NORTH LONDON CHORUS

The Season of Singing

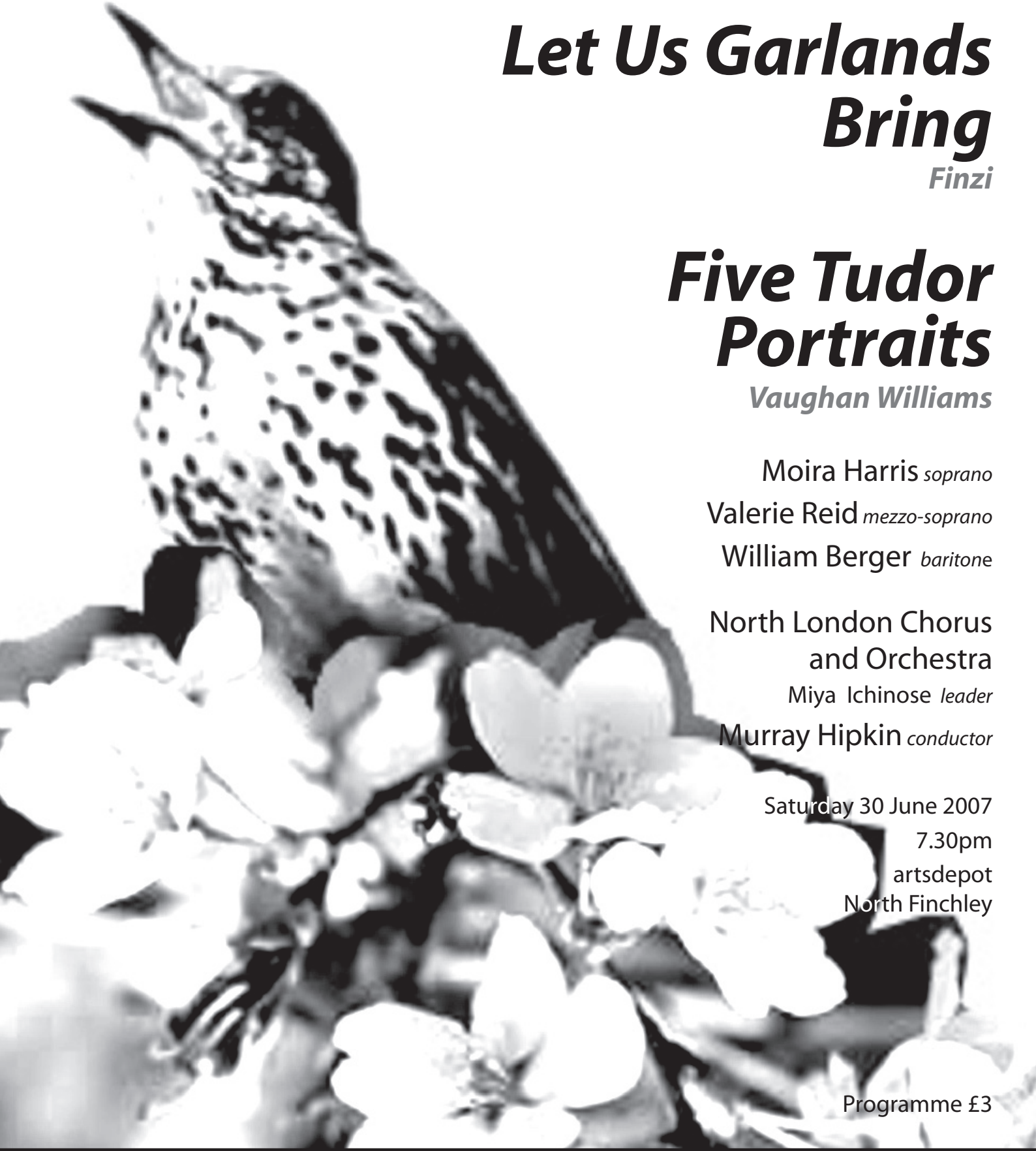
King

Let Us Garlands Bring

Finzi

Five Tudor Portraits

Vaughan Williams



Moira Harris *soprano*

Valerie Reid *mezzo-soprano*

William Berger *baritone*

North London Chorus
and Orchestra

Miya Ichinose *leader*

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

Saturday 30 June 2007

7.30pm

artsdepot

North Finchley

Programme £3

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NORTH LONDON CHORUS

Saturday 30 June 2007
artsdepot
North Finchley
London, N12

King *The Season of Singing*

Finzi *Let Us Garlands Bring*

Interval of 20 minutes

Vaughan Williams *Five Tudor Portraits*

Moira Harris *soprano*
Valerie Reid *mezzo-soprano*
William Berger *baritone*

North London Chorus
and Orchestra

Miya Ichinose *leader*

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

Please remember to switch off all pagers, mobile phones and digital watch alarms.
The use of tape recorders, video cameras or other recording devices is prohibited. Thank you for your cooperation.

Matthew King (b 1967)
The Season of Singing (2006)

I A Song of Spiritual Creatures

Millions of spiritual Creatures walk the Earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night: how often from the steep
Of echoing Hill or Thicket have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air.
Sole, or responsive each to others note
Singing their great Creator: oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk
With Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.

(John Milton: Paradise Lost, Book 4, lines 677-688)

II A Song of Byrds

all which isn't singing is mere talking
and all talking's talking to oneself

(E E Cummings: from poem 32 of '73 poems')

Reasons briefly set down by the author, to perswade every one to learn to sing.

First, it is a knowledge safely taught and quickly learned, where there is a good Master, and an apt Scholler.

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals
There will we make our beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies

(William Shakespeare: The Merry Wives of Windsor Act 3, Scene 1)

The exercise of singing is delightfull to Nature, and good to preserve the health of Man.

It doth strengthen all parts of the brest and doth open up the pipes.

It is a singular good remedie for stuttering and stammering in the speech.

The ousel cock, so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill.
The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo grey,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay.

(William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 3, Scene 1)

It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation and to make a good Orator.

It is the only way to know where Nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice: which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand, that hath it.

christ but they're few

all (beyond win
or lose) good true
beautiful things

god how he sings

the robin (who
'll be silent in
a moon or two)

(E E Cummings: poem 33 from '73 poems')

And in many, that excellent gift is lost because they want Art to express Nature.

There is not any musicke of instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.

The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God there-with: and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.

"*Omnes Spiritus Laudes Dominum*"

Since Singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learn to sing.

(*William Byrd: Preface to "Psalms, Sonets, and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie" 1588)*

III Laughing Song

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it.

When the meadows laugh with lively green
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily,
With their sweet round mouths sing "Ha, ha, he."

When the painted birds laugh in the shade
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he."

(William Blake: from 'Songs of Innocence and of Experience')

IV A Song (without and with accompaniment)

Rare is the voice itself: but when we sing
To th' lute or viol, then 'tis ravishing.

(Robert Herrick: 'On the Voice and the Viol')

So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the Damned would make no noise,
But listen to thee (walking in thy chamber)
melting melodious words to Lutes of Amber.

(Robert Herrick: 'On Julia's Voice')

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings.

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cosy parlour, the tinkling piano our guide.

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

(D H Lawrence: 'Piano')

V A Song of Love

My beloved spake and said to me,
"Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away.
See! The winter is past;
The rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth,
The season of singing is come;
And the cooing of turtledoves is heard in our land.
The blossoming vines with their tender grapes
Give out their sweet fragrance.
Arise my fair one and come away."

('The Song of Songs' 2:10-13)

Matthew King's set of five songs for chorus, soprano and mezzo-soprano soloists and classical orchestra was commissioned by North London Chorus, and first performed in 2006 at its summer concert in St Jude's church, Hampstead Garden Suburb. The structure of the work takes the deceptively simple form of an arch, each movement of which sets poetic texts, either about singing or in the form of song. The first and last movements balance each other in an inverted symmetry: both are written using the B flat 'acoustic' mode with common themes, and both have Biblical associations, but of different kinds. Milton's text in the first movement ('A Song of Spiritual Creatures') is spiritual in character (though King's use of it suggests a humanist inflection), whereas the excerpt from The Song of Songs in the fifth movement ('A Song of Love') is a beautifully simple, ancient love lyric. The soloists carry most of the text in the first movement, above the choir singing wordlessly almost throughout, whereas in the fifth movement these assignments are reversed: the choir sings the text whilst the soloists vocalize for all but the final passage.

...'a kind of Englishness: a strange combination of eccentricity and regret'...

