

THE DAMON SINGERS

One of the questions we are most often asked is: "Why are you called the Damon Singers?"

The popular explanation is that our first conductor was named David, and we always rehearsed on Mondays... Anyway, the name stuck - and it is still half right, although rehearsal nights have moved to Wednesdays.

The choir was formed in 1957 in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. So next year will be our 60th anniversary! We hope to celebrate in some style, with an even more lavish concert than usual - if that is possible!

We are delighted to be back in Newton Longville - the home of one of our longest serving members, and a former Chairman, Cleone Goddard.

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OUR MEMBERS:

Soprano:

Helen Baker, Helen Cooke,
Jane Featherstone-Witty,
Penny Fray, Barbara McGillivray,
Rachel Meldrum, Marianne Michael

Alto:

Sheila Jalland, Marion Koebner,
Malavika Legge, Anne MacDowell,
Louise Pearce, Madeleine Symes

Tenor:

Simon Beattie, Andy Scott,
Chris Turner

Baritone:

Martin Cunningham,
Sebastian Gibbs, John Reuter

Bass:

Patrick Lunt, Patrick Martin

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OUR MUSICAL DIRECTOR

**David Cooke BA (hons),
BMus (hons), ALCM**

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

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

The Damon Singers

directed by David Cooke

A summer concert



St. Faith's Church, Newton Longville

**Saturday 16th July 2016
7.30 p.m.**

A date for your diary

11th December

Christmas concert

White Hill Centre, Chesham

www.damonsingers.co.uk

Registered charity no. 1118442

Programme

Many Years

Dmitry Bortniansky (1751–1825)

Bortniansky was in charge of the music at the Imperial Chapel in St Petersburg for over 40 years, and a prolific composer of church music. The acclamation 'Many Years' is traditionally sung at the end of a service to mark a special day (e.g. a parishioner's birthday). For his setting, Bortniansky has harmonised a traditional Russian chant.

O Sanctissima Maria *Paul Mealor (b.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".

Bogoroditse Devo, raduisya

Arvo Pärt (b.1935)

The text here ('Hail, O Virgin, Birth-giver of God!') is the Ave Maria, and is included in the Orthodox service the All-Night Vigil. This setting was in fact commissioned by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, 1990.

This Marriage *Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)*

This Grammy-winning American composer is known for his choral, orchestral and wind ensemble music. The words of This Marriage were written by the 13th-century Persian poet, scholar and theologian Jalal al-Din Rumi.

Hymn to the Eternal Flame

Stephen Paulus

Soprano solo: Rachel Meldrum

Stephen Paulus was a Grammy-winning American composer who sadly died two years ago, aged only 65. His 'Pilgrims' Hymn' was sung at the funerals of both Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford. 'Hymn to the Eternal Flame', which we are performing tonight, is a movement from the Holocaust oratorio, To be

Certain of the Dawn.

Demons Diminished (in 15th-century mode):

'Amoroso'

Helen Cooke - *dulcimer*; **David Cooke** - *psaltery*
The music for this piece — possibly an Italian dance — survives as a single line of melody. This is typical for the 15th Century. Any other instrumentalists were left to improvise suitable backing, often based on the idea of a drone.

Ecce quod natura

Anon. 15th century, ed. David Cooke

Madeleine Symes, Simon Beattie,

Martin Cunningham

This early English carol is written in the sweetly mellifluous style characteristic of English music from the second quarter of the 15th century. In the second verse, David has provided a third vocal part using the harmonic practices of the time. "See how Nature changes her laws: A pure virgin gives birth to the Son of God. See, a new joy. See, a new wonder. A virgin bears a son."

Lullabye for Lucy

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (1934-2016)

One of the foremost composers of our time, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies made a significant contribution to musical history through his wide-ranging and prolific output. He lived much of his life in the Orkney Islands, where he wrote most of his music. Over five decades, he wrote across a broad range of styles, yet his music always communicates directly and powerfully. He died in March this year.

Reading: The Hare and the Tortoise

Malavika Legge

De Animals a-comin

Trad. Spiritual

arr. Bartholomew (1885–1978)

The animals board Noah's Ark in their idiosyncratic fashion. Marshall Bartholomew was a long-time director of the Yale Glee Club (1921–53), and set this spiritual's "tune and text as sung by Maginel Wright Barney, July 8, 1933."

Epitaph on a Dormouse

Benjamin Cooke (1734 – 1793)

Benjamin Cooke was the organist at

Westminster Abbey for over thirty years, as well as being the organist at the church of St Martin in the Fields. He wrote many "glees", as well as composing a variety of church music and organ music.

The Owl and the Pussycat

Edward Lear (1812 - 1888) arr. John Rutter

This joyous, dance-like setting of Edward Lear's famous nonsense poem 'The Owl and the Pussy-cat' is taken from Rutter's Five Childhood Lyrics, a collection of unaccompanied pieces inspired by rhymes and verses for children.

INTERVAL

Blue Moon

Richard Rodgers (1902–1979), arr. D. Blackwell

A classic song, written in 1934 when Rodgers was still working with the lyricist Lorenz Hart.

You are the new day *John David (b. 1946)*

This song first appeared, performed a capella, in a 1978 album by the group Airwaves founded by the Welsh musician John David. It was subsequently arranged by Peter Knight (1917-1985) for the Kings Singers, so creating one of their best-loved numbers.

The Continental

Con Conrad, Herb Magidson

The song was introduced by Ginger Rogers in the 1934 film, The Gay Divorcee. It was the first song to win the Academy Award for Best Original Song. In 1952 Harry James released a recording of it with Rosemary Clooney on vocals. A cover version by Maureen McGovern reached number 16 in the UK Singles Chart in 1976.

Reading: **Patrick Lunt**

Scarborough Fair

Trad. arr. David Cooke

Accompanist: **Patrick Martin**

This song relates the tale of a young woman who instructs her former love to perform a series of seemingly impossible tasks, such as making a shirt without a seam and then washing it in a dry well, adding that if he completes these tasks she will once again be his true love.

The Coolin *Samuel Barber (1910 - 1981)*

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.

Demons Diminished:

The Derby Ram

John Wall Callcott (1766–1821)

Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham,

Patrick Lunt

This is an arrangement for three men's voices of a folk song which tells the rather tall-tale of a ram of gargantuan proportions, how it is butchered and the subsequent use of its tail... Be warned that the song contains buckets of blood and reference to an ell, a unit of length approximating the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger.

Yarmouth Fair

Norfolk folk tune, arr. Warlock, adapted

C. Armstrong Gibbs, words by Hal Collins

Peter Warlock was the pseudonym adopted by the British composer Philip Arnold Heseltine (1894–1930). He wrote over a hundred songs, a number of choral works and a small number of instrumental pieces. Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (10 August 1889 – 12 May 1960) was a prolific and versatile English composer, best known for his output of songs.

Ca the yowes

Trad.

arr. R. Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

Tenor solo: Simon Beattie

This traditional setting of words by Robbie Burns was arranged by Vaughan Williams in 1922 for tenor solo and chorus. A shepherd pledges his love by the banks of Burns's beloved Clouden. In standard English the refrain would be "Drive the ewes to the knolls, Drive them where the heather grows, Drive them where the streamlet runs, My lovely dear". Definitely much better in Scots!

Sourwood Mountain *arr. John Rutter*

Soloists: Simon Beattie, Patrick Lunt

A folksong that treats us to a 'hoedown', from Tennessee.

Programme notes: Simon Beattie, David Cooke, Martin Cunningham, Patrick Lunt