

PROGRAMME

Which is the properest day to sing?

Thomas Arne (1710–1778)

Arne is best known for *Rule, Britannia*. This glee won a prize when it was written, in 1765, scored for four tenors and with the words ‘Which is the properest day to drink?’!

Where do I begin?

Francis Lai (1932 -), arr Adrian Lucas

This song has been recorded many times, most notably by Andy Williams, on one notable occasion in duet with Miss Piggy. The music is from the phenomenally successful 1970 film ‘Love Story’. Lyrics by Carl Sigman were added later and reflect the tear-jerking finale in which the heroine, played by Ali McGraw, tragically dies.

The Bare Necessities

Terry Gilkyson (1916 – 1999), arr Nicholas Hare

The 1967 Disney animation ‘The Jungle Book’ has a particularly exuberant score and this song, originally performed by Phil Harris as Baloo the bear with Bruce Reitherman as Mowgli the ‘man cub’, is one of the highlights.

I would that my love

Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

[Helen Baker & Louise Pearce, acc. Helen Cooke](#)

Jesu Dulcis Memoria

attrib Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548 – 1611)

This motet has probably been misattributed to the great Renaissance Spanish composer Victoria as its style seems to belong to a later generation, but it is nevertheless a very fine piece. The text is the first stanza of a long Latin hymn attributed to St Bernard of Clairvaux. “Jesus, the very thought of Thee with sweetness fills the breast! Yet sweeter far Thy face to see and in Thy presence rest”.

Bogoroditsye Dyevo

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)

Rachmaninov composed his setting of the All-Night Vigil for the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1915. This luminous setting of the Ave Maria (Hail Mary) concludes Vespers, the first part of the Vigil. Although apparently based

on traditional chant in accordance with Orthodox practice, the melody is actually one of several ‘conscious counterfeits’ composed by Rachmaninov himself.

Ascendit Deus *Peter Philips (c1560 – 1628)*

Although born and educated in England, including a period as a choral scholar at St Pauls Cathedral, Philips spent most of his life abroad due to his Catholicism. As well as much keyboard and instrumental music, he composed several hundred Latin motets. “Ascendit Deus” is a setting of part of Psalm 47 “God has ascended with jubilation, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. Alleluia. The Lord has prepared his seat in heaven. Alleluia”.

Black Smoke Risin’

Matt Woosey

Wall of Wood

Chris Booroff

[Chris Booroff, guitar & vocals](#)

The Dark Eyed Sailor

R. Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)

This folk song was noted by Vaughan Williams on his first collecting trip which was to Ingrave, Essex in 1903. In fact it has since been found with surprisingly little variation as far afield as Newfoundland as well as across Britain and Ireland and has subsequently been traced to a printed broadside ballad published only about seventy years before Vaughan Williams collected it. He clearly regarded the piece with affection though, as can be heard in this gloriously affirmative setting from 1912.

Geographical Fugue *Ernst Toch (1887 – 1964)*

Toch was an Austrian composer and pianist who wrote a wide variety of music in both avant-garde and traditional styles. Following his exile from Germany in 1933, he eventually settled in California where he lectured, wrote music for films and composed seven richly romantic symphonies. It is perhaps strange that this Geographical Fugue is his most performed piece. In his own words it “is the last movement of a suite, *Gesprochene Musik* (Spoken Music), which tries to produce musical effects through speech”. Though he himself regarded it as something of a diversion, it is undeniably

effective, causing a sensation on its first performance and, despite its lack of notes, is technically the most difficult piece in tonight’s concert...

INTERVAL

O Vos Omnes *Pablo Casals (1876 – 1973)*

Although the 16th and 17th centuries have been regarded as the golden age of Spanish choral music, the country has a rich tradition from later periods which is only now becoming appreciated by audiences outside Spain. The great cellist Pablo Casals originally composed this powerful setting of a text for Holy Saturday in 1932 for the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of Montserrat, subsequently rescoring it for mixed chorus. “O all you who walk by on the road, pay attention and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow”.

Svete Tikhi *Viktor Kalinnikov (1870–1927)*

Like Rachmaninov’s *Nunc dimittis*, the words here come from the Orthodox All-Night Vigil: ‘O gladsome radiance of the Holy power of the Father Immortal, Heavenly, Holy, Blessed, Jesus Christ! In that we now are come unto the setting of the sun, and behold the light of even, we hymn Thee, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, God. For meet is it that at all times Thou shouldst be magnified by voices propitious, O Son of God, Who bestowest life. For which cause all the world doth glorify Thee’. Kalinnikov was a teacher at Moscow’s Choral Academy.

O Sanctissima Maria *Paul Mealor (1975 -)*

Paul Mealor is a Welsh composer and teacher who came to national prominence when his motet ‘Ubi Caritas et Amor’ was performed at the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. He also composed the music for “Wherever You Are”, commissioned for the Gareth Malone series “The Choir: Military Wives”, which became the Christmas Number One in 2011. “O Sanctissima Maria” was also written in that year for the Chapel Choir of King’s College, Aberdeen, part of the university where Mealor is Professor of Composition. “O most holy, O most loving, sweet Virgin Mary, beloved Mother, undefiled pray, pray for us”.