There is a similar parallel in the balance between the second and fourth movements. Both are characterized by what King terms 'a kind of Englishness: a strange combination of eccentricity and regret', moods which are captured effectively in their madrigal-like character, interlinking early- with late-modern poetic texts. The pivotal movement of the work is the third – the apex of its arch-like structure – which King describes as 'a kind of scherzo made up of lots of combined melodies in the Phrygian mode'. This is a classical Greek musical mode, originally of a war-like character, which became the second of the seven scales at the basis of ancient church music. Little used after the seventeenth century, they were taken up again by twentieth century composers and are now better known as the diatonic scales. The Phrygian mode, perhaps appropriately in the gay, dance-like rhythms of its use here, is reminiscent of Spanish music, since Flamenco uses similar scales. Its use in the third movement also marks the circular tonal journey implied by the key structure of the work as a whole, from the modal B flat of the first and fifth movements, linking the B major of the second, through the Phrygian E of the third, to the D (Dorian, another of the classical modes) of the fourth.

The clarity of this apparently simple structure, however, masks a work of considerable complexity. This is evident from the outset, as the chorus intones paralinguistic utterances above scattered chromatic sounds of the orchestra stirring. The effect of an awakening is endorsed by the soloists' ethereal delivery of Milton's account of 'spiritual creatures' walking 'the Earth unseen', which finally breaks into glorious life, as all voices are 'join'd' in the ecstatic lyricism of songs that 'Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven'. The orchestration scatters sound throughout the movement, threatening an instability upon which the distant soloists barely impose order, until the full, closing song . King says he was influenced by Holst's *Hymn of Jesus* whilst composing this movement, and there is a distinctly Gnostic sense of the esoteric knowledge, on which originating myths are founded, of how a world might have been brought into being. This matches well his use of Milton's verses from Book IV of 'Paradise Lost', as Adam explains to Eve ('talking hand in hand alone') the purpose of diurnial time in the Judaeo-Christian creation myth. Musically, it takes this further in its movement from the choral ululations on vowel sounds to the concluding celebratory text. This offers a mythical account of the elemental engagement of music with verbal language necessary for the birth of song itself.

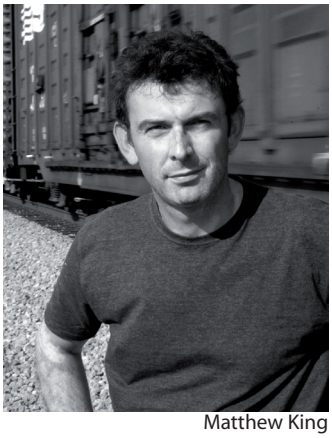
Having thus established the origins of singing, King moves confidently into a witty, transhistorical demonstration of its value in the second movement, 'A Song of Byrds'. This opens with the soloists' trenchant, unaccompanied announcement of E E Cummings's sardonic, high modernist poetic contention that 'all which is not singing is mere talking, and all talking's talking to oneself ', with demonstrative syllabic amplifications of 'singing'. This concludes as male voices chant William Byrds' seventeenth century instructions on the virtuous exercise of singing, to emphatic timpani and brass, overlaid and then supplanted by delicately detailed, at times angular string orchestration. The gentle verbal pun on the 'Byrds' of the title that is thus introduced is elaborated between the two genders of choral parts, as the female voices begin singing the first of two excerpts from Shakespearean lyrics about bird song. Such a simple introduction to these three different texts and voice groups belies the virtuosic complexity with which King proceeds to develop the tiered musical interplay between them, and the fourth element provided by orchestration which, as both interruption and accompaniment, structures the contrasting moods of the solo and choral parts, as they move through a series of potentially contradictory accounts of the value of singing. The soloists shift to new, but equally sardonic lines of Cummings: 'christ but they're few', as the male voices reflect on the rarity of a naturally good voice, while the female voices continue singing of birds. As soloists change to yet other lines from Cummings: 'god how he sings/ the robin',

male voices celebrate the superiority of the human voice over 'any musicke of instruments whatsoever', insisting that the better it is, 'the meeter it is to honour and serve God', demonstrating in pastiche plainsong, with the undulating vignette of 'Omnes Spiritus Laudes Dominum', before concluding with a wish that 'all men would learn to sing'. Meanwhile, however, the female voices mock this pious earnestness with a more subversive pun than the simple play on Byrdsong, invoking 'the plainsong cuckoo grey/ Whose note full many a man doth mark,/ And dares not answer nay..Cuckoo! Cuckoo!'. The soloists close the movement with cummings's opening lines of solipsistic regret at 'all that is not singing', marking the resolution of the structural tensions within the movement as a celebration of the plurality of different voices, instruments and themes that singing can sustain.

The structure of the third movement, 'Laughing Song in Phrygian Mode', has its own complexity in its scherzo-like combination of melodies to provide a setting for one of William Blake's 'Songs of Innocence'. Choral voices enter serially, altos first, joined after thirty two bars by soloists, to a Phrygian, quasi-*marcato* accompaniment throughout on timpani and strings. All sing repeatedly the first verse of the poem, as the soloists take off into decorative elaborations of 'laugh' and 'joy', suggesting playful fun as the corollary of innocence. The texture of the orchestration thickens as chorus and soloists rush into the second verse, expanding the tempo by embroidering 'lively' and adding a bar's rest between the second and third lines, and again before the fourth, where a change in tempo to 2/4 occurs after the first two words. The line ends in 'Ha ha he', indicating that the fun really has begun, for by now the orchestration is punctured with brassy chromatics and the interplay with all voices reaches the verge of uncontrolled cacophony. The soloists continue with their triumphant laughter as the sopranos restore order, quietly leading the chorus into the third verse, again ending in 'Ha ha he', but at disparate points for all parts. The final 'he' of the soloists lingers over the soft, simultaneous return of choral voices to the opening line of the poem. Now, however, as a playful test of keeping intervalised time, just as in a musical game at a children's party, King shifts the tempo back and forth, inserting a beat's rest in each of the next fourteen bars as they repeat the first verse. The soloists' lines and intervals do not quite synchronise with those of the chorus, and the fugal overlaps become more extended as the remaining verses of the poem are repeated once again until, abruptly, the fun seems exhausted and the song ends on 'joy'.

The fourth movement contrasts unaccompanied singing of two Herrick couplets, one each by male and female voices, leading into an accompanied duet of a setting of D H Lawrence's poem, 'The Piano', before the two songs are finally brought together. The first of the couplets, drawn from a lyric verse entitled 'The Voice and the Viol' is given to double soprano and alto soloists from the choir; the second is taken from one of the delightful, short poems Herrick composed for his imaginary mistress, Julia – this one 'On Julia's Voice' – and is given to tenor and bass choral soloists. In both couplets, soloists are gradually augmented by the full chorus, celebrating the 'ravishing' and 'melting' levels of melodiousness to which instrumental accompaniment on the lute or viol can elevate 'the voice itself'. King marks the opening *quasi una madrigal*, matching the formal structure of the second movement, and this modal rhythm continues as the unaccompanied choral voices weave against and around one another. An undulating orchestral accompaniment quietly insinuates itself rhythmically into the melody as the high voices of the first sopranos move above the rest of the chorus from 'ravishing' onto an ecstatic, undulating sigh of 'Ah' for the concluding bars of the first section of the movement. The second section begins as the two sopranos, to continuing accompaniment, sing Lawrence's bitter-sweet nostalgia for childhood, invoked by the sound of a piano and the treacherously 'insidious mastery of song'. Coupled with the unaccompanied opening of the movement's celebration of accompanied singing, this suggests a confident irony in King's sense of the combination of words with music, as song. He can be seen here as consolidating the incipient direction which he has taken in the earlier movements, that the essential character of song is emergent and the quintessential aesthetic mode of expression of the human voice.

There is a thematic textual comparability between the fifth movement, 'A Song of Love', and the first that both matches their common key structure and continues the evolutionary discourse that underpins the work as a whole. 'A Song of Spiritual Creatures' takes its text from Milton, whose source was the Book of Genesis. King uses the Bible directly – The Song of Songs – as his source for this final movement. Written originally for performance at his own wedding, it celebrates an invitation to the joint project of a shared life at the point of birth and renewal in the natural world, as 'the winter is past, the rains are over and gone, flowers appear on the earth'. Chaucer and Eliot have used the month of April poetically, in just this self-conscious, metaphorical way, to similar ends. But by placing it as an opening to the final movement, King is signifying not just the advent of spring, but that 'the season of singing is come' – as it were to complete the metaphor implied by the eponymous title of the work. From the outset, however, we can sense difference: this is the only movement with an orchestral introduction, a series of soft but clear trumpet calls, followed by an understated, portentous roll of timpani, that herald the gentle melody of the invitation itself, introduced by the sopranos, with chorus following, but not before the *mezzo* soloist has indicated its ecstatic import with her soaring 'Ah'. We can infer from the previous movement (where it follows 'ravishing') that this is King's signifier for the transcendent point at which music takes the voice beyond words (and also before them, in the paralinguistic vocalizing of the first movement). The tempo has a special semiotic importance here: marked *andante calmo*, at 90 beats per minute, it is the pulse rate of an adult person, walking at an easy pace – just that of a mature, unhurried response to the invitation from a beloved to arise, and come away.



