

A decorative border with a repeating floral pattern surrounds the text.

*The Chantry Singers*

**ENGLISH  
SUMMER MUSIC**

BRITTEN Flower Songs  
& Choral Dances from Gloriana  
RUTTER, HOLST Folk Songs  
STANFORD, ELGAR Part Songs  
FINZI Clarinet Music

**Conductor : Andrew Wilson**

**Clarinet : Jason Matthews**

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 1998

St Nicolas Church

Guildford

**Six Choral Dances from "Gloriana"**

*Benjamin Britten*

- Time
- Concord
- Time and Concord
- Country Girls
- Rustics and Fishermen
- Final Dance of Homage

**Five Flower Songs, Op.47**

*Benjamin Britten*

- To daffodils
- The succession of the four sweet months
- Marsh flowers
- The evening primrose
- Ballad of green broom

**Four Bagatelles (for clarinet and piano)**

*Gerald Finzi*

- Prelude
- Romance
- Carol
- Fughetta

**Three Romantic Partsongs**

- There rolls the deep
- My love dwelt in a Northern land
- The blue bird

*Charles Hubert Parry*  
*Edward Elgar*  
*Charles Stanford*

**I N T E R V A L**

(Wine will be served in the Church Hall)

### **Three Romantic Partsongs**

-Full fathom five

-Lay a garland

-Home, sweet home

*Charles Wood*

*Robert Pearsall*

*Henry Bishop*

Chanson de Nuit

Chanson de Matin

*Edward Elgar*

### **Three Folk Song Arrangements**

-My sweetheart's like Venus

-O waly, waly

-Dashing away with the smoothing iron

*Welsh (arr. Holst)*

*Somerset (arr. Rutter)*

*English (arr. Rutter)*

Benjamin Britten was one of the outstanding British musicians of his generation. As well as composing, he is remembered for his great accompanying skills and as a reviver of early English music, especially that of Purcell. Although composing at the same time as serial composers in the rest of Europe, and indeed he wanted to study with Berg, Britten did not embrace European avant-garde techniques and never abandoned the principles of tonality. The *Choral Dances* are taken from the opera *Gloriana*, one of the least successful of Britten's operas during his lifetime. At the start of Act II, Queen Elizabeth I is on a state visit to the city of Norwich. After a formal address of welcome, she is entertained by a Masque. To these unaccompanied Choral Dances, dancers representing Time and Concord, country girls, and young rustics and fishermen all pay homage and tribute to the Queen. The dances were extracted as a set of unaccompanied choruses, but also exist in an arrangement for tenor solo, harp and chorus and this version was premiered at the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall on the South Bank. The *Five Flower Songs* were written for the 25th wedding anniversary of Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst in 1950 and take their texts from poems by Herrick (the first two), Crabbe, Clare and an anonymous text for the Ballad of Green Broom. They display all Britten's skill in handling amateur vocal resources. The serenity of *The Evening Primrose* is contrasted with the lively setting of *The Ballad of Green Broom*.

The practice of madrigal singing which had begun during the latter part of the 16th century, continued through the 18th century and was been boosted by the formation of a number of musical clubs including the Madrigal Society in 1741. They began a yearly competition in 1811 for new madrigals which stimulated compositions in this genre (though later the term madrigal was dropped in favour of partsongs). Many of the early contributors to the form are less than household names now, but they occupied a gap in English music between the death of Handel and the renaissance of English music in the hands of Parry (1848-1918), Elgar (1857-1934) and Stanford (1852-1924).

The three more established composers (Parry, Elgar and Stanford) took the genre into the Edwardian era and added maturity to the works that had been produced during the Victorian era. Parry's set of six partsongs, the *Songs of Farewell* mark the summit of his achievement in the form, but there are many other fine single works of which *There rolls the deep* (words by Tennyson) is one such example. Elgar's *My love dwelt in a Northern land* uses words by Andrew Lang and contains some fine word painting, not least in the central section where the stillness of the couple watching their surroundings is portrayed by a static bass and repeated chords in the inner voices. Stillness is a sentiment echoed finely in Stanford's *The Bluebird* where the sopranos imitate the bird soaring over the still lake with a solo part that hovers above the chordal accompaniment.

