

DARTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Autumn Concert



RALPH VAUGHAN

WILLIAMS

Various items celebrating

150th birth anniversary

Schubert Mass in Eb

Bach "Sleepers, Wake!"

Saturday 19th November 2022

St. Michael's Church

Wilmington

Conductor: Michael Bell

Organ Accompanist: Raymond Lewis



Affiliated to Making Music

www.dartfordchoral.org.uk

Registered charity No.1042096

PROGRAMME

1. *Sleepers, Wake!* (3 choruses from Cantata No.140) – J.S,Bach

2. *Cantique de Jean Raçine* – Gabriel Fauré

3. *Mass No.6 in E flat* – Franz Schubert

Kyrie

Gloria

* * * I N T E R V A L * * *

(Schubert *Mass* continued) :-

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

4. Ralph Vaughan Williams:-

(a) *Rhosymedre* (organ solo)

(b) *Toward the Unknown Region*

(c) *O taste and see*

(d) *Antiphon* – Let all the world in every corner sing

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed upwards of 200 cantatas, each performed as part of the regular Sunday service at the church of St Thomas, Leipzig. *Wachet auf!* (to be sung tonight in English) is based on a chorale melody by Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608). This melody is often heard during the season of Advent in English churches, usually set to the words “Wake, O wake! with tidings thrilling”. It appears with telling effect in the first and longest of the cantata’s movements. Likewise in the central movement of our three extracts, where it is heard against an equally striking (not to say famous in its own right) counter-melody. As in many of his cantatas the last is a four-part setting enhanced by Bach’s splendid harmony.

Sleepers wake! For night is flying.

The watchmen on thy walls are crying:
thou city of Jerusalem.

Hear ye now ere comes the morning,
the midnight call of solemn warning:
where are ye, O wise virgins, where?

Behold the Bridegroom comes.
Arise! And take your lamps. Alleluia!
Yourselves prepare , your Lord draws near.
He bids you to His marriage feast.

Zion hears her watchmen's voices.
Their gladd'ning cry her soul rejoices.
The shadows of her night depart.
In His might her Lord appeareth,
His word of grace and truth she heareth,
the day-star riseth in her heart.
O come, in splendour bright,
Lord Jesu, Light of Light! Hosanna!
We follow Thee, Thy joy to see,
where everlasting bliss shall be.

Glory now to Thee be given,
on earth as in the highest heaven,
with lute and harp in sweetest tone.
All of pearl each dazzling portal,
where we shall join the song immortal
of Saints and Angels round Thy throne.
Beyond all earthly ken
those wondrous joys remain,
that God prepares. Our hearts rejoice, Io! Io!
Ever *in dulci júbilo*.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) This is an early composition (Op.11) dating from 1865. The (French) text of Jean Raçine's Canticle is from 'Hymns translated from the Roman Breviary' - and further translated into English by John Rutter.

O divine Word above, our hope and consolation, Eternal light of the heavens and the earth: our voices greet the morning: Look down, O Lord, and hear thy people's prayer!

Inspire us, Lord, we pray, with the power of thy Spirit, that hell may flee before thy mighty word. From slumber waken us, our weary souls reviving, that we may never forget thy laws. Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on thy faithful congregation now gathered here in the sight of thy throne.

Receive the hymns they offer to thy eternal glory: renewed by thy gifts
may they go forth in peace.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) The Mass in E flat dates from the last summer of Schubert's short life. (He died on this very day in November of that year,) Its first performance did not take place until the following year – whether in concert hall or in a church communion service is not entirely clear. There is much characteristic Schubertian melody and engaging harmonic novelty along the way (also a slight tendency towards equally characteristic long-windedness). The *Credo* is omitted from this performance and 'solo' voice parts (occurring only in the *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei*) will be sung by different groups within the chorus. As the movements would be separated by quite lengthy intervals when sung as a Mass setting in a church service, it was felt justifiable to place our own interval roughly halfway through the work...

[Sung in Latin]

Kyrie : Lord, have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.

Gloria : Glory to God in the highest...

I N T E R V A L

Sanctus : Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth...
Hosanna in the highest...

Benedictus : Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei : O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us... Grant us thy peace.

