

Celebrating
60 years
1957-2017

THE DAMON SINGERS

IN HARMONY, IN CHESHAM, SINCE 1957



PUDDING CONCERT

15th July 2017

St Mary's Church, Chesham

Directed by David Cooke



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Tonight's programme

<i>Many Years</i>	Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)
<i>Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'</i>	Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
<i>Le Boléro du Divin Mozart</i> <i>Organ Solo: Alex Flood</i>	Guy Bovet (b.1942)
<i>Three Hungarian Folk-Songs</i>	Mátyás Seiber (1905–1960)
<i>Dravidian Dithyramb</i>	Victor Paranjoti (1906–1967)
<i>Reading: Ann Crisp</i>	
<i>The Punch Ladle</i>	trad arr. David Cooke

INTERVAL

<i>Il est bel et bon</i>	Pierre Passereau (fl.1509–1547)
<i>O Waly, waly</i>	arr. Alexander Flood
<i>Fandanguillo</i> <i>Guitar Solo: Simon Pearce</i>	Joaquin Turina (1882–1949)
<i>I love my love</i>	arr. Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
<i>Just as the tide was flowing</i>	arr. Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
<i>Reading: Patrick Lunt</i>	
<i>Paddy McGinty's Goat</i>	arr. Richard Grylls
<i>Shenandoah</i>	American folk-song, arr. James Erb (1926-2014)
<i>Tequila Samba</i>	Guy Turner (b.1955)
<i>Antiphon</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

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, David 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.

In the last few years David has increasingly been invited to work with singers. He has conducted productions of several operas including *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*, and Handel's *Semele*. He is currently also Musical Director of the Wycombe Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra.

Whichever group he is working with, David is keen to explore lesser known but good quality music of several periods, as well as the more familiar repertoire.

Alexander Flood

Alexander Flood read Music at Oxford, and attended the composition classes of Robert Sherlaw-Johnson and Robert Saxton. He held the organ scholarships of Jesus College, Oxford, and St Albans Cathedral. He gained a Ph.D. in Composition from King's College, London.

Alex now divides his time between performing, teaching, and composing. In addition to being Assistant Director of Music at St Peter's Church, St Albans, he conducts Radlett Choral Society and Sandringham Community Choir. As an organist, he has recently played recitals in London, Portsmouth, Oxford and St Albans, as well as Würzburg, Marburg, Heidelberg and Tübingen in Germany.

He has a thriving practice of private piano, organ, music theory and composition pupils, and teaches two days per week at Wycombe Abbey School. He was a teaching assistant in music analysis at King's College for five years, and has lectured at the London College of Music and Media. His organ teaching aims especially to help organists exploit the potential of mechanical action instruments to create musical and stylish performances.

His own compositions are highly acclaimed for their imaginative use of instruments and voices within a strong long-range harmonic framework. His works have won numerous awards. His cantata *Born in Flight* was premiered last autumn to great acclaim.

Simon Pearce

Simon took up the classical guitar at the age of nine. He attended 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 he gained a place in the National Youth Guitar Ensemble under the direction of Gerald Garcia. After finishing school 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 master classes with great guitarists including Xuefei Yang, Marcin Dylla and John Williams.

After graduating with a BMus(Hons) (1st class) Simon is currently working as a guitar teacher with the Berkshire Maestros, and plays at a variety of different performance venues.

The Damon Singers evolved from a nucleus of singers who had been in the Cheslyn Youth Choir. Our first conductor was **David Carr**, who had sung with the group for a year or so. There were about 15 voices, and rehearsals took place in members' homes, with a largely *a cappella* repertoire.

We needed a name, initially to complete the entry form for the Chiltern Music Festival in February 1958. We came up with an acronym, derived from the choir's founder and the day we rehearsed: **DA(vid)–MON(day)**. Early on, it was also pointed out that the reverse of *damon* was not inappropriate for a group with no fixed abode.

Success in the Chiltern Festival resulted in numerous local invitations to sing; no fewer than eight events in 1958, as well as singing at the wedding of two of the group's members. Changes in membership occurred fairly regularly, with some leaving the area through marriage or working away, others going to university or college. The gaps were readily filled, and the size of the choir remained fairly constant at around 15–18. The standard of performance was consistently high.

