

Saturday 18 December 2021

St Andrew's Church
Maple Road, Surbiton KT6 4DS

A detailed oil painting of a Victorian family in a parlor. A large, brightly lit Christmas tree stands in the center, decorated with lights and ornaments. A woman in a dark dress stands on the right, holding hands with children. Other children and a man are gathered around the tree. The room is filled with festive decorations, including garlands and a bust on a pedestal in the background.

MAKE WE MERRY

Aeron Preston Organ

Andrew Griffiths Conductor

www.kingsonchoralsociety.co.uk



Since its formation in 1949, Kingston Choral Society has earned a reputation for concerts of a high standard and for performing a wide range of music. The Society enjoys singing the familiar favourites of the choral repertoire, but is not afraid of tackling ambitious projects and has, for example, performed a new commission by Peter Maxwell Davies, Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* in Russian and other pieces in Czech, Hebrew, Finnish and Swedish.

Kingston Choral Society has over 100 members drawn from southwest London and north Surrey. New members are welcome. The choir performs four concerts a year, usually in All Saints Church, Kingston, and St Andrew's Church, Surbiton. Two of the concerts are with a professional orchestra. Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings (8-10 pm) at The Hollyfield School, Surbiton, in term-time. Kingston Choral Society also holds regular social and fundraising events and occasional musical workshops.

If you are interested in joining, please talk to any member of the choir during the interval or at the end of the concert. You can also contact the Membership Secretary on 020 8949 5253 or join@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk for more information and arrange to come to a rehearsal.

~ ~ NEXT KCS CONCERT ~ ~

19th March 2022 at 7.30 pm

Vaughan Williams - Rutter - Dyson

Andrew Griffiths - Conductor

With Thames Sinfonia

All Saints Church, Market Place, Kingston KT1 1JP

For further details contact the Box Office on 07770 932912

If you would like advance notice of concerts by email,
please phone 020 8942 2275 or email info@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk



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~ ~ PROGRAMME ~ ~

Up! Good Christen Folk and Listen (KCS)

O come, O Come Emmanuel (All)

Adam lay ybounden (KCS)

Infant lowly (KCS)

Once in Royal David's City (All)

Nativity Carol (KCS)

Good King Wenceslas (All)

Bach: Fuga sopra il Magnificat (Organ)

Personent Hodie (KCS)

O Come, All Ye Faithful (All)

Ding dong merrily on high (KCS)

Sussex Carol (KCS)

~ ~ INTERVAL ~ ~

Bednall: Make We Merry (KCS)

Hark! The herald angels sing (All)

BACH (1685 - 1750)

Born into a dynasty of professional musicians in north Germany, Bach's musical aptitude was taken for granted and he received very little systematic training during his youth. After his parents' death in 1695, he was brought up by his older brother Johann Christoph, from whom he learnt the organ. At the age of 15 Bach went north to Lüneberg. He joined the Mettenchor (Matins Choir) and spent all his time reading scores, composing, and learning to play violin, organ, clavichord and organ. His thirst for knowledge was so great that he walked 30 miles to Hamburg to hear Johann Adam Reincken's (1643-1722) organ playing, 60 miles to Celle to learn about French music and, in 1704, 213 miles to Lübeck to hear the celebrated organist Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707).

Bach's first permanent positions were as organist in Arnstadt (1703-1707), Mühlhausen (1707-1708) and Weimar (1708-1717). During these years, he performed, composed, taught, and developed his interest in organ building. His next position, as Music Director for Prince Leopold of Cöthen (1717-1723), involved entirely different activities; the court chapel was Calvinist, so there was no need for church compositions. In 1723, Bach was appointed cantor at the St. Thomas Church and School, and Director of Music for Leipzig, positions which he retained for the rest of his life. His official duties included the responsibility of overseeing the music in the four principal churches of the city, and organizing other musical events sponsored by the municipal council.

During Bach's last decade, he completed and revised several large-scale projects: *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Vol. II; a manuscript collection of chorale preludes (known as the "*Leipzig 18*", comprising revisions of Weimar pieces); and the *B minor Mass*. Other new works showed an increased interest in fugal and canonic writing: *Musikalische Opfer* (Musical Offering); the canonic variations for organ on "*Vom Himmel hoch*"; and *Die Kunst der Fuge* (The Art of Fugue).

Bach's eyesight deteriorated towards the end of his life, and in 1749 he underwent an operation with the English optician John Taylor, who would later perform a similar, unsuccessful operation on Handel. The operation was only partially successful and a second was performed a few weeks later. This proved very detrimental to Bach's health and he died a few weeks later after a stroke.

FUGA SOPRA IL MAGNIFICAT

This piece does not exist in a manuscript copy, so it is difficult to date, but it is probably an early work from Bach's time in Weimar (1708-1717). It exists in one source with the title 'Meine Seele erhebet den Herren – pro organo pleno con pedale' (My soul lifts up the Lord – for full organ with pedals), and in two other sources with the title 'Fuga sopra il Magnificat' (Fugue on the Magnificat). These last two sources are both written out by Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713-1780), one of Bach's pupils and copyists, and this has led some people to believe that the work is actually by Krebs.

Despite the title 'Fuga sopra il Magnificat', it is not a true fugue because the subject is not given an exposition or an answer. It is more correct to think of it as a fully worked-out contrapuntal movement based on a theme and its countersubject. This style of composition was common in previous generations of composers, particularly in Italy.

