



IN VENICE

Conductor Robin Page
Organist Maria Jovanovic

SUNDAY 30 MAY, 5PM - ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, SAN VIO.

MONDAY 31 MAY, 6PM - INSTITUTO CANOSSIANO,
FONDAMENTO DELLE ROMITE, DORSODURO.

An Evening of Song
To celebrate the Official Birthday of
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Since its formation in 1948, Kingston Choral Society has earned a reputation for concerts of a high standard and for performing a wide range of music. Under the guidance of Robin Page Kingston Choral Society is not afraid of tackling ambitious projects and has for example performed Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky in Russian.

The choir also enjoys singing the more familiar favourites of the choral repertoire. Kingston Choral Society has around 100 members drawn from a wide area of southwest London and north Surrey.

Kingston Choral Society is delighted to have this opportunity of singing in Venice.

We would like to thank Lady Frances Clark and Signora Christina Marigonda for all their help in making this occasion a success.

VENICE PROGRAMME OF MUSIC

Sunday 30th May 5-5.45pm

Monday 31st May 6-6.45pm

SUNDAY

Vaughan Williams: Let all the World in Every Corner Sing
O Taste and See

Duncan Faulkner: Go Forth for God

Gibbons: Drop Drop
Almighty and Everlasting God

Tallis: If Ye Love Me

Handel (Messiah) And The Glory

Mozart: Ave Verum

Bruckner: Locus Iste

Fauré: Cantique de Jean Racine

Franck: Panis Angelicus

Handel: Zadok the Priest

MONDAY

Handel: (Messiah) And the Glory

Tallis: If Ye Love Me

Morley: Now is the Month of Maying

Gibbons: Silver Swan

Bennett: Weep O Mine Eyes

Holst: Ye little birds
Come To Me

Grainger: Mo Nighean Dhu
Six Dukes Went a Fishin'

Vaughan Williams: Linden Lea

Finale: Jerusalem

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759) was born in Halle in Saxony, son of the barber-surgeon to the court of Saxe-Weissenfels. He was destined for the law, when his employer the Duke heard young Georg doodling on the court organ one day in 1693 and urged a musical career. He was certainly a precocious musical talent, having by the age of six mastered the family clavichord. He was tutored by Friedrich Zachau in harpsichord, oboe, organ and violin, and introduced to a French, Italian and German music. By 10, he had composed several sonatas for oboe and bassoon and performed for the Prussian court in Berlin. At 17 he was organist of the Calvinist Cathedral, but a year later left for Hamburg, where he played violin and harpsichord in the opera house. He became Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover in 1710, but at once left for London, where his opera *Rinaldo* was produced in 1711. Back in Hanover, he applied for a second leave and returned to London in 1712. His use of English words in *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* was a huge success. He became the Duke of Chandos' composer-in-residence and helped form the first Royal Academy of Music, for which he wrote an opera each year, but despite his fame, it went bankrupt. A second academy met little more success. He also composed ballet music for the famous and popular French dancer Marie Salle, and thereafter many of his operas (*Ariodante*, *Alcina*) combined both choral work and ballet. Eventually, Handel worked himself to exhaustion, suffering a stroke, but he bounced back, composing operas in both English and Italian. In 1727, he became a British subject. In 1741, with his finances stretched perilously thin, Handel accepted a job offer in Dublin. He came with *The Messiah*, a spectacular oratorio he had written in a mere three weeks that August, an astonishing pace even for a man who was famous for composing quickly. *And the glory of the Lord* is the opening chorus in *Messiah*. The text is from Isaiah 60. *Zadok the Priest* is the best known of the four coronation anthems composed by Georg Handel for the coronation of George II. It has been used in all coronation services since.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) had never been an avid composer of sacred music. In 1791, however, Leopold Hofmann, Kapellmeister at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, fell gravely ill. Mozart saw an opportunity to enhance his income, and manoeuvred to succeed Hofmann. Towards this end, he turned his attentions to sacred music, culminating ultimately with his Requiem. Unfortunately for him, Mozart died first!

Ave Verum Corpus K.618 was written in 1791, a few months before his death, and is based on a 14th century Eucharistic hymn. This setting was dedicated to his friend, Anton Stoll, who was chorus master of the parish church in Baden, and it was first performed in Baden at the Feast of Corpus Christi.

César Franck (1822-1890) from Liège, planned a career as a virtuoso pianist. In Paris his nationality at first excluded him from the Conservatoire, where he eventually failed to achieve the necessary distinction as a performer, so he concentrated on composition. In 1846 became the first organist at the church of Ste. Clothilde, with its Cavaillé-Coll organ. A man of gentle character, known to his pupils as Pater seraphicus, he exercised considerable influence through his classes and performances. *Panis Angelicus* is the sixth verse of a hymn by St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) for the feast of Corpus Christi (the body of Christ) in 1264. The words mean: The bread of angels becomes the bread of man.

