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Die erste Walpurgisnacht MENDELSSOHN

Byzantium BEAT DÄHLER

Danse Macabre SAINT-SAËNS

In Windsor Forest VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Saturday 25th November 2017
7:30pm
Shoreditch Town Hall

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MENDELSSOHN
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Danse Macabre

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
In Windsor Forest

Saturday 25th November 2017
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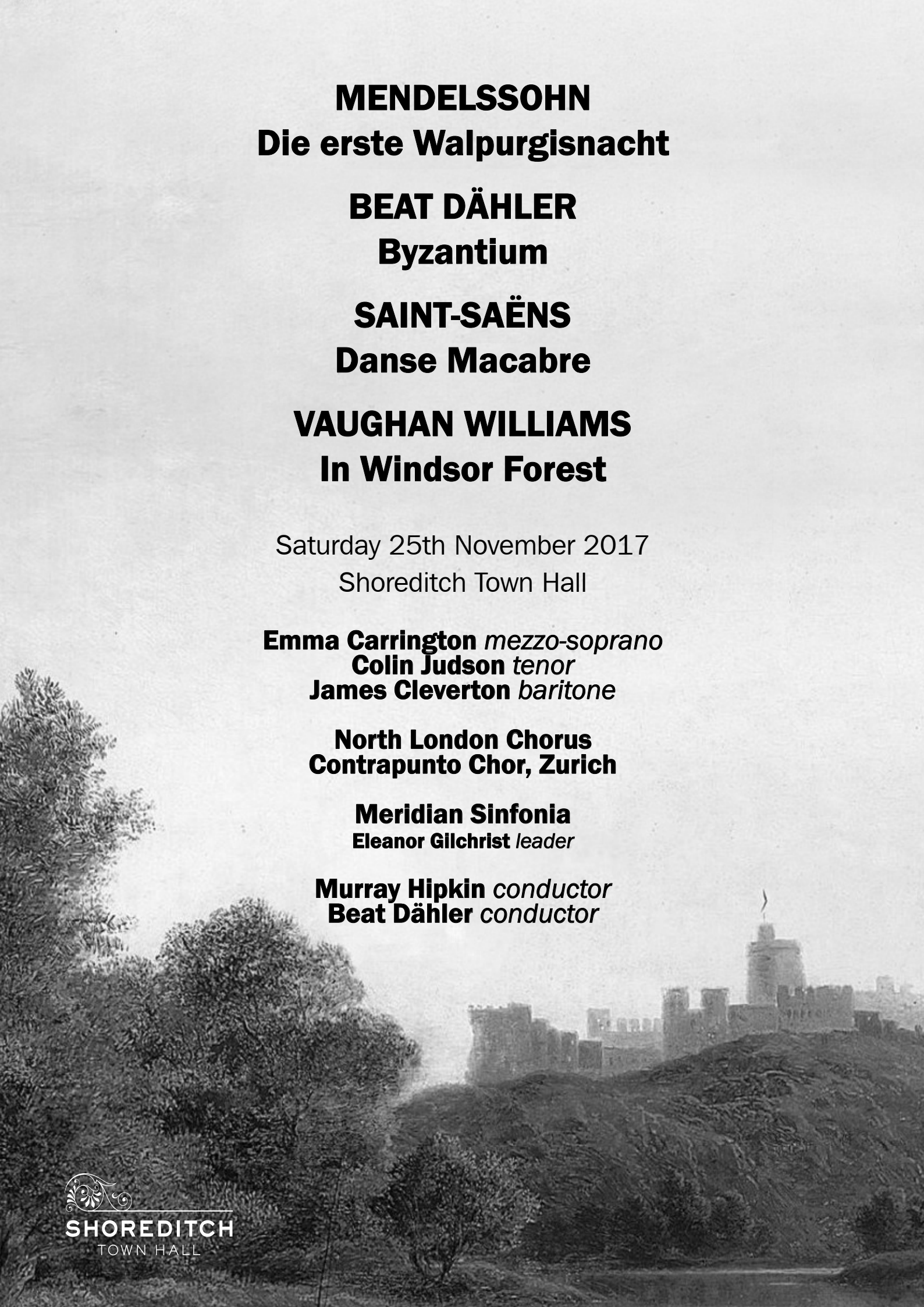
Emma Carrington *mezzo-soprano*
Colin Judson *tenor*
James Cleverton *baritone*

North London Chorus
Contrapunto Chor, Zurich

Meridian Sinfonia
Eleanor Gilchrist *leader*

Murray Hipkin *conductor*
Beat Dähler *conductor*



SHOREDITCH
TOWN HALL

INTRODUCTION

The mythic symbolism of the danse macabre is at the heart of tonight's concert celebrating the 40th anniversary of North London Chorus and the 30th of Contrapunto Chor, who we welcome on a reciprocal visit following the concert we shared with them in Zurich a fortnight ago. The mood is set with Mendelssohn's 'grand cantata with full orchestra' which scores Goethe's poetic ballad, Die erste Walpurgisnacht, about the devilish, pre-Christian practices of the Druids in the Hertz mountains of central Germany at 'the merry beginning of spring'. Berlioz, no less, was 'inclined to describe it as the best thing that Mendelssohn has done...the perfection of art'.

Whilst Mendelssohn and Goethe explore the eerie mysteries of mountain and forest at night, Contrapunto Chor's music director, Beat Dähler explores the mythic symbolism of the mediaeval city of Byzantium in W.B. Yeats' late poem. Setting its five stanzas as a choral cantata in a three-part format, he combines romantic tonal music with modern contrapuntal compositional techniques and jazz and popular musical elements in a vivid re-evocation of Yeats's compelling work.

One feature of Dahler's setting is to evoke a macabre, purgatorial dance of dead human souls towards the close of Yeats' poem. This is further endorsed by the Meridian Orchestra, who perform Saint-Saëns well-known tone poem, Danse Macabre. The devil leads the skeletons of the dead, at their annual night-long resurrection on Hallowe'en, in an increasingly frenzied dance, reaching a dissonant, contrapuntal climax which ends with the cock's crow at dawn.

In a return to the mysteries of the forest at night, but in a mood of merriment, farce and buffoonery, this evening's concert concludes with Vaughan Williams' suite of songs, In Windsor Forest. Choruses from his unsuccessful opera about Falstaff, 'Sir John in Love', he termed them 'plums without cake' - a resigned dismissal that is belied by the beauty of their melodic harmonies, complemented by a danse macabre in which Falstaff is pinched black and blue by dancing fairies for his roguish villainy.

North London Chorus is grateful to The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust and BIA Financial Planning Ltd. for their generous financial contributions towards this evening's performance.

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DIE ERSTE WALPURGISNACHT
FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847): Die erste Walpurgisnacht, op 60 (1844)

In the last days of paganism in Germany, the Druids' sacrifices were subject to punishment by death at the hands of the Christians. Nevertheless, at the beginning of springtime the druids and the populace sought to regain the peaks of the mountains so that they could make their sacrifices there, and to intimidate and chase off the Christians (usually through the latter's fear of the devil). The legend of the first Walpurgis Night is supposed to be based on such attempts.

This explanatory note, unattributed and enclosed in quotation marks and parentheses, was included in the programme for the premiere, in 1844, of Mendelssohn's final revised setting of Goethe's 1799 ballad, *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, and draws on a summary Goethe himself made in 1812 of 18th century conjectural historical explanations of the Walpurgisnacht legends. Goethe had initially sent the poem on its completion to his friend and Mendelssohn's composition teacher, the composer Karl Zelter, with the request that he should set it to music. Goethe had been introduced to Zelter by Mendelssohn's father, Abraham, in 1797, a year after Zelter had published his first collection of songs, among which he had set five of Goethe's poems. In a letter with which the poem was enclosed, Goethe referred to it as 'a production with a rather unusual appearance. It came into being through the idea that one might craft dramatic ballads in such a fashion that they would offer the composer material for a larger vocal piece'. Zelter responded, describing it as 'a most singular poem. The verses are musical and suitable for singing. I wanted to include it in a musical setting…and have worked out a good portion of it, but I cannot find the breath that breathes through the whole, so it unfortunately should be set aside'. Goethe published the poem in 1800 but it was not until two years later that Zelter referred again to his continuing problems in setting it, writing that 'the old played-out form of the cantata kept imposing itself on me' in his renewed attempts at a score. It was a further decade before the matter was broached again, when Zelter requested further information on the historical origins of the Walpurgis night legend. Goethe responded with an account of a 'fable-like history' that he had 'made back into a poetic fable'. It is evidently the basis for the short note, quoted above, which was included in the programme for the premiere of Mendelssohn's setting more than thirty years later:

> …the witches' and devils' ride on the Brocken…has been known in Germany from time immemorial… the German pagan priests and elders, after they had been driven out of their sacred groves and Christianity had been forced on the populace, withdrew with their faithful followers into the desolate, inaccessible Harz mountains in the early spring, so that they

> could offer up their prayers and their fires to the incorporeal god of heaven and earth, according to ancient custom. To protect themselves from the spying, armed converts they decided that it was advisable to disguise some of their members and thereby to keep their superstitious adversaries at a distance, and thus protected by devils' masks to carry out the purest of worship services.

