



WHITEHALL CHOIR
70th Anniversary Concert
GLORIANA!

Conductor PAUL SPICER
Piano IAN TINDALE Double bass JAMES OPSTAD

Choral Dances from Gloriana Benjamin Britten

*A Garland for the Queen: Vaughan Williams,
Finzi, and Ireland*

Music to Hear George Shearing
and other Shakespeare settings by
Vaughan Williams and Mathias

Instrumental music by Ireland and Piazzolla

Programme £2

THE BANQUETING HOUSE
London SW1A 2ER



Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Edward Benjamin Britten was born in Lowestoft, Suffolk, the son of a dentist and a talented amateur musician. He showed musical gifts very early in life, and began composing prolifically as a child. He was educated at Gresham's, Holt, Norfolk. In 1927, he began private lessons with Frank Bridge. He was also a student at the Royal College of Music. Of lasting importance to Britten was his meeting in 1937 with the tenor Peter Pears, who was to become his musical collaborator and inspiration as well as his life partner. In early 1939, Britten and Pears left for America. There, in 1940, Britten composed *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo*; this period was also remarkable for a number of orchestral works, including the Violin Concerto Op. 15, and *Sinfonia da Requiem* Op. 20 (for full orchestra). After their return to England in 1942 *Peter Grimes* was the first in a series of English operas, of which *Billy Budd* (1951) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954) were particularly admired. Britten was appointed a Companion of Honour (CH) in the Coronation Honours of 1953, and he was honoured again by appointment to the Order of Merit (OM) on 23 March 1965. Britten's later works include the operas *Owen Wingrave* (1970) and *Death in Venice* (1971–1973), the *Suite on English Folk Tunes "A Time There Was"* (1974), the Third String Quartet (1975) and the dramatic cantata *Phædra* (1975). He accepted a life peerage on 2 July 1976, but later that year died of heart failure at his house in Aldeburgh.

Choral Dances from 'Gloriana' (1953)

The *Choral Dances* come from the scene in the opera *Gloriana* which portrays a masque at the Guildhall in Norwich performed for Queen Elizabeth I during her visit to the city. The music bursts into life with a depiction of the demigod Time who is followed by his wife Concord. The latter's music consists entirely of concords, showing a cleverness and sense of humour typical of Britten. 'Country Girls', sung by the sopranos and altos, and 'Rustics and Fishermen', by the tenors and basses, then join in the celebrations before the voices come together again for the moving 'Final Dance of Homage'.

Adapted from a programme note for the Viva Voce Singers, Norwich

http://vivavocesingersnorwich.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Britten_programme_notes_final_JB.pdf

1. 'Time'

Yes, he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe.
No reaper he
That cries 'Take heed!'
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

2. 'Concord'

Concord is here
Our days to bless
And this our land to endue
With plenty, peace and happiness.
Concord and Time
Each needeth each:
The ripest fruit hangs where
Not one, but only two, only two can reach.

3. 'Time and Concord'

From springs of bounty,
Through this county,
Streams abundant
Of thanks shall flow.
Where life was scanty,
Fruits of plenty
Swell resplendent
From earth below!
No Greek nor Roman
Queenly woman
Knew such favour
From Heav'n above
As she whose presence
Is our pleasance
Gloriana
Hath all our love!

4. 'Country Girls'

Sweet flag and cuckoo flower
Cowslip and columbine,
Kingcups and sops-in-wine,
Flower-de-luce and calaminth,
Harebell and hyacinth,
Myrtle and bay and rosemary between,
Norfolk's own garlands for her Queen.

5. 'Rustics and Fishermen'

From fen and meadow
In rushy baskets
They bring ensamples of all they grow.
In earthen dishes
Their deep-sea fishes;
Yearly fleeces,
Woven blankets;
New cream and junkets,
And rustic trinkets,
On wicker flaskets,
Their country largess
The best they know.

6. 'Final Dance of Homage'

These tokens of our love receiving
O take them, Princess great and dear.
From Norwich city you are leaving,
That you afar may feel us near.



Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams OM was born on 12 October 1872 in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire. After Charterhouse School he was a student at the Royal College of Music under Charles Villiers Stanford. He afterwards read history and music at Trinity College, Cambridge, and on returning to the RCM studied composition with Hubert Parry, who became a friend. Another friendship made at the RCM, crucial to his development as a composer, was with Gustav Holst, whom he first met in 1895. Vaughan Williams is a central figure in British music at least in part because of his long career as teacher, lecturer and friend to many younger composers and conductors. In 1904, Vaughan Williams became aware of English folk songs and carols, and he thereafter did much to raise appreciation of traditional English folk song and melody. In 1909, he composed incidental music for Aristophanes' *The Wasps*. The next year, he had his first big public successes conducting the premières of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and his choral symphony *A Sea Symphony* (Symphony No. 1). He enjoyed a still greater success with *A London Symphony* (Symphony No. 2) in 1914.