Matthew King

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)
Let Us Garlands Bring (1942)
Words by William Shakespeare1564-1616

I Come Away, Come Away, Death

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it;

My part of death no one so true
Did share it.
Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown:
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

(*Twelfth Night II, 4)*

II Who is Silvia?
Who is Silvia? What is she?
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.
Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being help'd, inhabits there.
Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

(*The Two Gentlemen of Verona IV, 2)*

III Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun *Cymbeline, IV, 2*

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art done, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.
Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The Sceptre, Learning, Physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.
Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the'all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.
No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have,
And renownèd by thy grave!

IV O Mistress Mine
O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies not plenty;
Then, come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(*Twelfth Night, II, 3)*

V It was a Lover and His Lass
It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that life was but a flower
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And, therefore, take the present time
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crownèd with the prime
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

(As You LIke It, V, 3)

Like Vaughan Williams and, later, Britten, Finzi preferred to organise his songs in sets rather than cycles. This was one way in which the two generations of composers involved in the English musical renaissance of the first half of the twentieth century sought to differentiate themselves from Germanic conventions in song composition. By arranging

> Gerald had said he felt as if he was "watching a man done to death..."

songs in groups, composers sought to free themselves from the obligation to display an organic unity to the collection, though this did not prevent them from implying common thematic concerns. *Let Us Garlands Bring* sets five Shakespearean songs which focus on the fundamental human themes of love and death which, like the fourth of Vaughan Williams's *Five Tudor Portraits*, Jane Scroop's lament for her pet sparrow, might well have reflected Finzi's own intense response to the troubled times during which

they were composed, between 1929 and 1942. Despite the difficulty of accurately dating many of Finzi's works, due to his habitual practice of later revising compositons (*Who is Sylvia?* remains undated and the date of 1940 is cancelled on the manuscript of *It was a Lover and his Lass)*, this seems especially likely with the opening song of the set, *Come Away Death*. It is dated 1938, and on March 12, the day that German troops entered Austria, Joy Finzi recorded in her journal that Gerald had said he felt as if he was "watching a man done to death, only this is a civilisation and the last stand of European culture". Finzi's sense of the imminent arbitrariness of death was acute, even for one of his generation. His father had died when he was eight and his three brothers were killed during the First World War, as was his teacher, Ernest Farrar. His own life ended tragically early, four years after he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease in 1951.

Gerald Finzi

Yet a strong sense of the continuity of English cultural and artistic life is central to Finzi's work and to the ways in which he chose to live himself. As a young man, at the beginning of the 1920s he was drawn to set up his first home in Painswick, Gloucestershire, partly because of the area's influence on the works of Elgar and Vaughan Williams, whose examples in seeking one resource for the renewal of contemporary English music in its vernacular folk traditions he sought to follow. When finally he built his permanent family home, in 1937 at Ashbourne in Wiltshire, he assembled a considerable library of English literature, especially poetry (now in the Finzi Book Room at the University of Reading), whilst also cultivating an orchard of English apples which eventually numbered some 400 varieties. In the 1941 and 1951 prefaces to his own catalogue of works, he wrote of the artist's compulsion "to preserve and project into the future the essence of our individuality, and in doing so, to project something of our age and civilization", on the grounds that "there is, ultimately, little else but his work through which his country and civilization may be known and judged by posterity". Sharing the dominant conservative ethos of the necessity for a minority culture to nurture and sustain cultural tradition, he echoed F R Leavis in expressing the hope that "in each generation may be found a few responsive minds". It is in this spirit, surely, that Finzi responds, as composer as well as a reader, to the work of English poets from the 16th century onwards, with the disarmingly informal agnosticism of his concluding observation that: "To shake hands with a good friend over the centuries is a pleasant thing, and the affection which an individual may retain after his departure is perhaps the only thing which guarantees an ultimate life to his work".

Though less well-known than the settings of Hardy's poetry on which he worked throughout his life, these settings of Shakespearean songs exhibit, nevertheless, the distinctive qualities of Finzi's compositions for the voice. Again in contrast to the practices of the German *lieder* tradition, Finzi was not a graphic composer. Rather than seeking to engender a musical picture in his songs, he preferred instead to focus on what he regarded as the vital centre of his verbal text. For this he had a fine ear, and his tendency to favour syllabic rather than strophic settings of the words enabled him to develop both a supple lyricism, evident here in the love songs, and to utilise an *arioso* style well-suited to the songs on death. These qualities are complemented further by Finzi's awareness of both the intensity of poetry (he had earlier set Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*) and its colloquial character – equally well-displayed here in both erotically- and thanatically-themed verses. Both types have the structure of an internal monologue, attempting to articulate feelings (far more important than experiences, he insisted) reflectively around key words and ideas, which Finzi seems to have found sympathetic to his own introspective character. His very personal sense of tonality and form enable his accompaniments to engage closely with the voice, thus producing an emergent whole which resembles the densely integrated textures of his pieces for instrumental ensembles, and thus to work equally effectively for piano or orchestra. *Let us Garlands Bring* was performed first at the National Gallery in London by Robert Irwin, on October 12, 1942, to piano accompaniment by Finzi's contemporary and friend, the composer Howard Ferguson; then, six days later on BBC Radio, to orchestral accompaniment conducted by Clarence Raybould.

INTERVAL OF 20 MINUTES

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Five Tudor Portraits

A Choral Suite in Five Movements with Soli for Contralto (or Mezzo) and Baritone and Orchestral Accompaniment.
Founded on Poems by JOHN SKELTON (Laureate) 1460-1529, sometime Rector of Diss in Norfolk

I *Ballad* **The Tunning of Elinor Rumming**

Tell you I will,
If that ye will
A-while be still,
Of a comely Jill
That dwelt on a hill:
She is somewhat sage
And well worn in age:
For her visage
It would assuage
A man's courage.
Droopy and drowsy,
Scurvy and lowsy,
Her face all bowsy,
Comely crinkled,
Wondrously wrinkled
Like a roast pig's ear,
Bristled with hair.
Her nose some deal hookéd,
And camously-crookéd,
Never stopping,
But ever dropping;
Her skin loose and slack,
Grained like a sack;
With a crooked back.
Jawed like a jetty;
A man would have pity
To see how she is gumméd,
Fingered and thumbéd,
Gently jointed,
Greased and anointed
Up to the knuckles;
Like as they were with buckles
Together made fast.
Her youth is far past!

And yet she will jet
Like a jollivet,
In her furréd flocket,
And gray russet rocket,
With simper and cocket.
Her hood of Lincoln green
It has been hers, I ween,
More than forty year;
And so doth it appear,
For the green bare threadés
Look like sere weedés,
Withered like hay,
The wool worn away.
And yet, I dare say
She thinketh herself gay
Upon the holiday
When she doth her array
And girdeth on her geets
Stitched and pranked with pleats;
Her kirtle, Bristol-red,
With clothes upon her head
That weigh a sow of lead,
Writhen in wondrous wise
After the Saracen's guise,
With a whim-wham
Knit with a trim-tram
Upon her brain-pan;
Like an Egyptian
Cappéd about,
When she goeth out.

And this comely dame,
I understand, her name
Is Elinor Rumming,
At home in her wonning;
And as men say
She dwelt in Surrey
In a certain stead
Beside Leatherhead.
She is a tonnish gib,
The devil and she be sib.

But to make up my tale
She breweth nappy ale,
And maketh thereof pot-sale
To travellers, to tinkers,
To sweaters, to swinkers,
And all good ale-drinkers,
That will nothing spare
But drink till they stare
And bring themselves bare,
With '*Now away the mare!*
And let us slay care'.
As wise as an hare!
Come who so will
To Elinor on the hill
With 'Fill the cup, fill!'
And sit there by still,
Early and late.
Thither cometh Kate,
Cisly, and Sare,
With their legs bare,
They run in all haste,
Unbraced and unlaced;
With their heelés daggéd,
Their kirtles all jaggéd,
Their smocks all to-raggéd,
With titters and tatters,
Bring dishes and platters,
With all their might running
To Elinor Rumming
To have of her tunning.