David was succeeded in 1964 / 65 by **Peter Watts**, who led the choir for almost twelve years. Peter told us (as we went to press) that he is planning to be with us tonight. When he left for Wales, the choir was leaderless for a short while until the discovery of **Peter Tinlin**. We were Peter's first choir, but his ebullient style readily attracted new members. Social activities also became a regular feature. Barbecues, themed parties, canal trips, punting at Oxford, and numerous get-togethers in members' homes made the choir a well-knit and friendly group.

As the choir increased in size, featured the infamous "frilly dress". It was under Peter international appearance, in local groups as diverse as the of Hearing Club.

In 1987, **Richard Grylls**, a teacher, took over. His style dynamic, inspired the choir to left, Richard led the choir on a set of truly wonderful concerts.



so did the repertoire. Concerts fronts", and other forms of fancy that the Damons made their first Germany, as well as entertaining Amersham Spiritualists and the Hard

highly-accomplished local music of direction, at once subtle and even greater heights. Just before he memorable trip to Normandy, for a

In 2001, we found a new leader, **Alex Flood**. An organ scholar at St Alban's Abbey, Alex had accompanied the choir in the past. He was also a composer, and arranged a number of pieces for us. After three years, the pressures of completing a PhD forced Alex to leave, but he maintained links with the singers and we are pleased to welcome him back to perform with us again tonight.

Alex's successor, **Matthew Watts**, was with us for only a year, after which there followed an interregnum as other possible candidates were sought. We were overwhelmed with the number of applicants, and each was rigorously auditioned and interviewed (a bit like *X Factor*). And the winner was.... **Will Dawes**, an experienced young choral conductor and fine baritone.

Although he was only with us for two years, Will certainly made his mark on the choir. His great expertise in conducting and vocal training helped us to perform to a high standard, and his great sense of humour enabled him to push us beyond what we thought were our limits without frightening us too much! Will has now moved on to great things as a regular member of professional choirs such as Stile Antico and Polyphony.

Which brings us to our present conductor, **David Cooke**. David is perhaps the perfect conductor for the Damons today. His technical and musical understanding, combined with his great humour and patience, have enabled the choir to improve even more. New singers are joining the choir, we are exploring a great repertoire of pieces old and new, light and serious, and rehearsals and concerts alike are thoroughly enjoyable experiences.

The Damon Singers



The Damon Singers..... at work.... and at play





The Damon Singers of Chesham came to Chesham Bois on Saturday, where at the Beacon School, they entertained almost 200 people with a programme entitled: "A Sound of Music." The group brought their own grand piano for the concert, which was run in aid

of the Chesham and Amersham Society for Mentally Handicapped Children. The evening provided a varied selection of music, including a monologue, a song cycle, instrumentals and folk songs. The Damon Singers are pictured above during the concert

March 22nd 1969

With grateful thanks to David Harmer and Siddhartha Ramaswamy for the use of their photographs

The Damon Singers have long enjoyed singing a range of material, from early music to folk-song arrangements, sacred and secular, serious and 'light', and in a variety of languages. We are also lucky to know talented people who have written pieces specifically for us. Tonight's programme showcases the kind of music we love, and we hope you will enjoy it, too.

Many Years Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)
Solo: Simon Beattie

Well known for his ballets, operas, and symphonies, Prokofiev never wrote for the Church. This short acclamation was composed for Eisenstein's 1942 film *Alexander Nevsky*, a great success with Soviet audiences due to its captivating music. We first sang the piece in 2015, and thought it a suitable headline for our own celebrations tonight, with the final phrase specially adapted to reflect our sixtieth anniversary (but you fluent Russian speakers will know that!)

Choral Dances from 'Gloriana'

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

Britten's opera, *Gloriana*, was first performed at a gala event at the Royal Opera House in 1953, in honour of the Queen's coronation just six days before. We first sang the set in 2002, to mark the Golden Jubilee. The libretto of *Gloriana* was by the author and editor (and dedicatee of Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger*) William Plomer (1903-1973). The six 'dances' you will hear tonight open the second act, and portray a colourful masque of 'Time and Concord' attended by Elizabeth I in Norwich. They are: 1. *Time*; 2. *Concord*; 3. *Time and Concord*; 4. *Country Girls*; 5. *Rustics and Fishermen*; 6. *Final Dance of Homage*. Time is portrayed as a lusty youth, in his prime, while his wife, Concord, blesses the land with plenty, peace and happiness. In Time and Concord, this plenty is attributed to the Queen, Gloriana who "hath all our love". Country girls offer garlands for the Queen, while the men bring samples of their country largesse and all finally join to ask the Queen to accept their gifts so that 'you afar may feel us near'.