Vaughan Williams served in the First World War, and prolonged exposure to gunfire began a process of hearing loss which eventually caused severe deafness in old age. After the war he adopted for a while a somewhat mystical style, notably in *Flos Campi*, while in his *Pastoral Symphony* (Symphony No. 3) he drew on his wartime experience as an ambulance volunteer. From 1924 his music began to be characterized by lively cross-rhythms and clashing harmonies, a phase which culminated in the Symphony No. 4 in F minor, a work that contrasts dramatically with the 'pastoral' orchestral works with which he is associated. Vaughan Williams was appointed to the Order of Merit in the King's Birthday Honours of 1935, having previously declined a knighthood. His music entered a lyrical phase in the *Five Tudor Portraits*, the *Serenade to Music*, and the Symphony No. 5 in D. However, many people interpreted his Symphony No. 6 of 1946 as a grim vision of the aftermath of an atomic war: typically, Vaughan Williams himself refused to recognize any programme behind this work. His Seventh, *Sinfonia Antartica*, exhibits his renewed interest in instrumentation and sonority, the Eighth had its première in 1956, and the Ninth, in E minor (1956–57), was first performed in May 1958, just three months before his death. Other works also include a Tuba Concerto, *An Oxford Elegy* on texts by Matthew Arnold, and the Christmas cantata *Hodie*; and he wrote an arrangement of The Old One Hundredth Psalm Tune for the Coronation Service of Queen Elizabeth II. At his death he left an unfinished Cello Concerto, an opera, *Thomas the Rhymer*, and music for a Christmas play, *The First Nowell*, which was completed by his amanuensis Roy Douglas.

Vaughan Williams was first married to Adeline Fisher, who died in 1951 after years of crippling arthritis. In 1938 he began an affair with the married poet Ursula Wood who, after her first husband died in 1942, became his literary advisor and personal assistant and moved into his Surrey home, apparently with the tacit approval of Adeline, for whom Wood served as a carer until Adeline's death in 1951. Wood wrote the libretto to his choral work *The Sons of Light*, and contributed to those of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Hodie*. Wood and Vaughan Williams married in 1953 and moved to London. When the composer died five years later he was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.

Three Shakespeare Songs (1951)

In 1951, during the Festival of Britain, the British Federation of Music Festivals held its annual National Competitive Festival, which included a choral competition. Vaughan Williams's associate composer, Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, tried to persuade him to compose a new test piece. Vaughan Williams was reluctant at first, and thought the choirs should perform one of the established test pieces. However, according to Gibbs:

“Soon afterwards I was stricken down with some illness and was in bed when a fat envelope, registered and bearing the Dorking postmark, was brought up. Inside was the MS. of the *Three Shakespeare Songs* dedicated to me and the briefest of notes which ran: ‘Dear Armstrong. Here are three Shakespeare settings. Do what you like with them... Yours ever R.V.W.’ ”

The songs were premiered in the Royal Festival Hall on 23 June 1951, conducted by Armstrong Gibbs. Stylistic comparisons have been made with Vaughan Williams's Sixth Symphony, notably in the second song, 'The Cloud-Capp'd Towers'. Although the published version begins in the key of F# minor, the composer's original holograph was in E minor, which is also the key of the Sixth Symphony. The shifting between E minor and Eb minor triads, as heard on the words "shall dissolve" has been compared to the conclusion of the Epilogue movement of the symphony. Indeed, Vaughan Williams himself later suggested that the meaning of the symphony's last movement could be summed up in the lines from *The Tempest*: "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on; and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep".

1. 'Full Fathom Five'

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them, - ding-dong bell.

The Tempest, Act I, Scene 2

2. 'The Cloud-Capp'd Towers'

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind:
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

The Tempest, Act IV, Scene 1

3. 'Over Hill, Over Dale'

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moonè's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act II, Scene 1



John Ireland (1879-1962)

‘The Scarlet Ceremonies’

‘The Island Spell’

- from *Decorations*

‘Ragamuffin’

- from *London Pieces*

Ian Tindale, *piano*

There is a short biographical note on John Ireland below, under the heading ‘Composers who contributed to the *Garland*’. Of all his compositions, John Ireland’s large body of piano music most supports his unofficial title ‘The English Impressionist’; the three *Decorations* (1912-1915) are no exception. They are all ‘decorations’ of a short passage of text given at the start of each piece. The excerpt for ‘The Scarlet Ceremonies’ is from *The Green Book* by Arthur Machen, a mystic and a fantasy writer of Ireland’s period: “Then there are the Ceremonies [...] but the Scarlet Ceremonies are the best...”. Ireland’s piece offers no more answers than Machen’s text as to the nature of these mystic ‘ceremonies’, but it is a virtuoso piece of whirling patterns and fanfares of unstoppable supernatural energy.

‘The Island Spell’ was written during one of Ireland’s many holidays in Jersey in 1912. In this early piece we hear Ireland sounding closest to Debussy and Ravel, the French Impressionists who inspired him. Poet Arthur Symons’ text must have resonated with the landscape of the island where the composer was holidaying:

“I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood:

Here, between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude...”