She lendeth them on the same,
And thus beginneth the game.
Some wenches come unlaced
Some housewives come unbraced
Some be flybitten,
Some skewed as a kitten;
Some have no hair-lace,
Their locks about their face
Such a rude sort
To Elinor resort
From tide to tide,
Abide, abide!
And to you shall be told
How her ale is sold
To Maud and to Mold.
Some have no money
That thither comé
For their ale to pay.
That is a shrewd array!
Elinor sweared, 'Nay,
Ye shall not bear away
Mine ale for nought,
By him that me bought! '
With 'Hey, dog, hey!
Have these hogs away! '
With 'Get me a staffé
The swine eat my draffé!
Strike the hogs with a club,
They have drunk up my swilling-tub!'

Then thither came drunken Alice,
And she was full of talés,
Of tidings in Walés,
And of Saint James in Galés,
And of the Portingalés,
With 'Lo, Gossip, I wis,
Thus and thus it is:
There hath been great war
Between Temple Bar
And the Cross in Cheap,
And there came an heap
Of mill-stones in a rout '.
She speaketh thus in her snout,
Snivelling in her nose
As though she had the pose.

'Lo, here is an old tippet,
An ye will give me a sippet
Of your stale ale,
God send you good sale! '
'This ale', said she, 'is noppy;
Let us suppé and soppy
And not spill a droppy,
For, so may I hoppy,
It cooleth well my croppy ,
Then began she to weep
And forthwith fell asleep.

('With Hey! and with Ho!
Sit we down a-row,
And drink till we blow.')

Now in cometh another rabble:
And there began a fabble,
A clattering and babble
They hold the highway,
They care not what men say,
Some, loth to be espied,
Start in at the back-side
Over the hedge and pale,
And all for the good ale.
(With Hey! and with Ho!
Sit we down a-row,
And drink till we blow.)
Their thirst was so great
They asked never for meat,
But drink, still drink,
And 'Let the cat wink,
Let us wash our gummés
From the dry crummés!'
Some brought a wimble,
Some brought a thimble,
Some brought this and that
Some brought I wot ne'er what.
And all this shift they make
For the good ale sake.
'With Hey! and with Ho!
Sit we down a-row,
And drink till we blow,
And pipe "Tirly Tirlow!",
* * *
But my fingers itch,
I have written too much
Of this mad mumming
Of Elinor Rumming!
Thus endeth the geste
Of this worthy feast.

II *Intermezzo* **Pretty Bess**

My proper Bess
My pretty Bess;
  Turn once again to me!
For sleepest thou, Bess,
  Or wakest thou, Bess,
Mine heart it is with thee.

My daisy delectable,
My primrose commendable,
My violet amiable,
My joy inexplicable,
  Now turn again to me.

Alas! I am disdained,
And as a man half maimed,
My heart is so sore pained!
I pray thee, Bess, unfeigned,
  Yet come again to me!

By love I am constrained
To be with you retained,
It will not be refrained:
I pray you, be reclaimed,
  And turn again to me.

My proper Bess,
My pretty Bess,
  Turn once again to me!
For sleepest thou, Bess,
  Or wakest thou, Bess,
Mine heart it is with thee.

III *Burlesca* **Epitaph on John Jayberd of Diss**

Sequitur triginta!e
Tale quale rationale,
Licet parum curiale,
Tamen satis est formale,
Joannis Clerc, hominis
Cujusdam multinominis,
Joannes Jayberd qui vocatur,
Clerc cleribus nuncupatur.
Obiit sanctus iste pater
Anno Domini Millesimo Quingentesimo sexto.
In parochia de Diss
Non erat sibi similis;
In malitia vir insignis,
Duplex corde et bilinguis;
Senio confectus,
Omnibus suspectus,
Nemini dilectus,
Sepultus est among the weeds:
God forgive him his misdeeds!
Carmina cum cannis
Cantemus festa Joannis:
Clerk obiit vere,
Jayberd nomenque dedere:
Diss populo natus,
Clerk cleribus estque vocatus.
Nunquam sincere
Solitus sua crimina flere:
Cui male linguo loquax—
—Qui mendax que, fuere
Et mores tales
Resident in nemine quales;
Carpens vitales
Auras, turbare sodales
Et cives socios.
Asinus, mulus velut, et bos.
Quid petis, hic sit quis?
John Jayberd, incola de Diss;
Cui, dum vixerat is,
Sociantur jurgia, vis, lis.
Jam jacet hic stark dead,
Never a tooth in his head.
Adieu, Jayberd, adieu,
In faith, deacon thou crew!
Fratres, orate
For this knavate,
By the holy rood,
Did never man good:
I pray you all,
And pray shall,
At this trental
On knees to fall
To the football,
With 'Fill the black bowl
For Jayberd's soul'.
Bibite multum:
Ecce sepultum
Sub pede stultum.
Asinum et mulum.
With, 'Hey, ho, rumbelow!'
Rumpopulorum
Per omnia Secula seculorum!

FREE TRANSLATION
Here follows a trental, more or less reasonable, hardly fitting for the Church, but formal enough,
for John the Clerk, a certain man of many names who was called John Jayberd. He was called clerk by the clergy. This holy father died in the year of our Lord 1506. In the parish of Diss there was not his like; a man
renowned for malice, double-hearted and double-tongued, worn out by old age, suspected of all, loved by none. He is buried…
Sing we songs in our cups to celebrate John. The clerk truly is dead and was given the name of Jayberd. He was born among the people of Diss and was called clerk by the clergy. Never was he wont truly to bewail his sins. His evil tongue was loquacious and lying. Such morals as his were never before in anyone. When he breathed the vital air he disturbed his companions and his
fellow citizens as if
he were an ass, a mule, or a bull. Do you ask who this is? John Jayberd, inhabitant of Diss with whom while he lived were associated quarrels, violence and strife. Now here he lies…
Pray, brethren…"
Drink your fill. See he is buried under your feet, a fool, an ass, and a mule…
For ever and ever.

IV ***Romanza*. Jane Scroop**
Her lament for Philip Sparrow

Placebo!
Who is there, who?
Dilexi!
Dame Margery?
Fa, re, mi, mi,
Wherefore and why, why?
For the soul of Philip Sparrow,
That was, late, slain at Carrow,
Among the Nuns Black.
For that sweet soul's sake,
And for all sparrows' souls
Set in our bead-rolls.

When I remember again
How my Philip was slain,
Never half the pain
Was between you twain,
Pyramus and Thisbe,
As then befell to me:
I wept and I wailed,
The tears down hailed,
But nothing it availed
To call Philip again,
Whom Gib, our cat, hath slain.
Vengeance I ask and cry,
By way of exclamation,
On all the whole nation
Of cattés wild and tame:
God send them sorrow and shame!
That cat specially
That slew so cruelly
My little pretty sparrow
That I brought up at Carrow!
O cat of churlish kind,
The fiend was in thy mind
So traitorously my bird to kill
That never owed thee evil will!
It had a velvet cap,
And would sit upon my lap,
And seek after small wormes,
And sometime whitebread-crumbes;
And many times and oft,
Between my breastes soft
It would lie and rest;
It was proper and prest!
Sometime he would gasp
When he saw a wasp;
A fly, or a gnat,
He would fly at that;
And prettily he would pant
When he saw an ant!
Lord how he would pry
After a butterfly!

Lord, how he would hop
After the grasshop!
And when I said, 'Phip, Phip!'
Then he would leap and skip,
And take me by the lip.
Alas! it will me slo
That Philip is gone me fro!

For Philip Sparrow's soul,
Set in our bead-roll,
Let us now whisper
A *Pater noster.*

Lauda, anima mea, Dominum!
To weep with me, look that ye come,
All manner of birdés in your kind;
See none be left behind.

To mourning look that ye fall
With dolorous songs funeral,
Some to sing, and some to say,
Some to weep, and some to pray,
Every bird in his lay.
The goldfinch, the wagtail;
The jangling jay to rail,
The fleckéd pie to chatter
Of this dolorous matter;
And Robin Redbreast,
He shall be the priest
The requiem mass to sing,
Softly warbling,
With help of the reed sparrow,
And the chattering swallow,
This hearse for to hallow;
The lark with his long toe;
The spinke, and the martinet also;
The fieldfare, the snite
The crow and the kite;
The raven called Rolfe,
His plain song to sol-fa;
The partridge, the quail;
The plover with us to wail;
The lusty chanting nightingale;
The popinjay to tell her tale,
That toteth oft in a glass,
Shall read the Gospel at mass;
The mavis with her whistle
Shall read there the Epistle.
Our chanters shall be the cuckoo,
The culver, the stockdoo,
With 'peewit' the lapwing,
The Versicles shall sing.

