

 *Tring Choral Society* 

Conductor: Colin Stevens



Vaughan Williams

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Jean Sibelius

Finlandia

Vaughan Williams

Five Mystical Songs

Elgar

The Music Makers

SOLOISTS

**Andrea Gray (Soprano)
Tom Isherwood (Baritone)**

**Chiltern Orchestral Society
Leader: Janet Hicks**

Saturday 15 December 2012



The Soloists



ANDREA GRAY (SOPRANO): Andrea studied singing at the Royal College of Music and then pursued a career as a freelance singer and teacher. She has sung with several professional choirs, both in the UK and abroad, including The Academy of Ancient Music, The Finzi Singers, The London Handel Festival choir, The Ambrosian Opera Chorus and European Voices.

For many years she was also a full time chorister at St Georges Hanover Square and Farmer Street Church, both situated in central London.

Andrea has extensive experience as a soloist mostly in the field of oratorio and has appeared with choral societies around the country including the Bath, Leicester and Cheltenham Bach choirs. Andrea is also an experienced voice teacher and is currently teaching singing at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts.



TOM ISHERWOOD (BARITONE); Thomas' interest in music began at a young age when he would listen to Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* with his Grandma while marching up and down the living room to the 'March of the Peers'. This interest first turned to the cello and he began studying with Harriet Allen and John Brennan at the Watford School of Music, where he participated in both the Senior String Orchestra and the Youth Orchestra for twelve years, playing with the BBC Concert Orchestra on two occasions and playing for the BBC TV Series 'Maestro'.

At the age of 15, he participated in a local production of *Les Miserables* and it was at this point that he discovered his love for singing. After taking part in many more productions in the local area, Thomas gained a place to perform with the National Youth Music Theatre in their 2007 production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Bridewell Theatre in London.

It was after a performance of 'Ol'Man River' during the 2008 Summer Concert at St. Clement Danes School that he realised that he wanted to make singing his main focus. In 2009, he successfully gained a place to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he has spent the last two years receiving training from its world- renowned vocal department.

In his time at the college Thomas has taken part in masterclasses with Lynne Dawson and Julius Drake while receiving personal tutelage from his teacher, Stuart MacIntyre. He has also appeared in the chorus for the RNCM's productions of Bizet's *Carmen*, Barber's *Vanessa* and Handel's *Seise*.

In 2011, Thomas represented the college at the annual Kathleen Ferrier Bursary for Young Singers and became the first student from the RNCM ever to win the prestigious prize and the £3000 bursary.



Ralph Vaughan Williams



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS is arguably one of the greatest composers Britain has seen since the days of Henry Purcell. In a long and extensive career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness, representing, perhaps, the essence of 'Englishness'

Vaughan Williams was born in 1872 in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney. He was educated at Charterhouse School, then Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he was a pupil of Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music after which he studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris.

At the turn of the century, he was among the very first to travel into the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy.

As musical editor of *The English Hymnal*, he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (*For all the Saints, Come down O Love Divine*). Later he also helped to edit *The Oxford Book of Carols*, with similar success.

Vaughan Williams volunteered to serve in the Field Ambulance Service in Flanders for the 1914-1918 war, during which he was deeply affected by the carnage and the loss of close friends such as the composer George Butterworth.

Before the war, he had met and then sustained, a long and deep friendship with the composer Gustav Holst. For many years Vaughan Williams conducted and led the Leith Hill Music Festival, conducting Bach's *St Matthew Passion* on a regular basis. He also became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London.

In his lifetime, Vaughan Williams eschewed all honours, with the exception of the Order of Merit, which was conferred upon him in 1938. He died in August 1958, his ashes being interred in Westminster Abbey, near Purcell.

In a long and productive life, music flowed from his creative pen in profusion. Hardly a musical genre was untouched or failed to be enriched by his work, which included nine symphonies, five operas, film music, ballet and stage music, several song cycles, church music and works for chorus and orchestra..

FUTURE CONCERTS

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6 July 2013

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The Creation



Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*



This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love. Therefore don't turn me from your door. But hearken all, both rich and poor. The first thing which I will relate is that man did God create. The next thing which to you I'll tell, woman was made with man to dwell. Then after this, 'twas God's own choice, to place them both in Paradise, there to remain, from evil free, except that they ate of such a tree. And they did eat, which was a sin, and thus their ruin did begin. Ruined themselves, both you and me, and all of their posterity. Thus we were heirs to endless woes, till God the Lord did interpose. And so a promise soon did run that he would redeem us by His Son.

Come all you worthy gentlemen that may be standing by, Christ our blessed Saviour was born on Christmas day. The blessed Virgin Mary unto the Lord did pray- *O we wish you the comfort and tidings of joy.*

Christ our blessed Saviour in the manger lay, He's lying in the manger, while the oxen feed on hay.

On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring. News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth. When sin departs before thy grace, then life and health comes in its place. Angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the new born King.

