Larley - Tenor, Geoff Thomas - Bass

The Consort - Orchestra

Saturday 2nd July 2005, 7.30pm

Civic Hall, Nantwich

CARMINA BURANA - Orff

Sue Tyson - Soprano, Adrian Blakeley - Baritone

Andrew Mildinhall - Pianist, Patricia Wood - Pianist

Tickets for all forthcoming concerts will be available from the Box Office at "Sounds Musical" 01270 625579
Tickets are also available from St. Mary's Church Shop or at the door.

For more information visit our website:
www.nantwichchoral.org.uk

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

SOPRANO 1

Ann Barnard
Janice Brown
Janet Burton
Jo Butchart
Joyce Clegg
Glenda Colemere
Gail Corfield
Rita Davies
Annabel English
Anne Ferguson
Cynthia Gorton
Frances Hughes
Bronwyn Kelly
Helen Kerr
Liz Kirby
Sheila Luke
Sue Munks
Maire Pedder
Rachel Pentecost
Tracy Shone
Jacqueline Weatherill

SOPRANO 2

Sue Briscoe
Christine English
Joyce Foster
Karen Grimwood
Gill Handford
Anne-Dorothee Maechtig
Eileen Robertson
Barbara Shone
Sally Sissons

ALTO 1

Liz Abbott
Jean Atkin
Alison Bailey
Jocelyn Cooper
Jacqueline Davies
Sarah Heald
Isobel Hope
Jane Lincoln
Anne Nicol
Margaret Smith
Gillian Wakeley
Diane Wheatley

ALTO 2

Shirley Burton
Rita Donnelly
Diane Didsbury
Angela Greaves
Joy Guest
Nancy Kellett
Anne McKay
Brenda Midgley
Janet Miller
Brenda Morris
Jean Nurse
Gwyneth Rollins
Joan Shaddick
Margaret Whitehurst

TENOR

Wal Kaye
Thomas Maechtig
Mike Moores
Nick Smith
Philip Trinder
Joe Watson

BASS

Christopher Findlay
David Foster
Martin Jones
Ron Kelley
Jock Knight
Jonathan Layfield
Cameron Paterson
Ray Potts
Bob Pugh
Dan Rynchart
Simon Stubington
David Walker

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