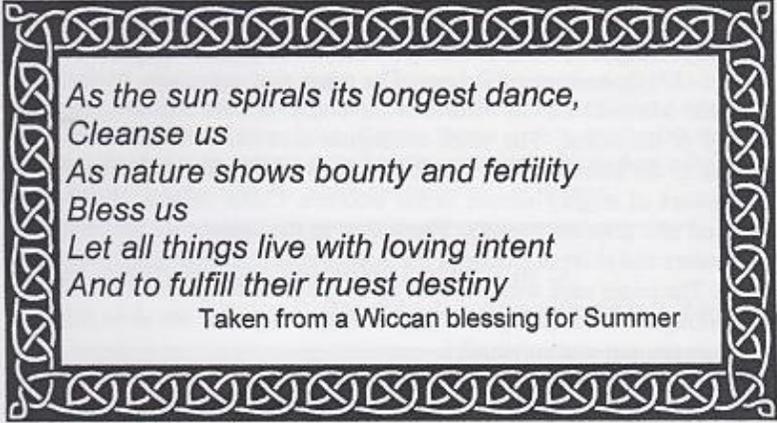


# *Nantwich Choral Society*



*As the sun spirals its longest dance,  
Cleanse us  
As nature shows bounty and fertility  
Bless us  
Let all things live with loving intent  
And to fulfill their truest destiny*  
Taken from a Wiccan blessing for Summer

*Solstice of Light*      *Maxwell Davies*  
*Blest Pair of Sirens*      *Parry*  
*Five Mystical Songs*      *Vaughan Williams*

Steven Newlove      Tenor  
Adrian Blakeley      Baritone  
Graham Eccles      Organ

Conducted by Patrick Larley

The Parish Church of St Mary, Nantwich  
Saturday 26th June 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

## *Solstice of Light*

*Peter Maxwell-Davies (1934 - )*

Solstice of Light is an extended poem by George Mackay Brown (1921 – 1996), a native of Orkney. The poem was especially written for Peter Maxwell Davies' fourteen movement cantata depicting the history of the island. The work catalogues successive waves of incomers to the islands - from the first arrivals in twig and hide boats; the hewers of mighty stones; broch builders; Celtic monks; Norsemen; oil and uranium seekers. The voices in the cantata are the hills and waters and skies of Orkney - the ever-present, yet changing, presences. The poem ends with a Prayer to St. Magnus, the patron saint of the Orkneys - 'that the last ice may not cover us, that the dove fall still between sun and cornstalk'.

Solstice of Light was first performed in St Magnus Cathedral at the 1979 Orkney Festival, with Neil Mackie (tenor), Richard Hughes (organ) and the St. Magnus Singers conducted by the festival director, Norman Mitchell.

- 1 New Hills and Lochs and Shores
- 2 The Mild Circle of the Sun (*Organ solo*)
- 3 We Rowed Blindly North and North
- 4 Green Whirls of Melted Ice (*Organ solo*)
- 5 The Hills, the Skies, the Sweet and the Salt Waters
- 6 Earthbreakers, Hewers of Mighty Stone (*Organ solo*)
- 7 Circles of Stone on the Blank Moor (*with Tenor solo*)
- 8 Solstice of Light
- 9 The Celtic Priests
- 10 The White Weave of Peace (*Organ solo*)
- 11 Hawkship
- 12 Norsemen (Tenor solo)
- 13 Invocation of the Dove (*Organ solo*)
- 14 Prayer for these Islands: New Troves (*with Tenor solo*)

INTERVAL

## *Blest Pair of Sirens*

*Sir Hubert Parry (1848 - 1918)*

*Blest Pair of Sirens* is a setting of John Milton's *At a Solemn Musick*. The rather quaint and unprepossessing title belies the quality of both its powerful verse and its delightful music. Far from being an obscure Victorian curiosity, its noble, masculine treatment of Milton's poetry stands out as a landmark in the development of the English choral tradition. Despite Parry's roots in the English church tradition, this music reveals his characteristic openness to the modern influences of his day and especially to the genius and techniques of Brahms.

