

The West Somerset Singers

*The West Somerset Singers welcome you
and present*

*In
Praise
of
Spring*

Saturday 8th May, 2010

**Musical Director - Nick Thomas
Accompanist - Rachel Robinson**

Programme

Come Gentle Spring from *The Seasons* - Haydn

Early One Morning – Arr. Malcolm Goldring

All Through the Night – Arr. Malcolm Goldring

Departure – Felix Mendelssohn (from English Romantic Partsongs edited by Paul Hillier)

***Annandale* by Phamie Gow – performed on the piano by Rachel Robinson**

The Lark in the Clear Air – Andrew Carter
(Traditional Irish Air)

The Golden Wheat – Arr. Alan Paynes
(Welsh Folk Song)

The Ash Grove – Arr. Gordon Jacob
(Welsh Air: *Llwyn On*) a traditional Welsh folk song

The Blue Bird – Charles Stanford
(Soprano Solo: Gill Thompson)

— INTERVAL —

Programme

Stars of the Summer Night – John Hatton

It Ain't Necessarily So - George Gershwin (arranged by William Stickles)

De Battle ob Jericho – (Negro Spiritual) Arr. Hugh S. Robertson

As Torrents in Summer – Edward Elgar

***Skylark* by Hoagey Charmichael Arr. Nick Thomas.
Flute and Piano. Nick and Elaine Thomas.**

Love Walked in - George Gershwin

Sweet and Low – Joseph Barnby

The Long Day Closes – Arthur Sullivan

Ascot Gavotte taken from *My Fair Lady* – Lerner and Loewe

The Drunken Sailor (Sea Shanty) Arr. Donald Cashmore

Londonderry Air (*Danny Boy*) – Fred Weatherley (arr. Bob Chilcott)

****Refreshments will be served in the church hall after this evening's performance****

S elected Programme Notes

The following notes are edited from entries in the on-line encyclopaedia [www. wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

Come Gentle Spring from *The Seasons*

Haydn was led to write *The Seasons* by the great success of his previous oratorio *The Creation* (1798), which had become very popular and was in the course of being performed all over Europe. The libretto for *The Seasons* was provided to Haydn, just as with *The Creation*, by Baron Gottfried van Swieten, an Austrian nobleman who had also exercised an important influence on the career of Mozart. Van Swieten's libretto was his own rendering into German of extracts from the long English poem "The Seasons" by James Thomson (1700-1748), which had been published in 1730.

Frederick Weatherley (1848-1929)

Londonderry Air

The most popular lyrics for the tune are *Danny Boy* ("Oh Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling"), written by English lawyer Frederick Edward Weatherly in 1910, and set to the tune in 1913. While Weatherly intended the song as a parting message from a woman to a man, others have interpreted the parting in the song as that between a parent or grandparent and a son or grandson going off to war. The song has sometimes been taken as a call to arms or a rebel song, sometimes with the addition of verses of a more military nature.

Frederick Edward Weatherly was an English lawyer, author, songwriter and radio entertainer. He was born and brought up in Portishead, Somerset before moving to Bath.

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

It Ain't Necessarily So and *Love Walked In*

George Gershwin was an American composer and pianist. Gershwin's compositions spanned both popular and classical genres, and his most popular melodies are widely known. He wrote most of his vocal and theatrical works, including more than a dozen Broadway shows, in

collaboration with his elder brother, lyricist Ira Gershwin. George Gershwin composed music for both Broadway and the classical concert hall, as well as popular songs that brought his work to an even wider public. His compositions have been used in numerous films and on television, and many became jazz standards recorded in numerous variations. Countless singers and musicians have recorded Gershwin songs. *It Ain't Necessarily So* comes from the Gershwins' opera *Porgy and Bess* (1935) where it is sung by the character Sportin' Life, a drug dealer, who expresses his doubt about several statements in the Bible.

Love Walked In was composed in 1930, but the lyrics were not written until 1937, for the movie musical *The Goldwyn Follie*.

The Ash Grove (Welsh Air: Llwyn On) is a traditional Welsh folk song whose melody has been set to numerous sets of lyrics. The most well-known was written, in English, by John Oxenford in the 19th century.

The first published version of the tune was in 1802 in *The Bardic Museum*. The book was written by Edward Jones, a harpist. About four years later a version with words appeared, under the name *Llwyn On*. It tells of a sailor's love for "Gwen of Llwyn". The tune might be much older, as a similar tune appears in *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay (1728), in the song *Cease Your Funning*. In 1922, however, Kidson claimed that John Gay's tune derives from the morris dance tune *Constant Billy* which is first known in Playford's *Dancing Master*.

The Drunken Sailor is an air taken from a traditional Irish dance and march tune, *Oró Sé do Bheatha 'Bhaile* (Translated as "Óró, you are welcome home") originally in dorian mode. The music was first reproduced in printed form in 1824–25 in Cole's *Selection of Favourite Cotillions* published in Baltimore. However, the lyrics were first published in 1891 under the title *What to do with a Drunken Sailor?* It is one of the few shanties that were sung in quick time.

All through the Night (Welsh: Ar Hyd y Nos) is a Welsh folk song sung to a tune which was first recorded in Edward Jones' *Musical and Poetical Relics of the Welsh Bards* (1784). The Welsh lyrics were written by John Ceiriog Hughes. It has been translated into several languages, including English. The song is included in *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* at the Last Night of the Proms, representing Wales. The melody was used by John Gay in *The Beggar's Opera*. It is also used in the hymn *Go My Children With My Blessing*.

Part Songs

A part song (or part-song) is a form of choral music which consists of a secular song which has been written or arranged for several vocal parts. Usually the arrangement is homophonic, where the highest part carries the melody with the other voices supplying the accompanying harmonies, rather than one which is contrapuntal like a madrigal. They are often sung unaccompanied. Arrangements may be for SATB choir, or for an all-male or all-female ensemble. The original text and melody often originate in traditional folk song; in the British choral repertoire, composers have often drawn on the rich folk traditions of the Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland, arranging traditional melodies for choir in a contemporary style.

Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann and Felix Mendelssohn all contributed to the genre, but the part song gained popularity in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the growth of choral societies. Works by composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Edward Elgar, Benjamin Britten, Arnold Bax and Peter Warlock are typical examples of the part-song repertoire.

Biographies

Musical Director—Nick Thomas

Nick is at present Head of Music at Kingsmead School, Wiveliscombe. His musical interests are wide and varied. 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.

Accompanist – Rachel Robinson

Rachel Robinson has been playing the piano from a young age. After finishing a degree in music she taught piano until she became a full time mum a couple of years ago. Rachel has enjoyed accompanying various performers from singers to instrumentalists. She also plays the French horn with Somerset County Orchestra.

Rachel accompanies the choir during their Monday evening rehearsals.

Acknowledgments

The West Somerset Singers would like to thank **St George's C of E, Wilton** for their hospitality.

Thank you also to **Somerset Libraries Arts and Information** for supplying the music copies.

Future Performances

Friday 25th June 2010 – Light-hearted music and buffet supper in aid of Cancer Research UK to be held at the Albemarle Centre, Taunton at 7.30pm

Saturday 3rd July 2010 – The West Somerset Singers will perform as part of the Kingston St Mary Patronal Festival at Kingston St Mary Church, 7.30pm

The West Somerset Singers meet on Monday evenings for two terms in the Gwyn Williams room at Taunton School. Our next rehearsal will take place on Monday 13th September 2010 at 7.30pm. New members very welcome—telephone Sue Sutton, Secretary, on (01823) 432157.

**For further information please visit our website
www.westsomersetsingers.org.uk**

