

The West Somerset Singers



Saturday 3rd December 2011

*The West Somerset Singers
welcome you and present*

*A
Christmas
Cornucopia*

Programme

Chorale: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (Wake ye Maids! Hark strikes the hour) – J S Bach

(sung in German)

Musical item performed by Alex Davies

Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo (Little Organ Mass) – Haydn

(sung in Latin) Soloist: Katharine Walker

Maria Wiegenlied The Virgin's Slumber Song—Max Reger

Solo performed by Amie Ward (Bishop Fox's School)

How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings — Brahms

Chorale: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme Chorale — J S Bach

Zion Hears The Watchmen Calling

****INTERVAL of 15 Minutes****

Navidad Nuestra – Ariel Ramírez

(A Folk Drama of the Nativity Based on the Rhythms and Traditions of Hispanic America sung in English) Soloist: Pat Phillips

La Anunciacion – The Annunciation

La Peregrinacion – The Pilgrimage

El Nacimiento – The Nativity

Los Pastores – The Shepherds

Los Reyes Magos – The Three Kings

Programme

Donkey Carol – John Rutter

Musical item performed by Alex Davies

What Child Is This? - words W.C Dix / arr. David Willcocks

Soloist: Katharine Walker

Star Carol – John Rutter

In the Bleak Mid Winter (All)

Chorale: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme Chorale — J S Bach

“Gloria” sing all our voices

Come All You Worthy Gentlemen words Cecil Sharp / arr. David Willcocks (Choir)

Deck the Halls (Choir)

O Come All Ye Faithful (All)

Please join us for light refreshments after this evening’s performance

Programme Notes

The following note is an edited version taken from Making Music. Author Eric Cross (November 1990)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 140 (Wake ye maids! Hark, strikes the hour)

In 1731 the church calendar contained the maximum possible number of weeks between Trinity and Advent, and so for the first time for well over twenty years Bach needed a cantata for the 27th Sunday after Trinity. The result was a performance on 25 November 1731 of one of his most famous works, Cantata No. 140. The work is based on a chorale by Philipp Nicolai; as this hymn had only three strophes, Bach's librettist added two recitatives, each being followed by a duet representing a dialogue between the soul and Jesus. The three strophes of the chorale are given highly contrasted settings, though all three are in the key of E flat. The first is treated as a massive 205-bar chorale fantasia, the chorale tune being sung by the sopranos in long notes, phrase by phrase, interspersed with elaborate instrumental interludes and a central fugal Alleluia. The second chorale, which Bach also transcribed for organ as the first of the Schubler chorales, sets an upper-string countermelody against the tenor hymn, while the final chorale presents a simple four-part harmonisation.

Chorale:

Wake ye maids! Hark strikes the hour
The watchman calls high on the tower
Awake, awake Jerusalem

Midnight strikes, hear, hear it sounding
Loud cries the watch with call resounding
Where are ye, o wise virgins, where?
Good cheer, good cheer the Bride groom comes
Arise, arise and take your lamps
Alleluja

Ye maids beware, the feast prepare
So go ye forth to meet Him there

Programme Notes

The following note is taken from *Making Music*. Author: Plymouth Philharmonic Choir (June 1991)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Little Organ Mass (Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo)

In addition to his well-known large-scale masses, Haydn wrote three that were not only much shorter but employed smaller forces – a quite small choir and a Viennese Church Trio which consisted of 2 violins, a *basso continuo* ('cello or other bass instrument) and organ (modern-day performances employing a much larger body of singers use an enlarged orchestra).

The so-called *Little Organ Mass* was in truth a *Missa Brevis*, written between 1775 and 1778 for the chapel of the Brothers of Mercy in Eisenstadt which was dedicated to St. John of God – hence the formal Latin title of the work. The nickname by which is customarily known (the *Little Organ Mass*) derives from the fact that the *Benedictus* includes an extended solo part for the organ.

A feature of the *Missa Brevis* form was the use of telescoped texts (that is, the simultaneous singing of several phrases, especially in sections of the longest movements, the *Gloria* and *Credo*).