That 1844 setting was not, however, Mendelssohn's first. He had been introduced to Goethe in 1821 by Zelter, who had already been his teacher for two years. Despite the difference of sixty years in their ages, the young musical prodigy and the ageing poet developed a strong collaborative creative friendship. As well as sustaining a lengthy correspondence on a range of aesthetic and philosophical topics over the following decade until Goethe's death in 1832, Mendelssohn visited him in Weimar on three occasions, the last of fourteen days in 1830. Goethe wrote to Zelter of this visit that 'the excellent Felix…edified everything with his perfect and genial art… Moving forward from the time of Bach, he brought Haydn, Mozart and Gluck alive for me…and finally made me sensitive to and aware of his own works'. Whether or not at his own instigation or that of his teacher, it was at this time that Mendelssohn took over responsibility for setting the Walpurgisnacht ballad in a form that he described to his sister Fanny early in 1831 as:

> …a grand cantata with full orchestra. It can become very merry, for at the beginning it is full of spring songs and more such things; and then, when the watchmen make a ruckus with their prongs and pitchforks and owls, there is also the witches' spookiness, and…I have a particular fondness for that. Then the druids who make the sacrifices appear in C major with their trombones, and then again the watchmen, who are afraid of them (here I mean to introduce an eerie, lightly mysterious chorus); and then finally, at the end, the complete sacrificial hymn. Don't you think this could become a new kind of cantata? As a matter of course there is an instrumental introduction, and the whole thing is vivid enough.

To Goethe at the same time he wrote, in more restrained terms, of wanting 'to compose…a kind of grand cantata with orchestra, and the merry beginning of spring, the witchery and devilish magic, and the recurrent solemn sacrificial chorus could provide the opportunity for the most beautiful music'. By July he reported it finished in a letter to his friend, Eduard Devrient, 'another large composition that may also have some broader effect…I started on it just because I liked it and it spoke to me; I wasn't considering it for performance. But now that it is completed before me I see that it would work very well as a grand concert composition'. Devrient sang the solo baritone role of the druid priest when the cantata was first performed with full orchestra as the finale in the last of three benefit concerts conducted by Mendelssohn in Berlin during the winter of 1833. It was included with others of his own works, alongside works by Bach, Beethoven Gluck, Mozart and Weber. Placing it in such august company indicates the scale of Mendelssohn's continuing ambition at this still early stage of his career and may also explain the mixed critical reception it received. Neither Goethe nor Zelter heard the finished work: both had died in the spring of 1832, and Mendelssohn hesitated over preparing the work for publication. This was not uncharacteristic; his ambition was qualified by persistent self-doubt, which manifested itself as an incessant wish to revise his work. In the case of this piece, it may also have resulted from Goethe's rather delphic attempt to explain that his poem,

> which no one has been able to make anything out of…is intended as elevated symbolism in the literal sense. For in the history of the world it must eternally be repeated that something old, established, proven, reassuring will be compacted, pushed aside, dislocated, and, if not abolished, then corralled into the tightest space by emergent new forces. The middle period, in which the hatred is still capable of reacting, and still may do so, is presented here succinctly enough, and a joyous, indestructible enthusiasm flares up once again with brilliance and clarity.

It is presumably the symbolism of paganism that Goethe seeks to elevate in writing the ballad. It implies 'succinctly enough' the idea that the early Christians' 'emergent new forces' of belief had 'corralled into the tightest space' the 'established, proven, reassuring' rituals of the pagans' religious practices. At the same time, it also suggests the 'brilliance and clarity' of enlightenment rationalism's contemporary challenge to the absolutist claims of monotheistic religious ideologies by

Copper engraving by W. Jury after Johann Heinrich Ramberg - Walpurgis Night Scene from Faust

reconsidering sympathetically the coherent world view of the pagans' humane pantheism.

These suggestions would almost certainly have been inflected in Mendelssohn's thinking with the implications of his childhood conversion to Christianity from the Judaism into which he was born. Jewish-Christian cultural relations in Biedermeier Germany were changing and developing in subtle and complex ways during the lifetimes of both Goethe and Mendelssohn, the latter having inherited from his family a particularly sophisticated legacy of religious identity. His paternal grandfather, Moses Mendelssohn, was one of the most influential of post-enlightenment eighteenth century German philosophers and, with the publication of his treatise *Jerusalem*, in 1784, argued that the worldly truth of Judaism was a basis for its compatibility with modern life. Modernization of Jewish life should be seen as a condition of contemporary Jewish emancipation, the enactment of which should involve secularisation of Jewish culture. In its commitment to rationalism and its concession to secularisation, this proposal was seen as constituting a controversial rejection of orthodoxy as tradition in favour of reform as engagement with modernity. Moses's son Abraham took this dialectical argument further through what he saw as the progressive conversion of his children, Felix and Fanny. Each generation of the family, thus, had sought to confront the tension between modernity and tradition in a new, and thoughtfully modern way. In doing so, they had made important contributions to the continuing debate on the relationship between religious affiliation and modern German identity.

In related ways, this was a focus of concern for both Goethe and Mendelssohn. Both were committed to open engagement with other cultures through active translation in their own art forms of foreign works. Bedermeier Germany sought to articulate a distinctively German culture by differentiating its character in contrast to expressive work from other cultures and belief systems. Differences were explored through engaging with aesthetic work in other cultures (Goethe and Mendelssohn both showed a critical interest in Islamic art) and historical differences that had evolved in central European culture. Goethe had, in his two dramatic versions of *Faust*, already dramatized the mysteries of Walpurgisnacht as the scene with which Mephistopheles attempts to seduce the ambitiously inquiring Faust into the wanton delights of primitive paganism. His poetic ballad on the same theme can be seen as a further attempt to realise paganism as a sense of otherness to the dominant Lutheran Christianity of his time. That would surely have appealed to Mendelssohn as he began his initial setting of it and may well have been an increasing preoccupation for him by providing a sense of otherness to his own Judaeo-Christian identity. It may be also part of the dissatisfaction with his early setting which led him to postpone publication and to begin a process of revision over the following decade until he had produced a work that he described as 'in a rather different habit than the previous version' which was 'much better… everything that was good…has been retained and has only now attained its rightful significance'.

That Mendelssohn should have returned to the work at the height of his career surely underlines its significance for him. He conducted the premiere at the close of a concert in February, 1843 to an enthusiastic reception. One critic referred to it as an 'extraordinarily lovely thing…so fresh and healthy… that brought such joy to one's heart'. Even more enthusiastic was Hector Berlioz, who heard it in rehearsal and 'was astounded…by the grandeur of the work'.

> I am strongly inclined to regard it as the finest thing that Mendelssohn has done…The score is of impeccable clarity, notwithstanding the complexity of the writing. Voices and instruments are completely integrated, and interwoven with an apparent confusion which is the perfection of art…One does not know which to praise most… the orchestral or the choral writing, or the whirling momentum and sweep of the whole.

It is organised in nine numbers, preceded by a symphonic overture of two movements. The first, (Das schlechte Wetter/Bad Weather), marked *Allegro con fuoco* is considerably longer than the second, (Der Übergang zum Frühling/The Coming of Spring), marked *Allegro vivace non troppo*. In both parts Mendelssohn uses vivid orchestral tone colours, in what by now had become a familiar manner in his work (*Hebrides Overture, Calm Seas and a Prosperous Voyage*), to provide a sound portrait of natural elements. Here they characterise the seasonal passage from the stormy rigours of winter atop the Brocken to the gentle awakening of spring, setting a musical picture as background to the cantata's choral action, in which the heathen Druids resume their annual covert rituals.

The first number (Es lacht der Mai/May is laughing) opens with a tenor solo as a Druid priest announces spring's advent and urges fellow heathens to hasten up the mountains and celebrate their ancient sacred rite. The chorus responds with rising religious fervour, resolving to follow him to praise the Allvater, the Lord of All. By contrast, the second number (Könnt ihr so verwegen handeln/How can you behave so boldly) strikes a warning note: an alto solo representing a woman of the people, ominously reminds the heathens of the risks they are taking; the Christian conquerors have forbidden them to perform their rites. The chorus of women repeat her message that by persisting with their worship, the heathens court certain doom and the slaughter of their families. The third number (Wer Opfer heut zu bringen scheut/He who shies away from sacrifice today) opens with a Druid priest defying the warning with the challenge that whoever hesitates to make the sacrifice deserves to be a slave (verdient erst seine Bande). The chorus respond with vigour, dutifully collecting wood to make a sacrificial pyre. The priest cautions them to remain hidden in the grove until nightfall, with guards posted to keep watch. The fourth number (Verteilt euch, wackre Männer hier/ Spread out here brave men) opens with the chorus of guards tiptoeing out of the grove, urging one another in a whispering staccato to secure its perimeter and safeguard the wood gatherers. In a bass recitative, a Druid guard opens the fifth number (Diese dumpfen Pfaffenchristen/ These foolish cleric-Christians) with a challenge to his fellows to scare the persecuting Christians by threatening them with the noisy presence of the devil they are so afraid of. In a martial staccato, he proposes they make a great racket by charging noisily at night with prongs, pitchforks and flares through the narrow mountain gorge, rattling clapsticks and setting night birds to an accompanying clamour. At the same allegro tempo, the chorus of guards takes up the challenge, reciting it as they set determinedly about their tasks with cries of 'Kommt!' A furious orchestral introduction, marked *Allegro molto*, begins the sixth number (Kommt mit Zacken und mit Gabeln/Come with prongs and pitchforks), before the heathen people join the chorus of guards in their clamorous terrorising, urging owls and ravens to howl with them. The full chorus sing at varying fast tempi and loud dynamics, alternately in pairs of male and female voice parts and full harmony, to bring to a triumphant conclusion the routing of their foes. This lengthy and chorally taxing movement brings the first part of the work to a rousing conclusion.

