

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.

The Damons come of age....

This year has seen us celebrating our 60th Anniversary - yes, we can hardly believe that we have been singing in and around Chesham since 1957! It was wonderful to be among so many Damons, past and present, for our summer Pudding Concert in July. We hope to celebrate the end of this momentous year in fine style!



THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano

Helen Cooke
Ann Crisp

Jane Featherstone-Witty

Sophie Hamilton
Claire Hunter

Barbara McGillivray
Rachel Meldrum
Marianne Michael

Alto

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

Tenor

Simon Beattie
Duncan Passey
Andy Scott
Chris Turner

Baritone

Martin Cunningham
Sebastian Gibbs
Jeremy Moodey

Bass

Roderick Holburn
Patrick Lunt
Patrick Martin

Dates for your diary

28th April 2018 Spring concert
Holy Trinity Church, Prestwood

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, Patrick Lunt.

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THE DAMON SINGERS

PRESENT

Fanfare for Christmas

THE WHITE HILL CENTRE, CHESHAM

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2017

7.30 P.M.



Registered charity no. 1114882



Programme

Fanfare for Christmas Day

Martin Shaw (1875–1958)

Dedicated to Adeline Vaughan Williams (the composer's wife), this arresting piece was written in 1922, when Shaw was organist of St Martin-in-the-Fields. He and Ralph Vaughan Williams had initially met working on *The English Hymnal* (the source for a carol you will sing later), and later collaborated on *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928).

Carol for All: Ding dong! merrily on high

This seemingly age-old carol is actually anything but. It was created in 1924 by Cambridge musician Charles Wood (1866–1926), and marries a secular 16th-century French dance tune to words written by Wood's friend and collaborator G. R. Woodward (1848–1934), a Liverpoolian cleric with antiquarian tastes.

Nay Ivy Nay

Stef Conner (b.1983)

Stef Conner is an exciting young musician, whose vocal compositions are strongly rooted in the sounds of language and natural speech. In *Nay Ivy Nay*, she applies this to a 15th-century carol written, and performed tonight, in Middle English. The contest of the holly and the ivy was a popular theme at this time, with ivy frequently representing the feminine and holly the masculine.

"Damons Diminished"

Green grow with th'Holly Anon, c.1515

Soloists: Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham, Patrick Martin

Though sometimes attributed to Henry VIII, it is unlikely he actually wrote this, a three-part winter love song.

Sans Day Carol

arr. David Cooke

soloists: Rachel Meldrum, Claire Hunter, Sophie Hamilton, Martin Cunningham, Simon Beattie

Unlike *Nay Ivy Nay*, this well-known carol,

which was collected in *St Day* (hence 'Sans Day'), near Redruth in Cornwall, unusually associates holly with the Virgin Mary. This new arrangement, written especially for the Damons' 60th anniversary, receives its premiere tonight.

Reading

My Lord has come Will Todd (b.1970)

Today the Virgin

Sir John Tavener (1944–2013)

The popular contemporary composer Will Todd sets his own words here. Tavener used a text by the Orthodox nun Mother Thekla (1918–2011), a strong spiritual influence on the composer. It was written for the choir of Westminster Abbey in 1989.

Carol for All: O Little Town of Bethlehem

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams and Simon Beattie

This year is the 111th anniversary of the well-loved carol, which first appeared in *The English Hymnal* in 1906 after Vaughan Williams paired up words written by the 19th-century American bishop Phillips Brooks with a folk tune he had heard in Surrey a few years before. Tonight you will hear a new arrangement of verse 3, written especially for the choir.

Hodie Christus natus est

Giovanni Gabrieli (c.1554–1612)

Gabrieli's double-choir setting of the Christmas Day antiphon ('Today Christ is born. Today the Saviour appeared. Today on Earth the Angels sing, Archangels rejoice. Today the righteous rejoice, saying: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.') is in fact a contrafactum—one song to the tune of another—of the secular canzone 'O che felice giorno' which he wrote in 1585, the year he became organist of St Mark's, Venice.

Appeal on behalf of the White Hill Centre

Interval

Exultate justi

Lodovico Viadana (c.1560–1627)

Viadana was successively *maestro di cappella* at Mantua, Cremona, Concordia (near Venice), and Fano, before retiring to a monastery. Though not a prolific composer, he was popular; this exuberant setting of Psalm 33, 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous', published in Venice in 1602, has been a favourite with choirs ever since.

Carol for All: Past Three A Clock

This comes from the same collection as *Ding dong! merrily on high*. Woodward wrote new verses to an old refrain, and Wood harmonised the 17th-century tune 'London Waits' to complete the carol.

Reading

"Damons Diminished"

Resonet in laudibus

This is one of the oldest and most popular of German carols, with its opening phrases strongly reminiscent of a fanfare. We present three versions. The first, from the 14th century, is for a single voice, the second from the 15th is for two voices and the third, more extended version in four parts, is from Mainz in the early years of the 17th century. 'Let the voice of praise resound, Signs of joy be all around, Heaven and earth with songs abound: A child is born, the Christ, the Son of Mary'.

The Shepherd's Carol

Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

Wassail Song

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Two pieces to mark Christmas musical traditions. The first, which composer John

Rutter has called 'the most beautiful modern carol there is', comes from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, for which Bob Chilcott, himself a former King's chorister, wrote his carol in 2000. The second piece is the last of Vaughan Williams's 'Five English Folksongs', dating from 1913. He had collected the carol in Yorkshire, near the village of Hooton Roberts. In this 'freely adapted' version, he depicts a group of wassailers gradually approaching and receding.

Reading

Follow that Star Peter Gritton (b.1963)

In which the contemporary singer and composer Peter Gritton envisions the Three Kings' journey as a jazz stomp!

Carol for All: O come all ye faithful

Trumpet - Alison Davidson, Bill McGillivray

The genesis of this carol is shrouded in obscurity, but became popular in the late 18th century, with the Latin words 'Adeste fideles'. The English version we use today was written by the Catholic priest Frederick Oakeley, and first published in 1852.

My Guardian Angel Judith Weir (b.1954)

Weir became Master of the Queen's Music in 2014, a position broadly comparable to Poet Laureate. Her setting of a short text by William Blake, which 'celebrates the increased incidence of public appearances by angels at Christmas time', was first performed in 1997 by The Joyful Company of Singers and the Spitalfields Festival audience. That's right: you get to join in, too!

Programme notes:

Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham

Programme design:

Patrick Lunt