(from *The Wood of Finvara* by Arthur Symons)

The collection of *London Pieces* (1917-20) was written for the city where Ireland lived and worked and which he loved so much. ‘Ragamuffin’ is a light-hearted and relatively simple musical image of some light-hearted and relatively simple London lowlife. The naive march rhythms and jazzy harmonies are reminiscent of the music of Eric Coates and early William Walton.

Ian Tindale

A Garland for the Queen

Arthur Bliss, Arnold Bax, Michael Tippett, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Lennox Berkeley, John Ireland, Herbert Howells, Gerald Finzi, Alan Rawsthorne and Edmund Rubbra were the composers contributing to this collection of choral songs, which was commissioned by the Arts Council of Great Britain to celebrate the Queen’s Coronation in 1953. These ten, with their respective poets, were bidden to create settings for mixed voices: the idea was to craft a 20th century ‘replica’ of the famous *The Triumphs of Oriana* (1601), which was presented to Queen Elizabeth I. However, the present series of songs, of which the Choir is singing a selection of three, is not in any sense a parody of the earlier cycle, though it is certainly influenced by it, and the madrigal is a creative inspiration for both collections.

All the songs offer challenges to the singers. Of those being performed tonight the most straightforward are perhaps the ones by Ralph Vaughan Williams and John Ireland. Finzi’s contribution is well summed up by Ivor Keys: “ ‘Now the white-flowering days, the long days of blue and golden light, wake nature’s music round the land’, and Finzi is the man to fit the words not only technically like a glove, but in mood, enlivened by some quintuple rhythm and surprising modulation, of mellowed rejoicing in ‘Old England of the Shires.’ ”

Adapted from a review of a Heritage CD of A Garland for the Queen by John France, first published in Music Web International
http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2011/Apr11/English_Choral_HTGCD213.htm

Composers who contributed to the *Garland*

Ralph Vaughan Williams's 'Silence and Music' set words by his second wife, writing as Ursula Wood. A note on the composer appears earlier in this programme, above the description of his *Three Shakespeare Songs*.



Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), the composer of 'White flowering days' to words by Edmund Blunden, was born in London, and he became one of the most characteristically 'English' composers of his generation, firmly in the tradition of Elgar, Parry and Stanford, and is mostly though not exclusively known for his vocal music. An agnostic of Jewish descent who wrote Christian choral music, he was educated privately, and studied music under Ernest Farrar, and later Edward Bairstow. In 1922 Finzi moved to Painswick in Gloucestershire, then, after studying counterpoint with R O Morris, he moved to London, where he got to know, among others, Arthur Bliss and Ralph Vaughan Williams; the latter obtained a teaching post for him at the Royal Academy of Music. Afterwards, however, he and his wife returned to the country, and during the 1930s his output was small; however, it was in the cantata *Dies natalis* (1939), that his fully mature style developed. After the war, he became somewhat more productive, writing several choral works, as well as the Clarinet Concerto (1949), perhaps his most popular work. In 1951 Finzi learned that he was suffering from Hodgkin's disease and had at most ten years to live. Something of his feelings after this revelation is probably reflected in the agonized first movement of the deeply moving Cello Concerto (1955), his last major work. In 1956, he developed shingles, complicated by encephalitis, and died in an Oxford nursing home.

John Ireland, who wrote 'The Hills', a setting of a poem by James Kirkup, was born in Bowdon, in Cheshire, the youngest of the five children of his father's second marriage. At the age of 15 he became a student at the Royal College of Music, where he studied piano and organ, and later composition under Stanford. He subsequently became a teacher at the College himself, his pupils including Geoffrey Bush, who subsequently edited or arranged many of Ireland's works for publication. He was sub-organist at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, London SW1, and later became organist and choirmaster at St Luke's Church, Chelsea. His compositions include songs and chamber music. Ireland's frequent visits to the Channel Islands led to the composition of piano music inspired by the landscape there. In 1949, his 70th birthday was celebrated in a special Prom concert, at which his Piano Concerto was played. He retired in 1953 to Sussex, where he died at the age of 82.

Ralph Vaughan Williams 'Silence and Music'

Silence, come first: I see a sleeping swan,
wings closed, and drifting where the water leads,
a winter moon, a grove where shadows dream,
a hand outstretched to gather hollow reeds.
The four winds in their litanies can tell
all of earth's stories as they weep and cry,
the sea names all the treasure of her tides,
the birds rejoice between the earth and sky.
Voices of grief and from the heart of joy;
so near to comprehension do we stand
that wind and sea and all of winged delight
lie in the octaves of man's voice and hand,
and music wakes from silence where it slept.

Words by Ursula Wood
© Oxford University Press

Gerald Finzi 'The White-Flowering Days'

Now the white-flowering days,
The long days of blue and golden light,
Wake nature's music round the land; now plays
The fountain of all sweetness; all our ways
Are touched with wonder, swift and bright.