The seventh movement (So weit gebracht/It's come to this) begins with a marked change of mood, from aggression to devotion, marking the beginnings of the forbidden ritual worship of the Druids'Allvater. At a sombre *Andante maestoso*, the Druid priest reflects on the sad necessity that their rites must be performed in secret and by night. In a dialogue with the chorus, their faith is affirmed with the assertion that their prayers bring the daylight of Allvater's purifying flame. For though their enemies forbid their ancient customs, they cannot deprive them of the light of their faith, which will shine on them forever. A Christian guard's cry for help opens the eighth number (Hilf, ach hilf mir, Kriegsgeselle/Help, oh help me, comrade in war), which attests to the success of the Druids' devilish diversions. Joined by the chorus he cries out at apparitions of the denizens of hell, wolves in human shape and female dragons flying past and the sounds of the devil himself, in flames and howling from above as the breath of hell boils beneath. They rush away with increasingly faint, terrified cries of 'Lasst uns fliehn'. At a renewed *Andante maestoso*, the full chorus of Druids and heathens begin the hymn which closes the cantata (Die Flamme reinigt sich vom rauch/The flame is cleansed of smoke). In dialogue with their priest they celebrate the clearing of the smoke of persecution from the purifying flame of their faith, asserting once again that though they may be prevented from performing their ancient rites, they cannot be deprived of the illumination of their beliefs by Allvater's everlasting light. Their song of praise closes confidently with a simple statement of their faith: 'Dein Licht, wer kann es rauben!'.

Paul Filmer

November 2017

Overtüre
1] Das schlechte Wetter
2] Der Übergang zum Frühling

1
Ein Druide
Es lacht der Mai!
Der Wald ist frei
Von Eis und Reifgehänge.
Der Schnee ist fort!
Am grünen Ort
Erschallen Lugesänge.
Ein reiner Schnee
Liegt auf der Höh;
Doch eilen wir nach oben,
Begehn den alten, heilgen Brauch
Allvater dort zu loben.
Die Flamme lodre durch den Rauch!
So wird das Herz erhoben.

Die Druiden
Die Flamme lodre durch den Rauch!
Begeht den alten, heilgen Brauch,
Allvater dort zu loben!
Hinauf! Hinauf nach oben!

2
Eine Frau aus dem Volke
Könnt ihr so verwegen handeln?
Wollt ihr denn zum Tode wandeln?
Kennet ihr nicht die Gesetze
Unsre strengen Überwinder?
Rings gestell sind ihre Netze
Auf die Heiden, auf die Sünder.
Ach, sie schlachten auf dem Walle
Unsre Weiber, unsre Kinder,
Und wir alle
Nahen uns gewissen Falle.

Chor der Weiber
Auf des Lagers hohen Walle
Schlachten sie schon unsre Kinder!
Ach, die strenge Überwinder!
Und wir alle
Nahen uns gewissen Falle.

3
Ein Druide
Wer Opfer heut
Zu bringen scheut

Overture
1] Bad Weather
2] The Coming of spring

1
A Druid
May is laughing!
The forest is free
Of ice and hoarfrost.
The snow is gone;
In the green fields
Songs of joy resound.
Pure snow
Lies on the mountain tops;
Let us hasten up there
To celebrate the ancient sacred rite,
To praise the Lord of All.
Let the flame blaze through the smoke!
And so lift up our hearts.

The Druids
Let the flame blaze through the smoke!
Celebrate the ancient sacred rite,
Of praising the Lord of All.
Away! Upwards to the heights!

2
A woman from the crowd
How can you behave so boldly?
Do you want to go to your death?
Don't you know the laws
Of our fierce conquerors?
Their snares have been set all around
For the pagans, for the sinners.
(Ah), on their ramparts they slaughter
Our women, our children,
And all of us
Approach our certain doom.

Chorus of Women
On the high ramparts of the camp
They are already slaughtering our children.
Oh, the fierce conquerors!
And all of us
Approach our certain doom.

3
A Druid
He who shies away
From sacrifice today

Verdient erst seine Bande.
Der Wald ist frei!
Das Holz herbei
Uns schichtet es zum Brande!
Doch bleiben wir
Im Buschrevier
Am Tage noch im stillen,
Und Männer stellen wir zur Hut
Um eurer Sorge willen.
Dann aber lasst mit frischen Mut
Uns unsere Pflicht erfüllen!

4
Chor der Wächter
Verteilt euch, wackre Männer, hier
Durch dieses ganz Waldrevier
Und wachet hier im stillen,
Wenn sie der Pflicht erfüllen!

5 Recitativo
Ein Wächter
Diese dumpfen Pfaffenchristen!
Lasst uns keck sie überlisten!
Mit dem Teufel, den sie fabeln,
Wollen wir sie selbst erschrecken.
Kommt! Mit Zacken und mit Gabeln
Und mit Glut und Klapperstöcken
Lärmen wir bei nächter Weile
Durch die engen Felsenstrecken.
Kauz und Eule
Heul in unser Rundgeheule!

6
Chor der Wächter
Kommt mit Zacken und mit Gabeln
Wie der Teufel, den sie fabeln,
Und mit wilden Klapperstöken
Durch die leeren Felsenstrecken.
Kauz und Eule
Heul in unser Rundgeheule!

7
Ein Druide
So weit gebracht
Dass wir bei Nacht
Allvater heimlich singen!
Doch ist es Tag,
Sobald man mag
Ein reines Herz dir bringen.
Du kannst zwar heut

Deserves to be a slave.
The forest is free!
Fetch wood here
And build a fire!
But let us stay
In the bushy area
Quietly while it is still day,
And we'll put men on guard
To ease your fears.
But then let us fulfil our duty
With renewed zeal!

4
Chorus of the Watchmen
Spread out here, brave men,
Throughout this forest grove,
And quietly keep watch here
While they fulfil their duty!

5 Recitativo
A Watchman
These foolish cleric-Christians!
Let's outwit them with boldness!
Let's frighten them
With their own fabled devil.
Come! With prongs and pitchforks
And with fire and rattling sticks
Let's make a noise during our night-watch
Along the narrow rocky paths.
Screeching owls
Howl along with us!

6
Chorus of the Watchmen
Come with prongs and pitchforks
Like their fabled devil,
With wild rattling sticks
Along the empty rocky paths.
Screeching owls
Howl along with us!

7
A Druid
It's come to this:
That we sing to the Lord of All
In secret and by night!
But daylight breaks
When a pure heart
Is offered up to you
Today and any day

Und manche Zeit
Dem Feinde viel erlauben.
Die Flamme reinigt sich vom Rauch:
So reinig unsem Glauben!
Und raubt man uns den alten Brauch:
Dein Licht, wer will es rauben?

8
Ein christlicher Wächter
Hilf, ach hilf mir; Kriegsgeselle!
Ach, es kommt die ganze Hölle!
Sieh, wie die verhexten Leiber
Durch und durch von Flamme glühen!
Menschenwölf und Drachenweiber,
Die im Flug vorüberziehen!
Welch entsetzliches Getöse!
Lasst uns, lasst uns alle fliehen!
Oben flammt und saust der Böse;
Aus dem Boden
Dampfet rings ein Höllenbroden.

Chor der christlichen Wächter
Schreckliche, verhexte Leiber,
Menschenwölf und Drachenweiber!
Welch entsetzliches Getöse!
Sieh, da flammt, da zieht der Böse;
Aus dem Boden
Dampfet rings ein Höllenbroden.
Lasst uns fliehn!

9
Chor der Druiden
Die Flamme reinigt sich vom Rauch:
So reinigt unsem Glauben!
Und raubt man uns den alten Brauch:
Dein Licht, wer kann es rauben!

You can allow the enemy
Great scope.
The flame is cleansed of smoke;
Thus cleanse our faith as well!
And though we are robbed of our ancient rite,
Who would rob us of your light?

8
A Christian Guard
Help! oh help me, comrade in war!
Alas, all hell is approaching!
Look how their accursed bodies
Are engulfed in flames!
Wolf-men and dragon-women
Fly about overhead!
What a frightful noise!
Let us flee, one and all!
The Evil One blazes and howls above,
From the ground
A broth of hell steams all around.

Chorus of the Christian Guards
Terrible, accursed bodies,
Wolf-men and dragon-women!
What a frightful noise!
Look at the flames, the Evil One emerges!
From the ground
A broth of hell steams all around.
Let us run away!

9
Chorus of the Druids
The flame is cleansed of smoke:
Thus cleanse our faith as well!
And though we are robbed of our ancient rite,
Who would rob us of your light!

Translation by Roy and Joan Reardon, 2017

INTERVAL
During the 20-minute interval, members of the audience are requested not to enter the performing area.

BYZANTIUM
BEAT DÄHLER

Beat Dähler (b.1959): Byzantium (2017)

A Cantata for Alto, Tenore & Basso-Solo, Mixed Voices and Orchestra (Lyrics by William Butler Yeats, 1933).

Byzantium received its premiere at the concert given jointly by the Contrapunto Chor and North London Chorus in Zurich on November 11th 2017. Beat Dähler writes of his setting:

The symbolism of Yeats's *Byzantium* immediately fascinated me. Even though as a non-native English speaker the text wasn't always easy to understand, his strong, suggestive images struck me. The intellectual symbols held an unexpected melodious quality.

A bi-tonal chord (F-sharp major over C major – the largest harmonic distance) opens the composition, representing the 'unpurged images', but the 'images recede', and so the music becomes calm and moves into more melodious harmonies. Night falls. The star-studded sky, which spreads like an enormous dome, is accompanied by strains of soft string and harp. But the lyrics do not only speak of a romantic moonlit night, the dome despises 'all that man is' and so the music becomes fiercer.

