

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 currently also Musical Director of the Wycombe Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra.

Simon Pearce

Currently 24 years of age, Simon took up the classical guitar at the age of nine. After this he began to attend the Amersham Music Centre and eventually gained a Saturday morning scholarship studying with Debbie Cracknell, whilst also learning the piano and the violin. Along with the support of his parents who are also keen guitarists, the time he spent at the music centre over the next eight years was the main inspiration for his chosen musical direction. In 2010 Simon successfully gained a place in the National Youth Guitar Ensemble under the direction of Gerald Garcia. After 3 years in the ensemble and 7 years at St Clement Danes School in Hertfordshire, Simon gained a place to study with John Mills at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. During the 4 years completing his studies Simon has played in many masterclasses with great guitarists including Xuefei Yang, Marcin Dylla and John Williams. After successfully graduating with a BMus(Hons) (1st class) Simon is currently self-employed doing much teaching and playing at a variety of different performance venues. He has also recently accepted a place at the Royal College of Music with a scholarship to study for his Masters in Music which he is looking forward to starting in September 2018.

The Damons come of age....

Last year we celebrated our 60th Anniversary - no mean achievement for a small, local choir! Our motto has always been "To sing for pleasure, ours and other people's..." In the course of those 60 years, we have also raised significant sums for charities, by performing at concerts like tonight's. We are delighted to be singing for the first time (as far as we can remember!) in Holy Trinity Church, Prestwood. We thank you for supporting us, and the beneficiaries of the proceeds from tonight's event.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano

Helen Cooke
Ann Crisp
Jane Featherstone-Witty
Sophie Hamilton
Claire Hunter
Barbara McGillivray
Rachel Meldrum
Marianne Michael

Alto

Katie Francis
Caroline Greenwood
Malavika Legge
Anne MacDowell
Louise Pearce
Liz Sheppard
Karen van Oostrum
Uli Wright

Tenor

Simon Beattie
Duncan Passey
Andy Scott
Chris Turner

Baritone

Martin Cunningham
Sebastian Gibbs
Jeremy Moodey

Bass

David Harmer
Patrick Lunt
Patrick Martin

Dates for your diary

14th July 2018 "Pudding" Concert
United Reformed Church, Chesham

9th December 2018
Christmas concert White Hill Centre

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 are at present, 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, Claire Hunter.

Phone: 07772 754163
email: claire_hunter@hotmail.co.uk



The
Damon
Singers

Reflections
Spring
Concert

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PRESTWOOD
SATURDAY 28TH APRIL 2018
7.30 P.M.

All proceeds to an initiative commemorating local men killed in WW1

www.damonsingers.co.uk facebook.com/thedamonsingers Registered charity no. 1114882

Programme

Te lucis ante terminum Thomas Tallis
(c.1505–1585)

The words date from the 7th century and are sung at the close of day during the monastic office of Compline. Writing towards the end of his life, Tallis set the middle verse only, with the outer verses sung to plainchant. 'To Thee, before the close of day Creator of the world, we pray that with Thy wonted favour, Thou wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now. From all ill dreams defend our eyes, from nightly fears and fantasies: tread under foot our ghostly foe, that no pollution we may know. O Father, that we ask through Jesus Christ Thine only Son, who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee, shall live and reign eternally. Amen.'

Svete tikhii Aleksandr Grechaninov
(1864–1956)

The original text here is even older: the Greek hymn 'Phos Hilaron', written in the 4th century. Known, thanks to John Keble's translation, as 'Hail, gladdening light' in English, it is rendered as 'O gentle light' in Church Slavonic. In the Orthodox tradition it is sung as part of the All-night Vigil service. This setting was written in 1900 by Grechaninov, a favourite of Nicholas II who wrote much for the Orthodox Church, before finally leaving Russia after the Revolution for France, then America.

O salutaris Hostia Ēriks Ešenvalds (b.1977)
A Damons premiere: one of the modern Latvian composer's most popular pieces, in which two soprano solos trace ethereal melodies over a sonorous hushed chorale. 'O saving Victim, who expandest the door of heaven, hostile armies press, give strength, bear aid. To the Triune Lord may there be everlasting glory, that He might give us life without end in our [heavenly] homeland. Amen' (St Thomas Aquinas).

