

The West Somerset Singers warmly welcome you to Taunton Baptist Church this evening for *A Seasonal Celebration*.

Musical Director: Anne-Marie Twort

Pianist and Organist: Mike Wager

Introducing our soloists for tonight's performance;

Tenor: David Bridges

Solo tenor and bass parts in *Nowell, Nowell* and the *Boars Head Carol*. Bass solo in *On Christmas Night*.

Countertenor: Robert Kaczmarek

Solo vocal performance.

Oboist: Poppy Webb-Taylor

Instrumental solo.

Our upper voices in *On Christmas Night* are Lucy Lee, Pat Moore, Pat Phillips, Julie Pope and Tesh Setter.

PROGRAMME

PART ONE

Carol of the Bells — Mykola Leontovych

Nowell, Nowell — Anon. arr. Anne-Marie Twort

Boars Head Carol — Trad.

A New Year Carol — Benjamin Britten

Past Three O'Clock — Trad. arr. Charles Wood. Words by G.R. Woodward

Oboe Solo by Poppy Webb-Taylor

Oboe Concerto in C Major RV 447, mvt 1 — Vivaldi

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring — Bach

Vocal solo performance by Robert Kaczmarek

Lulajże, Jezuniu — Polish Carol "Hush, Little Jesus"

Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes — Words by Ben Johnson

The Nailsborne Beast Carol — Collected in 1907 from a cowman's widow in Kingston St Mary

A Maiden Most Gentle — French tune arranged by Andrew Carter. Words paraphrased from *The Venerable Bede*

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen — Trad. Please join in!

Sure on this Shining Night — from *Nocturnes Music* Morten Lauridsen, words from a poem by James Agee

INTERVAL

**** Please join us for light refreshments ****

PART TWO

O Radiant Dawn — James MacMillan, from *The Strathclyde Motets* (an Antiphon for 21 December)

On Christmas Night — Bob Chilcott

This is the Truth

Adam Lay y Bounden

Cherry Tree Carol

O Little Town

Vocal Solo performance by Robert Kaczmarek

Nie Płacz Nade Mną — Don't Cry Over Me

Ave Maria — M. Lorenc

Sweet Chiming Christmas Bells — Trad. Please join in!

Jesus Child — Music and words by John Rutter

Rejoice and be Merry — Bob Chilcott

Rejoice

We Three Kings — Music and words by John H Hopkins Jr. Arr.
By Philip W.J. Stopford

Selected Composer and Programme Notes

The following notes have been edited from Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia.

***Carol of the Bells* — Mykola Leontovych**

Carol of the Bells is a popular Christmas carol, with music composed by Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych in 1914 and lyrics by Peter J. Wilhousky. The song is based on the Ukrainian folk chant "Shchedryk.

The music is based on a four-note ostinato. It has been performed in many genres: classical, metal, jazz, country music, rock, and pop. The piece has also been featured in films, television shows, and parodies. Conductor of the Ukrainian Republic Choir Oleksander Koshyts (also spelled Alexander Koshetz) commissioned Leontovych to create the song based on traditional Ukrainian folk chants, and the resulting new work for choir, "Shchedryk", was based on four notes Leontovych found in an anthology.

The original folk story related in the song was associated with the coming New Year, which, in pre-Christian Ukraine, was celebrated with the coming of spring in April. The original Ukrainian title translates to "the generous one" or is perhaps derived from the Ukrainian word for bountiful (shchedryj) and tells a tale of a swallow flying into a household to proclaim the bountiful year that the family will have.

With the introduction of Christianity to Ukraine and the adoption of the Julian calendar, the celebration of the New

Year was moved from April to January, and the holiday with which the chant was originally associated became Malanka, the eve of the Julian New Year (the night of 13–14 January in the Gregorian calendar). The songs sung for this celebration are known as *Shchedrivky*.

The song was first performed by students at Kiev University in December 1916.

Wilhousky rearranged the melody for orchestra with new lyrics for NBC radio network's symphony orchestra, centered around the theme of bells because the melody reminded him of hand bells, which begins "Hark! How the bells". It was first aired during the Great Depression, and Wilhousky copyrighted the new lyrics in 1936 and also published the song, despite the song having been published almost two decades earlier in the Ukrainian National Republic.

"Carol of the Bells" has been recorded into over 150 versions and re-arrangements for varying vocal and instrumental compositions.