In an echo of the words of the second verse, the orchestra provides a shadowy accompaniment to the baritone soloist. Only in the double invocation of the 'superhuman' does the sound intensify. Yeats uses the word 'superhuman' to suggest a ghostly figure, implying that such a state is only achievable after death. This somewhat vague notion is enhanced by the accompanying chords which cannot be assigned to an exact key. However, from the melody springs hope.
The golden bird of the third verse is for me a key figure. The brass open the movement almost with a fanfare in a 5/4 beat in reference to the 'glory of changeless metal'. This is then repeated by the woodwind and picked up by the whole orchestra on the choir's entrance. The movement alludes with contrapuntal composition to 'all complexities of mire and blood' and leads into a wild *fortissimo* combining both choir and orchestra.

The flute solo at the beginning of the fourth verse interprets the dancing flames of the 'Emperor's pavement. The syncopated rhythms of the strings bring the flames of purgatory to a climax as they accompany the alto and tenor soloists. Unclean spirits must go through a spiritual fire to become clean, to rise again as 'superhumans'. The paralysing 'agony of trance' and 'agony of flame' take up the opening chords of the movement, thus creating an ABA-format. The final movement speaks of spirits carried through the seas of time to Byzantium by dolphins, to be forged by smithies in the art of eternity.
A possible interpretation could be that the spirits are being carried to their final resting place as in classic mythology. It is to this inner resting place that the sounds of the cantata lead. The work closes with a final uprising of the 'gong-tormented sea', which refers back to the opening chord at the beginning of the piece.

Although Yeats described himself as the last Romanticist, he writes and thinks as a poet of the 20th century. Thus I attempted to combine romantic tone language, which is close to my musician's heart, with modern compositional techniques and with jazz or popular music elements. I composed the first, second and last verses as individual but interrelated movements to be played 'attaca'. From the five verses arose a three-part format with the pivotal motive of the golden bird in the middle.

Beat Dähler, October 2017

Translation: Nicola Fielder

Some notes on symbolism in Yeats' Byzantium

Yeats's poem is full of mythological references and allusions and he would certainly have been familiar with Sir James Frazer's late 19th/early 20th century multi-volume compendium of myth, entitled *The Golden Bough*. The title refers to the branch which, according to Virgil, Aeneas broke from a tree in the grove of Nemi, near Rome, devoted to the worship of the goddess Diana. Armed with this 'golden bough', Aeneas was able to enter the underworld and explore the mythic figures, events and institutions which Frazer recounts. Yeats' citation of 'the starlit golden bough' on which is planted the miraculous 'bird or golden handiwork' is surely a suggestive key to mythology as one resource for allusive meanings in the poem.

Another key to some of the poem's apparently obscure and puzzling references can be found in his earlier poem *Sailing to Byzantium,* written when he was 62, to which *Byzantium,* written three years later, is clearly related: it continues, perhaps concludes the narrative of the earlier poem, sharing and elaborating its mythic imagery. Both poems can be seen as reflections on the experience of ageing, the opening line of *Sailing…* declaring 'This is no country for old men.' Once arrived in Byzantium, the final stanza proposes, his body will not take a natural form but one such 'as Grecian goldsmiths make/Of hammered gold and gold enamelling' which will 'keep a drowsy Emperor awake;/Or set upon a golden bough to sing/To lords and ladies of Byzantium/Of what is past, or passing, or to come'. *Sailing…* is surely a song about what is past, and *Byzantium* sings of both what is passing and what may be to come, as an afterlife.

However, the spectacle presented by the opening of *Byzantium* does not seem to be a realisation, at least in what is passing, of the ambitions held for the soul in *Sailing…* Rather, it calls to mind St Theresa of Avila's apocryphal caution to be careful what you wish for… Yeats himself, in a lecture he gave in America in 1932 makes clear his metaphorical sense of Byzantium (and by implication also the Byzantine) as representing a kind of style:

> …style, whether in life or literature, comes, I think, from excess, from that something over and above utility which wrings the heart. In my later poems I have called it Byzantium, that city where the saints showed their wasted forms upon a background of gold mosaic, and an artificial bird sang upon a tree of gold in the presence of the emperor; and in one poem I have pictured the ghosts swimming, mounted upon dolphins, through the sensual seas, that they may dance upon its pavements.

This statement offers us a strong basis for interpretation of stanzas 2,3,4 and 5 of the poem. The first stanza describes Byzantium as it confronts the arriving narrator: here, 'The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed', the 'images of day' are receding 'unpurged' and the 'starlit or moonlit dome' of night 'disdains/all that man is, /All mere complexities, /The fury and mire of human veins' – still flowing, living human blood, then, but of experiences of rage and dirt and, almost certainly, death. These invocations of complexity, fury and blood are central to the poem and recur thematically in the last two stanzas, 4 and 5. In 4, '… blood-begotten spirits come/And all complexities of fury leave' the Emperor's pavement, where burns a self-renewing, seemingly eternal flame 'that cannot singe a sleeve'. In 5, 'mire and blood' are of 'the dolphin', on which 'spirit after spirit' are 'astraddle'; the 'bitter furies of complexity' are broken by 'Marbles of the dancing floor' into self-refreshing images of a sea that is 'dolphin-torn…gong-tormented'.

An image also present in the opening and closing stanzas is that of the gong: in the first it is the 'great cathedral gong' after which 'Night resonance recedes' and the 'night-walkers' song' is heard; in the last, the 'dolphin-torn' sea in which the flood of 'Spirit after spirit' are 'Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood' is 'gong-tormented'. Meanwhile, stanza 4 has announced that it is 'midnight on the Emperor's pavement', which suggests that the cathedral gong has run its full sequence of twelve chimes, preceded also, perhaps, by four chimes for each of the preceding quarter-hours, amounting to a possible twenty-eight gong-chimes – enough, surely and under the particular circumstances evoked by the poem, to amount to a torment of sound. The dolphin in Graeco-Roman mythology is frequently evoked as a symbol of resurrection, so the 'blood-begotten spirits…Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood' are souls released by death and seeking purgatorial purification through the cleansing fire of 'Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit…flames begotten of flame…that cannot singe a sleeve'. This self-renewing, purgatorial 'agony of flame' will ensure that 'All complexities of fury leave,/Dying into a dance,/An agony of trance', released into a transcendent flood, broken by 'The golden smithies of the Emperor', their 'bitter furies of complexity' also broken by 'Marbles of the dancing floor' releasing images that, like the 'flames begotten of flame' are 'Those images that yet/Fresh images beget' and which sustain the

continuing flood of spirits in search of purgatory, borne on the 'dolphin-torn' and 'gong-tormented sea' through which the narrator has himself presumably sailed to reach Byzantium.

The Emperor's smithies are important as creators of imagery that gives form to desire. The core, third stanza of *Byzantium* opens by planting 'on the starlit golden bough' one of their created forms - 'a 'bird or golden handiwork, /More miracle than bird or handiwork' which has a dual quality, as both an imaginative symbol and a material phenomenon. Mythically, it 'Can like the cocks of Hades crow,' or, embittered by the cold light of the moon's reality, it can '…scorn aloud/In glory of changeless metal/common bird or petal/And all complexities of mire and blood'. In classical mythology, Hades is the god of the dead, but also of renewal and hence of fertility, prosperity and wealth – his place in the pantheon is shared with Pluto. Cocks, as symbols of fertility, were a common sacrifice made to both deities. The cock's crow, thus, is both a scream (rattle?) of death and the defiantly scornful cry of the great leveller, of the finality and dominion of death over life, as well as signifying the art-full triumph of 'golden handiwork' over 'common bird or petal'. At the centre of the poem and in the midst of the narrator's Byzantine uncertainty and ignorance that permeate his quest for transcendence, it has a sense of ambiguity which carries both possible meanings. As creators of imaginative symbols, the Emperor's smithies are also responsible for the 'Marbles of the dancing floor' that is 'the Emperor's pavement' where '… flit…Flames begotten of flame' and '… images that yet/Fresh images beget'. Their craft is to conjure what, at the close of stanza 2 is introduced as the existential condition of the narrator, now arrived in Byzantium, before whom '…floats an image, man or shade, /Shade more than man, more image than a shade;'. Of the three ontic conditions proposed here (image, shade, man), image is dominant – that is, the product of imagination announced in the closing lines of the stanza: 'I hail the superhuman;/I call it death-in-life and life-in-death'. These dualistic images match, in different words, the complementary ambiguities of man-shade and shade-man in the stanza's opening lines.