This is the star, the bell—
While fields of emerald rise, and orchards flower
Brown nooks with white and red,—this is the spell
of timeless dream; Avilion, happy dell!

The legendary, lovely bower.

Now the bold children run
By wild brooks and woods where year on year
Tall trembling bluebells take their stand; now none
is bloomless, none quite songless; such a sun

Renews our journey far or near.

Old England of the shires,
Meadowy land of heath and forest ground,
And lawny knoll, land of gray towers and spires,
Fairly thy season sings our hearts' desires

Fulfilled in queenly beauty youngly crowned.

Words by Edmund Blunden

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John Ireland

'The Hills'

How calm, how constant are the hills!
How green and white and golden in
The summer light! Their lakes, their leaping wells
Are bright with flower, leaf, and rain,
And their profounder rivers run
From rocks that are the altars of the sun.

How calm, how constant are the hills!

Our time's dark gale of ice and fire

Thunders around them, but removes them never.

No tempest overthrows their strong humility.

They are both god and temple, and their stones

Are holy, the earth's enduring thrones.

Words by James Kirkup

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William Mathias (1934-1992)

William Mathias CBE was born in Whitland, Carmarthenshire. A child prodigy, he started playing the piano at the age of three and composing at the age of five. At Aberystwyth University, he was a member of the Elizabethan Madrigal Singers and wrote 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' for them in 1954. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music under Lennox Berkeley, where he was elected a fellow in 1965. In 1968, he was awarded the Bax Society Prize of the Harriet Cohen International Music Award. He was professor of music and head of department in the University of Wales, Bangor, from 1970 until 1988. His compositions encompass large scale works, including an opera, *The Servants* (1980), three symphonies and three piano concertos. Much of his music was written for the Anglican choral tradition, most famously the anthem *Let the people praise Thee, O God* written for the July 1981 royal wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales, which had a television audience of an estimated 1 billion people worldwide. Mathias wrote his Sinfonietta – initially called Dance Suite – for the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra in late 1966, and it received its first performance at Leicester De Montfort Hall during the 1967 Schools Festival. It was also included in the orchestra's tour programme for Denmark and Germany later in the year. The LSSO made the first commercial recording of Sinfonietta for the Pye Golden Guinea label in July 1967 under the direction of the composer. Mathias founded the North Wales International Music Festival in St Asaph in 1972 and directed it until his death in 1992. He is buried outside St Asaph Cathedral.

Shakespeare Songs (1979)

Mathias set eight songs from Shakespeare plays for mixed choir and piano for the third Cardiff Festival of Choirs in 1979. Although all different in origin, he saw them as a linked set like a song cycle. This concept is emphasised by the fact that the last song ('Blow, blow, thou winter wind') recalls some of the music of the first ('Under the greenwood tree'); both are winter poems. No.3 ('Lawn as white as driven snow') is for men only and proceeds immediately to 'Sigh no more, ladies' for women's voices only. The piano part is integral to the whole, helping to emphasise the different moods. Tonight the Choir is performing five of the eight songs.

Adapted from a programme note by the Cantate Choir:

<http://www.cantate-choir.info/ProgrammeNotes/0606%20Poetry%20In%20Music/PoetryInMusic.php>

1. 'Under the greenwood tree'

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

As You Like It, Act II, Scene 5

3. 'Lawn as white as driven snow'

Lawn as white as driven snow;
Cypress black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber;
Golden quoifs and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins and poking-sticks of steel;
What maids lack from head to heel.
Come, buy of me, come;
Come buy, come buy;
Buy, lads, or else your lasses cry:
Come, buy!

The Winter's Tale, Act IV, Scene 4

4. 'Sigh no more, ladies'

Sigh no more, 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 moe
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.

Much Ado about Nothing, Act II, Scene 3

7. '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 cornfield 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, etc.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower,
In the spring time, etc.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crowned with the prime
In the spring time, etc.

As You Like It, Act V, Scene 3

8. 'Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind'

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

As You Like It, Act II, Scene 7

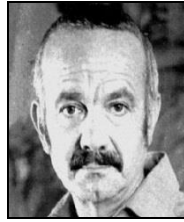
A souvenir of seventy years ago ...

St. Margaret's - - - Westminster

Carol Recital

Thursday, 16th December, 1943

1. *Traditional.* **I SAW THREE SHIPS.** *Ibid.*
(M.S.)
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
2. And what was in those ships all three?
3. Our Saviour Christ and his lady.
4. Pray, whither sailed those ships all three?
5. O, they sailed into Bethlehem.
6. And all the bells on earth shall ring.
7. And all the angels in Heaven shall sing.
8. And all the souls on earth shall sing.
9. Then let us all rejoice amain!
2. *English Traditional.* **CHILDREN'S SONG OF THE NATIVITY.** *Frances Chesterton.*
(R.V.W.)
1. How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not very far.
Shall we find the stable-room
Lit by a star?
2. Can we see the little child,
Is he within?
If we lift the wooden latch
May we go in?
3. May we stroke the creatures there,
Ox, ass, or sheep?
May we peep like them and see
Jesus asleep?
4. If we touch his tiny hand
Will he awake?
Will he know we've come so far
Just for his sake?
5. Great Kings have precious gifts,
And we have nought,
Little smiles and little tears
Are all we brought.
6. For all weary children
Mary must weep.
Here, on his bed of straw
Sleep, children, sleep.
7. God in his mother's arms,
Babes in the byre,
Sleep, as they sleep who find
Their heart's desire.



Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Living in Argentina, Vicente Nonino Piazzolla and Asuta Manetti (both of Italian descent) welcomed their son Astor Piazzolla into this world in the year 1921. While he was born in Argentina, Astor spent most of his early years of life in New York City. This is where his love of music began to bloom. Enjoying jazz and the music of J.S. Bach, his love and knowledge of this art became his passion. His father found a bandoneon in a New York pawnshop and purchased it for his young son. This seemed to be one of the most significant steps in moulding the musician that Astor Piazzolla became. In addition to his music, he also excelled in multiple languages including French, English, Italian and Spanish. Returning to Argentina in 1937, he found tango to be the reigning style of music. Continuing his love of playing the bandoneon, he and his various ensembles performed in a multitude of nightclubs throughout Argentina. Quickly becoming known as the best bandoneon player in Buenos Aires, Astor Piazzolla expanded his musical knowledge by studying under Alberto Ginastera. Covering a number of composers like Stravinsky, Bartok and Ravel, he began to take from their excellence when composing his own music. That was until he met Nadia Boulanger. She quickly noticed his own magic and encouraged him to focus on his own style and talent leaving the others to theirs. In 1955, he organized the Octeto Buenos Aires and began playing his own style of tango. Astor Piazzolla is well known in the music world for his contributions to the tango. He took elements from jazz and classical music, added them to tango and created 'nuevo tango'. As an accomplished composer and bandoneon player, he commonly performed his compositions adding electronic and acoustic sounds, creating his unique form of music. While this new form of the tango was widely accepted in the United States and Europe, Argentina in general showed resistance to this change. Among some of his most notable pieces are *Adios Nonino* (written in 1959 in memory of his father), *Libertango* (written in 1974 symbolizing his liberation from the traditional tango), *Oblivion* and *Milonga Del Angel*. In 1990 Piazzolla suffered a cerebral haemorrhage that eventually led to his death in Buenos Aires in 1992.

Adapted from a short biography on the website <http://www.astor-piazzolla.org/>

Kicho

Kicho was written by Astor Piazzolla as a tribute to the great Argentine double bass player, Kicho Diaz. One of the most respected musicians in the history of Tango, Diaz joined Piazzolla's first Quinteto in 1960, having previously been a member of the orquesta tipica of Anibal Troilo. The piece is a testament to his virtuosity, power and drive.

James Opstad

James Opstad, *double-bass*

Ian Tindale, *piano*



Sir George Shearing (1919- 2011)

The Anglo-American jazz pianist and composer George Shearing was born in Battersea, London, in 1919. He was the youngest of nine children. Blind from birth, Shearing began to learn piano when he was three. His only formal musical training came at the Linden Lodge School for the Blind. He was offered scholarships to attend college, but needed to earn money, which he did by playing piano and accordion at a local pub. During this period, he also joined a band made up entirely of blind musicians, and made his first BBC radio appearance. Shearing was a member of several bands during the early 1940s. He received the *Melody Maker* award for seven years running. In 1947, Shearing moved to New York, where he developed his own style, influenced by swing, bop and classical music. In 1949, he formed the George Shearing Quintet. Over the years, many major artists appeared with this group, and the Quintet made many recordings. Shearing created what is known as the 'Shearing sound'. He composed his two most popular works, *September in the Rain* and *Lullaby of Birdland*, during this time. George Shearing became a naturalized American citizen in 1956. At this time, he also began to perform classical concertos with symphony orchestras. In addition, he created orchestral arrangements for his Quintet. He was influenced by the music of Claude Debussy and Erik Satie. Shearing disbanded his quartet in 1978. After that time he played in various combos, as well as performing solo. He collaborated with many famous singers, including Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, Carmen McRae, Nancy Wilson, Marian McPartland, and especially, Mel Tormé. George Shearing composed over 300 works and made over 100 recordings. He received numerous honours and awards, including two Grammy Awards (1983 and 1984), the Horatio Alger Award for Distinguished Americans (1978), honorary Doctorates of Music from Westminster College, Salt Lake City (1975), Hamilton College, New York (1994), and De Pauw University (2002), the Ivor Novello Award for Lifetime Achievement (1993), the American Music Award from the National Arts Club, New York (1998), and the Lifetime Achievement Award from BBC Jazz (2003). He performed for three American Presidents, and also for the Queen and Prince Philip. One of Shearing's more notable albums of the 1970s was *The Reunion with George Shearing* (Verve 1976), made in collaboration with bassist Andy Simpkins and drummer Rusty Jones, and featuring Stéphane Grappelli, the musician with whom he had debuted as a sideman decades before. Later, Shearing played with a trio, as a soloist and increasingly in a duo. Among his collaborations were sets with the Montgomery Brothers, Marian McPartland, Brian Q. Torff, Jim Hall, Hank Jones and Kenny Davern. In his later years he toured the UK, giving concerts. He was appointed OBE in 1996 and in 2007 was knighted. In 2004, he released his memoirs, *Lullaby of Birdland*, which was accompanied by a double album 'musical autobiography', "Lullabies of Birdland". Shortly afterwards he suffered a fall at his home and retired from regular performing. Shearing died on 14 February, 2011.

