

‘On a starry night’

PROGRAMME

In dir ist Freude

Giovanni Gastoldi (c.1554–1609)

Gastoldi served as maestro di capella to the Dukes of Gonzaga in Mantua. It is not known whether he travelled much, but his music certainly did. This version is what’s called a contrafactum (i.e. one song to the tune of another), put together by the German composer, Johannes Lindemann, in the 1590s, creating a dance-like song of joy to Christ the Saviour.

CAROL FOR ALL:

As with gladness (V3 Choir only)

Infant Holy *arr. David Willcocks*

This traditional Polish carol, *W żłobie leży* (‘Lying in a manger’), has been a favourite with English choirs for over fifty years, when Sir David Willcocks wrote this setting while director of music at King’s College, Cambridge.

Concerto No 21 (2nd movt)

W.A. Mozart arr. Malcolm Bennett

Solo: Alison Davidson (Flugel Horn)

One of the most famous melodies in classical music, composed in 1785 for the second movement of this concerto. The subtitle ‘Elvira Madigan’ was acquired only in 1967, following release of a film about a tightrope walker who used that pseudonym.

Advent Calendar *Simon Beattie (b.1975)*

This short piece was premiered by the Damons in 2006. It sets a poem by the

former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

Reading: Patrick Lunt

Stille Nacht

F. X. Grüber (1787–1863), J. Mohr

Duo: Helen Baker & Rachel Meldrum
As we remember the poignant Christmas Truce of 1914, groups all over the country will be singing this carol again 100 years later, in cathedrals, churches, sports stadiums, village halls, town squares, in fact anywhere that people sing carols.

Just another star

Karl Jenkins (b.1944) & Carol Barratt,

arr. Peter Gritton

A catchy Christmas number written in the late 1970s by the Welsh jazz musician Karl Jenkins, perhaps best known as a composer for the popular *The Armed Man: a Mass for Peace* (2000).

CAROL FOR ALL:

O little town of Bethlehem

Carol of the Bells

Mykola Leontovych (1877–1921),

arr. Peter J. Wilhousky

Today the Virgin

Sir John Tavener (1944–2013)

Two works with East European connections: a popular Ukrainian folk-carol (here receiving its Damons’ premiere), and Tavener’s setting of words by the Orthodox nun Mother Thekla (1918–2011), a strong spiritual influence on the composer. It was

written for the choir of Westminster Abbey in 1989.

Appeal on behalf of BucksVision

Interval

Glory to the Christ Child

Alan Bullard (b.1947)

The composer studied with Herbert Howells, and spent most of his working life as a teacher in Essex. This is a recent piece, from 2006, but the words come from a manuscript in the British Library written about 1610.

CAROL FOR ALL:

See amid the winter’s snow

Reading: Ann Crisp

Wassail Song

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

This exuberant setting is the last of VW’s ‘Five English Folksongs’ dating from 1913. He had collected the carol in Yorkshire, near the village of Hooton Roberts. In this ‘freely adapted’ version he depicts a group of wassailers gradually approaching and receding.

‘Damons Diminished’

Nowell Sing We

Anon. English 15th Century

This joyful carol is from the Selden manuscript prepared for John Alcock, Bishop of Worcester in the mid 15th century. Although mainly in English, it contains a number of Latin tags, each of which opens an item in the liturgy of

Christmas Day. ‘Nowell sing we both all and some, now Rex Pacificus is ycome’. Rex Pacificus (the King of Peace) is the first antiphon of first vespers on Christmas Day.

A un niño llorando al yelo

Francisco Guerrero (1528-1599)

Guerrero, who was born and died in Seville, worked for most of his life in Spain and Portugal. This piece is one of his many sacred villancicos, settings of vernacular religious texts in a popular style in which a four- or five-part refrain (estribillo) is set against a stanza (copla) for a smaller ensemble or soloist. ‘To a boy crying in the cold go three kings to worship; for this child can grant the kingdom, life, glory and Heaven’.

White Christmas

Irving Berlin

arr. Robin Grayson/Simon Beattie

Bing Crosby’s version is apparently the best-selling single of all time: over 50 million copies worldwide. Tonight we perform an arrangement originally written for pupils at Aylesbury Grammar School.

CAROL FOR ALL:

Good King Wenceslas

Benedicamus Domino

Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

Peter Warlock was the pseudonym of Philip Heseltine whose 120th birthday was celebrated in October. His exultant setting of this text from a fifteenth century English manuscript dates from 1918. “Glory, Praise, God is made both man and immortal... Let us bless the Lord”.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano:

Helen Baker, Helen Cooke, Ann Crisp, Jane Featherstone-Witty, Penny Fray, Cleone Goddard, Bell King, Rachel Meldrum, Janine Page

Alto:

Alison Davidson, Eleanor Greenhalgh, Madeleine Greenhalgh, Malavika Legge, Louise Pearce, Madeleine Symes, Uli Wright

Tenor:

Simon Beattie, Chris Turner, Nicholas Richards

Baritone:

Martin Cunningham, Sebastian Gibbs, Andy Scott

Bass:

Roderick Holburn, Patrick Lunt, John Reuter

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.

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

In recent years David 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 Chiltern Hundreds Bach Choir and the Chorleywood Chamber Orchestra.

Have you got what it takes?

The Damon Singers are always on the lookout for new recruits... Not that we plan to grow much larger than we currently are, but from time to time members move away from the area, or their circumstances change...

If you would like to talk to us, and join us for an evening, please contact the Secretary, Patrick Lunt.

Phone: 01494 712583
Mobile: 07768 566588
email: patrick@patricklunt.com

Read more about *The Damon Singers* on our Facebook page; and, by the way, we would love you to like us!

The Damon Singers

directed by David Cooke

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

All proceeds to



Sunday 14th December 2014
The White Hill Centre, Chesham
7.30 p.m.