

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.

About tonight's charity...

Last year, we celebrated our 60th Anniversary - and, by way of a small 'thank you' to the building that has been our home for many years, we chose to donate the proceeds of our Christmas concert to the White Hill Centre Looking Forward Appeal.

And then the 'weather gods' intervened... and at the last minute we had to cancel the concert entirely, when the Chilterns all but disappeared under a blanket of snow. It was not possible to reschedule the concert for a later date - and it would not have felt right, singing Good King Wenceslas in February or March!

We resolved to support the White Hill Centre this Christmas - even though last year's Appeal has drawn to a close. We ask you to donate generously to our collection plates, so that Chesham can continue to benefit from the many activities that take place in this building.

THE DAMON SINGERS

Soprano

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

Tenor

Simon Beattie
David Freedman
Duncan Passey
Andy Scott
Chris Turner

Baritone

Martin Cunningham
Sebastian Gibbs
Paul Sheppard

Alto

Katie Francis
Sheila Jalland
Anne MacDowell
Marianne Michael
Louise Pearce
Liz Sheppard
Madeleine Symes
Karen van Oostrum
Uli Wright

Bass

David Harmer
Roderick Holburn
Patrick Lunt

Dates for your diary

27 April 2019 Spring concert
St. Peter's Church, Berkhamsted

6 July 2019 "Pudding" Concert
venue tba

8 December 2019
Christmas Concert White Hill Centre

Keeping in touch

Some of you heard about tonight's concert by receiving a flyer in the post. And we would like to continue to let you know about our forthcoming events. However, we are trying to reduce our costs, in order to maximise the amount we can give to charity; and we would therefore ask you to allow us to put you on our **email mailing list**, if you can. Please give your name and email address to the helpers on the ticket desk, if you are able to move from postal to email... Thank you!



O RADIANT DAWN

CAROLS AND SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS

7.30 pm, Sunday 9 December 2018
The White Hill Centre, Chesham, HP5 1AG

Programme

Benedicamus Domino

Peter Warlock
(1894–1930)

We begin tonight's concert with one of Warlock's earliest choral works, written exactly a century ago, in 1918. 'A boy comes forth, Eya, this is our time, From the womb of a virgin. Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal. Without the seed of a man ... He is born of a virgin ... Without the means of a man ... He is born of Mary ... On this appointed feast ... Let us bless the Lord ...'

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 a 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 Middle English carol. 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. Unfortunately, the odds seem very unfairly stacked against ivy in this version...

Green growth th'Holly

Anon, c.1515

Sheila Jalland, Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham
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, Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham
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 receives its premiere tonight.

Reading: Ann Crisp

O Radiant Dawn Sir James MacMillan (b.1959)
This setting of the Magnificat antiphon for 21 December ('O Oriens') is new to us. Written in 2007, and dedicated to the Choir of St Columba's Church, Maryhill, Glasgow, it is one of MacMillan's 'Strathclyde Motets'.

Today the Virgin

Sir John Tavener (1944–2013)

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

(v. 3 Choir only)

This well-loved carol 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.

O magnum mysterium

Pedro de Cristo
(c. 1550 – 1618)

with **Alison Davidson** (Tabor)

We commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of the Augustinian friar, Pedro de Cristo, with his setting of 'O magnum mysterium' which celebrates the mystery and wonder of Christ's birth in the stable amidst the animals. Most of Pedro's life was spent at the great Augustinian monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, in northern Portugal. Over two hundred of his compositions have languished in its library since his death, their riches only now being revealed through publication and performance.

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 *with mince pies & mulled wine*

Fanfare for Christmas Day

Martin Shaw (1875–1958)

with **Alison Davidson & Bill McGillivray**

(Trumpets)

This year is the 60th anniversary of Martin Shaw's death. This arresting piece, dedicated to Adeline Vaughan Williams (the composer's wife), 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*, and later collaborated on *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928).

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.

I Sing of a Maiden

Patrick Hadley
(1899–1973)

Duo: **Helen Baker & Rachel Meldrum**
Helen Cooke (piano)

While still a teenager, Hadley had fought in the First World War, receiving an injury that led to his right leg being amputated. He then studied at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music (under Charles Wood and Vaughan Williams respectively), where he later taught composition. Here he sets a beautiful Middle English poem, known from a single surviving manuscript at the British Library.

Reading: Patrick Lunt

My Lord has come

Will Todd (b.1970)

A recent work by the popular contemporary composer Will Todd; the lyrics are his own.

Santa Baby

Joan Javits & Philip Springer
arr. Simon Beattie

This song has been covered by various artists since it was first sung by Eartha Kitt back in 1953. Tonight opportunity knocks for our wonderful altos (for whom it was written). It's not often they get the tune!

Ashoken Farewell

**3 Polkas: Terry Teahan's Polka/
Rattlin' Bog/Salmon Tails Down Water**
The GillyBillies

Accordion & Mandolin/Banjo

Jingle Bells

James Pierpont (1822–1893)
arr. Ben Parry

This is the complete opposite of *Ding! dong! merrily on high*: it's much older than you think, being written in the 1850s. Tonight we perform 'an irresistibly cheeky arrangement', composed for the Swingle Singers.

My Guardian Angel

Judith Weir (b.1954)

(1) Choir only, (2) Choir & Audience

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!

Carol for All: O come all ye faithful

with Piano Duet (**Helen Cooke & Liz Sheppard**)
Trumpets: **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.

Programme notes:

Simon Beattie, Martin Cunningham

Programme design: Patrick Lunt