Folk songs have remained important in many of the European countries with a classical tradition. Towards the end of the last century, many classically trained musicians began to explore how traditional folksong could be incorporated into their own classical tradition. Composers such as Bartok and Kodaly made inroads into the Eastern European tradition, while in Britain, Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan-Williams did much the same. Since then, many leading British composers have either arranged folk songs for various ensembles of voices or instruments. Two of them are represented tonight; Holst (who arranged folk songs in his Military Band Suites) and the modern composer John Rutter.

The instrumental music tonight also belongs in the English tradition. Elgar's orchestral favourites *Chanson de Nuit* and *Chanson de Matin* are arranged for clarinet and piano, and these complement Finzi's quintessentially English bagatelles for clarinet and piano. The *Prelude* contrast fast outer sections in B $\flat$  with a more lyrical central section in the sumptuous key of E major. Finzi's gift for simple and effective melody is demonstrated in the two slower movements, *Romance* and *Carol* while his flexible use of fugue in the last movement is effective for its breathtaking simplicity.

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Charles Wood (1866-1926) lived the early part of his life in Ireland before moving to England to study in 1883. Today he is best known for his works for the Anglican church (over 50 services and anthems), including the large scale *St. Mark Passion* (1921). However, he also composed some larger works including two operas and a number of oratorio/ode type works which were well received at the Leeds festival. *Full Fathom Five* takes words by Shakespeare and includes an imitation of the bells which permeates most of the work.

Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856) was born in Bristol and trained to become a barrister. However, a minor stroke at the age of 30 led him to give up the profession and live abroad. When his father died he moved back to Bristol and was one of the founding members of the Bristol Madrigal Society when it was formed in 1837. He started composing madrigals using the texts of some of his English predecessors and his training abroad (which encompassed the revival of Renaissance and Baroque music in Germany) enabled him to expand his resources from the four parts he used in many of his early examples in the form. His time abroad led to the writing of his most famous work, the arrangement of the Lutheran chorale *In dulci jubilo* we find in many modern carol books. He wrote over 25 madrigals including *Lay a Garland* which displays his fine handling of eight parts and careful and effective use of dissonance to portray the reflective nature of the text.

Henry Bishop (1786-1855) was one of the most highly regarded composers of his day and one who kept English opera alive almost single-handed. Yet he is remembered now for very little except the over-sentimental part song *Home, Sweet Home*. He held a number of prestigious posts in his lifetime; musical director at Covent Garden (from 1810) and Drury Lane (from 1824); professorships at Edinburgh University (1841, though he resigned two years later having given only 2 lectures) and Oxford University (1848), and was knighted in 1848.

Jason Matthews is currently in his penultimate year at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford where he is a music scholar. He is currently a member of the National Youth Orchestra and the Surrey Youth Orchestra as well as leader of the RGS Big Band. Recently he has taken up the saxophone, but can be heard playing the Weber's second clarinet concerto with the Guildford Sinfonia this Tuesday evening in Holy Trinity Church. He attends the Royal College of Music Junior Department on a Saturday and hopes to go on to study music full time at university after he has left school.

Andrew Wilson was born and educated in Leeds. he went on to study at Edinburgh University where he gained a first in music and won the prize for organ performance. Since leaving Edinburgh, he has spent time at Cardiff University studying for an MA in Eighteenth Century Music and in particular, English oratorio of the period, and has continued to give recitals in various parts of the country. He is currently Assistant Director of Music at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford having previously held a similar position in Ipswich, and accompanies the University of London Chamber Choir, with whom he has made a number of recordings. At present he also conducts the Guildford Chorale and Sinfonia, a youth choir and orchestra based in Guildford with whom he undertook a succesful tour of Western France last summer, and examines for GCSE and A-level.

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Future Concerts to be given by the Chantry Singers:

**Saturday 5 December 1998, 8pm, Holy Trinity Church, Guildford.**

Programme to include Purcell *Rejoice in the Lord*, Parry *Blest Pair of Sirens*, Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*, Mathias *Ave Rex*.

**Saturday (28th) March 1999, 8pm, venue to be confirmed.**

Programme to include Handel *Dixit Dominus*, Vivaldi *Gloria*, Bach *Violin Concerto in A minor*.

This concert forms part of the Guildford International Festival.