The swan of Maeander,
The goose and the gander,
The duck and the drake,
Shall watch at this wake;
The owl that is so foul,
Must help us to howl;
The heron so gaunt,
And the cormorant,
With the pheasant,
And the gaggling gant,
The dainty curlew,
With the turtle most true.
The peacock so proud,
Because his voice is loud,
And hath a glorious tail,
He shall sing the Grail.

The bird of Araby
That potentially
May never die,
A phoenix it is
This hearse that must bless
With aromatic gums
That cost great sums,
The way of thurification
To make a fumigation,
Sweet of reflare,
And redolent of air,
This corse for to 'cense
With great reverence,
As patriarch or pope
In a black cope.
Whiles he 'censeth the hearse,
He shall sing the verse,
Libera me, Domine!
In *do, la, sol, re,*
Softly *Be-mol*
For my sparrow's soul.

And now the dark cloudy night
Chaseth away Phoebus bright,
Taking his course toward the west,
God send my sparrow's soul good rest!
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine!
I pray God, Philip to heaven may fiy!
Domine,exaudi orationem meam!
To Heaven he shall, from Heaven he came!
Dominus vobiscum!
Of all good prayers God send him some!
Oremus,
Deus, cui proprium est misereri et parcere,
On Philip's soul have pity!
For he was a pretty cock,
And came of a gentle stock,
And wrapt in a maiden's smock,
And cherished full daintily,
Till cruel fate made him to die;
Alas, for doleful destiny!
Farewell, Philip adieu!
Our Lord, thy soul rescue!
Farewell, without restore,
Farewell for evermore!

V *Scherzo* **Jolly Rutterkin**

Hoyda, Jolly Rutterkin, hoyda!
Like a rutter hoyda.

Rutterkin is come unto our town
In a cloak without coat or gown,
Save a ragged hood to cover his crown,
Like a rutter hoyda.

Rutterkin can speak no English,
His tongue runneth all on buttered fish,
Besmeared with grease about his dish,
Like a rutter hoyda.

Rutterkin shall bring you all good luck,
A stoup of beer up at a pluck,
Till his brain be as wise as a duck,
Like,a rutter hoyda.

What now, let see,
Who looketh on me
Well round about,
How gay and how stout
That I can wear
Courtly my gear.

My hair brusheth
So pleasantly,
My robe rusheth
So ruttingly,
Meseem I fly,
I am so light
To dance delight.
Properly dressed,
All point devise,
My person pressed
Beyond all size
Of the new guise,
To rush it out
In every rout.

Beyond measure
My sleeve is wide,
All of pleasure
My hose strait tied,
My buskin wide
Rich to behold,
Glittering in gold.

Rutterkin is come, etc.

GLOSSARY
camously-crookéd—snub-nosed
Carrow—Carrow Abbey, near Norwich, where Jane was being educated
cocket—coquetry
culver—dove
daggéd—muddy
draffé—hog-wash
Egyptian—gipsy
fabble—jabbering
Galés—Galicia
gant—gannet
geets—clothes
gib—cat
hoppy —have good luck
jetty—a projection
jollivet—gay young girl
kirtle—skirt
Mold—Molly
nappy/noppy—foaming
Nuns Black—Benedictine Nuns
pluck—gulp
Portingalés—Portuguese
pose—catarrh
pranked—decked
prest—neat
properly—handsomely
reflare—perfume
rocket—dress
rutter—dashing young fellow
ruttingly—dashingly
sib—akin
slo—slay
snite—snipe
spinke—chaffinch
stead—place
stockdoo—pigeon
swikers—toilers
tonnish—beery
toteth—peeps
trim-tram—pretty trifle
tunning—brewing
whim-wham—trinket
wimble—gimlet
wonning—dwelling

It was Elgar who recommended Skelton's scatological poems to Vaughan Williams, as 'pure jazz', perhaps anticipating the lively musical accompaniments, by turns robust, rowdy, gentle, gleeful and sentimental, to which they would be set. The resulting suite of songs was completed and published in 1935 and first performed at the 1936 Norwich Festival, on September 25. It remains a difficult piece to sing, not least because of Vaughan Williams's attempts to capture the complexities of Skelton's deceptively simple, indexical and infinitely extendable rhyming schemes, which have come to be termed generically Skeltonic. The apparently solemn, final part of Vaughan Williams's title, stating that the movements of the suite are 'founded' on poems by Skelton, who is identified both as 'Laureate' and 'sometime Rector of Diss in Norfolk' and placed historically by his dates, provide some clues about how the composer himself might have wanted his choice of words to set to be contexted.

The accession of his former pupil as Henry VIII in 1509 occasioned the fulsome panegyric 'Laud and Praise made for our sovereign Lord the King' whose opening lines...neatly encapsulate ...theTudor myth of a unified, politically stable 'merrie England'...

Skelton's dates locate him at a crucial period of historical transition, as the second feudal age in England collapses after the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, and the Tudor dynasty emerges under Henry VII, consolidating the initial conditions for the emergence of the early modern period, the new political economy of mercantile capitalism and the penetration of European renaissance thought into English culture. To identify Skelton as a parochial priest is an interesting emphasis to place on his work as a poet, and in relation to the other positions of authority that he held. He was called to the Tudor court on two occasions: first, in 1494, as 'the Duc of Yorkes scolemaster', having already attained the titles 'laureate' from the universities of Oxford (1488/9), Louvain (1492) and Cambridge (1493), and was ordained around 1498. This first period at court seems to have ended in 1502, when Henry's elder son Arthur died, though it was not until 1504 that Skelton was awarded the country living at Diss. The accession of his former pupil as Henry VIII in 1509 occasioned the fulsome panegyric 'Laud and Praise made for our Sovereign Lord the King' whose opening lines: "The Rose both White and Red/In one Rose now doth grow/…/ England, now gather floures,/Exclude now all doloures" neatly encapsulate what was to become the Tudor myth of a unified, politically stable 'merrie England' after the chaotic, late feudal dynastic wars between Yorkists and Lancastrians. Yet it was not until 1512 that Skelton was recalled to London and the post of Orator Regius; though he retained the living at Diss until his death, he never returned there.

The title of Laureate marked Skelton's distinction as a master of the mediaeval art of rhetoric. His erudition drew on the linked sources of scholastic Thomist theology and Aristotelian rationality and took the principal form of satire throughout his work. It was primarily as a satirist that he was recalled to court, where among his other, more formal responsibilities as King's Orator, he was required to engage in 'flytyng' contests with other members of the court. These entertainments were ritual confrontations between courtiers in impromptu verse, in which each participant satirised the character and behaviour of the other by displaying the ingenuity of their insults and invective. Skelton's brilliance at ad hoc versification – the essence of the Skeltonic - ensured his success in these exchanges which, combined with his firm political and religious convictions, provided a sound basis from which to develop wider and more sustained critiques of the changes that would come to mark the specific character of early modernity throughout Europe. Following mediaeval practice, Skelton saw poetry as a form of didactic literature, satirising all the human vices. Whatever the particular poetic form, it was invariably an expression of his orthodoxy and was directed at enemies of the monarchy and the universal Catholic church. Among both, he included those of the emerging bourgeoisie, like Cardinal Wolsey, Henry's chancellor, who were developing a new political order, to be legitimated by ecclesiastical and theological reformation. As what might now be termed a radical conservative, Skelton saw such changes as subverting the natural authority of divinely ordained monarchy.

