

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 presently 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.

The Damon Singers were founded 61 years ago, "To sing for pleasure, for others and ourselves". We now have over 30 members, from different musical and professional backgrounds, who enjoy coming together every Wednesday evening to rehearse for the concert you are attending this evening. We sing a varied repertoire of a capella choral music, ranging from medieval polyphony to pop songs and pretty much anything in between! Many of our concerts raise funds for charity: organisations we have supported recently include Chiltern Music Therapy, Workaid, The Theatre Shed, Médecins sans Frontières, Bega kwa Bega (for Ugandan orphans), Chiltern Foodbank, Chesham Museum,

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Friends of the Belarussian Hospice, The Walk Centre (Nakuru, Kenya), Bucks Vision, Chilterns Dial-a-Ride, British Red Cross, and Neuroblastoma UK.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano

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

Tenor

Simon Beattie
David Freedman
Duncan Passey
Andy Scott
Chris Turner

Baritone

Martin Cunningham
Sebastian Gibbs
Paul Sheppard

Alto

Sheila Jalland
Malavika Legge
Anne MacDowell
Louise Pearce
Liz Sheppard
Karen van Oostrum
Uli Wright

Bass

Roderick Holburn
Patrick Lunt
Phil Ogley

A date for your diary

Sunday 9th December 2018

Christmas concert *White Hill Centre*

Have you got what it takes?

The Damon Singers don't plan to grow larger than we are now, but from time to time members move away from the area or their circumstances change. So vacancies for singers do arise.

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
directed by David Cooke

"Summer Pudding Concert"

7.30.p.m.

Saturday July 14th 2018

United Reformed
Church, Chesham

Programme

Our “Summer Pudding concerts” have been a Damons’ tradition over many years: for several days, and, in some cases, weeks, we have been slaving over ovens, food processors and chopping boards (you do believe us, don’t you?!), to make a wide selection of delicious desserts, which we hope you will share with us after this evening’s concert. Because many of us can’t wait to tuck in, we will sing the whole programme without an interval...

A theme of joy runs through tonight’s music: of singing and nature, of love and freedom. We hope you enjoy it.

My Spirit sang all day

Gerald Finzi (1901–1956)

This exuberant piece is the third of Finzi’s *Seven Unaccompanied Part Songs* (1934–7), all setting words by Robert Bridges. Here, the late Poet Laureate finds joy, in music.

Three Shakespeare Songs

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958) ‘Full Fathom Five’, ‘The cloud-capp’d towers’ and ‘Over hill, over dale’: love and nature combine in these sumptuous settings of texts from *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, written in 1951 by Vaughan Williams, the 60th anniversary of whose death we mark this year.

Reading

Malavika Legge

Alas that e’er I knew this hour

Samuel Webbe (1740–1816)

Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

The World to me

Simon Beattie (b.1975)

Dindirín 16th-century Catalan/Spanish

This section features two more Poet Laureate settings: Tennyson (Holst, writing for upper voices, in 1905) and Carol Ann Duffy (Beattie, receiving its premiere tonight). Love is the theme for all the pieces: a brief tiff between Damon and Chlora ends harmoniously; a Victorian representation of erotic love; absent lovers send each other the sun, moon, and clouds; and a nightingale (*le ruyseñor*) is despatched to reject another’s advances, with its cry of ‘dindirín’.

Mannin Veen

Manx traditional arr. Vaughan Williams

The Hills John Ireland (1879–1962)

Vaughan Williams arranged this lilting Manx melody much earlier in his career, in 1912. Like Ireland’s piece, written over forty years later for the Coronation in 1953, it finds beauty, and an almost religious serenity, in nature.

Reading

Ann Crisp

Au joli bois

Claudin de Sermisy (c.1490–1562)

La lune est morte

Georges Liferman (b.1922)

arr. Jean Lenoble

Le Baylère

Auvergne traditional, arr. Goff Richards

Tant que vivray

Sermisy

Auprès de ma blonde

arr. Alice Parker & Robert Shaw

While he wrote both sacred and secular music, Sermisy’s most notable contribution was to the development of the French chanson during the 16th century of which *Au joli bois* is a particularly fine example. Despite its title, it is in effect a slow stately pavane reflective of its mournful text: ‘I have to go to the pretty wood and spend my grief in the shadow of worry. Filled with mourning for a penetrating memory I must eat such bitter fruit. In a garden filled with black flowers I shall weep and sob from my two eyes.’ *Tant que vivray* shows us a much more cheerful side of Sermisy’s output: ‘As long as I live in my prime, I shall serve the mighty king of Love in deeds, in words, in songs, in harmonies. That king made me languish a while; but afterwards he made me rejoice since now I have the love of the sweet-bodied beauty.’ In *Auprès de ma blonde*, based on an 18th-century French march, we find two lovers in a garden, birds singing all around; *Le Baylère*, perhaps the most famous of the Songs of the Auvergne, tells of shepherds singing to each other in the calm of the

high peaks. Liferman’s ‘The moon has died’, composed in 1968—like the French Revolution in 1789, the anniversary of which is remembered today, a year of tumult and protest in France—casts a typically French sardonic glance on events.

Reading

Patrick Lunt

The Star Spangled Banner

arr. Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Amor vittorioso

Giovanni Gastoldi (c.1554–1609)

The French Revolution was in part inspired by America’s declaration of independence some years before. No less revolutionary was Stravinsky’s harmonisation of the American national anthem: due to be performed in 1944, it was banned on account of its ‘radical’ harmonies. See what you think.

We close with a rousing song to Love. Gastoldi’s *Balletti a cinque voci* was first published in Venice in 1591 and was quickly reprinted many times across Europe due to its immense popularity. Its light-hearted ballets introduce a number of *commedia dell’arte* characters and situations. *Amor vittorioso* describes Love Victorious in somewhat military terms: ‘Come all ye, armed, my hardy soldiers! I am Love indomitable, the righteous archer. Do not fear in the slightest, but in beautiful array follow me with ardour!’

Programme notes by Simon Beattie & Martin Cunningham

Programme design by Patrick Lunt