However, the lines between these evocations offer an interesting anticipation of the imaginative art of the Emperor's smithies quite different from, though complememtary to the craft of precious metalwork: 'For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth/May unwind the winding path;/A mouth that has no moisture and no breath/Breathless mouths may summon;'. Among this complex of images, it would seem that 'the winding path' is the as-yet-unknown and impossible-to-predict path to transcendence sought by the narrator as the release for his soul. If the unwinding of the mummy-cloth bound around 'Hades' bobbin' may be the guide to that 'winding path' it cannot have to do with what might seem an obvious resonance with the reference in Sailing… to the place which was 'no country for old men and where an 'An aged man is but a paltry thing/', who is '…but a paltry thing,/A tattered coat upon a stick' whose 'mortal dress' may have been transfigured into the 'mummy-cloth' or shroud of the formerly aged (now dead?) man's corpse whose soul seeks release from Hades' kingdom. But if so it would surely have been put to another and better use before being bound around Hades' bobbin, a use which would remedy the crucial lack in that country which is not for old men, and from which the narrator has sailed to Byzantium. That country had lacked 'Monuments of unageing intellect'. A 'bobbin bound in mummy-cloth' could well be such a monument if it were a scroll containing ancient, sacred, mythological, imaginative literature. This would make the Emperor's smithies, like Yeats himself, literary as well as sculptural artists, writing and recording mythic symbols - the work and worth of unageing intellect being, presumably, the occult, transcendent exploration of spiritual as opposed to physical life, of eternity rather than finality, of the ultimate and beyond rather than the present and its immediate future. Its monuments, as works of literary art, recorded on the mummy-cloth wound around Hades' bobbin, constitute a guide to this winding path of conjectural exploration which their unwinding will reveal. The written symbolic words of literary art constitute, as representations of actual or imagined speech or poetic song, 'A mouth that has no moisture and no breath'; but in being read, heard and responded to, they summon other 'Breathless mouths' in reciprocally creative, regenerative acts like those purifying 'flames begotten of flame' and '… images that yet/Fresh images beget,'. These words and images are the 'marbles of the dancing floor', 'Those images that yet/Fresh images beget,' in that style which Yeats says is in excess of utility and 'which wrings the heart'. They populate symbolically the 'dancing floor' onto which the 'blood-begotten spirits' come to perform their danse macabre of 'death-in-life and life-in-death'. Here they are 'Dying into a dance,/An agony of trance,/An agony of flame…', from which, purified, they emerge as transcendent and superhuman spirits, purged and freed from all the 'bitter furies…of complexities of mire and blood'.

Paul Filmer
October, 2017

Byzantium - A Choral Cantata

The unpurged images of day recede;"
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance recedes, night-walkers' song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins.

Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the starlit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood,
The golden smithies of the Emperor!
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

Text by W B Yeats

DANSE MACABRE
SAINT-SAËNS

Camile Saint-Saëns (1835-1921): Dance Macabre, op. 40 (1874)
Solo violin: Eleanor Gilchrist

Saint-Saëns first wrote this *Danse* in 1872 as an art-song for voice and piano, setting a poem, "Egalité, Fraternité…" by Henri Cazalis. Two years later he extended it into an orchestral tone poem, replacing the voice with a solo violin.

According to mediaeval legend, the figure of Death appears annually at midnight on Hallowe'en, calling the skeletons of the dead from their graves to dance with him to the tune of a fiddle until the rooster crows at dawn, when they return to their graves for another year.

The work opens with a single note, plucked twelve times on the harp, accompanied by soft strings, to signal midnight. A solo violin then plays a dissonant tritone – the 'diabolus in musica' which, according to baroque convention, is the musical representation of the devil. Two themes follow: the first on solo flute, the second on solo violin in a descending scale, accompanied again by soft strings. Passages from both themes interweave recurrently between different sections of the orchestra as the dance increases in energy and momentum, punctuated by the xylophone representing the shaking rattle of the dancing skeletons. After reaching a furiously abandoned, contrapuntal climax, the dance stops abruptly as an oboe sounds the cock's dawn crow and the skeletons return once more to their entombment.

IN WINDSOR FOREST
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958): In Windsor Forest, (1931)
A Cantata for Mixed Voices. Music adapted from the opera 'Sir John in Love'.

During the spring of 1913, Vaughan Williams worked as music director for Frank Benson's Shakespeare company at Stratford-upon-Avon. Their main production was The Merry Wives of Windsor, a comedy unique in Shakespeare's oeuvre for having been commissioned directly by Queen Elizabeth with the instruction to show Sir John Falstaff, the antihero of Henry IV, in love. For Benson's production, Vaughan Williams provided an arrangement for solo voice of the old English tune 'Greensleeves' which is twice referred to in Shakespeare's text and which Vaughan Williams used as an entre acte melody as well as a song for Mistress Ford in Act III and an instrumental prelude to the closing scene of the play in Windsor forest.

Whatever may have been the Queen's intentions or expectations, Shakespeare's reinvention of Falstaff for The Merry Wives… is no longer as the jovial, quick-witted, humorous and face-saving rascal of the earlier plays. Abandoned by his princely protector who has fulfilled his self-redeeming promise to become a strong monarch, Falstaff has now become 'out at heels' and is paying court to the wives of two gentlemen at Windsor, Ford and Page, who control their husbands' wealth and to whom he sends identical love letters, boasting: "I will be cheaters to them both and they shall be exchequers to me". But just as Prince Hal has discarded Falstaff, so Falstaff has rejected his own followers, Bardolph and Pistol, who vengefully denounce him to Mistresses Ford and Page. This makes for great comedic potential which Shakespeare realises by exposing the self-regarding Falstaff to ridicule and indignity.

In a prolific period, a decade after his work with Benson, Vaughan Williams began an operatic version of The Merry Wives…, focussing on Falstaff, which he entitled initially The Fat Knight. At the same time (1924-8) he composed Job, a masque for dancing, based on William Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job, and his one-act opera of J.M. Synge's play, Riders to the Sea, in which he began to engage with modernist compositional practice. Although the sombre character of these two works was in marked contrast to the comic elements at the core of his setting of Falstaff's exploitative amorous adventures, those, too had a serious element in depicting the pathos of the unremitting humiliation of the fat

knight by the very women he sought to charm. It may have been because of this that Vaughan Williams decided to re-title the opera Sir John in Love. As well as reviving Queen Elizabeth's original instruction to Shakespeare, it made, he suggested, for a sense of a 'happier, sweeter work' whilst retaining its comedy and high spirits.

The opera was not a success, however. Notwithstanding its characteristically beautiful music and lovely tunes, reflecting the modal harmonies and flexible rhythms that Vaughan Williams so admired in early Tudor and Elizabethan sacred music, it is a cumbersome work. Its four acts, for twenty solo singers, mixed chorus and orchestra, include interpolations from other Shakespeare plays and from works by other authors of the mid-16th to mid-17th centuries. It was premiered at the Royal College of Music in March, 1929, conducted by Malcolm Sargent and published in 1930. Inevitably it was compared with Verdi's late triumph, Falstaff, which mined the comedic potential of Sir John's escapades to the full without trying to understand his scarcely plausible characterisation as a lover. Vaughan Williams' narrative, by contrast, had become embroiled in the farcical complexities of Shakespeare's underplot, ignored by Verdi, concerning the courting of Mistress Page's daughter, Anne, by three different suitors who, with Mistress Quickly, share a go-between in common. All is resolved in the final scene, set in Windsor Forest, but by then the opera has become littered with musically undeveloped minor characters and has quite lost its dramatic momentum.

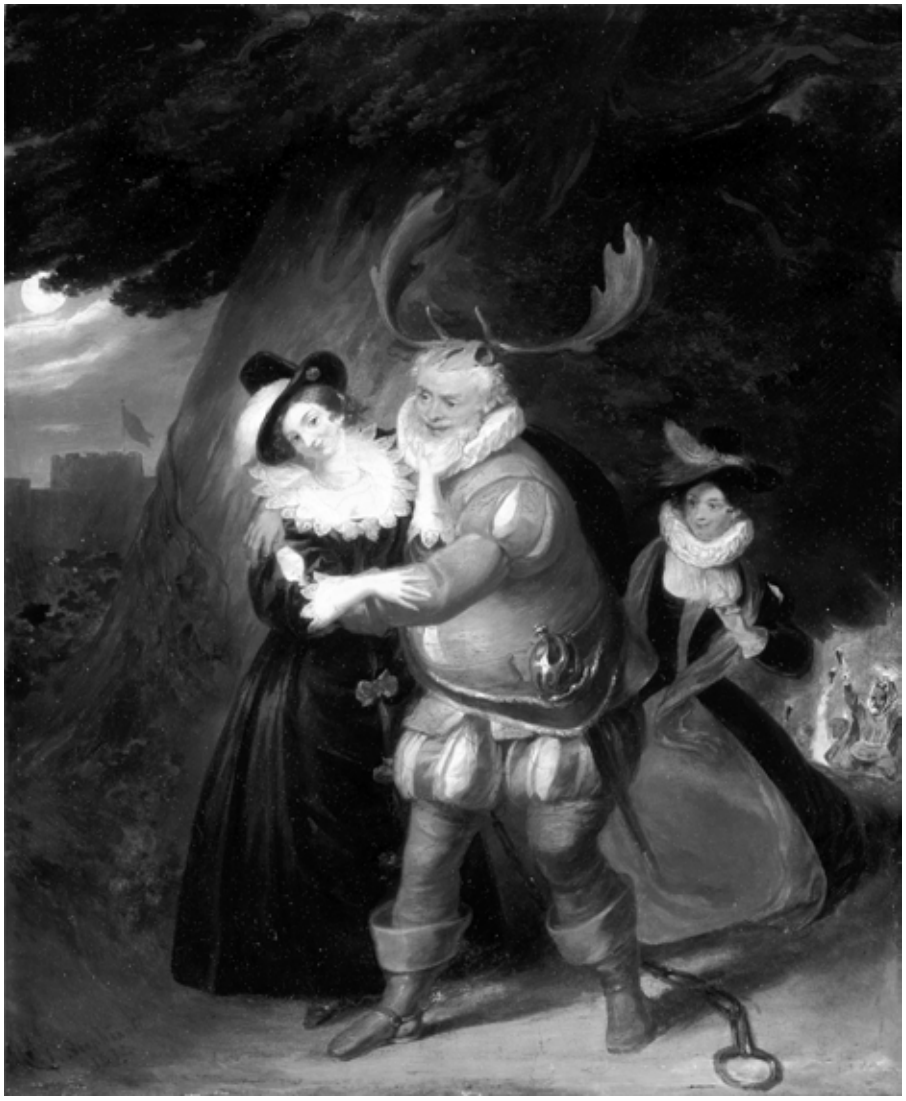
Resigned to the lack of critical acclaim, Vaughan Williams rearranged some of the music as a cantata in five sections for performance at Leith Hill Music Festival in 1931. Entitled In Windsor Forest, this was the first of several selections of his operatic choruses for concert performance, a practice which, though it proved popular and successful, he described ruefully as giving the public 'plums without cake'. These five pieces did not include 'Greensleeves' as they were intended, like all such selections, for performance by choirs alone, without need for soloists.