It is not these targets of Skelton's major satires that Vaughan Williams selects to found his suite of choral songs upon, however, so much as those addressing three more mundane vices – boozing, spite and vanity - contrasted with two tender portraits. While the iterative rhythms of Skeltonic verse lend themselves easily to adaptation as songs, Vaughan Williams's accompaniments have a constantly surprising freshness, which is anything but repetitious. This is immediately evident in the *Ballad* that begins the suite – The Tunning of Elinor Running – where Skelton's graphic, Breughelesque portrait of Elinor and her rural clientele, committed drinkers all of her 'nappy ale', is matched by Vaughan Williams's robust and lively orchestration. Skelton shows an understanding of their range of moods as he develops his narrative by contrasting Elinor's physical grotesqueness and eccentric dress with her self-deceiving jetting, 'like a jolivet' who 'thinketh herself gay'. Similarly, Vaughan Williams uses rousing, patter-ballad orchestrations underpinned by rumbustious percussion and raucous brass to introduce the roistering tumble of the narrative theme which eventually identifies Elinor, 'this comely dame', whilst alternating a lyrical cantabile, carried initially by female voices to represent Elinor's view of herself. The narrative builds, through the full dynamic range and in rhythms that shift between folkloric and *marcato,* to the core of the song – 'drunken Alice'. This is an acute sketch by Skelton, which Vaughan Williams gives brilliantly to the soprano soloist, marked andante doloroso, of a familiar type of drunk, clearly neither historically nor gender specific. She

weaves with inebriated majesty from inflated trivia 'of tidings in Wales,…of Saint James in Gales,…the Portingales,… war between Temple Bar and the Cross in Cheap', through maudlin weeping over the stale, yet croppy-cooling ale, into stupefied sleep. Softly, as if not to wake her, the orchestration changes to allegro vivace and basses and tenors lead all voices into a resumption of their banale, onomatopeic

celebrations of Elinor's and a *fortissimo* climax of 'tirley tirlow', surrendering finally to narrative closure with a restatement of the vigorous opening theme.

In complete contrast, the second portrait is a short, delicate *Intermezzo* in which the baritone soloist, supported by the chorus, celebrates the beauty and charms of Pretty Bess in three short, disciplined Skeltonic verses. These are preceded and concluded in the verbal text by a declamatory refrain, which Vaughan Williams arranges to permeate the simple eulogies of the verses.
The third portrait, a *Burlesca* for male voice chorus, is reminiscent of the first in the urgency of its underlying vigour. From the opening allegro, it bursts into tongue-twisting dog-Latin to build a Chaucerian account to commemorate the choler and mendacious spite of its clergyman subject, who 'Did never man good', though 'God forgave him his misdeeds'. The raucousness develops brassily, tenors and basses overlapping one another, towards the stumbling *glissandi* of 'Jam jacet hic stark dead, never a tooth in his head' before a faux-noble, valedictorial 'Adieu, Jayberd , adieu'. The allegro rhythm of the opening resumes, leading to a final, bellowing maestoso chorus of 'Hey, ho, rumbelow, rum populorum': however dreadful Jayberd's legacy, Vaughan Williams has ameliorated Skelton's devastating account of it with the songful sense of fun which runs through his jolly setting.

'Jane Scroop', the fourth portrait, is a *Romanza* for soprano soloist and female chorus for which Vaughan Williams selects from Skelton's much longer poem, 'Philip Sparrow' and is widely regarded as the best song of the suite. Jane's lyrical expression of grief at the loss of her pet bird contrasts in its sad intensity with the gleeful dismissal of the idle priest Jayberd, and her pious innocence is in stark contrast to the coarse venality of Elinor Rumming. Yet Skelton makes her an agent of his reflexive satire in the poem itself. Her innocence is a knowing one in the sensual intimacy of her relationship with her pet, and her complaints about the adequacy of language to the poetics of her knowledge and experience. Her sparrow would not only 'many times and oft/Between by breastes soft/…lie and rest' but was also 'wont to repayre/And go in at my spayre,/and crepe in at my gore/O my gowne before,/Flyckerynge with his wynges!'. Jane's demurral that 'though he crept so lowe/It was no hurt, I trowe,/…/Phyllyp, though he were nyse,/In him it was no vyse' may preserve her innocence, but the same cannot be said about the issue of language. Skelton uses her to display his own rhetorical skills in adapting the liturgical office of the dead 'with dolorous songs funeral' to mourn her pet's passing, inventorising numerous species of birds to attend and officiate, whilst insisting, nevertheless, on the conceit that 'Our natural tongue is rude…rusty…cankered…and so dull/That if I wolde apply/To write ornately/I wot not where to fynd/Termes to serue my mynde'. Perhaps it was the evident disingenuousness of such claims that led Vaughan Williams to omit these elements of the poem from his selected text: it makes clear, at any rate, one sense in which his portraits are 'founded upon' Skelton's poems. As with Pretty Bess, there is no sense of parody in either his selection of words or the delicate lyricism of the orchestration of his setting – he reserved the term Romanza for movements which sought to express emotions of lyrical intensity which are evident here from the opening, marked 'Lento doloroso'. Soloist and chorus combine clear harmonies with chromatic inflections in softly crooning their sadness at Philip's death, alternating with cheerful reminiscences of Jane's pleasure in his company, building to an exultant celebration of the participation of other birds in Philip's last rites, as the soloist soars into 'Libera me, Domine' at the beginning of a recitation of the requiem, accompanied by the chorus, moving softly from tranquillo, through *lento* to *poco piu lento*, as they bid Philip a final farewell.

The concluding song, a lively *Scherzo* for baritone and full chorus, reverts to the vigorous satire of Elinor Rumming and John Jayberd, but with a different, more generous inflection. Its target is the dandified fop Rutterkin – an earlier Malvolio, perhaps, though his hose is 'strait tied', rather than cross-gartered. With shimmering orchestral strings, a series of decorative, jazzy-martial brass fanfares and overlapping cries of 'Hoyda, Hoyda' from the chorus, Vaughan Williams captures the flashy spectacle with which 'Rutterkin is come into our town', as well as the jollity and simple pleasure he brings to its people. They sing heartily of their enjoyment of his rakishness, while the soloist details the 'Rutterkin's narcissistic appreciation of his self-display, mirrored by a brittle orchestral accompaniment and returning to a final, cheerful chorus of 'Hoyda'.

Moira Harris *soprano*

Moira studied music at Royal Holloway College and singing at the Guildhall School of Music of Drama and the Mayer-Lisman Opera Centre. She is a member of the chorus of English National Opera where she has also understudied and performed roles such as Amor (*Orpheus*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*), Woglinde, Woodbird (*The Ring*), Bridesmaid (*Marriage of Figaro*), Barena (*Jenufa*), Miss Naidoo (*Satyagraha*) and The Strolling Player (*Death in Venice*). She has also worked on several educational projects with ENO's Baylis programme.

Other companies Moira has worked with include Cambridge University Opera Society, Lyon Opera, Jigsaw Music Theatre, Opera Italiana, The Grand Opera Company and Pavilion Opera. Other roles include The Countess (*Marriage of Figaro*), Fiordiligi (*Cosi fan tutte*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Musetta and Mimi (*La Boheme*) and the heroines in *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Moira has an extensive oratorio and concert repertoire including works such as Bach's *B minor Mass*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *C minor Mass*, the Verdi *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Poulenc's *Gloria*. She has also performed Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* and Berlioz's *La mort de Cleopatra* with orchestra.

Moira is a founder member of The Artsong Collective, an ensemble specialising in performing 20th century and contemporary song written in English. The ensemble has produced three CDs, championing the works of Ronald Stevenson, Samuel Coleridge Taylor and Alan Bush. They are just about to release their fourth CD, a recording of Stevenson's song cycle, *Songs of Innocence*.

Valerie Reid *mezzo-soprano*

Valerie was born in Fife and studied singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow with Pat McMahon. Whilst there she won the Governors' Recital Prize, two Caird Scholarships and the John Noble Award which with further support from the Friends of Covent Garden enabled her to undertake a years study at the National Opera Studio in London.

Valerie made her début with English National Opera as Mercedes in the David Poutney production of *Carmen*, this was followed by further appearances as Second Lady in Mozart *Magic Flute*, Third Nymph in *Rusalka*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, The Lady in David Sawer's acclaimed new opera *Morning to Midnight*, Grimgerde in *Die Walküre* which was also performed at the Glastonbury Festival in front of a world wide television audience of over one billion and most recently Marcellina in *The Marriage of Figaro.*

Other operatic appearances include Dorabella (*Così Fan Tutte*), Cherubino (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Charlotte (*Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*) for Scottish Opera, Natasha in *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* for Music Theatre Wales, *Carmen* in Hong Kong, Rosina (*Barber of Seville*) at the Festival de la Vézère in France, Krobyle in the Richard Strauss Opera *Des Esels Schaten* with Sir Peter Ustinov at the Covent Garden Festival and Mrs Turner in Will Todd's new opera *The Blackened Man* at the Linbury Theatre Covent Garden.