Music to Hear

Music to Hear was first performed by the Dale Warland Singers, during their 1985-1986 season, with Shearing playing the piano part. Shearing comments: "The idea for this work came to me as a result of a commission I received from the Dale Warland Singers in 1985... It occurred to me that, obviously, I would need a first-rate lyricist... one who wouldn't be too busy to help. Fortunately, almost immediately William Shakespeare appeared and offered his literary service. But then I had another question: 'Could the musical conception of this work stretch from ol' William's period to the present time?' Hearing no Shakespearean objection, I went to work. In the opening selection, 'Music To Hear', my admiration for the works of Frederick Delius somehow seems to shine through. Then, bowing to the style of music composed during Shakespeare's time, I wrote 'Is It For Fear To Wet A Widow's Eye?' and 'Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day?' Finally, segueing into the music I know and love best, I composed 'Sigh No More Ladies' and 'Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind'." In tonight's performance the Choir is performing the last two songs of the sequence in reverse order.

The notes on Shearing and Music to Hear were adapted from a programme note by the San Francisco Lyric Chorus
<http://www.sflc.org/concerts/programs/MusicExpresses4web.pdf>

1. 'Music to Hear'

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lovest thou that which thou receivest not gladly,
Or else receivest with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'thou single wilt prove none.'

Sonnet VIII

2. 'Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day?'

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as man can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet XVIII

3. 'Is it for Fear to Wet a Widow's Eye?'

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consumest thyself in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep
By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unused, the user so destroys it.
No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

Sonnet IX

5. 'Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind'

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho, the holly!

This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

As You Like It, Act II, Scene 7

4. 'Sigh no more, Ladies'

Sigh no more, 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 no.

Much Ado about Nothing, Act II, Scene 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Choir is very grateful for the support it continues to receive from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The Choir would like to thank Philip Pratley, the Concert Manager, and all tonight's volunteer helpers.

The picture on the front cover is taken from a series of oil paintings created by artist and choir member Jane Mackay for an exhibition in Aldeburgh last month. The paintings were inspired by Benjamin Britten's opera Gloriana, and choruses from this work are part of our programme this evening.

We are grateful to Hertfordshire Libraries' Performing Arts service for the supply of hire music used in this concert.

Paul Spicer



Paul Spicer, musical director of the Whitehall Choir, began his musical training as a chorister at New College, Oxford. He studied with Herbert Howells and Richard Popplewell (organ) at the Royal College of Music in London, winning the top organ award (the Walford Davies Prize) in his final year. Paul is best known as a choral conductor, partly through the many CDs he made with the Finzi Singers for Chandos Records. He conducted Bach Choirs in Chester and Leicester before moving to conduct the Bach Choir in Birmingham in 1992. He taught at the Royal College of Music between 1995 and 2008, and now teaches choral conducting at the Birmingham Conservatoire, where he also directs both chamber choirs, and at Oxford University. Until July 2001 Paul Spicer was Artistic Director of the Lichfield International Arts Festival and the Abbotsholme Arts Society. He was Senior Producer for BBC Radio 3 in the Midlands until 1990, and today is in considerable demand as a composer and as a recording producer.

The first complete recording of Paul Spicer's large-scale *Easter Oratorio* was released in 2005 to critical acclaim, the work being recognized by Gramophone magazine as "the best of its kind to have appeared ... since Howells's *Hymnus Paradisi*". *The Deciduous Cross*, for choir and winds, which is based on poems by R S Thomas and was premiered in 2003, was commissioned for Paul's tenth anniversary as conductor of the Birmingham Bach Choir, and was recorded by the Whitehall Choir. Robert Sharpe, when Director of Music at Truro Cathedral, recorded his complete works for organ. A recording of his shorter choral works was made by the choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, in 2008.

Paul Spicer's biography of his composition teacher, Herbert Howells, was published in August 1998 and has been reprinted twice, and he has recently completed a full-scale biography and study of works of the composer Sir George Dyson, which will be published in the spring of 2014 by Boydell & Brewer. He has written articles for many periodicals and is a contributor to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Paul's *Advent Oratorio*, setting a libretto by the New Testament scholar Dr. Tom Wright, formerly Bishop of Durham, who had also written the text for the *Easter Oratorio*, was first performed in Lichfield Cathedral on 5 December 2009.