The opening number of the cantata is a choral setting in waltz rhythm for women's voices of 'Sigh no more, ladies', a song taken from Shakespeare's earlier comedy, Much Ado about Nothing, though set for Mistress Quickly in the opera. Aptly entitled 'The Conspiracy' it sets well the mood of The Merry Wives in counselling women against being saddened by men's promiscuous duplicity, to 'sing no-mo of dumps so heavy' but rather to convert their 'sounds of woe' into 'blithe and bonny' cries of 'hey hey, non-ny non-ny non-ny' and to take control of their own fate. Number 2, the 'Drinking Song', 'Back and sides go bare' is taken from 'Gammer Gurton's Needle' (1575), a pioneering native English comedy, usually attributed to one 'Mr S, Master of Arts'. This is thought to have been John Still (1543-1608) who was Bishop of Bath and Wells and a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, where the play was first performed. Vaughan Williams modulates the robustness of the song with some quieter, almost conversational passages which has made it a regular choice as a set piece for competitive performance by male voice choirs – regular, but not always popular. Its choice for the 1960 Welsh National Eisteddfod led to the withdrawal of the Trimsaran Male Voice Choir, a temperance ensemble, whose members objected to its celebration of drinking.

A more complex number in terms of both music and structure is 'Falstaff and the Fairies (Round about in a fair ring-a)', the third number, at the centre of the cantata's sequence of choruses. Vaughan Williams adds words and music from two of Shakespeare's contemporaries, the playwright John Lyly and psalmist Thomas Ravenscroft (a collector also of canons, catches and rhymes who was the first to publish 'Three Blind Mice'), to passages in his closing denouement of 'The Merry Wives…'. Falstaff is 'made an ass' by Ford, Page and their wives and children who, disguised variously as fairies, elves and hobgoblins, lure the hapless suitor, himself disguised as Herne, the hunter sporting a mythical buck's head, to a midnight tryst at a Windsor forest oak. There they mock him 'for his villainy' in song and dance, pinching him black and blue, burning and turning him about. The song moves from the opening gaiety of a ring dance to the fairy queen's severe command that her 'orphan heirs of fixed destiny,/Attend your office and your quality'. The fairies 'locked hand in hand' duly set themselves in order, and tenors and basses, accusingly, 'smell a man of middle earth. Vile worm…corrupt and tainted with desire'. This is Falstaff, of course, and it signals the entire chorus of judgmental taunters to 'sing a scornful rhyme; and as you sing, pinch him to your time…till candles and starlight and moonshine be out' at an increasing pace until closing breathlessly in a cascading glissando.

For all its distraction from the narrative, the intrigue of the opera's subplot surrounding the marriage of the Pages' daughter elicits for the fourth number one of Vaughan

Williams' loveliest tunes, a Wedding Song set to words of Ben Jonson ('See the Chariot at Hand'). Variously a bricklayer, soldier and actor, Jonson was trained intellectually as a classicist and became one of the most learned men of his time. A great champion of Shakespeare, he was appointed poet laureate to James I in 1616. He wrote one of the earliest of English grammars, displaying a native and commonsensical genius through which he helped to make the language a fluent and powerful means of thought and expression, enabling the development of a major tradition of English poetry. Vaughan Williams' setting of his 'Wedding Song', from one of his court masques, responds to this fluency at a beautifully measured andante moderato as the chorus harmonise a quietly exquisite realisation, through surprising metaphors, of love itself: 'All the gain, all the good of the elements' strife…O so soft, O so sweet…'.



The cantata's closing number is a complex setting of words by Thomas Campion and Philip Rossetter's 'Booke of Ayres', published in 1601. Rossetter was composer and lutenist at James I's court, where he would almost certainly have performed a setting of this song. The text, however, consists of the first two verses of a poem by his senior collaborator. Like Jonson, Campion was a prototypical Elizabethan man: lawyer and physician as well as poet and composer, and the only songwriter of his time who wrote words and musical accompaniments. In the preface of one of his later (1610-12) collections of airs he wrote: "I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to do that hath not power over both". He was the best poet of his time writing in the song tradition, insisting that "short airs, if they be skilfully framed and naturally expressed, are like quick and good epigrams in poesy, many of them showing as much artifice and breeding as great difficulty as a larger poem". Vaughan Williams titles his setting of 'Whether men do laugh or weep' fittingly as 'Epilogue'. It is one of Vaughan Williams' sturdiest tunes and the closing chorus of 'Sir John in Love'. Campion closes his poem with an uncertain verdict in which 'Powers above in clouds do sit,/ Mocking our poor apish wit', but by omitting this Vaughan Williams sustains more appropriately the Shakespearean conclusion of his Falstaffian melodrama that 'Vain opinion all doth sway,/And the world is but a play'.

Paul Filmer

November 2017

1 The Conspiracy

Sigh no more, ladies,
Ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe into
Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
Of dumps so dull and heavy,
The fraud of men was ever so
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe into
Hey nonny, nonny.

Men were deceivers ever.

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616), no title, appears in Much Ado About Nothing, Act II, Scene 3

2 Drinking song

Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.
Jolly good ale and old.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good.
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing acold;
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.
Jolly good ale and old.

I love no roast but a nutbrown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire,
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I no desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I would,
I am so wrapt, and throughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.
Back and side ...etc.

And Tib my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she, till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek.
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl,
Ev'n as a maltworm should;
And saith 'sweetheart, I've take my part
Of this jolly good ale and old.'

Now let them drink, till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do;
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to.
And all poor souls that have scoured black bowls,
Or have them lustily trowled,
God, save the lives of them and their wives
Whether they be young or old.
Back and side ...etc.

3 Falstaff and the fairies

Round about in a fair ring-a,
Thus we dance and thus we sing-a,
Trip and go, to and fro, over this green-a
All about, in and out over this green-a.
Fairies black, grey, green and white
You moonshine revellers and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
But till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter let us not forget.
Lock hand in hand, yourselves in order set,
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be
To guide our measure round about the tree.
About, fairies, about, about.

But stay! I smell a man of middle earth.
Vile worm, thou wast o'erlooked even in thy birth.
Corrupt, corrupt and tainted in desire!
A trial, come, come, will this wood take fire?
About him, fairies, sing a scornful rhyme;
And, as you sing, pinch him to your time.
Pinch him pinch him black and blue,
Saucy mortals must not view
What the Queen of stars is doing,
Nor pry into our fairy wooing.
Pinch him blue, and pinch him black
Let him not lack
Sharp nails to pinch him blue and red
Till sleep has rocked his addle head,
Pinch him fairies, mutually,
Pinch him for his villainy.
Pinch him and burn him and turn him about,
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

An amalgam of texts by Shakespeare (Merry Wives of Windsor, Act V, Scene 5), Ravenscroft's The Elves' Dance, and Lyly's Fairy Revels.

4 Wedding chorus
See the chariot at hand here of love
Wherein my lady rideth.
Each that draws is a swan or a dove,
And well the car Love guideth;
As she goes all hearts do duty
Unto her beauty;
And enamoured do wish, so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side
Through swords, through seas whither she would ride.
Do but look on her eyes,
They do light all that Love's world compriseth.
Do but look on her hair,
It is bright as Love's star when it riseth.
Do but mark, her forehead's smoother
Than words that soothe her;
And from her arched brows such a grace
Sheds itself through the face,
As alone there triumphs to the life,
All the gain, all the good of the elements' strife.
Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall of the snow
Before the soil hath smutched it?
Have you felt the wool of the beaver
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt of the bud of the brier
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white, O so soft, O so sweet is she!

5 Epilogue
Whether men do laugh or weep,
Whether they do wake or sleep,
Whether they die young or old,
Whether they feel heat or cold,
There is underneath the sun
Nothing in true earnest done.
All our pride is but a jest.
None are worst and none are best.
Grief and joy and hope and fear
Play their pageants ev'rywhere.
Vain opinion all doth sway,
And the world is but a play.