---

*Organ Solo: Allegro Maestoso (Sonata in G)*

*Sir Edward Elgar (1857 - 1934)*

---

## *Five Mystical Songs*

*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)*

In 1911 Vaughan Williams was commissioned to write a piece for the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester and decided to complete the settings of five poems by George Herbert, the Metaphysical poet (1593-1633), which he had been working on for some time. The poet was himself a musician who associated music with a 'divine voice', a view totally in sympathy with the visionary aspects of Vaughan Williams' art. The opening song 'Easter' establishes the nature of the whole cycle with its ardent religiosity where 'musically, light is shed by the frequent move from flat to much sharper tonal centres'. The second song 'I got me flowers' is a fine example of Vaughan Williams' ability to express emotion with the simplest arrangement of notes. 'Love bade me welcome' uses the plainchant hymn 'O sacrum convivium' as a wordless chorus set against the Baritone soloist and 'The Call' - for solo voice only - has a modal melody which gives it a sense of apparent antiquity. This is a striking contrast to the 'Antiphon' - 'Let all the World in every corner sing' which rings out with unequivocal conviction from the chorus.

- 1 Easter: Rise Heart, thy Lord is risen
- 2 I got me flowers to strew thy way
- 3 Love bade me welcome
- 4 The Call: Come my Way, my Truth my Light
- 5 Antiphon: Let all the World in every corner sing.

# *Solstice of Light*

*George Mackay Brown*

- 1. New Hills and Lochs and Shores**  
We are the new hills and lochs and shores,  
Lissom shapes from ice,  
The gray hands of the ice lie folded now,  
far north.  
All's new and good  
Under the beckoning sun.  
The firths are fretted with fish.  
Birds visit the high heather, birds walk  
about in the ebb.  
A first boat has blundered into Rackwick.  
Many new creatures  
Live under the mild circle of the sun.
- 2. The Mild Circle of the Sun**
- 3. We Rowed Blindly North and North**  
We rowed blindly north and north.  
We came in boats of skin and branch.  
Green whirls of melted ice.  
Where are the promised birds and fish,  
Our prey, our kin?  
I cried one morning: *Look,  
The blue whales, children of ice!  
The whales will whelm our boats!*  
The whales stood all about us.  
The whales were the hills.  
We drew out currachs up beaches of shell.  
We called the place "Whale Islands".
- 4. Green Whirls of Melted Ice**
- 5. The Hills, the Skies, the Sweet and the Salt Waters**  
The hills, the skies, the sweet and the salt  
waters.  
We have long forgotten  
The gray trumpeter of ice, the mammoth.  
Under the breeding sun  
The beasts make their circuits, birth to  
death.  
The full moon  
Draws a wavering legion into the nets.

- The people who come and go in cells of  
stone  
Are glad of the sun-cattle  
And the glancing sillocks of the moon.  
They were glad.  
Their ashes lie in cells of stone.  
A stronger race has come,  
Earth-breakers, hewers of mighty stone.
- 6. Earth-breakers, Hewers of Mighty Stone**
  - 7. Circles of Stone on the Blank Moor**  
Why should the hands be red always with  
battle?  
Our cheeks gaunt with hunger  
Many a rieving winter.  
Kindred tribes shouldering us west and  
north.  
North we sailed bearing the sun key.  
A cry from the helm one dawn –  
*Islands of the Whale!*  
A young earth untouched  
By the hands of sun and scytheman.  
We breached quarries. We levered stones.  
We honoured sun and moon  
With circles of stone on the blank moor.  
Our ploughs struck virgin earth.  
We drew haddocks from broken horizons.  
Seedtime and winter, bread and death –  
We praised that round in a womb and web  
of stone.
  - 8. Solstice of Light**  
We have long put off drab coats, heather  
and moor.  
They give us in summer  
The pasture patched with sheep,  
The yellow drapes of barley and oat.  
The new islanders  
Have quartered the fecund sun.  
Islands and islanders dance together  
In the solstice of light.  
Their heart of darkness is merry with  
flame and song.  
The "painted people", first Celts.  
What are the lonely strangers with crossed  
hands?  
They stand, gray shapes,

