

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2011: '*O magnum mysterium*'

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear Christ the Lord. [Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you.] Alleluia!

### PROGRAMME

**Verbum caro factum est** (excerpt)  
Plainchant

great English choral composers, from 1919 and 1966 respectively.

#### ***O magnum mysterium***

Pedro de Cristo (c.1545–1618)  
Pedro de Cristo spent his career in Coimbra and Lisbon, but his music travelled much further. Tonight we perform one of his two settings of *O magnum mysterium* as it might have been heard at the time in the New World.

Carol for All: ***Once in Royal David's City***

#### ***O magnum mysterium***

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)  
A very different, and certainly more 'mysterious' setting: the first of Poulenc's *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël*, from 1952.

#### ***Swete was the song the Virgin soong***

Sixteenth-century, arr. Thomas Hamond? Hamond (d.1662) was a Suffolk landowner. This arrangement of an older carol comes from a manuscript formerly belonging to him, now at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

#### ***The truth from above***

Traditional, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

#### ***Tomorrow shall be my dancing day***

Traditional, arr. Sir David Willcocks (b.1919)

Two traditional carols arranged by two

**Reading:** Patrick Lunt

#### ***Verbum caro factum est***

Spanish, sixteenth-century.  
A sacred *villancico* written in a popular style combining a Latin refrain with a Spanish text, published in Venice in 1556 and preserved in a unique copy in Uppsala, Sweden. The refrain is based on the short responsory, 'Verbum caro factum est', sung at the service of terce on Christmas Day and heard at the start of tonight's programme. 'The Word is made flesh for the salvation of you all. And the Virgin said unto Him: Life of my life what would I not do for you, my Son? Yet I have nothing on which to lay you down'.

#### ***I sing of a maiden***

Patrick Hadley (1899–1973)  
Duet: Helen Baker & Louise Pearce  
Hadley was a pupil of Vaughan Williams. His setting of a fifteenth-century carol was written in 1936, when he was on the staff of the Royal College of Music.

#### ***Gaude Maria Virgo***

Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548–1611)

#### ***Ave Maria***

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)  
'Rejoice, Virgin Mary, all heresies alone thou hast crushed in the whole world. Alleluia.' An exuberant five-part setting

by Victoria, the foremost composer of the Spanish Renaissance, from 1572. The great Brazilian composer Villa-Lobos composed his setting of Gabriel's words to the Virgin Mary in 1918.

Carol for All: ***God rest you merry, gentlemen***

Appeal on behalf of Chesham foodbank

### INTERVAL

Carol for All: ***Away in a Manger***

#### ***O magnum mysterium***

Giovanni Gabrieli (1557–1612)  
A suitably opulent setting by Gabrieli, organist at St Mark's in Venice, published in 1587. For this we divide into two choirs: two sopranos, alto and bass, and alto, two tenors, and bass.

#### ***Jesus Christ the Apple Tree***

Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)  
Soprano solo: Rachel Meldrum  
Poston worked for a long time at the BBC, composing for both television and radio. Her setting of this eighteenth-century American song comes from 1967 and has been a firm favourite ever since.

#### **Reading**

Ann Crisp

#### ***Gabriel fram Heven-King***

(Fourteenth-century)  
Duet: Simon Beattie & Martin Cunningham  
A song popular in England in medieval times and referred to in Chaucer's

Canterbury Tales in its Latin version 'Angelus ad Virginem'. It may originally have been brought from France by wandering Franciscan friars. We sing a two-part version from a manuscript of 1349 which only survived as a few smoke-blackened sheets, relics of a fire that destroyed the Cotton Library in 1730.

#### ***Veinticinco de diciembre***

Spanish traditional  
Perhaps the best known Spanish folk carol, the recurring 'Fum, fum, fum' may imitate a drum or the strumming of a guitar. 'Twenty-fifth day of December, *fum, fum, fum!* For the love of man is given the Holy infant, Son of Heaven; Of the holy virgin springing, peace on earth and good will bringing, *fum, fum, fum!*'.

#### ***I saw a maiden***

Basque traditional, arr. Edgar Pettman (1866–1943)

#### ***Hodie Christus natus est***

Francis Poulenc  
'Today Christ is born: today the Saviour appeared: today on Earth the Angels sing, Archangels rejoice: today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia', the last of Poulenc's four Christmas motets. The first piece was published 70 years before, in 1892.