A New Year Carol — Benjamin Britten

"Levy-Dew", also known as "A New Year Carol" and "Residue", is a British folk song of Welsh origin traditionally sung in New Year celebrations. It is associated with a New Year's Day custom involving sprinkling people with water newly drawn from a well. The song was set to music by Benjamin Britten in 1934.

As with any traditional folk song, there are a number of variations. One standard form appeared in Walter de la Mare's *Tom Tiddler's Ground* (1931), an anthology of verse for children. Benjamin Britten set the De la Mare version of the

song to music as "A New Year Carol" in 1934. The text of the song is attested as early as 1849, in form substantially identical to De la Mare's text.

The song is associated with Pembrokeshire. There, the song figured in a custom in which, on New Year's Day, children collect fresh water from a well, and go around with a sprig from an evergreen tree, which they use to sprinkle the faces of passers-by with the water while singing the carol and begging for gifts of food or money. Elsewhere in Wales, the custom is called *dwr newy*, "new water", and the water was also used to lustrate rooms and doors of houses.

In Scotland, this ceremony has a parallel in the Hogmanay tradition of *saining*; here water drawn from a "dead and living ford", a ford crossed by both the living and the dead, is sprinkled through the house, and then juniper branches are burnt for the smoke indoors. The purpose of the rite is to *sain*, or purify, the house for the new year.

***Sure on this Shining Night* — Morten Lauridsen**

Morten Johannes Lauridsen (born 27 February 1943) is an American composer. He was composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1994–2001 and has been a professor of composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music for more than 40 years.

In 2006, Lauridsen was named an 'American Choral Master' by the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2007 he received the National Medal of Arts from the President in a White House ceremony.

Lauridsen's eight vocal cycles and two collections — *Les Chansons des Roses* (Rilke), *Mid-Winter Songs* (Graves), *A*

Winter Come (Moss), *Madrigali: Six "FireSongs" on Italian Renaissance Poems*, *Nocturnes* (Rilke, Neruda and Agee), *Cuatro Canciones* (Lorca), *Four Madrigals on Renaissance Texts*, *A Backyard Universe*, *Five Songs on American Poems* (Moss, Witt, Gioia and Agee) and *Lux Aeterna*—his series of sacred a cappella motets (*O Magnum Mysterium*, *Ave Maria*, *O Nata Lux*, *Ubi Caritas et Amor*, and *Ave Dulcissima Maria*) and numerous instrumental works are featured regularly in concert by distinguished artists and ensembles throughout the world.

Sure on this Shining Night, the third movement from *Nocturnes*, which the choir will be performing this evening is based on a poem by James Agee and has become one of Lauridsen's most recognised choral works, performed the world over.

***On Christmas Night* — Bob Chilcott**

Robert (Bob) Chilcott (born 9 April 1955) is a British composer, singer and conductor based in Oxfordshire.

Chilcott sang in the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, both as a boy and as a university student, when he conducted the voluntary Choral Society. He performed the *Pie Jesu* of Fauré's *Requiem* on the 1967 King's College recording.

The UK premiere of *On Christmas Night* was given on 28 November 2011 in Rugby School by the Arnold Singers conducted by Richard Dunster-Sigtermans.

On Christmas Night is a musical celebration of the Christmas story presented as a sequence of eight original carols. Chilcott calls upon several familiar carol melodies within his own setting.

Biographies

Musical Director — Anne-Marie Twort

Anne has sung in a variety of choirs since the age of 10.

She took up the post of Music Director at St Georges RC Church, Taunton in 2003, initially leading the Choir and in more recent years the Music Group as well. She is also an active member of the RSCM Somerset Branch committee.

Anne enjoys playing the trombone and having played in various brass, military and jazz bands she now plays for pleasure.

Accompanist — Mike Wager

Mike was a music scholar at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, where he studied Music to A Level and piano to Grade 8. Since graduating in French from Exeter University, he has been a modern languages teacher for 35 years, during which time he has supported numerous school orchestras, choirs and instrumentalists on the piano.

Mike is one of the musicians at Taunton Baptist Church.

Tenor — David Bridges

Born in 1963, a short distance from Sellafield Nuclear Power Station, David studied at the Royal College of Music under Nicholas Danby and Sir David Willcocks. All his working life has been spent in music education at Independent Schools in Surrey, Kent and, latterly, as Organist and Director of

Chapel Music at Taunton School for the past 30 years. As a young Treble Chorister, he was an active member of The RSCM Southern Cathedral Singers. He has enjoyed playing the organ in most of the great Cathedrals of England and has recorded several *Sunday Half Hour* programmes for BBC Radio 2, as well as directing live *Daily Service* broadcasts on BBC Radio 4 from Taunton School.