God bless the ruler of this house and long on may he reign. From out of darkness we have light, which makes the angels sing this night. Many happy Christmases he live to see again. God bless our generation, who live both far and near. *And we wish them a happy New Year.* Glory to God and peace to men, both now and ever more. Amen.



Sibelius; *Finlandia*



The first version of *Finlandia* was written in 1899 (it was revised in 1900) and was composed for the Press Celebrations of 1899 as a covert protest against increasing censorship from the Russian Empire. It was the last of seven pieces, each performed as an accompaniment to a tableau depicting episodes from Finnish history.

A recurrent joke within Finland at that time was the renaming of *Finlandia* at various musical concerts so as to avoid Russian censorship. Titles under which the piece masqueraded were numerous, a famously flippant example being *Happy Feelings at the Awakening of Finnish Spring*.

Most of the piece is taken up with rousing and turbulent music, evoking the national struggle of the Finnish people but, towards the end, a calm comes over the orchestra, and the serenely melodic *Finlandia Hymn* is heard. Often incorrectly cited as a traditional folk melody, the Hymn section is, in fact, of Sibelius's own creation.

Sibelius later reworked the *Finlandia Hymn* into a stand-alone piece. This hymn, with words written in 1941 by Veikko Antero Koskenniemi, is one of the most important national songs of Finland (although *Maamme* is the national anthem). At one time, it was the national anthem of the short-lived African state of Biafra (Land of the Rising Sun).



Vaughan Williams: Five Mystical Songs



No. 1 Easter

Rise, heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
with Him mayst rise;
That as his death calcined thee to dust, His life
may make thee gold, and much more, Just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part with
all thy art.
The cross taught all wood to resound his name
who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what
key is best to celebrate his most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
pleasant and long;
Or since all music is but three parts vied, and
multiplied;
O let thy blessed spirit bear a part, and make
up our defects with his sweet art.

No. 2 I Got Me Flowers

I got me flowers to strew thy way;
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The sun arising in the East,
Though he give light, and the East perfume;
If they should offer to contest
With Thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
Though many suns to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we miss;
There is but one, and that one ever.

No. 3 Love Bade Me Welcome.

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew
back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning.
If I lacked anything.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here;
Love said, you shall be he.

I the unkind ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?
Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my
shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, says Love, who bore the
blame?
My dear, then I will serve.
You must sit down, says Love, and taste my
meat;
So I did sit and eat.

No. 4 The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;
Such a Way, as gives us breath;
Such a Truth, as ends all strife;
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength;
Such a Light, as shows a feast;
Such a Feast, as mends in length;
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart;
Such a Joy, as none can move;
Such a Love, as none can part;
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

No. 5 Antiphon

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

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.



Interval





Sir Edward Elgar



EDWARD ELGAR was born on 2 June 1857, in Worcester. His father played the organ and directed the choir in St George's Catholic Church, was a violinist in local orchestras, and ran a music store. This musical ambience was both school and conservatory for young Edward, who received no formal musical education except for a few violin lessons. He served his apprenticeship as a church organist, choirmaster, and director of amateur orchestras - and the band of the county mental institution. The focus of musical activity was the annual choir festival, where distinguished conductors and soloists performed oratorios by Handel and Mendelsohn, as well as newly commissioned works, with the local choir.

Elgar's earliest works were for his church choir and, in later years, his most important compositions were large oratorios commissioned for choir festivals. Through these performances, he became known throughout England.

His first important orchestral piece was the *Enigma Variations* (1899). There have been many conjectures about the mysterious theme, but its identity has never been determined. Each of the variations is labelled with the initials or nickname of friends of the composer, and each variation is a musical character sketch. Elgar's choral masterpiece is *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900). Written to a religious poem by Cardinal Newman, it is perhaps the finest English composition of the Victorian era. It is Wagnerian in its use of leitmotifs characterizing the protagonists and situations, the rich,

chromatic harmony, and the masterful orchestral writing.

Other important works by Elgar are the Violin Concerto (1910) and two overtures, *Cockaigne* (1910) and *Falstaff* (1913). His best-known piece is *Pomp and Circumstance No 1* (1901), a concert march in which the patriotic hymn "Land of Hope and Glory" is found. Its honest, brilliant tunes epitomize the optimism of Edwardian England.



Elgar was knighted in 1904 and named Master of the King's Music in 1924. By the time of his death on 23 February 1934, in Worcester, the younger twentieth-century composers had made his music seem old-fashioned. Later evaluations, however, have been more generous, and Elgar is now regarded as one of this country's truly great composers.