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924) won acceptance with difficulty in the rigid official musical establishment of Paris. He was a pupil of Camille Saint-Saëns at the Ecole Niedermeyer and served as organist at various Paris churches, including finally the Madeleine, but had no teaching position until 1897 at the Conservatoire, where his pupils included Ravel and Enescu. In 1905 he became director of the Conservatoire in the aftermath of the scandal of the refusal of the Prix de Rome to Ravel and introduced a number of necessary reforms.

Cantique de Jean Racine is an early work, composed in 1865 when still a student at the Niedermeyer School. This poem is from a collection entitled Hymns Translated from the Roman Breviary by poet and dramatist Jean-Baptiste Racine (1639-1699).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) is arguably the greatest composer Britain has seen since Henry Purcell. In a long career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness, representing perhaps the essence of Englishness. He was born in the Cotswold village of Down Ampney, educated at Charterhouse, then Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied with Stanford and Parry at the Royal College of Music. He later studied with Max Bruch in Berlin and Maurice Ravel in Paris. He volunteered for the Field Ambulance Service in Flanders for the 1914-1918 war, and was deeply affected by the carnage and the loss of close friends such as the composer George Butterworth. He founded the Leith Hill festival in Surrey, which continues to attract choirs from all over Britain. He also became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music. At the turn of the century he was among the very first to travel in the countryside to collect folk-songs and carols from singers, notating them for future generations to enjoy. As musical editor of *The English Hymnal* he composed several hymns that are now world-wide favourites (*For all the Saints, Come down O Love Divine*).

Let All the World in Every Corner Sing comes from the song cycle *5 Mystical Songs*, which is based on a collection of poems entitled *The Temple* by George Herbert (1593-1632).

O taste and see is from Psalm 34. He wrote it for the Queen's coronation in 1953.

Linden Lea a Dorset song was written in 1941. It was arranged for mixed voices by Arthur Somervell.

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) was one of the last great polyphonic English composers. Born in Oxford, Orlando Gibbons was the last of four sons of a family of musicians. He held positions as Organist of the Royal Chapel, as keyboard player in the court of Prince Charles, and finally as organist at Westminster Abbey. He died an early death at Canterbury Cathedral, while awaiting the arrival of the new Queen Henrietta Maria. He was among the first major English choral composers schooled entirely in the Protestant universe, and his highly polished English anthems are among the finest in the repertory.

Almighty and Everlasting God is the Collect for the 3rd Sunday in Advent.

Drop, drop slow tears, and *The Silver Swan* are from his publication *Madrigals and Motetts* (1612).

Thomas Tallis (c.1510-1585). Relatively little is known about Tallis's life. Tallis embarked upon his musical career at a time when the culture of church music in England was at its zenith. This was a highly uncertain time to be employed in English church music – no sooner did he find a position than it was dissolved by Henry VIII's commissioners. In 1532, he was organist of Dover Priory but this dissolved in 1535. In 1537 he was employed by St Mary-at-Hill in Billingsgate, London. In 1538 he moved to the Augustinian abbey at Waltham in Essex, but in 1540 it was the last English abbey to be dissolved. As a native of Kent and a former organist at Dover, he was able to join the choir at Canterbury, but stayed only two years before becoming a Gentleman (i.e. a singer) of the Chapel Royal. He remained at the Chapel Royal for the rest of his life. He was close to his greater pupil William Byrd and was godfather to his son Thomas. The two musicians were rewarded by the grant of a monopoly of music-printing for twenty-one years! Both composers continued to compose for the Latin rite, as well as in Latin and English for the national Church. The anthem *If Ye Love Me* is taken from John 14 verses 15-17.

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934) was born in Cheltenham of Latvian-Russian descent, and composed many choral part-songs, song cycles, operas and orchestral pieces. He is perhaps best known for his orchestral suite *The Planets* composed during 1914-1916. Though his music had a mixed reception in his life-time, he was a strong influence on later English composers. He was deeply influenced by England's countryside and folksong, and adopted a consciously nationalist style in his music.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) born in Ansfelden, son of a village schoolmaster and organist. When his father died he was sent at 13 as a chorister to the St. Florian monastery where he could study organ, violin and theory. He too became a schoolmaster-organist, but in 1845 returned to teach at St. Florian, becoming organist there in 1851. The same year he was appointed organist at Linz Cathedral. He continued his studies almost to the age of 40, but more crucial was his contact, in 1863, with Wagner's music - first *Tannhäuser*, then *Tristan und Isolde*. In 1868, after Sechter's death, he became theory teacher at the Vienna Conservatory. In the ensuing years he travelled to Paris and London as an organ virtuoso and improviser.

Locus iste was written for the dedication of the votive chapel of Linz cathedral in 1869. The words mean: This place was made by God, a priceless sacrament; beyond reproach.