Organ Solo: Alex Flood

Le Boléro du Divin Mozart Guy Bovet (b.1942)

Three Hungarian Folk-Songs

Mátyás Seiber (1905–1960)

Seiber arranged these three popular songs - *The handsome butcher*; *Apple, apple*; *The old woman* - in 1931, while teaching in Frankfurt, but they did not acquire their English words until 1950, when he was living in the UK. We have wondered about the strange, almost Monty Python nature of the lyrics each time we have sung them over the years, but it turns out they're rather odd in Hungarian, too: 'Kolozsvar is such a town, its gate has nine locks. There lives a butcher, Virag Janos. He has yellow spurs [and] when he clicks his heels ... carnations fall from them'; 'The house went out through the window. The old woman stayed inside. She put reeds on her back and took them to the market'.

Dravidian Dithyramb Victor Paranjoti (1906–1967)

Paranjoti was an Indian musician with a deep love for Western classical music, and pioneered the performance of choral music in India. This infectious piece was written in 1962, and received its Damons premiere in 2015. 'Dravidian' refers to the peoples of southern India; a 'dithyramb' was a passionate choral hymn in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility.

Reading: Ann Crisp "Now we are Sixty"

adapted from the book by Christopher Matthew

The Punch Ladle

Trad arr. David Cooke

Following their successful debut last year, we are pleased to welcome back the Damons 'Hardy Band' to lead us in this traditional drinking song (to the tune of 'Green Grow the Laurels'). What could be more appropriate as we celebrate our sixtieth with a glass of Prosecco? We invite you to raucously join in the refrain which is printed here. Following this, the band will play some more traditional tunes (*The Girl I left behind/Brighton Camp, Newcastle* and *Gathering Peascods*) while we fill your glasses. Please feel free to clap and/or hum along!

The Punch Ladle

Audience Refrain



1
Come all you old min-strels where - e'er you may be, With com-rades u - ni - ted in

4
sweet har - mo - ny, While the clear cry - stal foun - tain through Eng - land shall roll, Give

7
me the punch la - dle I'll fa - thom the bowl. Oh give me the punch la - dle I'll fa - thom the bowl.

Last time only

Refrain - Choir only

Refrain - All

Verse 1- Choir only

Let nothing but harmony reign in our breast,
Let comrade with comrade be ever at rest,
Let's lift up our glasses, good cheer is our goal
Give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

Refrain - Audience

Verse 2 - Choir only

From France cometh brandy, Jamaica gives rum,
Sweet oranges, lemons from Portugal come,
Of beer and good cider we'll also take toll
So give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.
Oh give me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl.

Refrain - All, with final line.

The "Hardy" Band :

Flute - Karen van Oostrum, Clarinet - Patrick Martin, Cornet - Bill McGillivray,
Fiddle - Ed Cunningham, Accordion - Barbara McGillivray, Tabor - Alison Davidson.

INTERVAL

Il est bel et bon Pierre Passereau (fl.1509–1547)

Passereau is remembered for his lively chansons, often with unsophisticated texts and indelicate subject matter. 'Il est bel et bon' ('He's a good chap'), from 1536, is one of his most famous. 'There were two women from the same region, asking each other "What's your husband like?" "He's a good chap, my husband, I tell you, neighbour. He doesn't annoy me or beat me, he does the housework and feeds the chickens while I enjoy myself. I tell you, it's a laugh when the chickens cluck: "Little coquette, cock-a-doodledoo. What's all this?"' Listen out for the hens!

O Waly, waly

arr. Alexander Flood

Solos: Simon Beattie and Rachel Meldrum

In this half of the programme we will be including a couple of arrangements written by two of the Damons' former directors of music; both settings are firm favourites with the choir. *O Waly, waly* ('Wail, wail'), also known as *The water is wide*, may be Scottish in origin. The text is old and was noted in a wide number of variants by collectors across Southern England with the, now standard, lyrics collated in 1906 by Cecil Sharp. We premiered this version at our Valentine's Day concert in 2002. Alex's harmonies do full justice to the rather dark conclusion.

Guitar solo: Simon Pearce

Fandanguillo Joaquín Turina (1882–1949)

We are delighted to welcome Simon back to play for us on this special occasion. We always look forward to Simon's solos and tonight he will be performing a piece written for the great Spanish guitarist, Andrés Segovia, in 1925, inspired partly by the flamenco music of Turina's Andalusian homeland.