Elgar: The Music Makers



We are the music makers, and we are the
dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers, and
sitting by desolate streams.
World losers and world forsakers, on
whom the pale moon gleams,
Yet we are the movers and shakers of the
world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties, we build
up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story we fashion an
empire's glory.
One man with a dream, at pleasure, shall
go forth and conquer a crown.
And three with a new song's measure can
trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying in the buried past of
the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing, and Babel
itself in our mirth.
And o'erthrew them with prophesying to
the old of the new world's worth.
For each age is a dream that is dying, or
one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration is the life of each
generation,
A wondrous thing of our dreaming
unearthly, impossible seeming.
The soldier, the king, and the peasant are
working together in one,
Till our dreams shall become their present,
and their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing of the goodly
house they are raising,
They had no divine foreshowing of the land
to which they are going,
But on one man's soul it hath broken, a
light that doth not depart,

And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore today is thrilling with a past
day's late fulfilling,
And the multitudes are enlisted in the faith
that their fathers resisted
And, scorning the dream of tomorrow, are
bringing to pass, as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow, the
dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
ceaseless and sorrowless we.
The glory about us clinging of the glorious
futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing, O men,
it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and
singing, a little apart from you.

For we are afar with the dawning and the
suns that are not yet high,
And out of the infinite morning, intrepid you
hear us cry,
How, spite of your human scorning, once
more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning that ye
of the past must die.

Great hail! We cry to the comers from the
dazzling unknown shore;
Bring us hither your sun and summers, and
renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your songs new
numbers, and things that we dreamed not
before:
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
and a singer who sings no more.

We are the music makers, and we are the
dreamers of dreams.

HAPPINESS IS...



...SINGING IN A CHOIR

If you like what you hear (and see) tonight, and would like to be involved as a choir member, patron or helper (or perhaps you would simply like to learn more about Tring Choral Society), our web site will provide a mine of information.

Our web site contains details of future concerts, rehearsal dates and many other details that are sure to interest friends of our choir.

You can visit us at www.tringchoral.org.uk

As a member of the choir, you will not only have the chance to sing some of the world's greatest music, but you will also benefit from the choir's healthy social life!

Our Membership Secretary, Margaret Flanigan, will be pleased to hear from you on 01442 823915.



The Choir



SOPRANOS

Betilyn Alwyn-Jones
Celestria Bell
Gillie Bligh
Anne Box
Jane Brown
Hilary Colbert
Margaret Collier
Sally Dussek
Barbara Eykel
Ann Gray
Mary Haywood
Zoe Hill
Katie Hughes
Sue Jones
Christine Keen
Margaret Kirkby
Harriet Mackinder
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Fiona O'Neill
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Sheila Pulfer
Pam Rush
Carol Scribbins
Rosemary Southworth
Brenda Stapleton
Jenny Stevens
Helen Stokes
Elizabeth Thompson
Jenny Watkins

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Rachel Baldwin
Christine Bass
Janet Briant
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Margaret Flanigan
Sarah Garrett
Natasha Gething
Jane Glover
Janet Graves
Cindy Green
Maggie Halsey
Jenny Hoare
Lorna Lang
Jane Legg
Gill Lerigo
Elizabeth Moxley
Rhian Nicholls
Enid Powell
Marilyn Pryor
Phyllis Reynolds
Jacquie Rotheroe
Chris Sivers
Anne Wales
Heather Wignall
Kate Winterbottom

TENORS

Jenny Brannock-Jones
Cliff Brown
Richard Brown
Roger Judd
Nigel Lewis
Nick Marriner-Kyle
David Richardson
David Wilde

BASSES

Robert Allnutt
Alan Archer
David Chasey
Dave Clarke
Adrian Collin
Bob Davies
Paul Doughty
Chris Dove
Peter Graves
Richard Grylls
Geoff Harrison
Jim Hetherington
Hugh Hudson
David Long
Tony Mackinder
Richard Onslow
Tim Roberts
Richard Tregoning
John Watkins
Guy Williams



Chiltern Orchestral Society



Leader; Janet Hicks

- Violin;** Ed Hewitt, Muriel Abbott, Whiffen
Frances Bigg, Darrell Dunning,
Marion Garrett, David Glenister,
David Moore, Roger Neighbour, **Bassoon;** Caroline Cartwright,
Lesley Pearce, Mark Redman, Thomas Dryer-Beers
Frances Stanhope **Horn;** Stuart Carruthers, Liz Kadir,
John Lovell, Adrian Smith
- Viola;** Steffi Cook, Roger Evans,
Katie Hayes, John Saunders **Trumpet;** Jeremy Loukes, Allan
Robinson
- Cello;** Hilary Drinkall, Mary Harris **Trombone;** Simon Astridge, Chris
Brown, Martin Goodchild
- Bass;** Keith Leonard, Sudhir Singh
- Flute;** Rachel Tuckley, Caroline **Timpani;** Richard Baron-Tait,
Welsh Vivianne Child, John Stevens
- Oboe;** Emily Cockbill, Frances Slack **Harp;** Ruth Holden
- Clarinet;** Esther Moors, Theresa **Organ;** Ken Martlew



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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The piano accompanist for Tring Choral Society rehearsals is Adrian Johnson.

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We are grateful for the presence of St John Ambulance representatives at this concert.



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May we
wish all our
Patrons, Members,
audience members,
supporters, well-wishers and
helpers (and anyone else
who we may not have
thought of!) the happiest of
Christmases and a
healthy and
prosperous 2013.