The Ballad of Bethnal Green

Paddy Roberts (1910-1975)

[Ann Crisp, Louise Pearce](#)

The Coolin

Samuel Barber

Barber’s setting of James Agee’s poem was written in 1936, the same year as the famous *Adagio for Strings*. *The Coolin* (Irish for ‘the fair-headed one’, a poem by James Stephens) is the third of three choral settings entitled ‘Reincarnations’, published in 1940.

Miss Otis Regrets

Cole Porter (1891 – 1964) arr Martin Pickard

Originally written for Ada “Bricktop” Smith (who is well-worth Googling), ‘Miss Otis’ was premiered by Douglas Byng in “Hi Diddle Diddle” at the Savoy Theatre, London in 1934. Legend has it that the composition came about when Cole Porter boasted to friends over lunch that he could write a song on any subject. He was immediately challenged to write one based on the next thing they heard which happened to be a waiter announcing to a nearby table that “Miss Otis regrets she’s unable to lunch today”.

Let’s Twist again

Dave Appell (1922 -) arr Simon Beattie

With lyrics by Kal Mann, this song was a big hit for Chubby Checker in 1961 and refers to the dance craze inspired by his No 1 single ‘The Twist’ in the previous year. Simon prepared this arrangement for the Damon Singers a few years ago to celebrate a half century of the Twist. Surprisingly we seem to have been the only choir to mark this anniversary...

Me, me and none but me

Dowland (1563 – 1623)

Damons “diminished”

Born 450 years ago, John Dowland was a Catholic (like Peter Philips) but, apart from some years in the Danish court of Christian IV, he managed to work successfully in England as a lutenist and composer. However, an English court position continued to elude him until he was eventually appointed as a lutenist to James I in 1612. “Me, me and none but me” was included in his “Third Book of Songs”

published in 1603. To quote the Dowland scholar, Diana Poulton, "The extraordinary beauty of this song lies in a deeply felt grief expressed in terms of complete simplicity. The stanzas appear to have evoked a response in Dowland which perhaps reflected some personal sorrow in his own life".

Esta Tierra Javier Busto (1949 -)
Damons "diminished"

Our third Spanish work is a heartfelt tribute to the landscape of the province of Valladolid, high in the Spanish plain. The contemporary choral conductor and composer Javier Busto set this poem by Francisco Pino (1910 – 2002) for the Coral Valparaiso de Valladolid. "Do not look for me on the mountains no matter how high they may be, do not look for me at sea either, no matter how big it may seem to you. Look for me here on this flat land of bridge and pinewood, battlement and still waters, where flying is heard though the sound fades away".

DAVID COOKE BA (hons), BMus (hons), ALCM

David studied music at Liverpool and Oxford Universities. He specialised first in the early 16th Century keyboard repertoire, and then in the music of the later Middle Ages, working particularly on problems of its interpretation and performance.

As an instrumentalist, David studied the trombone, piano and harpsichord. He appears as an accompanist, and as a continuo player in baroque music. He has also performed widely as a player of several early wind instruments.

In the last few years David has increasingly been invited to work with singers. He has conducted productions of several operas including The Magic Flute, La Bohème, and Handel's Semele. He is presently also Musical Director of the Wycombe Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra, the Chess Valley Male Voice Choir, the Chiltern Hundreds Bach Choir and the Chorleywood Chamber Orchestra.

Whichever group he is working with, David is keen to explore lesser known but good quality music of several periods, as well as the more familiar repertoire.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Sopranos:

Helen Baker, Helen Cooke, Ann Crisp,
Jane Featherstone-Witty, Penny Fray,
Cleone Goddard, Bell King.

Altos:

Alison Davidson, Malavika Legge,
Liz Martine, Louise Pearce, Madeleine Symes.

Tenors:

Simon Beattie, Chris Booroff,
Alan Power, Windsor Thomas,
Chris Turner.

Basses:

Martin Cunningham, Patrick Lunt,
John Reuter, Andy Scott.

Goodnight Sweetheart

Calvin Carter (1925 -) &
James "Pookie" Hudson (1934 – 2007) arr Kirby Shaw
Goodnight Sweetheart was composed in 1953 and was a hit the following year for the R&B doo-wop group, The Spaniels, in which Pookie Hudson (feel free to Google him too) was lead singer. It has been re-recorded several times and featured prominently in the movies, "American Graffiti" and "Three Men and a Baby". It bears no connection other than its title to the 1930s song made famous by Rudy Vallée.

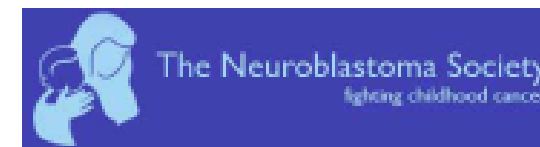
Tequila Samba

 Guy Turner (1955 -)

Guy Turner describes himself as a freelance composer, performer and administrator, and a Lay Clerk in the Choir of Southwell Minster. He has composed a range of choral music, both silly and serious. Decide for yourself which category this belongs to!

Holy Trinity Church, Penn Street

Spring Concert



Saturday April 20th 2013

7.30pm

Future Damons concert dates
13th July 2012 St. Mary's Church, Chesham 20th July 2012 St Faith's Church, Newton Longville

www.damonsingers.co.uk

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