I love my love arr. Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

Just as the tide was flowing

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Both of these songs concern sailors, recently returned from sea, who find their true loves. In Holst's setting from 1916 of a Cornish folk-song, collected by George Gardiner, the sailor reclaims his girl who has been confined to the madhouse in his absence by her cruel parents. All ends happily although the closing bars perhaps suggest that her pain has not been entirely forgotten. A simpler tale of courtship is recounted in our second piece. Several folk song collectors, including both Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams himself, came across this tale of love at first sight at the turn of the last century, though it dates from an earlier, and bawdier, broadside ballad. It was 'freely adapted' for mixed chorus in 1912, and in the cascades of notes on the word 'flowing' Vaughan Williams perfectly captures both the flowing of the tide and the exhilaration of the lovers.

Reading: Patrick Lunt

Paddy McGinty's Goat Bert Lee & R. P. Weston
arr. Richard Grylls

Chief Goat: Louise Pearce

Our second setting by a former Damons' director provides a strong contrast to Alex's *O Waly, Waly*. The denouement of *Paddy McGinty's Goat* is somewhat more incendiary... This music-hall song dates from 1917 and was popularised some years ago by Val Doonican. We have been singing and bleating Richard's vivid and fun version for many years.

Shenandoah

American folk-song,
arr. James Erb (1926–2014)

A traditional boatmen's song, which originally referred to an Oneida Iroquois chief ('Shenandoah') and a canoe-going trader on the Missouri who wanted to marry his daughter. As often with folk-songs, over time the words and the meaning have changed, so that it now seems to refer to the Shenandoah River, which is in Virginia (about 1000 miles away from the Missouri!). That confusion aside, it's a lovely song, here in an eight-part arrangement written for the University of Richmond Choir in 1971, and one of our favourites.

Tequila Samba

Guy Turner (b.1955)

Guy Turner is a freelance composer and performer, as well as a lay clerk at Southwell Minster. He has written a range of choral music, both silly and serious. We leave you to judge which category this falls under.

Antiphon ('Let all the world in every corner sing')

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

For this special occasion, we invite former members of the Damons to join us in singing this joyful and, we hope, appropriate acclamation. It is the last of the '*Five Mystical Songs*', settings from 1911 of verses by the seventeenth-century poet and priest George Herbert (1593-1633) for baritone (not used in this final movement), chorus and orchestra. Today the part of the orchestra will be heroically taken by Alex Flood.

Programme notes: Simon Beattie and Martin Cunningham



Apart from “singing for pleasure, both ours and other people’s”, The Damon Singers perform two or three fund-raising concerts per year. In the last five years alone, we have raised in excess of £10,000.

These are some of the charities that have benefited from our audience’s generosity:



Helping People Help
Themselves



Friends of the Belarusian Childrens Hospice (UK)

Brief lives, precious memories.



helping you get around





THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano: Helen Baker, Helen Cooke, Ann Crisp, Jane Featherstone-Witty, Claire Hunter, Barbara McGillivray, Rachel Meldrum, Marianne Michael

Alto: Sheila Jalland, Malavika Legge, Anne MacDowell, Louise Pearce, Maddy Symes, Karen van Oostrum, Ulrike Wright

Tenor: Simon Beattie, Duncan Passey, Andy Scott, Chris Turner

Baritone: Martin Cunningham, Sebastian Gibbs

Bass: Roderick Holburn, Patrick Lunt, Patrick Martin

1,000 thanks from the Damons!

We have some lovely friends:

You, our audience, who are such a pleasure to sing for and who join in so willingly (and sound so good) in audience participation pieces

We are grateful for the generous support of Waitrose, Chesham

IBB Solicitors, Chesham whose support has enabled the creation of this commemorative programme

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...

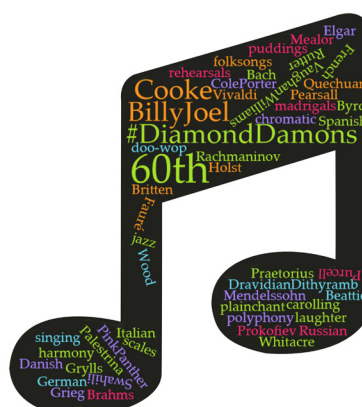
If you would like to talk to us, and join us for an evening, please contact the Secretary, Patrick Lunt.

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

Future dates for your diary

14th October
Autumn Concert
St Michael's Church, Beaconsfield

10th December
Christmas concert
White Hill Centre, Chesham



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