David divides his time between playing the organ, working at Taunton School, singing with local Chamber Choir *The Phoenix Singers*, accompanying the Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir and walking 'Walmisley' - his rather laid-back, 11 year old Golden Retriever.

Countertenor — Robert Kaczmarek

Robert started singing at the age of 10 and always wanted to be a pop singer. However, when he went to music college they advised him that he should sing classical music. With a strong background in singing and vocal acting, Robert graduated with a Master's degree from the prestigious Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, Poland in 2013. His experience includes position of second tenor with the Baltic Opera in Gdansk, Passion concert series "Encounters with Music" Hall Choral Society "Lute" in Zgierz, the role of Gigi Prince Orlovsky in Strauss operetta "The Bat's Revenge" and the main role in the opera "Supposed Miracle, Cracovians and Highlanders".

Robert has participated in vocal competitions at an international level.

Oboist — Poppy Webb-Taylor

Poppy Webb-Taylor became a music specialist at Wells Cathedral School at the age of twelve where she studied oboe under Liz Fyfe. Here she had many opportunities to perform and take part in master classes with internationally renowned players. Poppy is now an undergraduate at the Royal College of Music and is also an RCM Scholar.

She enjoys solo performances as well as combining her time with performing chamber music regularly with her flute and oboe duo and The Albert Quintet. Most recently, she has performed in the Royal Opera House with her quintet and she has toured Barcelona with the Kings College London Symphony Orchestra including venues such as The Santa Maria Basilica. Currently, her professors include John Anderson for oboe and Christine Pendrill for cor anglais.

The Choir

Sopranos

Vivienne Barrett
Marianne Bray
Diana Davies
Alison Edwards
Gillian Greig
Catherine Hartland
Anne Jordan
Christine Knapman
Joanne Lee
Lucy Lee
Vivienne Lewis
Pat Moore
Pat Phillips
Julie Pope
Hilary Shaw
Betty Stone
Pam Whittaker

Altos

Judi Boobyer
Gill Brown
Alix Cathcart
Janet Hall
Louise Hayden
Sheila Ruff
Tesh Setter
Sue Sutton

Tenors

David Bridges (guest)
Mike Hawkins
John Page

Basses

John Gillard
David Greig
Bob Hart
Stephen Page (guest)
Keith Taylor
Bob Town

God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
This blessed Babe to find:
**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this Infant lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:

**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface:

**O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.**

Sweet Chiming Bells

While shepherds watched,
Their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

**Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
They cheer us on our Heavenly way,
Sweet chiming bells.**

"Fear not," said he,
For mighty dread,
Had seized their troubled minds,
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
To you and all mankind".

**Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
They cheer us on our Heavenly way,
Sweet chiming bells.**

To you in David's,
Town this day,
Is born of David's line.
The Saviour who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign.

**Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
They cheer us on our Heavenly way,
Sweet chiming bells.**

All glory be to, God on high
And to the earth be peace,
Goodwill henceforth,
From heaven to men,
Begin and never cease.

**Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
Sweet Bells, Sweet chiming Christmas Bells
They cheer us on our Heavenly way,
Sweet chiming bells.**

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.

With our thanks to the following for loan of the music copies; **St George's RC Church Taunton, RCSM Courses Library, Devon Library, Warwickshire Library and Hampshire Library.**

Fancy joining us? Rehearsals begin in the Gwyn Williams Room at Taunton School on **Monday 7th January 2019.**

We are a friendly, welcoming choir who offer try-out sessions for beginners and returners. We would be delighted to have some new members for all voice parts — particularly tenors!

For more information contact our Secretary, Mrs Chris Knapman on 01823 335303.

Thank you for supporting us this evening.
We look forward to seeing you again soon.
Here are some dates for your diary...

Saturday December 8th — Members of the choir will be carol singing at the Orchard Centre in Taunton from 11am-12 noon.

Saturday December 15th — Members of the choir will be singing at Dunster Castle for their Christmas opening weekend 12 noon - 2pm.

Our Spring concert will take place on
Friday 5th April 2019,
7.30pm at St George's Roman Catholic Church, Taunton.

www.westsomersetsingers.org.uk

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