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Ann Beaton,
Helen Brown,
Rob Brown,
John Davies,
Vivienne Gross,
Vivienne Mitchell,
Jack Whitehead,
and those who wish to remain anonymous

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BIOGRAPHIES

EMMA CARRINGTON
MEZZO-SOPRANO

British Mezzo Emma Carrington has worked in opera and concert venues across the world, performing a huge variety of repertoire, all to critical acclaim. Emma is delighted to be making her Royal Opera House debut playing the Valkyrie Waltraüte in Keith Warner's production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* conducted by Antonio Pappano in Autumn 2018. Also for ROH she will understudy the roles of Erda *Das Rheingold/ Siegfried* and 1st Norn *Die Götterdämmerung*. Emma will return to English National Opera in early 2018 as Hippolyta *A Midsummer Night's Dream* having made her debut, to critical acclaim, as Queen Nefertiti in Glass's *Akhnaten* under the baton of Karen Kamensek. *Akhnaten* was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Emma was then chosen to be a soloist, appearing in cinemas across the globe for the BBC's *Shakespeare Live* as part of Shakespeare's 400th anniversary celebrations, with ENO and Mark Wigglesworth. A regular soloist at Welsh National Opera, she made her main stage debut as Mercedes in *Carmen*, shortly followed by Third Lady *Die Zaüberflöte*. Also for WNO she appeared alongside Bryn Terfel for the Millennium Centre's 10th anniversary celebrations as Schwertleite *Die Walküre*. She returned this summer to WNO to cover Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice* at ROH. Her international debut was made in Chile's only Opera House, Teatro di Santiago, as Baba the Turk *The Rake's Progress* with David Syrus conducting. Emma is equally at home in the concert hall, and has performed in prestigious venues such as the Wigmore Hall, The Birmingham Symphony Hall, The Sage, Cadogan Hall and in many of the UK's Cathedrals. Born in Hertfordshire, Emma completed her studies on the Opera Course at the Royal Academy of Music.

COLIN JUDSON
TENOR

Making frequent featured role appearances with the Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, and Covent Garden, as well as in France and in Canada, Colin Judson has established himself as a noteworthy tenor. Notable recent engagements include The High Priest in *Akhnaten* for English National Opera, Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger* and Schoolmaster in *Cunning Little Vixen* at the Glyndebourne Festival. Mr. Judson continued his 2017 season with Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* in the co-production between Caen, Reims, Rouen, Limoges and Luxembourg, in addition to Kuzka in *Khovanshchina* for the BBC Proms under Semyon Bychkov. In the Fall he appears with Toulon as Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* and Goro in *Madama Butterfly* and will make his North American debut as Laca in *Jenufa* with Pacific Opera Victoria. In 2018, Colin appears with ENO as Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Colin debuted at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Pang (*Turandot*) and returned for Vogelgesang (*Die Meistersinger* - conducted by Pappano) and Monostatos in David McVicar's *Die Zauberflöte*. For Glyndebourne Festival, roles have included Squeak in *Billy Budd* (Elder), Vogelgesang in *Die Meistersinger* (Jurowski), Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Ticciati), Remendado in *Carmen* (Jordan), and Bardolfo in *Falstaff* (Elder). A favourite at English National Opera, his roles include Third Jew in *Salome*, Don Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Tchekalinsky in *Queen of Spades*. Further credits: Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Opera North, Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* for Scottish Opera, and Nick in *La Fanciulla del West* (Corti) at the Edinburgh Festival. In Europe, he has appeared in Lisbon, Strasbourg, Helsinki, Madrid, Amsterdam, Limoges, Lyon and for Oper der Stadt Köln in Germany.

Concert engagements include the Verdi *Requiem* (Hereford Cathedral), Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (Brighton Festival), Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Britten's *War Requiem* at the Megaron in Athens.

JAMES CLEVERTON
BARITONE

British baritone James Cleverton studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Zürich Opera's International Opera Studio. James made his Royal Opera House debut as Gregorio *Roméo et Juliette* and his English National Opera debut as J.Robert Oppenheimer in John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* conducted by Lawrence Renes.

Previous seasons highlights include Marcello *La bohème* and Sharpless *Madama Butterfly* both at the Royal Albert Hall for Raymond Gubbay; Count Asdrubale in Rossini's *La Pietra del Paragone* for Opernhaus Zürich and Opéra de Rennes; Papageno *Die Zauberflöte* for Theater Saint Gallen; Il Conte *Le Nozze di Figaro*; the title role in *Don Giovanni* and Danilo in Lehar's *The Merry Widow* at the Dublin National Concert Hall for Lyric Opera Ireland; Ford *Falstaff* for Grange Park Opera; Silvio *I Pagliacci* for English Touring Opera and Hanoi Opera; Escamillo in *Carmen* in South Africa; Second Apprentice and cover of the title role in Berg's *Wozzeck* for ENO and the BBCSSO; and The Forester *The Cunning Little Vixen* for the Oundle International Festival. Other roles include Aeneas *Dido and Aeneas*; Enrico *Lucia di Lammermoor*; Eisenstein and Falke *Die Fledermaus*; Malatesta *Don Pasquale*; Schaunard *La bohème* and the title role in *Eugene Onegin*.

Recent engagements include a critically acclaimed return to ENO as Horemheb in Philip Glass's *Akhnaten*; The Protector in George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* and Pablo in the UK premiere of Adès's *The Exterminating Angel,* Royal Opera House; Bussy in a new production of Leoncavallo's *Zaza*, Opera Holland Park, and his Scottish Opera and Welsh National Opera debuts. On the concert platform he regularly performs as the baritone soloist in the Last Night of the Easter/ Autumn/Christmas/New Year Proms and the Classical Spectaculars for Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and in Birmingham Symphony Hall with the CBSO.

BEAT DÄHLER
CONDUCTOR

Beat Dähler studied piano and organ in his home city of Zurich. He completed his studies at the Akademie für Schul- und Kirchenmusik Luzern, majoring in conducting.

Beat performs regularly as a conductor of choirs and orchestras, and as a pianist and keyboard player. He composes and arranges classical music, as well as music for musicals, and pop and rock music. He works as a studio musician, produces CD recordings and teaches at secondary schools and higher education institutions. He is also a parish choirmaster.

Beat has composed five musicals which were premiered successfully in Switzerland. He is in demand as a conductor and arranger for TV shows and musicals. As a member of the Redaktions- und Musikkommission (Editorial and Music Commission) he shares responsibility for the publication and organisation of musical scores and training course opportunities in several cantons and national institutions.

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 (1983–1988) and then working for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and, as Musical Director, Opera Brava. Since returning to ENO in 1995, he has appeared in *Mahagonny*, *The Silver Tassie*, Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, *The Rake's Progress* and *Trial by Jury*; as Senior Répétiteur his productions over 24 seasons have included Phyllida Lloyd's *Ring Cycle* and Terry Gilliam's *The Damnation of Faust*; as Assistant Conductor he worked on, most recently, *Sweeney Todd* (with Emma Thompson and Bryn Terfel), *The Barber of Seville*, *Akhnaten*, *Sunset Boulevard* (starring Glenn Close),*The Pearlfishers* and *Carousel*. In 2013 he played the solo piano in a revival of Deborah Warner's production of Britten's *Death in Venice* (available on DVD). He has conducted *La bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box); Salieri *Falstaff*, Haydn *La vera costanza*, Mozart *Apollo and Hyacinth*, Gluck *Le cinesi* (Bampton Classical Opera), and for ENO, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers*, *Kismet* and, in April and May this year, two performances of *Carousel* starring Katherine Jenkins and Alfie Boe. In July 2010 he was Associate Conductor of *The Duchess of Malfi* by Torsten Rasch (ENO/Punchdrunk). Other highlights include assisting the composer John Adams and conducting on location for the Channel 4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and *Pierrot Lunaire* with Björk at the Verbier Festival. In September 2012 he assisted John Adams once again on *Nixon in China* at the BBC Proms and the Berlin Philharmonie. In February 2009 Murray completed an eight-month sabbatical from ENO as Musical Director of *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium, conducting over 170 performances. He has been Musical Director of NLC since January 2003 and of the Pink Singers, Europe's longest running LGBT choir, since November 2010 and this season he has also been working with the East London Chorus and ENO's Community Choir. Other recent and upcoming projects include a visit to Mumbai with the Pink Singers, working on the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Marnie* (ENO) and assisting on *Satyagraha* (ENO).

Murray Hipkin is a member of English National Opera and appears by permission.

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

We are a talented and versatile amateur choir and have established a reputation for performances of a high standard since our first concert in 1977 under the direction of the late Alan Hazeldine. Our Musical Director since 2003 has been Murray Hipkin, Senior Répétiteur at English National Opera and also Musical Director of London's longest running LGBT choir, The Pink Singers. Murray's considerable experience of both choral music and opera, together with his enthusiasm and skills as teacher and conductor have enabled NLC to flourish through the development of an exciting and ambitious programme of performances drawn from the choral repertoire of the 16th to 21st centuries, as well as specially commissioned work from contemporary composers. The choir benefits greatly from working with our Vocal Consultants Mark Oldfield and Andrea Brown, and is privileged to have as its Patrons the renowned operatic soprano Janis Kelly, recently appointed Professor at the Royal College of Music, and the baroque musicologist and Handel scholar and performer Laurence Cummings. Both perform regularly with us: in 2015 we were delighted to have Janis sing with us in Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral and Laurence conduct us in a workshop and concert performance of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in London.

We rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley and on additional Wednesdays as concert dates approach. We give public concerts three times a year, usually to a full house at St James Church in Muswell Hill, though we are beginning to explore performing at larger venues in Central London after a successful performance of Brahms' *German Requiem* with the Berlin choir Cantus Domus at Milton Court in the Barbican Centre in 2014. This reciprocal visit by Cantus Domus was the follow-up to our visit to Berlin in November 2013 to perform the *War Requiem* with them at the Berliner Konzerthaus.

Following on from that very positive experience we have developed a triennial reciprocal touring programme with choirs in other countries. This concert is part of that programme, and on the 11th November we performed the choral works you will hear this evening with our guests Contrapunto in Zurich at the City Church of St Jakob, Staffauer, in celebration of their 30th anniversary. We are delighted that they have joined us this evening during our 40th anniversary year.