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus (Soprano solo)

Agnus Dei

Programme Notes

The following is edited from information taken from Wikipedia.

Ariel Ramírez (4 September 1921 – 18 February 2010) Navidad Nuestra (“Our Nativity”)

Born in Santa Fe, Ariel Ramírez was an Argentine composer, pianist and music director. He was considered "a chief exponent of Argentine folk music" and noted for his "iconic" musical compositions. Ramírez is known primarily for his *Misa Criolla* (1964). It allowed him to travel around Europe and Latin America to build his reputation. He had more than 300 compositions during his career and sold millions of albums. By the time he died in 2010, his work was globally renowned. Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Mercedes Sosa are some of the artists to have recorded his work.

Ariel Ramírez's father was a teacher and it had been thought Ramírez would also pursue this career path but the job lasted for just two days due to "discipline problems". He pursued initially tango before switching to Argentine folklore. He began his piano studies in Santa Fe, and soon became fascinated with the music of the gauchos and creoles in the mountains. He continued his studies in Córdoba, where he met the great Argentinian folk singer and songwriter Atahualpa Yupanqui and was influenced by him. Following a suggestion from Yupanqui, he visited the North East of Argentina and deepened his research into the traditional rhythms of South America. He spent time in Mendoza and Buenos Aires whilst continuing his academic studies as a composer at the National Conservatory of Music, in Buenos Aires. In 1946 he made his first recording, with RCA. He made twenty records with RCA until 1956.

Ramírez went on to study classical music in Madrid, Rome and mainly in Vienna, from 1950 to 1954. Back in Argentina, he collected over 400 folk and country songs and popular songs and founded the *Compañía de Folklore Ariel Ramírez*. In 1964, the Ramírez' composition *Misa Criolla* marked the beginning of a period of high musical productivity for the composer which also heralded the premieres of the works *Navidad Nuestra* (1964), *La Peregrinación* (1964); *Los caudillos* (1965); *Mujeres Argentinas* (1969), and *Alfonsina y el Mar* (1969), all produced in collaboration with writer Félix Luna.

Biographies

Soprano—Katharine Walker

Katharine sang with a variety of choirs from an early age and also learnt to play violin, piano, recorders and crumhorns. She gained a junior exhibition scholarship to the London College of Music and went on to study music at the University of Exeter. Whilst there, she sang with the Exeter University Singers under the directorship of Donald James, as well as playing in the orchestra, chamber groups and early music ensembles. She continued to sing with choirs and play in musical groups in Nottingham, Leeds and Dorset before moving to Somerset in 1987, where she joined The Phoenix Singers, with whom she still sings.

Musical Director—Nick Thomas

Nick retired last year from his post as Head of Music at Kingsmead School, Wiveliscombe and is now a freelance musician and music teacher. 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 *Tranters 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 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

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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.

Carols

In the Bleak Mid Winter

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, Whom cherubim, worship night and day,
A breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, Whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But only His mother, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

Carols

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O Come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels;

Refrain

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

2. God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, Begotten not created.

Chorus

3. See how the shepherds
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear
We too will thither, bend our joyful footsteps

Chorus

4. Sing choirs of angels
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above
Glory to God, In the highest

Chorus

Acknowledgements

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

Special thanks also to **Mike Wager** for accompanying the choir during their Monday evening rehearsals.

*Thank you to **Somerset Performing Arts, Hampshire Library, Plymouth Library and Bournemouth library** for supplying the music copies and **Making Music** for programme notes.*

The West Somerset Singers are looking for new members (particularly tenors!) to join them in the Spring term. At present we do not hold auditions but some experience of singing in parts and the ability to read music would be very helpful.

We meet on Monday evenings for two terms in the Gwyn Williams room at Taunton School. Our next rehearsal will take place on Monday 9th January 2012 at 7.30pm.

For an informal chat please call our Secretary, Chris Knapman on (01823) 335303.

Our next concert will be held on Saturday 31st March 2012 here at Taunton Baptist Church. Please visit our website in the New Year for programme details.

www.westsomersetsingers.org.uk

