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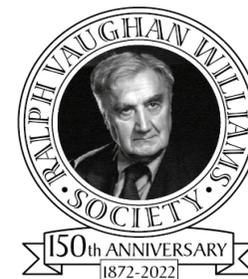
Website: strettonchoral.org.uk



Member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies

Stretton Choral Society
presents

Christmas Fantasias



Soloists

Catherine Rooney-Ward, Soprano

Gavin Ashenden, Tenor

Mark Horner, Baritone

Conductor ~ Michael Turner

The Shropshire Hills Ensemble ~ leader David Joyce

Piano/Keyboard ~ Sally Oak

Sunday 11th December 2022

7.30 pm

Silvester Horne Institute

Registered Charity No. 1012348

www.strettonchoral.org.uk

PROGRAMME 50p

Musical Notes

An introduction to our programme from our Music Director, Michael Turner

When putting together tonight's programme, uppermost in my mind was to honour Ralph Vaughan Williams, the 150th anniversary of whose birth falls this year. Vaughan Williams, although an agnostic, edited the English Hymnal and, alongside this, wrote a number of original Christmas works and arranged many carols. His huge Christmas oratorio *Hodie* was written towards the end of his life. However, the two choral works programmed for tonight come from earlier in his career.

Our opening piece is *The Hundredth Psalm* of 1929. This should not be confused with *The Old Hundredth*, which was an arrangement of the hymn *All people that on Earth Do Dwell*, that Vaughan Williams wrote for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. That said, the opening orchestral introduction, and the closing pages, do appear again in the later work. The piece starts with a jovial, almost march-like proclamation of the words "Oh be Joyful All Ye Lands" before a dance like quality to the music takes over. After a return of the marching music, a slower, more contemplative passage links us to a section where Vaughan Williams has all the voices interweaving, initially in pairs, before all four voices come together in a huge climax and then die away. The piece ends by returning to the opening music, with the familiar hymn tune ringing out in unison before a full chordal "Amen".

The *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* was written in 1912. Within it, the composer takes us from the carol *The Truth Sent From Above*, on to *Come All You Worthy Gentlemen* and, finally, *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing* (The Sussex Carol), with references to others along the way. The piece starts with a soulful solo cello and ends with the hushed tones of the choir. Between these we are treated to moments of light joviality, earthy rumbustiousness and quiet, almost meditational humming, with a baritone soloist almost acting as a narrator along the way.

Our last piece of Vaughan Williams is his ever-popular *Fantasia on Greensleeves*. This piece was drawn from the composer's opera, *Sir John in Love*. Ever the practical musician, Vaughan Williams enabled many of his works to be performed in different orchestrations. Tonight, we perform the *Fantasia* in the version for strings and piano.

Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst were great social and critical friends. They were also very keen collectors of folk music and often went on collecting trips together. Holst's *Brook Green Suite*, although

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

1.
O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to
Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ
the Lord!
2.
God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's
womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him.....
3.
See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh
with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, let us adore him.....
4.
Lo! Star-led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our hearts' oblations
O come, let us adore him.....



- 5
Child for us sinners
Poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee, with awe
and love:
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore him.....
6.
Sing, choirs of Angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n
above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
O come, let us adore him.....



**As part of your
Coronation
celebrations why
not join us here on
Sunday
7th May 2023
for our
SPRING
CONCERT
Including
Mass in D minor by
Dvorak**

PROGRAMME

The Hundreth Psalm	R. Vaughan Williams	Choir and Orchestra
Brook Green Suite	<i>Gustav Holst</i>	Orchestra
Fantasia on Christmas Carols	<i>R. Vaughan Williams</i>	Baritone, Choir and Orchestra
Fantasia on Greensleeves	<i>R. Vaughan Williams</i>	Orchestra
Two Psalms (Nos 87 & 148)	<i>Gustav Holst</i>	Soprano, Tenor, Choir and Orchestra

INTERVAL

Please remain seated until the choir and orchestra have left the hall.

Refreshments will be available for sale at the side of the hall.

A bell will be rung at the end of the interval.

Hark the Herald Angels Sing	<i>Mendelssohn, arr. Wilcocks</i>	Choir and Audience
O Men from the Fields	Cooke	Soprano and Choir
<i>*The First Christmas</i>	<i>Marian Swinger</i>	<i>Barbara Cotton</i>
The Holy Boy	Ireland	Soprano
<i>*A Christmas Poem - The forgotten</i>	<i>Margaret Harrison</i>	<i>Jamie Wrench</i>
O little Town of Bethlehem	Arr. H. Walford Davis	Choir
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen	Trad. arr Wilcocks	Choir and Audience
Myn Lyking	Terry	Choir
<i>*Christmas 1918</i>	<i>Helen Nightingale</i>	<i>Miriam Elliot-Smith</i>
Coventry Carol	Trad. arr. Turner	Soprano and Choir
<i>*Just Doing My Job</i>	<i>Clare Bevan</i>	<i>Tricia Gray</i>
Pat-a-Pan	Trad. arr, Turner	Soprano and Choir
Oh Come All Ye Faithful	Trad. arr Willcocks	Choir and Audience

* reading

SOLOISTS

Catherine Rooney - Soprano

Canadian-British soprano, Catherine Rooney completed her studies in vocal performance at the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and continued her studies with the English National Opera's "Opera Works" program in 2011. A keen performer of Baroque repertoire, Catherine has performed the role of Sesto in Giulio Cesare (Opera in Concert/Aradia Ensemble), Armida in Rinaldo and the title role in Handel's Semele (Summer Opera Lyric Theatre). Other roles include Frasquita in Carmen (Co-Opera Co.), Annina in La Traviata (Opera York) and the title role in La Gran Vestale by Mercadante (Opera in Concert). Catherine recently moved to Shropshire where she lives with her husband Chris, daughters Olive and Florence and pug Thor.

Mark Horner - Baritone

Originally from Salisbury, Mark moved from Norfolk to Shropshire in 2021. Before spending the previous 12 years in "bootiful" Norfolk, he sang as a Lay Vicar Choral in the choir of Lichfield Cathedral for 24 years. He combined this with a number of teaching posts in the West Midlands, including Head of Music at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School in Sutton Coldfield. Since leaving the teaching profession in 2017 he has performed regularly with touring opera company "Opera Anywhere". Roles include Sarastro, (Magic Flute) Balthazar, (Amahl and the Night Visitors) Dick Deadeye, (HMS Pinafore) Pooh-Bah, (Mikado) Sergeant of Police, (Pirates of Penzance), Colonel Calverley, (Patience) and Earl of Mountarat (Iolanthe).

Gavin Ashenden - Tenor

Gavin currently sings with Ex Cathedra. He began his singing as a choral scholar at Canterbury and has performed as a soloist, on and off over the decades since, in a variety of contexts ranging from Italian opera, lieder recitals and small chamber ensembles.