Paul Spicer is in great demand for his choral workshops, which take him all over the world. He runs three annual choral courses under the umbrella of his foundation, The English Choral Experience, two at Dore Abbey in Herefordshire (a large choir/arts festival in July and Camerata chamber choir weekend in May) and one in the south of France after Easter (www.englishchoralexperience.co.uk). He is a broadcaster, lecturer and popular speaker. Paul Spicer is a member of the Council of Lichfield Cathedral, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, an Honorary Research Fellow of Birmingham University, an Honorary Fellow of Birmingham Conservatoire, a Trustee of the Finzi Trust, Chairman of the Finzi Friends, Vice-President of the Herbert Howells Society, and Advisor to the Sir George Dyson Trust.

Ian Tindale



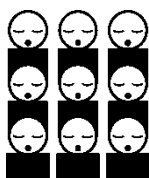
Our pianist tonight, Ian Tindale, who is the Whitehall Choir's regular accompanist, is a postgraduate student at the Royal College of Music (RCM), where he is in the second year of the Master of Performance course in Piano Accompaniment. He is a Kendall-Taylor Scholar supported by a Fishmongers' Company Beckwith Music Award, and studies with John Blakely, Simon Lepper and Roger Vignoles. Ian graduated from Selwyn College, Cambridge, with a double First in Music in 2011, receiving the Tony Bland Prize for academic achievement and the Williamson Prize for performance.

Ian is building a reputation as a versatile collaborative partner in song and chamber music, and he has performed at venues across London such as the Wigmore Hall, the National Gallery and Cadogan Hall. At the RCM, Ian has won accompaniment prizes in all the song competitions, and he recently won the MBF Accompanists' Prize (Maggie Teyte Competition) and the Association of English Singers and Speakers Accompanists' Prize. In 2012 Ian was named joint winner of the Gerald Moore Award. Ian is also a répétiteur (previously for British Youth Opera, Cambridge Handel Opera and English National Ballet) and an orchestral pianist: Ian was a participant on the BBC Symphony Orchestra Pathway Scheme, and he plays regularly with orchestral ensembles at the RCM. After finishing his Masters in July, Ian will stay at the RCM as the Lord and Lady Lurgan Junior Fellow in Accompaniment for the academic year 2013-2014.

James Opstad



James Opstad is a sought-after double-bass player on the London music scene, active in a broad spectrum of musical styles. In 2011 he graduated from the prestigious jazz course at the Royal Academy of Music with 1st Class Honours. Whilst at the Academy he performed with John Taylor, Kenny Wheeler, Stan Sulzmann and Julian Arguelles. He also forged continuing musical relationships with many fellow students. Venues have included the Purcell Room, Kings Place, Vortex, 606 Club, Ronnie Scott's, Blackthorpe Barn and Bath Festival Fringe. As a composer James works at the cutting edge of jazz and contemporary music. He studied composition at the Purcell School, was winner of the 2004 EPTA Composition Competition and was highly commended in the BBC/Guardian Composition Competition for three consecutive years. He has composed for ensembles ranging from Trio to Big Band. In 2012 he was awarded 1st Prize in the WCOM Dankworth Prize for Jazz Composition for 'What Was the Question?'. In 2011 he founded the James Opstad Septet, which comprises some of the leading lights of young British jazz and explores a meeting point between composition and improvisation. In 2007 James joined the Fugata Quintet, which specializes in the Nuevo Tango of Astor Piazzolla. They have performed many acclaimed concerts and in 2010 recorded a double album of Piazzolla's music. In 2010 James became a member of Paprika, a six-piece band that specializes in Balkan folk music. They regularly perform sellout shows at venues across the country and have also released their own self-titled album. In 2012 James recorded two albums with trumpeter Jack Davies, winner of the 2011 Deutsche Bank Award for Performance and Composition. These were released on Jack's own label, V&V Music, to critical acclaim.



THE WHITEHALL CHOIR
PRESIDENT: Martin Donnelly CMG

Conductor: Paul Spicer

Accompanist: Ian Tindale

The Whitehall Choir achieves singing of a high quality in a wide range of repertoire, and we are looking to recruit in all voices. Amongst our current members we count civil servants, lawyers, teachers, consultants, engineers and many others, with an age range of fifty years between youngest and oldest members. The choir meets every Tuesday evening near St James's Park tube station for a two-and-a-half-hour rehearsal. We are conducted by Paul Spicer – a conductor, composer and academic of international repute – and perform four concerts a year in a range of venues across London. Besides the Banqueting House in Whitehall, tonight's venue, our concert locations in recent years have included Holy Trinity Sloane Square, St Alban's Holborn, St Margaret's Westminster Abbey, and St John's Smith Square. Our programmes, which are rich and varied, cater for a broad spectrum of musical tastes, and we feel privileged to be able to give concerts in such great venues. Members' commitment to music-making is such that the weekly rehearsals go well with the busy day-jobs that many of them have, and provide a clear and friendly space in the middle of the week. We would love to hear from any singers who are interested in joining us. Short, informal auditions take place after a few weeks of singing with us on a trial basis.