Valerie's recent concert platform appearances include the Verdi *Requiem* in Coventry Cathedral, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Barbican Concert Hall, Mendelssohn *Elijah* in St Hellier, Barbican Concert Hall, Elgar *Dream of Gerontius* in Dunblane Cathedral, St Alban's Abbey, Elgar *Sea Pictures* in Athens, Mahlers *Eighth Symphony* in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and *Midsummer Music* with the English Sinfonia at Gibside.

Future plans for Valerie include a return to English National Opera for *Kismet* and *The Turn of the Screw*, *Dream of Gerontius* in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, *Messiah* in The Sage Gateshead, Verdi *Requiem* in Bury St Edmonds Cathedral and *Midsummer Music* with the Northern Sinfonia. In July Valerie was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Northumbria University.

Her most recent appearance with North London Chorus was Mendelssohn *Saint Paul* in December 2006.

William Berger *baritone*

William Berger ("...one of the best of our younger baritones." Gramaphone Magazine), an Associate and graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, is currently a member of ENO's Young Singers Programme where his roles have included Schaunard *La Boheme*, Masetto *Don Giovanni*, Fiorello *Barber of Seville*, Monsieur Javelinot *The Carmelites*, Second Nazarene *Salome*, Novice's Friend *Billy Budd*, Shepherd *Orfeo* and Grimbald, Aeolus & He *King Arthur*.

Recent appearances have included opening the 2006/2007 season for the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Francisco with Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*, Apollo in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* for the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, further performances of *King Arthur* with the Mark Morris Dance Company in California, Bach's *Weinachts Oratorium* for the Thaxted Festival and recording *The Carmelites* for Chandos.

William made his operatic debut at the Internationale Handel-Festspiele Göttingen, Germany as Ormonte *Partenope* and has since returned to sing Zebul *Jeptha* and Mercurio *Atalanta*. For the Festival Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence he created the role of Oberon *A Summer Night's Dream* for their Mozart/ Shakespeare project and toured to Spain, France and Germany with the same production. Other operatic roles include Don Giovanni (Opera East), Papageno *Magic Flute* (BYO), The Man *The Black Monk* (Sirius Ensemble, Bloomsbury Theatre), Harasta *Vixen* (conducted by Mackerras), Ernesto *Il mondo della luna* (RAM), and Count Almaviva *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Le Petit Theatre Les Alberres, France).

Concert work includes *Carmina Burana* (CBSO and Royal Albert Hall), Faure's *Requiem* (LPO), *Jephtha* (English Concert), *Apollo e Dafne* (La Stagione Frankfurt and Nord Deutsche Rundfunk), Saint Saens' *Oratoire de Noël* (Complesso Internazionale Cameristica, Milan), *Messiah* (Pacific Music Festival, Japan and Halle, Germany), *Elijah* (British Choral Institute) and the world premiere of *The Angry Garden* by Michael Stimpson (St John's, Smith Square). Recitals include his Wigmore Hall debut, Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* (Oxford Lieder Festival) and *Mörike Lieder* (Duke's Hall) and two recordings: *Songs of Spring* (RAM Song Circle) and October Roses (BMS).

Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Society Bursary for Young Singers in 1999, he was also awarded a Countess of Munster Trust Scholarship, an MBF grant and the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Award. Future engagements include Valetto *The Coronation of Poppea* and Prince Yamadori *Madam Butterfly* for ENO, Guglielmo *Cosi fan Tutte* (Longborough), Vaughan Williams's *Sea Symphony*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Elgar's *Coronation Ode,* Manoa in Handel's *Samson* (Internationale Handel-Festspiele Göttingen 2008) and *Death in Venice* (La Monnaie, Brussels).

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

Murray Hipkin studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining the Music Staff of English National Opera (1983–8) and then working for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and Opera Brava (as Musical Director).

Since returning to ENO in 1995, he has appeared in *The Silver Tassie, The Rake's Progress,* Leoncavallo's *La Boheme* and *Mahogonny* and worked extensively as Senior Répétiteur (his productions have included the complete *Ring*) and assistant conductor. He has conducted *La Bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box), the UK première of Salieri's *Falstaff*, Haydn's *La vera costanza* (Bampton Classical Opera), and for ENO *The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado* (including the 20th anniversary performance starring Lesley Garrett) and *The Gondoliers* starring Henry Goodman.

He assisted John Adams and conducted on location for the award-winning Channel 4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and in 2002 he was appointed Music Director of North London Chorus, where his most recent concerts include Bach *Mass in B minor,* the première of Matthew King *The Season of Singing* and Mendelssohn *Saint Paul.* Conducting plans include *30th Anniversary Concert* (NLC) and *Sweeney Todd* (Millrace Productions at Shawford Mill). He is currently rehearsing *Kismet* at ENO.

Moira Harris, William Berger and Murray Hipkin are members of English National Opera and appear by permission

North London Chorus

North London Chorus (NLC) first performed here at *artsdepot* in April 2005. The programme then included works by Puccini and Stravinsky. The Chorus is very pleased to return here this evening, for a concert that includes *A Season Of Singing* by Matthew King, which was commissioned by NLC last year, and funded by grants from the Britten-Pears Foundation and the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. NLC gave the first performance of this piece in June 2006 as part of the Proms Season at St Jude's, Hampstead Garden Suburb.

NLC met as The Hill Singers for the first time in 1976 and, under the direction of Alan Hazeldine, gave its first concert on 10 December 1977. This autumn, to celebrate the Thirtieth Anniversary of its first concert, NLC will give a special concert at St Michael's Church, Highgate, to include choruses from Handel *Messiah* and other works.

In 1985 the choir changed its name to North London Chorus (NLC) and Murray Hipkin was appointed Musical Director in 2003. He has considerable experience of both choral music and opera; his enthusiasm and skills as a teacher and conductor have enabled the choir to flourish and develop an ambitious programme of performances.

In 2005, NLC was proud to welcome renowned soprano Janis Kelly as its patron. Janis's rôles have included Romilda in Handel *Xerxes* and Pat Nixon in *Nixon In China* by John Adams. Her performing début with NLC was in April 2006. Janis runs singing sessions and masterclasses at the Chorus's regular singing workshops and has worked with the choir on aspects of technique, most recently at a residential weekend in February.

The Chorus has established a reputation as a versatile amateur choir, performing a broad range of choral works drawn from the 16th to the 21st centuries. A full list of concerts can be found elsewhere in this programme.

NLC is a friendly choir and, as well as preparing for concerts, organises a range of related activities, including residential weekends, at least one annual one-day workshop, sectional workshops, social events and visits to concerts and the opera. Rehearsals take place in East Finchley on Thursday nights and potential new members are welcome to audition. Please contact the Secretary, Norman Cohen on 0208 349 3022. (There is currently a waiting list for altos and basses.)

Further information about NLC can be found at www.northlondonchorus.org.uk

JAN TRAYLEN

NLC is a registered charity (no 277544) and is a member of Making Music, The National Federation of Music Societies

The Chorus

soprano
Lucy Allen
Gloria Arthur
Helena Beddoe
Michaela Carlowe
Laura Cohen
Heather Daniel
Sheila Denby-Wood
Alex Edmondson
Penny Elder
Anne Godwin
Debbie Goldman
Enid Hunt
Marta Jansa
Shanti Lall
Alison Liney
Holly Lloyd
Nikki Lloyd
Jo Lunt
Joanna Macdonald
Ros Massey
Verity Preest
Joan Reardon
Cheryl Rudden
Julia Sabey
Janet Saunders
Shantini Siva Prakasam
Jennie Somerville
Julia Tash
Jenny Taylor
Pauline Treen
Enriqueta Viñas

alto
Marian Bunzl
Alison Cameron
Lucy Ellis
Julia Fabricius
Sarah Falk
Eleanor Flaxen
Hélène Gordon
Viv Gross
Sue Heaney
Jo Hulme
Mary Instone
Susan Le Quesne
Jane May
Alice Mackay
Elaine McGregor
Margaret McGuire
Sarah McGuire
Kathryn Metzenthin
Vivienne Mitchell
Judith Moser
Kitty Nabarro
Janet Ridett
Alison Salisbury
Judith Schott
Belinda Sharp
Joanna Shepherd
Sonia Singham
Jane Spender
Lisa Sutton
Phyll White
Catherine Whitehead

tenor
Ridley Burnett
Alan Chandler
Mark Layton
Annie Pang
Jeremy Pratt
Gill Robertson
Stephen Rigg
Stephen Sharp
Chris Siva Prakasam
Mark Wakelin
Christine Westlake
Terrë Yuki

bass
Marcus Bartlett
David Berle
William Brown
Bill Bulman
Paul Cairns
Martin Cave
Norman Cohen
Andrew Elder
Paul Filmer
Simon Gibeon
Reinhold Kloos
Yoav Landau Pope
Stuart Little
Paul Long
Dan Newman
Neil Parkyn
David Philpott
Harvey Ratner
Tony Shelton
Andrew Westlake