- Between the broch and the forge of dark  
edges.  
They break our clods like dust-of-gold.  
"Little silver brothers" they call the fish.
- 9. The Celtic Priests**  
What is that sun? A goodly fire.  
It will be ashes soon.  
Everlasting to everlasting the true Light.  
A man, breathing, bears a bead of that  
brightness.  
Body breaches at last  
With sickness, or sword, or silver frosts of  
age.  
The sweet light endures,  
A little pool soon lost  
In a circling sea, the magnificent peace of  
God.
  - 10. The White Weave of Peace**
  - 11. Hawkship**  
The endless kiss of peace, cell to cell,  
Shore to shore,  
Matins, lauds, terce, evensong, compline.  
It worked another garment about us,  
The white weave of peace.  
In small islands they fish, break, furrow,  
pray.  
The people are glad of that mildness.  
Hills and waters and ploughland  
Were gathered inside the psalm and the  
pastoral...  
Against the dayspring, a single hawk-shape!  
Before noon  
The light at the altar was quenched.  
At sunset more than one redness  
Between the hill and the shore,  
The island was rigged in tatters of blood.  
At midnight  
In the bleached hawkship, boast and flame  
and saga.
  - 12. Norsemen**  
Ever foremost our banner  
At hunt, howe-break, host-melling.  
Many a maiden found we delightful.  
High vaunted in hall, the viking victory.  
Gull-breasted girls  
Gave horns, fleece-hung, to the warriors

- Twixt hearth and praising harp.  
No war-wolf reddens maw  
At our wounds, before tower or belfry  
Or sword-scrolled sea.  
Brighter wears our fame to leaf-fall.  
They hail us  
From halls of youth, fallen forgotten  
heroes.
- 13. Invocation of the Dove**
  - 14. Prayer for these Islands: New Troves**  
What hero hailed the hawk-men at last?  
Magnus, our Christ's hero, hailed them  
In Egilsay, one Easter dawn, early:  
"Flames in France? Broken ikons and  
alters  
Between the Volga and the Hebrides;  
English ships rudderless, cargoes with  
wounds.  
We have carried those seeds back to our  
shores.  
The furrow is choked with tare and thorn.  
How shall we live  
Without the Bread and the Word on our  
tongues,  
That white circle of peace?"...  
The hawk raged in, red, at the door of his  
skull.  
It fluttered free, gray dove.  
It fell, it folded, on the furrows' first green  
braird.  
Christ's hero, he hailed them, healed  
them,  
Herded them back from the hell-gate.  
*Magnus Martyr, pray for us.*  
Hidden under our furrows, deep  
Hidden under our waves  
New troves  
Wells and mines unproved  
Locked at the roots of the islands.  
That these flames may be for our peace  
And for the peace of our children  
And for the peace of the world  
That the last ice may not cover us  
That the dove fall still between sun and  
cornstalk  
  
*Saint Magnus, pray for us.*

### Patrick Larley — Musical Director

Patrick Larley, composer and conductor, has been Musical 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 Majety's Sagbutts and Cornetts, and by encouraging the performance of unaccompanied choral music.

Patrick 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. Recently, he attended the first performance, in St. Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, of *Columcille*, a musical sequence on the life of St. Columba, commissioned by Opus Anglicanum for the final concert of the Glasgow Cathedral Festival 2004.

### Stephen Newlove — Tenor

Stephen Newlove was born in East Yorkshire and studied for a music degree at Huddersfield followed by a Masters in composition at the University of Hull. He studies singing with Nicolas Powell. As an experienced cathedral singer in the choirs of York Minster and Chester Cathedral, he has broadcast on radio and television and has featured on a number of acclaimed recordings. He is currently a member of the Britten Singers, Canzonetta and Chudleigh's Company. Recent engagements as a soloist include Monteverdi's *Vespers* with the Orchestra of the Golden Age and His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts, Britten's *St Nicolas Cantata*, Bach's *St John Passion* with the English Haydn Orchestra, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* and the Evangelist in the *St Matthew Passion*. Future concerts include the Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* and Handel's *Saul* with Holmes Chapel Singers and Wensleydale Choral Society. In July 2004 Stephen will also give a recital here in St Mary's Nantwich as part of the lunchtime recital series. As well as performing Stephen is Director of Music at Carmel College in St Helens, Merseyside.

### Graham Eccles — Organ

Graham Eccles first studied the organ at Worksop College in Nottinghamshire. He subsequently studied at the Royal Northern College of music in Manchester under Ronald Frost and was appointed Boddington Organ Scholar at St. Ann's Church. As well as graduating from the college with an upper division diploma he gained the Diploma in Professional Performance and the Alice Shawcross prize in Church music.