We are a friendly choir and hold social events each year which include a fundraising quiz evening and a residential weekend workshop. As well as enabling us to work intensively on vocal technique and choral repertoire under expert specialist tuition, the workshop has as one of its highlights an enjoyable and relaxed Saturday evening concert of cabaret-style performances of music, song and humour displaying the considerable variety of our members' talents. As a registered charity, one of whose aims is the promotion, maintenance and improvement of the public's appreciation of choral music, we have been successful in raising funds to help subsidise our work. Through our own concerts and participation in local events we also support a number of other charities.

We welcome new members and invite singers interested in joining us to attend rehearsals prior to auditioning for membership.

making music

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

CONTRAPUNTO

Photo:Annika Bütschi

The first major concert of the Contrapunto Chor was the Swiss premiere in 1988 of *The Creation*, a rock cantata from the United States. In 1993, Beat Dähler took over the conductor's baton. Since then, the choir's speciality has been the interpretation of classical English works of the 19th and 20th centuries. Work in this area led to the recording of the CDs *English Part Songs*, *English Christmas Carols* and *Cities and Landscapes* as well as to performances of little known works, at least in Switzerland, such as Ralph Vaughan William's anti-war cantata *Dona nobis pacem* and his *The First Nowell*, Herbert Howell's a cappella *Requiem* for double-choir, Charles Stanford's *Stabat Mater* and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem*.

In addition, the Contrapunto Chor regularly interprets and performs major standards of the choral repertoire, including Mozart *Requiem* and *Mass in C minor*, Mendelssohn *Elijah* and *Christus*, Bach *Magnificat*, and Orff *Carmina Burana*. The choir often surprises its audiences with rare versions of well-known works: Fauré's *Requiem* was performed in the original version of 1893 (reconstructed by John Rutter) and Brahm's *Requiem* in the composer's own version with four-hand piano accompaniment instead of orchestra. Similar performances, comprising only soloists, choir and piano, have included Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Dvorak *Stabat Mater*.

Premieres in Switzerland include *Les sept paroles du Christ* by Théodore Dubois with reduced orchestra and Conrad Susa *Carols and Lullabies* for choir, harp, guitar and marimba.

The Contrapunto Chor also often holds theme-based concert evenings. A huge success was 'Love Songs' - a concert programme including classical, jazz, and pop songs about love. Other recent summer serenades were entitled 'Americana', 'Evensong', 'Midsummer, 'Happy Birthday, Amadeus','Swinging Contrapunto' and 'Highland Songs'.

The Contrapunto Chor has twice supported charity concerts given by baritone Simon Estes. One such charity concert (2003) was recorded live and has since been regularly broadcast on Swiss television.

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

SOPRANO

Gloria Arthur
Helena Beddoe
Amy Beswick
Jenny Bourne-Taylor
Michaela Carlowe
Jenny Cohen
Shantini Cooray
Heather Daniels
Sheila Denby-Wood
Susie Edwards
Penny Elder
Katheryn Ferin
Bernadette Gillespie
Anne Godwin
Debbie Goldman
Katharina Herold
Amanda Horton
Enid Hunt
Marta Jansa
Alison Liney
Ros Massey
Ainsley McArthur
Alice MacKay
Verity Preest
Susan Segal Horn
Jennifer Somerville
Pauline Treen
Patricia Whitehead
Andrea Whittaker

ALTO

Anna Armbruster
Eloise Beckles
Fiona Brown
Marian Bunzl
Lucy Ellis
Julia Fabricius
Sarah Falk
Vicky Faure Walker
Eleanor Flaxen
Hélène Gordon
Viv Gross
Sue Heaney
Jo Hulme
Helen Jones
Susan Le Quesne
Lynne Mark
Kathryn Metzenthin
Judith Moser
Kitty Nabarro
Annie Pang
Joan Reardon
Alison Salisbury
Josephine Salverda
Jane Spender
Marie Strube
Julia Tash
Phyll White

TENOR

Gary Bilkus
Vivienne Canter
Alan Chandler
Pasco Fearon
Keith Maiden
James Murphy
Jeremy Pratt
Jack Sultoon
Alan Wills

BASS

Marcus Bartlett
Norman Cohen
Shaun Davies
Michael Derrick
Paul Filmer
Simon Gibeon
David Hastings
Yoav Landau-Pope
Paul Long
David Loxley-Blount
Dan Newman
Harvey Ratner
Andrea Sabbadini
Tony Shelton
Chris Siva-Prakasam
David Stone
Richard Tyack

CONTRAPUNTO

SOPRANO

Anne-Marie Aisslinger
Annette Blume
Claudia Bolli
Emilie Brauner
Nicola Fielder
Angela Fischer
Elisabeth Gurtner
Nicole Hirzel
Birte Leutiger
Gisela Neumann
Petra Schöb
Katrin Schüeli

ALTO

Betsy Belart
Judith Hauenstein
Paola Hoffmann
Christine Jost
Hanna Luginbühl
Ina Paschen
Nadia Pietroboni
Yvonne Tschalèr

TENOR

Patrik Baumgartner
Johannes Belart
Torulv Norbäck
Christian Nünlist
Jon Thorsteinsen
Philipp Wolfensperger

BASS

Peter Aisslinger
Walter Fluck
Christoph Graf
Saso Jezernik
Fabian Schwarzenbach
Stefan Thieme

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

Leader
Eleanor Gilchrist

Violin 1
Gavin Rhind
David Lopez
Hugh Davies
Ellen Gallagher
Charlotte Amherst

Violin 2
Emma Penfold
Oliver Cave
Helen Brown
Eloise McDonald
Helen Twomey

Viola
Reiad Chibah
Geoff Irwin
Alexis Bennett
Jordon Bowron

Cello
Ruth Alford
Julia Morweneg
Josh Salter

Double Bass
Tim Amherst
Kate Aldridge

Flute
Christime Hankin
Laura Piras

Piccalo
Caroline Welch

Oboe
Jeremy Foster
Gwenllian Davies

Clarinet
Ruth Buxon
Rachel Bishop

Bassoon
Graham Hobbs
Hugh Wooley

Horn
Richard Wainwright
Richard Bayliss

Trumpet
Richard Thomas
Fraser Tannock

Trombone
Philip Dale
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PAST CONCERTS - THE LAST TEN YEARS

15 Dec 2007	**30th Anniversary Concert**
	Handel *Messiah Part I*
	Bach *Ich freue mich in dir*
	Pergolesi *Magnificat*
	Schönberg *Friede auf Erden*
15 Mar 2008	**Haydn** *The Seven Last Words*
	Rossini *Stabat Mater*
28 Jun 2008	**Britten** *Cantata Misericordium*
	Jenkins *The Armed Man*
	Tippett *Five Negro Spirituals*
22 Nov 2008	**Brahms** *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
	Schubert *Mass in G*
21 Mar 2009	**Beethoven** *Missa Solemnis*
27 Jun 2009	**Purcell** *O SIng Unto the Lord*
	Haydn *Nelson Mass*
	Handel *Four Coronation Anthems*
28 Nov 2009	**Mendelssohn** *Elijah*
20 Mar 2010	**Buxtehude** *Membra Jesu Nostri*
	Bach *Mass in F*
	Handel *Dixit Dominus*
3 Jul 2010	**Mozart** *Solemn Vespers*
	Bliss *Pastoral 'Lie Strewn the White Flocks'*
27 Nov 2010	**Orff** *Carmina Burana*
	Elgar *From the Bavarian Highlands*
26 Mar 2011	**Mozart** *Davidde Penitente*
	Beethoven *Christus am Ölberge*
25 Jun 2011	**Rossini** *Petite Messe Solennelle*
	Lauridsen *O Magnum Mysterium*
	Barber *Agnus Dei*
19 Nov 2011	**Britten** *Rejoice in the Lamb*
	Tavener *Svyati*
	Duruflé *Requiem*
24 Mar 2012	**Handel** *Israel in Egypt*
30 Jun 2012	**Dvorak** *Mass in D*
	Howells *An English Mass*
15 Dec 2012	**King** *Out of the Depths (First performance)*
	Mozart *Mass in C Minor*
20 Apr 2013	**J S Bach** *Mass in B Minor*
29 Jun 2013	**Various** *Summertime*
21 Nov 2013	**Britten** *War Requiem*
15 Mar 2014	**Schubert** *Mirjams Siegesgesang*
	Korngold *Passover Psalm*
	Mendelssohn *Hear My Prayer*
	Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*
14 Jul 2014	**Mendelssohn** *Verleih' und Frieden*
	Brahms *Nänie*
	Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
22 Nov 2014	**Beethoven** *Mass in C*
	Haydn *Te Deum*
21 Mar 2015	**Fauré** *Requiem Mass*
	Kodály *Missa Brevis*
	Liszt *Die Seligkeiten*
16 May 2015	**Britten** *War Requiem*
4 July 2015	**Handel** *Acis and Galetea*
28 Nov 2015	**Bach** *Magnificat, Christmas Oratorio Parts 1,2,3*
12 Mar 2016	**Mendelssohn** *Elijah*
11 Jun 2016	**Bernstein** *Mass*
	Whitacre *Five Hebrew Love songs*
	Copland *Old American Songs*
11 Nov 2016	**Verdi** *Requiem*
25 Mar 2017	**Dove** *The Passing of the Year*
	Brahms *Liebeslieder, Neue Liebeslieder*
1 Jun 2017	**Mozart** *Requiem*
	King *Out of the Depths*

Please visit www.northlondonchorus.org for the full list dating back to the first concert in 1977

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Laurence Cummings

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Murray Hipkin

Rehearsal Accompanist
Catherine Borner

Vocal Consultants
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Mark Oldfield

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