The remaining section of tonight's concert consists of music composed by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (12.10.1872 – 1958) in acknowledgement of the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Rhosymedre is one of 'Three Preludes on Welsh Hymn Tunes' dating from 1920. Originally intended as an organ solo, RVW later arranged it for

strings. A four-part version appears in the *New English Hymnal* (a volume edited by the composer) to be sung to words by Charles Wesley: “Author of life divine”.

Toward the Unknown Region was the composer’s first great public success at the Leeds Festival of 1907. It is a setting of words by Walt Whitman and captures supremely well in its brief course the mystery of the soul’s journey. Clearly a sympathetic admirer of Whitman’s work, Vaughan Williams was later to turn to him at considerably greater length in his *Sea Symphony*.

Toward the Unknown Region

Darest thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor voice with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul,
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen,
All but the ties eternal, time and space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In time and space O soul, prepared for them.
Equal, equipt at last, (O joy! O fruit of all!) Them to fulfil O soul.

O Taste and See is a brief motet for unaccompanied choir with organ introduction. It was ‘composed for the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday, 2 June 1953’. The text is Psalm 34 verse 8.

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blest is the man that trusteth in him.

Let all the world in every corner sing (as it were, the theme song of choral societies) are words penned by George Herbert which he entitled *Antiphon*. Vaughan Williams composed this jubilant setting which concludes his frequently performed song cycle *Five Mystical Songs*, dating from 1911.

Let all the world in every corner sing, My God and King.
The heavens are not too high, his praises thither fly:
The earth is not too low, his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing,

Let all the world in every corner sing, My God and King.
The Church with psalms must shout, no door can keep them out:
But above all, the heart must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing, My God and King.

DARTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

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The Dartford Choral Society is dependent upon financial assistance to continue giving public concerts with soloists of standing. If you would like to support us by becoming a Patron, please leave your name and address with a Choir member or Steward. Alternatively, contact the Patrons Secretary,

Andrew Dey – Tel.01322 555406.

The Dartford Choral Society greatly appreciates the financial assistance kindly given to us by our Patrons.

Our Musical Director - Michael Bell

Michael Bell has been Musical Director of Dartford Choral Society since 1984 taking over the baton from David Atkinson. A graduate of Bristol University, he trained additionally as a music teacher at the London Institute of Education. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

He was Director of Music at Dartford Grammar School from 1975 to 1992 and has served as Rochester Diocesan Organ Adviser. First prizewinner of the 1983 West of England Organ Festival, he has subsequently given recitals

at St. Paul's, Southwark and Rochester Cathedrals, and in many churches in London and the provinces (not to mention Scotland).

A former organist of Dartford Parish Church, Michael is currently Organist and Choirmaster of St. Nicholas Church, Chislehurst, Kent.

Our Organ Accompanist – Raymond Lewis

He was for many years Director of Music at St Stephen's Rochester Row in Westminster, and of Crown Court Church of Scotland (originally, the chapel of the Scottish Embassy) in Covent Garden. He has played at most of the major cathedrals of the UK and has given solo recitals in the cathedrals of Southwark, Rochester, St David's and Chichester, St Alban's Abbey and Central Hall Westminster.

As a composer, his output includes much church music (RSCM and Encore Publications), some music for strings, and a setting of the *Gloria* for baritone solo, choir and large orchestra. His anthem *It came even to pass* was described in the press as 'outstanding'. His compositions have been performed at the Barbican Centre, The Royal Festival Hall, St Alban's Abbey, Rochester Cathedral and Liverpool Cathedral.

Raymond was Director of Music at All Saints' Orpington from 1989 until 2018, conductor of All Saints' Festival Choir and Orchestra from 1992 until 2022, and conductor of Orpington Symphony Orchestra from 2003 until 2018.

The Dartford Choral Society rehearses on Monday evenings, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm, (except July & August) at the Mick Jagger Centre, Shepherds Lane, Dartford. New members are always welcome. Please contact the Hon. Secretary, Paul Grimmer 01342 833911 (Daytime) 01322 227994 (Evenings). Email: secretary@dartfordchoral.org.uk

Please put the date in your diary for our Christmas Concert on Wednesday 21 December 2022 at St Anselm's Roman Catholic Church, West Hill, Dartford DA1 2HJ