Patron *Janis Kelly*

Musical Director *Murray Hipkin*
Rehearsal Accompanist *Catherine Borner*

Committee *Gill Robertson (Chair), Norman Cohen (Secretary), Hélène Gordon (Treasurer), Bill Bulman, Marian Bunzl, Alan Chandler, Heather Daniel, Sheila Denby-Wood, Jo Hulme, Jeremy Pratt*

Programme *Jo Hulme*
Programme notes *Paul Filmer*
Concert management *Gill Robertson, Norman Cohen, Jeremy Pratt, Sheila Denby-Wood*
Orchestra management *Richard Thomas, Jemma Bogan*

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ARRIVA

North London Chorus - previous concerts

10 Dec 1977 Schubert *Mass in G*
Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*
Handel *Zadok the Priest*
13 May 1978 Haydn *Nelson Mass*
16 Dec 1978 Various *Christmas Carols*
30 Jun 1979 Beethoven *Mass in C*
2 Feb 1980 Vivaldi *Gloria*
Bach *Magnificat in D*
5 Jul 1980 Songs by various English composers
6 Dec 1980 Fauré *Pavane, Requiem*
4 Apr 1981 Handel *Belshazzar*
3 Apr 1982 Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*
27 Jan 1982 Handel *Zadok the Priest, Dettingen Te Deum*
29 Jan 1983 Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb* First concert as NLC
Handel *Zadok the Priest*
26 Mar 1983 Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*
Stravinsky *Mass*
12 Nov 1983 Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus, Requiem*
28 Jan 1984 Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus, Dies Irae* from *Requiem*
24 Mar 1984 Bach *Cantata No 9*
Haydn *Maria Theresa Mass*
4 Jul 1984 Handel *Messiah*
23 Mar 1985 Geoffrey Burgon *Short Mass* *First performance*
Victoria *O Quam Gloriosum*
Kodály *Missa Brevis*
10 Nov 1985 Handel *Zadok the Priest*
Thomas Linley Jnr *Music in the Tempest*
Mozart *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*
15 Mar 1986 Haydn *Missa brevis, St. Joannis de Deo*
Pergolesi *Magnificat*
Vaughan Williams *Benedicite*
21 Mar 1987 Britten *Two Flower Songs*
Messiaen *Sacrum Convivium*
Bruckner *Christus Factus Est*
Purcell *Te Deum Laudamus, Jubilate Deo*
8 Nov 1987 Beethoven *Mass in C major*
19 Mar 1988 Vivaldi *Beatus Vir*
Rutter *Requiem*
26 Nov 1988 Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus, Mass in C minor*
18 Mar 1989 Palestrina *Missa Brevis*
Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzer*
18 Jun 1989 Mozart *Kyrie in D minor*
Haydn *Nelson Mass*
25 Nov 1989 Mozart *Mass in C major,Requiem*
24 Mar 1990 Fauré *Pavane, Cantique de Jean Racine*
Rutter *Requiem*
10 Jun 1990 Vivaldi *Gloria*
Bach *Magnificat*
1 Dec 1990 Bach *Christmas Oratorio (Parts i-iv)*
09 Mar 1991 Fayrfax *Magnificat (Regale)*
Pergolesi *Magnificat*
Mozart *Ave Verum Corpus, Missa Brevis*
30 Jun 1991 Stravinsky *Mass*
Mozart *Missa Longa in C*
1 Dec 1991 Rossini *Petite Messe Solonnelle*
21 Jun 1992 Schutz *Aller Augen Warten Auf Dich,*
Herre Meine Seele Erhebt Den Herren
Bruckner *Three Graduals, Mass No 2 in E minor*
29 Nov 1992 Haydn *Te Deum Laudamus*
Handel *Coronation Anthem No 4*
Mozart *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*
21 Mar 1993 Copland *In The Beginning*
Vaughan Williams *A Vision of Aeroplanes*
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
26 Jun 1993 Vivaldi *Beatus Vir*
Haydn *Mass in B flat "Harmoniemesse"*
26 Feb 1994 Bach *Mass in B minor*
25 Jun 1994 Byrd *Mass in Five Voices*
Howells *Magnificat, Nunc Dimitis, Te Deum*
Kodály *Missa Brevis*
3 Dec 1994 Handel *Messiah*
5 Mar 1995 Various *Opera choruses*
10 Jun 1995 Mendelssohn *Elijah*
2 Dec 1995 Britten *Saint Nicholas*
Various Christmas music
23 Mar 1996 Bach *Jesu, meine Freude, Mass in G minor*
22 Jun 1996 Mozart *Regina Coeli, Requiem*
7 Dec 1996 Haydn *The Creation*
15 Mar 1997 Palestrina *Tu es Petrus*
Frank *Chorale no 3 in A minor*
Vaughan Williams *Benedicite*
Buxtehude *Prelude and Fugue in F# Minor*
Ireland *Elegaic Romance*
Kodály *Missa Brevis*
28 Jun 1997 Various
12 Jul 1997 Various
6 Dec 1997 Handel *Israel in Egypt*
21 Mar 1998 Bach *Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden*
Palestrina *Missa Aeterna Christi Munera*
Brahms *Liebeslieder*
4 Apr 1998 Handel *Israel in Egypt*
23 May 1998 Beethoven *Symphony no 9*
20 Jun 1998 Mozart *Mass in C Minor*
5 Dec 1998 Byrd *Various*
Poulenc *Quatre Motets pour le Temps de Noel*
Pinkham *Various*
Holst *Christmas Day*
13 Mar 1999 Bach *Mass in G minor*
Handel *Dixit Dominus*
12 Jun 1999 Victoria *O Quam Gloriosum*
Vaughan Williams *A Vision of Aeroplanes*
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
4 Dec 1999 Mozart *Benedictus sit Deus*
Haydn *Mass in B flat "Harmoniemesse"*
9 Apr 2000 Fauré *Cantique de Jean Racine*
Mozart *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*
Sarah Rodgers *Windhover Te Deum [9]*
8 Jul 2000 Bach *Jesu, meine Freude*
Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb, Antiphon, Missa Brevis,*
Traditional Spirituals
9 Dec 2000 Bach *Christmas Oratorio*
31 Mar 2001 Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle*
Puccini *Requiem*
30 Jun 2001 Songs by Gershwin,Copland, Arlen, Rodgers and Hart
8 Dec 2001 Handel *Theodora*
16 Mar 2002 Mozart *Coronation Mass*
Poulenc *Gloria*
30 Jun 2002 Elgar *The Later Part Songs*
Burgon *Magic Words*
Handel *Theodora (chorus highlights)*
Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*
7 Dec 2002 Handel *Messiah*
5 Apr 2003 Mozart *Requiem, Ave Verum Corpus, Dixit Dominus*
29 Jun 2003 Bruckner *Christus Factus Est, Locus Iste*
Brahms *Geistliches Lied, Ein Deutsches Requiem*
6 Dec 2003 Bach *Magnificat in D*
Rutter *Magnificat*
27 Mar 2004 Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
Kodály *Missa Brevis*
Pärt *The Beatitudes*
14 May 2004 Rutter *Magnificat (excerpts)*
Pärt *The Beatitudes*
Kodály *Missa Brevis (excerpts)*
26 Jun 2004 Various *Opera choruses*
27 Nov 2004 Haydn *The Creation*
17 Apr 2005 Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*
Puccini *Messa di Gloria*
25 Jun 2005 Buxtehude *Membra Jesu Nostri*
Vivaldi *Gloria*
10 Jul 2005 Various Opera Choruses
14 Jan 2006 JS Bach *Mass in B Minor*
8 Apr 2006 Holst *The Hymn of Jesus*
Finzi *Lo, the Full, Final Sacrifice*
Fauré *Requiem*
24 Jun 2006 King *The Season of Singing* *First performance*
Mozart *Requiem*
4 Jul 2006 *Sing!* at the London Coliseum
2 Dec 2006 Mendelssohn *Saint Paul*
24 Mar 2007 Various *Psalmfest*

Conductors

10 Dec 1977 to 8 Jul 2000	Alan Hazeldine
9 Dec 2000 to 30 Jun 2002	Matthew Andrews
7 Dec 2002	Colin Myles
5 Apr 2003 to date	Murray Hipkin

For complete list visit www.northlondonchorus.org.uk