Thomas Morley (1557 or 1558-1602) contributed significantly to the development of the English madrigal, imitated from Italian models. He was probably a pupil of William Byrd, to whom he dedicated his popular book *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597). Morley was employed at St. Paul's in London and became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1592, publishing his first set of part-songs in 1593. Thomas Morley is regarded by many as being the best composer of English madrigals during the Renaissance. *Now is the Month of Maying* is unusual for a madrigal in being arranged in verse form.

John Bennet (c.1575-1614) came from Lancashire, but his life is not well documented.

Weep, O Mine Eyes was published in his first collection of madrigals (1599). It was one of his most popular madrigals, as well as one of the most internationally famous songs of the period. It may be based on John Dowland's *Flow, my Teares*.

Duncan Faulkner was born in Northampton, and studied at the Royal College of Music with Richard Latham, Herbert Howells and Oliver Davies, where he won the Walford Davies Organ Prize. He now lives in Surrey and is Head of Music at a school in Middlesex and Director of Music at St Anne's Church, Wandsworth.

Go Forth for God comes from a hymn by John R. Peacey (1896-1971)

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918) was one of the main movers in English music in the 19th century. He helped found the Royal College of Music in 1883 and was its director from 1894 until his death.

The hymn *Jerusalem* (words by William Blake) is so popular in England that it is now an unofficial anthem at sports matches, rather as *Va, pensiero* from Nabucco is for Italians.

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961) was born in Melbourne, Australia. He studied in Frankfurt before beginning a successful career as a concert pianist in England at the turn of the century. At the outbreak of war in 1914 he moved to America, becoming an American citizen after a period as a bandsman in the US army. He had a musical mind of unusual breadth and vision, with interests spanning the ages from Mediaeval music to the latest twentieth century developments. In later life he devoted his energies to the design and construction of Free Music machines on which a composer could write his music as graphs on transparent sheets to be performed by the machine free of restrictions on rhythm and pitch. Best remembered as a folksong collector and arranger, his contemporaries mistook his vitality for clowning. Those performing his work notice an effect of this was to give instructions in colloquial English, such as *Linger very slightly* or *Quicker lots bit by bit*. *Mo nighean dhu, O mistress mine, Six dukes went a-fishin'* and *Mary Thompson* come from Four part songs (1905, 1910-12)

THE CHOIR

SOPRANO

Carol Boothman
Kate Cockle
Anna Cronin
Wendy Faulkner
Marigold Haworth
Nora Lack
Julia Siberry
Rachel Stokes
Sarah Stokes
Roshni Thoppil

ALTO

Sue Brodie
Trish Guthrie
Susan Hankey
Christine Hogh
Pam Pocock
Elizabeth Siberry
Jo Smith
Jill Telfer
Lucy Thomas

TENOR

Roger Price
Richard Siberry
Iain Smith
David Todd

BASS

Duncan Faulkner
David Firshman
Jo Foley
Ben Young

ROBIN PAGE - Musical Director

Robin is based in London where he is the principal conductor and musical director of Thames Sinfonia, the Purcell Orchestra, Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra, and Kingston Choral Society. He has conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra Chorus and has made many appearances at the Royal Academy of Music and the London College of Music as a conductor and lecturer specialising in contemporary repertoire and Scandinavian music.

Robin has given acclaimed performances of Sibelius and Nielsen symphonies and conducted the inaugural concert of the UK Sibelius Society in London. He has also given the first performance of many Swedish works, including such composers as Stenhammer, Rosenberg, Lidholm and Bortz. He is guest conductor to Sundsvalls Kammarorkester in Sweden and has broadcast on Swedish National Radio.

FOREIGN LINKS Robin also has close links with the Baltic States. As guest conductor to the Estonian State Symphony Orchestra, he gave the first broadcast performance and broadcast in Estonian of Elgar's Enigma Variations. Elsewhere in Europe he recently recorded film scores with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra and the Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra. He has given broadcast performances with Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra and the Silesian State Philharmonic Orchestra (Poland).

In Britain Robin travels widely. For many years he was the principal conductor of the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra and also conducted the Hallé Choir, Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Worthing Symphony Orchestra and the West Sussex Philharmonic Choir where he was their musical director for many years.

He has given broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 with the BBC Ulster Orchestra.

As well as conducting, Robin is in great demand as an adjudicator, notably with regular appearances at the National Festival of Music for Youth at the Royal Festival Hall.

For many years he was a visiting lecturer at Kingston University and has given classes for the Bandmaster course at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall.

Robin studied at Magdalen College School, Oxford, as a choral scholar, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge as a choral exhibitioner and as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music, London.



IN VENICE

Conductor Robin Page
Organist Maria Jovanovic

SUNDAY 30 MAY, 5PM - ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, SAN VIO.

MONDAY 31 MAY, 6PM - INSTITUTO CANOSSIANO,
FONDAMENTE DELLE ROMITE, DORSODURO.

An Evening of Song
To celebrate the Official Birthday of
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