Some details of forthcoming events can be found in this programme. For more information, please contact the Choir's Secretary, Liz Walton, at liz@thedrives.org.uk, or alternatively visit the Choir's website www.whitehallchoir.org.uk. (Charity no. 280478.)

Sopranos

Anu Bala
Hilary Davies
Imogen Davies
Anne Delauzun
Deb Dowdal
Ruth Eastman
Jacky Erwtelman
Kate Goulden
Fiona Graph
Kate Hand
Katherine Herzberg
Alice Hill
Lucilla Poston
Lesley Raymond
Christina Scharff
Janet Simpson
Joanna Tomlinson
Janet Winstanley

Altos

Helen Audaer
Rose Chandler
Jackie Cheng
Monica Darnbrough
Miranda Douce
Sam Foley
Polly Fortune
Madeleine Grundy
Penny James
Jane Mackay
Paula Nobes
Jean Orr
Penny Prior
Jean Robinson
Rachel Tedd
Liz Walton
Alison Williams

Tenors

Emmanuel Boukandoura
James Chapman
Patrick Haighton
Graham Hand
Ken Holmes
Kevin McManus
Philip Pratley
David Rawlins
Alastair Tolley
Jonathan Williams
Philip Worley

Basses

James Gourlay
Laurence Grace
Richard Grafen
Mark Graver
Martin Humphreys
Daniel Lambauer
Simon Lawson
William Longland
Tim Motz
Brendan O'Keefe
Ian White
Ian Williamson

WHITEHALL CHOIR COMMITTEE 2011-12

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PATRONS AND FRIENDS OF WHITEHALL CHOIR

Friends and Patrons of the Choir are a vital part of our future. They help fund not only our regular concerts but also additional activities such as workshops, sing-through days, and tours. For an up-front payment at the start of the season, Friends receive one top-price ticket for all Whitehall Choir-promoted concerts, plus 10% discount on any further tickets they require. Also included is advance notification of all concerts/events and a free programme – perfect for regular concert attenders, who will save overall on the whole season. For further details about how to become a Patron or Friend, please see the ‘Support Us’ page of the website www.whitehallchoir.org.uk.

Patrons and Friends:

Mr John Purkiss; Mr Michael Growcott; Ms Frances Morris-Jones; Captain B. V. Woodford CBE, RN; and others who wish to remain anonymous

Friends:

Miss Elsie Broadbent; Lady Teresa Carter; Mrs E. Gotto; Mrs Gillian Holmes; Mr Michael Pickersgill; Mr Paul Roach; Mrs Lis Warren; and others who wish to remain anonymous

FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN 2013

(For further details visit www.whitehallchoir.org.uk .)

Friday 15 November, 7pm

Handel *Jephtha*

St John's Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA

Tuesday, 10 December, 7.30pm

Christmas Music and Readings

St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, London SW1P 1LE



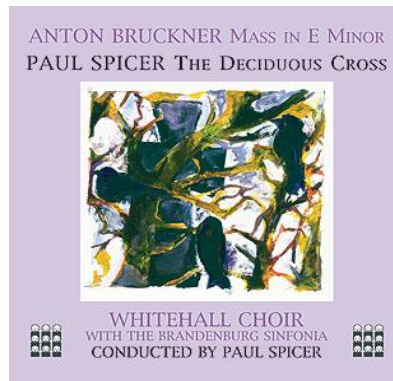
To stay up to date with the Choir's latest news, why not follow us on Facebook? Just search for 'Whitehall Choir' and click 'Become a Fan'.

If you're ordering anything from Amazon.co.uk, why not click on the Amazon link on the Choir's website, www.whitehallchoir.org.uk? For every sale, a contribution goes to Choir funds.

WANT TO JOIN OUR DATABASE?

If you want to be kept informed of Whitehall Choir performances and initiatives by e-mail please sign up for e-alerts via our website, www.whitehallchoir.org.uk

During 2007 the Whitehall Choir produced a CD featuring the first recorded performance of Paul Spicer's *The Deciduous Cross*. On it the Choir also recorded Bruckner's Mass in E minor.



"instrumental writing which is assured, inventive and colourful ... a performance which is committed and compelling"
Organists' Review, October 2007

"...Definitely recommended!" Bruckner Journal, November 2007

In 2009 the Choir recorded its second CD, which is a selection of music for the season of Christmas, at St Alban's Church, Holborn. This disc, 'Fairest flower of any field', is recommended as a best buy in *Gramophone's* 2009 Christmas edition, while the December 2009 edition of *Classical Music* magazine highlights "...[the Choir's] fine balance and floating lines ensuring this is a satisfying selection".



Both CDs may be purchased on eBay or via the Choir's website: www.whitehallchoir.org.uk.