More recently, he has been awarded the diploma in Choral Directing from the Royal College of Organists, gaining the Brook Memorial Prize.

In 1989 Graham started as Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral and has played a key role in the musical life of the city both in and out of the Cathedral. Some notable recital engagements have taken place in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, Cantù (Italy), the Cathedral of Sens (France) and in Memphis, New York and Atlanta USA. In 2002 he participated in the Keyboard Festival at the Conservatorium of Music in Newcastle, Australia.

He was Organist and Master of the Choristers at St Asaph Cathedral in North Wales between 1998 and 2003 and has recorded the first CD on the rebuilt organ entitled "Organ and Harp from St Asaph", with Eira Lynn Jones playing the harp.

From the start of this year, Graham has become a freelance musician and as well as teaching and performing locally, he is one of the regular organists for the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4. He is a visiting tutor in organ at the University of Wales, Bangor and is Deputy Conductor of St Asaph and Colwyn Bay Choral Societies. He is in regular demand as an organ accompanist by many choirs and Choral Societies in the North West and has played many times with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Hallé orchestras.

### Adrian Blakely — Baritone

Adrian studied singing at Huddersfield University in the late seventies and has been engaged regularly as a soloist throughout the country ever since. For 10 years up to 1990 he was Senior Bass Layclerk at Manchester Cathedral Choir and is currently a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers, where on occasions he undertakes live solo performances.

Over the years Adrian has been involved in many concerts with Nigel Ogden, (presenter of BBC radio 2's *The Organist Entertains*). This has afforded him the opportunity to gain a repertoire of lighter music and Adrian's recordings have featured on two CDs with Nigel Ogden and Altrincham Choral Society. He was also involved with live broadcasts from Bethlehem as part of the BBC's millennium celebrations. Forthcoming engagements include Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Liverpool Cathedral.

# Forthcoming Concerts

## Concert Season 2004 - 2005

### 2nd October 2004: Ellesmere College

Choral Singing Day 10.00 - 18.30

*Belshazzar's Feast* - Walton

### 4th December 2004: Bunbury Parish Church

*Fantasia on Christmas Carols* - Vaughan Williams

*On Christmas Day* - Larley

*In the Beginning* - Copland

### 18th December 2004: St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Family carols

### 12th March 2005: St Mary's Church, Nantwich

*Nelson Mass* - Haydn

### 25th June 2005: Nantwich Civic Theatre

*Carmina Burana* - Orff

Tickets for all concerts are 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 at [www.nantwichchoral.org.uk](http://www.nantwichchoral.org.uk)

## NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

### SOPRANO 1

Anne Barnard  
Janice Brown  
Jo Butchart  
Joyce Clegg  
Glenda Colemere  
Gail Corfield  
Rita Davies  
Annabel English  
Ann Ferguson  
Frances Hughes  
Helen Kerr  
Liz Kirby  
Sheila Luke  
Sue Munks  
Maire Pedder  
Jacqueline Weatherill

### SOPRANO 2

Sue Briscoe  
Christine English  
Joyce Foster  
Cynthia Gorton  
Gillian Handford  
Anne-Dorothee Machtig  
Rachel Pentecost  
Eileen Robertson  
Barbara Shone  
Christine Thomas

### ALTO 1

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

### ALTO 2

Shirley Burton  
Angela Greaves  
Joy Guest  
Nancy Kellett  
Anne Mckay  
Brenda Midgley  
Janet Miller  
Brenda Morris  
Jean Nurse  
Gwyneth Rollins  
Joan Shaddick

### TENOR

Wal Kaye  
Thomas Machtig  
Mike Moore  
Mike Moores  
Nick Smith  
Philip Trinder  
Joe Watson

### BASS

Roger Boulton  
Christopher Findlay  
David Foster  
Nick Green  
Martin Jones  
Ron Kelley  
Jock Knight  
Jonathan Layfield  
Ray Potts  
Bob Pugh  
John Saunders  
Simon Stubington  
David Walker

*Nantwich Choral Society is supported by*

**The National Federation of Music Societies  
The Harding Trust**