Carol for All: ***Good King Wenceslas***

arr.Reginald Jacques

#### ***Deck the Hall***

Peter Gritton  
A modern take on an old carol. Listen out for the Hallelujah Chorus and Auld Lang Syne!

*Programme notes by Simon Beattie.*

## 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, he 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.

As well as the Damon Singers, David is Musical Director of the Wycombe Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra, the Chess Valley Male Voice Choir, the Chiltern Hundreds Bach Choir and the Chorleywood Chamber Orchestra.

### Chesham foodbank

Chesham foodbank provides emergency food to local people in crisis. All food given out is donated by the local community and sorted by volunteers.

The charity needs donations of food, or money, to give food to people in crisis. Local churches, schools and businesses in Chesham are committed to making the foodbank work. The Damon Singers are delighted to be supporting Chesham foodbank tonight.

Website: <http://www.trusselltrust.org>

email: [foodbankchesham@gmail.com](mailto:foodbankchesham@gmail.com)

#### *THE DAMON SINGERS*

##### Soprano:

*Helen Baker, Helen Cooke, Ann Crisp, Penny Fray,  
Cleone Goddard, Bell King, Rachel Meldrum, Janine Page*

##### Alto:

*Alison Davidson, Lily Jordan, Marion Koebner, Liz Martine, Louise Pearce, Uli Wright*

##### Tenor:

*Simon Beattie, Windsor Thomas, Chris Turner*

##### Bass:

*Mike Costin, Martin Cunningham, Patrick Lunt, John Reuter*

#### Our next concert

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012

Holy Trinity Church, Penn Street

*If you wish to find out more about the Damon Singers, or you'd like to be put on our mailing list, please telephone the Secretary, Patrick Lunt, on 01494 712583, or email [patrick@patricklunt.com](mailto:patrick@patricklunt.com)*



# *The Damon Singers*

directed by David Cooke



## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

All proceeds to



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
8.00pm, St Mary's Church, Chesham

[www.bucksinfo.net/damonsingers/](http://www.bucksinfo.net/damonsingers/)

Registered charity no. 1118442

### **Once in Royal David's City**

1. Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.
2. He came down to earth from heaven  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and mean and lowly  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.
3. And through all his wondrous child-  
hood  
He would honour and obey,  
Love and watch the lowly maiden,  
In whose gentle arms he lay:  
Christian children all must be  
Mild, obedient, good as he.
4. Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars his children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.

### **God rest you merry, gentlemen**

1. 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.*
2. From God our heav'nly 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.*
3. 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.*
4. 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.*

### **Away in a manger**

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet  
head,  
The stars in the bright sky looked down  
where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby  
awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus no crying he  
makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from  
the sky,  
And stay by my side until morning is  
nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee  
to stay  
Close by me for ever, and love me, I  
pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender  
care,  
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee  
there.

### **Good King Wenceslas**

1. *(All)*  
Good King Wenceslas look'd out  
On the Feast of Stephen,  
When the snow lay round about,  
Deep, and crisp, and even:  
Brightly shone the moon that night,  
Though the frost was cruel,  
When a poor man came in sight,  
Gath'ring winter fuel.

### **2. (Men)**

'Hither, page, and stand by me,  
If thou know'st it, telling,  
Yonder peasant, who is he?  
Where and what his dwelling?'

### *(Ladies)*

'Sire, he lives a good league hence,  
Underneath the mountain,  
Right against the forest fence,  
By Saint Agnes' fountain.'

### **3. (Men)**

'Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,  
Bring me pine-logs hither:  
Thou and I will see him dine,  
When we bear them thither.'

### *(All)*

Page and monarch, forth they went,  
Forth they went together;  
Through the rude wind's wild lament  
And the bitter weather.

### **4. (Ladies)**

'Sire, the night is darker now,  
And the wind blows stronger;  
Fails my heart, I know not how;  
I can go no longer.'

### *(Men)*

'Mark my footsteps, good my page;  
Tread thou in them boldly:  
Thou shalt find the winter's rage  
Freeze thy blood less coldly.'

### **5. (All)**

In his master's steps he trod,  
Where the snow lay dinted;  
Heat was in the very sod  
Which the Saint had printed.  
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,  
Wealth or rank possessing,  
Ye who now will bless the poor,  
Shall yourselves find blessing.