

PROGRAMME

Omnes de Saba venient

Jakob Handl (1550–1591)

Also known as Jacobus Gallus (his name literally means ‘cockerel’), Handl was a Slovenian composer who worked in Austria and Bohemia. This rhythmic Epiphany motet, scored in five parts, was first published in 1586 and sets the prophecy of Isaiah 60:6: ‘All they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and shewing forth praise to the Lord.’

Carol for All:
As with Gladness Men of old

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).

Niño lindo
Venezuelan trad. arranged Alberto Grau
Helen Baker

Videntes stellam
Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)
If you came to our Christmas concert last year, you will have heard Poulenc’s setting of *O magnum mysterium*, from his *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël* of 1952. This is from the same group of pieces. ‘When they saw the star the wise men were greatly delighted, and they entered the house and offered to the Lord gold, frankincense, and myrrh.’

Reading

Noel Antoine Busnois (c1430 - 1492)
Busnois worked at the Burgundian court as a singer and composer, and his surviving music includes both sacred and secular compositions. This short piece is unusual in setting only a single, very Christmassy, word and may perhaps be part of a larger piece. It does however provide considerable scope for interpretation!

Follow that Star Peter Gritton
You’ll hear a couple of arrangements by Peter Gritton this evening, but this is an original piece by him, both the words and music, envisioning the Three Kings’ journey as a jazz stomp!

Carol for All: *We Three Kings*

Glory to the Christ Child Alan Bullard (b.1947)
Bullard studied with Herbert Howells (more of him later), 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.

Appeal by the Chairman of Chiltern Dial-a-Ride



INTERVAL

Mince pies will be served: mulled wine and soft drinks are available at the bar

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

French traditional

Un flambeau, Jeannette, Isabelle! comes from Provence, where torches have always played an important part in Christmas celebrations. It is an old carol, and was first published in 1553.

Carol for All: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Reading Ann Crisp

Here is the Little Door

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)
Howells wrote this in 1918, entitling it ‘A Carol of Gifts’. The words are by Frances Chesterton, the wife of the writer G. K. Chesterton. It’s a local piece, too: the Chestertons lived in Beaconsfield and the young Howells wrote it on a visit there.

Los Reyes Siguen la Estrella

Francisco Guerrero (1528 - 1599)
Guerrero was born and died in Seville, working mainly in Spain and Portugal. On his only visit to the Holy Land in 1589, he was captured and held to ransom by pirates. This piece is one of his many sacred *villancicos*, setting religious words to catchy popular tunes. In this piece the Kings follow the star, which follows the Lord who seeks out sinners...

A Boy was born

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

The Three Kings

Peter Cornelius (1824–1874)

Britten, like Howells, was only in his twenties when he wrote *A Boy was Born*, a setting of some 16th-century German words, which he dedicated to his father. It was the work which first brought him

to the public’s attention. Cornelius was a poet as well as a composer, and set his own poem ‘Die Könige’ (‘The Kings’), for solo voice, in 1859. When Franz Liszt saw the piece he suggested using the famous 16th-century chorale ‘How brightly shines the morning star’ to accompany it.

Carol for All: O Come all ye faithful

Santa Claus is coming to town
Fred Coots (1897–1985)

First sung in 1934, this song went on to become one of the biggest sellers in American music history. The arrangement, in six parts, is by Peter Gritton.

Programme notes written by Simon Beattie and Martin Cunningham.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Sopranos:

Coral Ash, Helen Baker, Helen Cooke, Ann Crisp, Penny Fray, Anneliese Frew, Cleone Goddard, Bell King, Janine Page.

Altos:

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

Tenors:

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

Basses:

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



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.



The Damon Singers, past and present

We know a lot of you are familiar with us - and it is always nice to see our "old faithfuls"! But we also like to welcome newcomers in our audience, and you may be sitting reading this while waiting for the concert to start. So, let us introduce you to the choir...

The Damon Singers have always had a motto: "To sing for pleasure, for others and ourselves". The choir was formed in 1957 under its first director, David Carr - rumour has it that the name 'Damon' was a combination of DAvid and MONday, when practices took place. Today, the choir has another conductor called David , but we now rehearse on Wednesday evenings -should we change our name to Dawed? Perhaps not!

Most of our concerts are in the Chesham area; but we also travel further afield, sometimes even overseas!

As you will hear tonight, we encourage members of the Damons to form their own smaller groups, in which to explore and perform music outside our main repertoire.

We hope you enjoy tonight!



The Damon Singers are now on Facebook. Tell us what you thought of the pieces we sang this evening... We'd love to hear from you!
<http://www.facebook.com/TheDamonSingers>

If you wish to find out more about the Damon Singers, or you'd like to be put on our mailing list, please contact the Secretary, Patrick Lunt:

(h) 01494 712583 (m) 07768 566588 email patrick@patricklunt.com

The Damon Singers

directed by David Cooke



Christmas Concert

'Wise Men and Stars'



All proceeds to



THE CHILTERN
Dial-a-Ride
helping you get around

Sunday 16th December 2012
7.30pm, White Hill Centre, Chesham

Registered charity no. 1118442

www.damonsingers.co.uk

CAROL FOR ALL:
As with gladness men of old
arr. David Willcocks

1. As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious God, may we
Evermore be led to thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped,
To that lowly manger-bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom heaven and earth adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek thy mercy-seat.

3. As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ to thee our heavenly King.

4. Holy Jesu, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds thy glory hide.

5. In the heav'ly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down:
There for ever may we sing
Alleluyas to our King.

CAROL FOR ALL:
We three kings

1. We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

2. [Melchior] Born a king on Bethlehem plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again
King for ever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign:
O star of wonder, etc.

3. [Caspar] Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a deity nigh:
Prayer and praising, all men raising,
Worship him, God most high:
O star of wonder, etc.

4. [Balthasar] Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb:
O star of wonder, etc.

5. Glorious now, behold him arise,
King, and God, and sacrifice!
Alleluia, alleluia,
Earth to the heav'ns replies:
O star of wonder, etc.

CAROL FOR ALL:
O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

2. O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.

3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

CAROL FOR ALL:
O come, all ye faithful
18th C anon, arr. David Willcocks

1. O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him etc

3. Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations:
O come let us adore him etc

4. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God,
In the highest:
O come let us adore him etc