Guest Soloist: Simon Pearce (Guitar)
Preludes Nos 1 & 5 Heitor Villa-Lobos
(1887–1959)

Heitor Villa-Lobos was arguably the best known and most prolific composer to come from South America. His meeting with Andrés Segovia in 1929 inspired him to create a substantial output for the guitar. The 'Cinq Préludes' were written and published in 1940 and are typical of Villa-Lobos's writing, combining elements of the western musical tradition with his own folk roots from South America. Each Prelude portrays a different aspect of life in Brazil.

1918 Centenary Reflections
Pilgrims' Hymn Stephen Paulus (1949–2014)
A Remembrance Simon Beattie (b.1975)
For the Fallen Douglas Guest (1916–1996)
They are at rest Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
The Armistice May Wedderburn Cannan
read by Ann Crisp

Four works of remembrance, and a reading. Stephen Paulus was a Grammy-winning American composer who sadly died a few years ago, aged only 65. Tonight we perform a piece taken from a larger work: the poignant eight-part 'Pilgrims' Hymn', which was sung at the funerals of both Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford, and comes from his 'church opera' *The Three Hermits* (based on a story by Tolstoy, a committed pacifist). The second work was written especially for tonight's concert, and is inspired by the story of a Chesham man who died on the Western Front. Then follows a piece by George Guest, Organist of Westminster Abbey from 1963 to 1981, during which time he wrote his setting of Laurence Binyon's famous lines. It is still sung at the Abbey, and other churches, on Remembrance Sunday. The final work was composed in 1910, on the anniversary of the death of Queen Victoria, a dignified setting of Cardinal Newman's poem 'Rest'.

Great God of Love Robert Lucas Pearsall
(1795–1856)

Another Damons premiere: in this eight-part 'madrigal', from 1839 (over two centuries after the madrigal's Golden Age), you can hear some of the sumptuous harmonies Pearsall went on to employ the following year in the famous *Lay a garland* (long a Damons' favourite). Pearsall happily engaged in antiquarian pursuits, and from 1842 took up residence in a castle on the edge of Lake Constance. The words, a call to Cupid, are the composer's own.

Appeal for tonight's good cause

INTERVAL

with refreshments

Voici le vert et beau Mai Jacques Mauduit
(1857–1927)

An innovative French composer, Mauduit is perhaps little known today, partly as much of his vast output remained unpublished at his death and many works are now lost. Dating from 1886, this sprightly piece sets words by Mauduit's friend, the poet Jean-Antoine de Baïf: 'Here is the green and lovely month of May, inciting all beauty; all is laughing, all is gay, roses and lilies will bloom. *Let's laugh, play, and leap, frolic one and all, after the season.* Roses and lilies must we gather to twine around our pretty hats, lovely bouquets and garlands of which, bedecked, we sing. *Let's laugh...* Snow and frost are here no more: calm and soft, the sea now smiles, the frightful wind is silent, the air flutters with a soft breeze. *Let's laugh...* Everywhere the birds - happy, twittering, full of love - go and rejoice over woods and waters.'

Three Songs
In Youth is Pleasure Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
Red River Valley arr. Jeffrey Douma
Byker Hill arr. Philip Wilby
From Tudor England (Holst sets words by the 16th-century poet Robert Wever), to Canada (the Red River flows into Lake Winnipeg), to the East End of Newcastle and its collieries: three very different songs, but all, in their way, reflecting on the past.

Guest Soloist: Simon Pearce (Guitar)
The Grand Solo Fernando Sor (1778–1839)
Fernando Sor was a Spanish guitarist and composer, who wrote quite prolifically for the guitar. His contemporaries considered him 'the best guitarist in the world!' His music was typically in the 'classical' style, as seen in this grand and triumphal piece that many people regard as one of his greatest works. 'The Grand Solo' was written in about 1805, in the early part of Sor's career while he was living in Paris. The piece's energy and youthfulness is in stark contrast to many of the composer's later works.

Spirituals:
My Lord what a mourning arr. David Cooke
Woke up this Morning arr. Jeffrey Douma
Two spirituals for you now. David's arrangement receives its premiere tonight. We sing the second to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King Jr: *Woke up this Morning* became a freedom song in 1960s America, with its words (originally '... with my mind stayed on Jesus') adapted to project the goals of the civil rights movement.

Blue Moon Richard Rodgers
(1902–1979) arr. David Blackwell
And to end, a classic song, written in 1934 when Rodgers was still working with the lyricist Lorenz Hart.

Programme notes: Simon Beattie