



## PUDDING CONCERT - THE DAMON SINGERS and special guests PICCANTE FLUTES

At Christ Church, Waterside, Chesham on Sat Jul 13<sup>th</sup> 2024 at 7.30pm



### ***I Got Rhythm***

George Gershwin (1898-1937) arr. Chris Clapham  
*Solos: Andrew Scott, Gina Daw*

Ethel Merman made her stage debut belting out this song in Gershwin's musical *Girl Crazy* in 1930 and reprised it nearly fifty years later in the legendary *Ethel Merman Disco Album*... In the intervening period it retained its iconic status, perhaps most memorably delivered by a tap-dancing Gene Kelly in the 1951 movie *An American in Paris*.

### ***I sat down under his shadow***

Sir Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)

We commemorate the anniversaries of two composers in this concert - Edward Bairstow and Charles Villiers Stanford. A proud, bluntly-spoken Yorkshireman, Bairstow was born in Huddersfield 150 years ago and spent much of his career as organist of York Minster. His compositions, mainly for the church, included 29 anthems of which this 1925 setting of two verses from the *Song of Songs*, is a particularly beautiful example.

### ***Sicut lilium***

Antoine Brumel (c.1460-1512/13)

A serene setting of an antiphon for the Feast of the Assumption by a French master of the early Renaissance also to words from the *Song of Songs*: *As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters*.

### ***This Marriage***

Eric Whitacre (b.1970)

This touching miniature from 2004 by the popular American composer sets words by the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Persian poet and mystic Jalal ad-Din Rumi. Whitacre explains it as 'just a small and simple gift to my wife on the occasion of our seventh wedding anniversary.' The four voices move together in speech rhythm in simple but affecting harmonies.



### ***Flûtes en Vacances Suite (I, II)***

Jacques Castérède (1926-2014)

Castérède was a prominent French composer whose works are celebrated for their elegance, charm, and imaginative use of textures. *Flûtes en Vacances*, a delightful suite composed in 1962, epitomizes his style: light-hearted, whimsical, yet demanding precision and expressive musicality from its performers. It captures the essence of a leisurely holiday, each movement painting a vivid picture of carefree and joyful moments.

#### ***I. Flûtes Pastorales***

This movement sets a serene and idyllic tone. It evokes the peaceful countryside, with gently flowing melodies that intertwine and create a tapestry of sound reminiscent of a tranquil rural landscape.

#### ***II. Flûtes Joyeuses***

This lively and rhythmic dance contrasts with the calm of *Flûtes Pastorales*. Its infectious energy and buoyant character are reminiscent of a festive village dance, where joy and celebration are palpable. The intricate interweaving of parts showcases Castérède's mastery in writing for wind instruments, with each flute taking turns leading the dance.



### ***The Blue Bird***

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)  
*Solo: Rachel Meldrum*

### ***Glorious and Powerful God***

Charles Villiers Stanford

Our second anniversary commemorates one hundred years since the death of Stanford, one of the most important composers in the revival of musical composition in Britain around the turn of the twentieth century. He was a complex individual, frequently hot-tempered and quarrelsome but also capable of great magnanimity. As well as his own considerable body of compositions, which include seven symphonies, his role as a teacher of the next generation of composers such as Holst and Vaughan Williams cannot be underestimated.

None of Stanford's personal turbulence can be detected in his tranquil setting from 1910 of words by Mary Coleridge which describe a bird gently flying over a cold blue lake, its image reflected in the still waters. Unlike much of his output, the harmonies are impressionistic with the last chord unresolved so that the music (and the soprano) are left floating in air. In contrast *Glorious and Powerful God*, a 1913 setting of a sacred text of praise, explores many different moods exploiting a huge range of choral sonorities, harmonies and dynamics.

**Reading: *The Alto's Lament*** (author unknown)

*read by Marianne Michael*

## **Blue Moon**

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979), arr. David Blackwell

Before arriving at the familiar lyrics to this classic Richard Rodgers tune, Lorenz Hart had written three others during the summer of 1934: 'Oh Lord, make me a movie star', 'You gulp your coffee and run' and 'I could be good to a lover, but then I always discover, the bad in ev'ry man'... Fourth time lucky!

**Reading: "Shirley"** (adapted from Joyce Grenfell)

read by Ann Crisp

## **The Steady Light**

Reginald Unterseher (b.1956)

Unterseher is a contemporary American composer, based in Washington State. He writes of this piece, composed in 2003: 'None of us are who we are without the people who have shown us the way, and we all show the way to those who will follow. We must choose carefully which light to follow, and which we carry. This piece is dedicated to our heroes, those people who made the choice to be the light for us.'

## **Sing, my Child**

Sarah Quartel (b. 1982)

*Solos: Rachel Meldrum, Simon Beattie*

Canadian composer and educator Sarah Quartel is known for her fresh and exciting approach to choral music. *Sing, my Child* sets a joyful text celebrating the beauty found all around us in everyday life. The buoyant 7/8 metre of the opening drives the piece forward while a contrasting hymn-like section is a call for strength despite the troubles that may come.



## **Flûtes en Vacances: IV Flûtes Légères**

Jacques Castérède

Castérède's suite concludes with a playful and spirited finale. Through lively, dance-like rhythms and buoyant melodies, *Flûtes Légères* evokes images of fluttering birds and gentle breezes. The movement's effervescent character and delightful harmonies celebrate the joy and spontaneity of a summer vacation.

## **Rialto Ripples**

George Gershwin

This is a ragtime piece with lively, syncopated rhythms, blending classical structure with jazz influences. Originally a piano solo, it is one of Gershwin's first published instrumental pieces (1917). Its energetic melodies and playful charm offer a glimpse into the vibrant and rhythmic style that would later define his career in such iconic works as *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*.



## **The Road Home**

Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

*Solo: Rachel Meldrum*

Stephen Paulus has adapted the traditional hymn tune *Prospect* from Southern Harmony originally compiled by William 'Singin' Billy' Walker in 1835. The heartfelt words were provided, at Stephen's request, by the librettist Michael Dennis Browne in 2000.

## **The Rhythm of Life**

Cy Coleman (1929-2004)

Ending as we began, with an emphasis on rhythm, this lively number is from the 1966 Broadway musical *Sweet Charity*, with lyrics by Dorothy Fields (also responsible for such classics as *The Way You Look Tonight* and *A Fine Romance*) and book by Neil Simon. In the musical the song is performed by the character Big Daddy Brubeck, the leader of an alternative hippie religious cult called the 'Rhythm of Life Church'. This arrangement by Jim Wild is based on an *acapella* version by the barbershop group *Jokers Wild*.

## **The Damon Singers**

**Musical Director:** David Cooke

### **Soprano**

Helen Cooke  
Ann Crisp  
Gina Daw  
Dorothy Freedman  
Sarah How  
Rachel Meldrum

### **Alto**

Caroline Greenwood  
Erika Lukacs  
Marianne Michael  
Louise Pearce  
Liz Sheppard  
Karen van Oostrum  
Uli Wright

### **Tenor**

Simon Beattie  
David Freedman  
Duncan Passey  
Chris Turner

### **Baritone/Bass**

Keith Armstrong  
John-Paul Bowman  
Martin Cunningham  
Sebastian Gibbs  
Andrew Scott

**Piccante Flutes:** Cat Ford, Rebecca Gilvear, Sara Paul and Barbara Young

**Percussion and voice:** Alison Davidson

Notes by Martin Cunningham and Rebecca Gilvear