The main theme (the *cantus firmus*) is the *tonus peregrinus* Magnificat chant, which starts in long notes in the left hand. The countersubject, in the right hand, starts in bar two with a quaver motif which features predominantly throughout the whole work.

Bach divides the 'countersubject' into smaller motifs and it is these fragments which undergo development rather than the *cantus firmus*. The motifs are subjected to the standard fugal techniques of inversion, augmentation (lengthening of the note values), diminution (shortening of the note values). Towards the end of the movement the complete theme is introduced on the pedals. The second part of the theme includes five repeated Gs, which are challenging to have to harmonise differently in the upper parts, which may explain why Bach only used this part of the melody once.

DAVID BEDNALL

David Bednall is one of the leading choral composers of his generation with an extensive freelance playing and conducting career. He was Organ Scholar at The Queen's College, Oxford, then at Gloucester Cathedral (2000-2002), worked at Wells Cathedral (2002-2007), Organist of The University of Bristol, and is now Sub-organist at Bristol Cathedral, and conducts The University Singers. He has studied with distinguished organ teachers including David Briggs and Naji Hakim, and he quotes his influences as being Herbert Howells (1892-1983) and French organ music.

He has won prizes in improvisation and performance at the examination for FRCO, and has improvised on live radio, and performed extensively in the UK and abroad. He appeared as stunt-organist on 'Dr Who'. He is most prominent as a composer, and recordings of his works have been extremely well received. A number of his works have been broadcast on radio, and he has been commissioned by St Paul's Cathedral, and The Queen's College, Oxford. His 40-part motet *Lux orta est iusto* closed the Bristol Proms 2015 and December 2018 saw the première of *Make We Merry* for upper voices, brass, and organ.

MAKE WE MERRY (2018)

'Make We Merry' was 'originally commissioned for Edward Whiting and the Benenden Chapel Choir'. It is an eight-movement piece which sets texts from the 15th to 19th centuries to a variety of choral textures with a highly characterful accompaniment. The original version was for upper voices, and we believe that tonight will be the first performance of the recently released SATB version.

The first movement is an upbeat and exuberant movement in F major, marked 'fairly fast and with great joy'. The second movement is marked 'slow and mysterious' and shows the influence of Herbert Howells in the organ writing. The poem speaks of a troubled soul contemplating death who, upon hearing the Christmas bells heralding the birth of Christ, feels his 'sorrow touched with joy'. Every time the bells are mentioned, the music swells and brightens. The third movement lullaby is marked 'slow and gentle' and is underpinned by rocking quavers. The fourth movement is 'fairly fast and with great joy'. It starts with a fanfare figure which depicts the crowing of the rooster Chanticleer as he joyously wakes everyone on Christmas Day. The fifth movement brings us back to 'slow and mysterious' contemplation of the hope and promise that the birth of Christ brings us. The sixth movement is also a lullaby. It is marked 'very loving and gentle' but is quite energetic. The seventh movement, marked 'slowly and with great warmth', is in a gently flowing, devotional mood. The final movement, 'Fast and lively, with great joy' returns us to the mood of the opening movement and brings back motifs from the earlier movements to bring the piece to an exhilarating end.



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Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen

Ding-dong, ding:
Ding-a-dong-a-ding:
Ding-dong, ding-dong:
Ding-a-dong-ding.

Tell the story how from glory
God came down at Christmastide,
Bringing gladness, chasing sadness,
Show'ring blessings far and wide,

Up! good Christen folk, and listen
How the merry church bells ring,
And from steeple bid good people
Come adore the new-born King:

Born of mother, blest o'er other,
Ex Maria Virgine,
In a stable ('tis no fable),
Christus natus hodie.

Born of mother, blest o'er other
Ex Maria Virgine,
In a stable ('tis no fable),
Christus natus hodie.

Adam lay ybounden

Adam lay ybounden,
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long.

Ne had one apple taken been,
The apple taken been,
Ne had ne'er our Lady
Abeen heavene queen.

And all was for an apple,
An apple that he took,
As clerkes finden written
In their book.

Blessed be the time
That apple taken was;
Therefore we moun singen:
Deo gracias!

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Infant holy, infant lowly
For His bed a cattle stall
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ, the babe is Lord of all

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story
Tidings of a gospel true

Swift are winging, angels singing
Noels ringing, tidings bringing
Christ, the babe is Lord of all

Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow
Praises voicing greet the morrow
Christ, the babe was born for you
Christ, the babe was born for you

Nativity Carol

Born in a stable so bare,
Born so long ago;
Born 'neath light of star
He who loved us so.

*Far away silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
For Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Cradled by mother so fair,
Tender her lullaby;
Over her son so dear
Angel hosts fill the sky.

*Far away silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Wise men from distant far land,
Shepherds from starry hills
Worship this babe so rare,
Hearts with his warmth he fills.

*Far away silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
For Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Love in that stable was born
Into our hearts to flow;
Innocent dreaming babe
Make me thy love to know.

*Far away silent he lay,
Born today, your homage pay;
Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Personent Hodie

Personent hodie
Voces puerulae,
Laudantes jucunde
Qui nobis est natus,
Summo Deo datus,
Et de vir-, vir-, vir-,
Et de vir-, vir-, vir-,
Et de virgineo ventre procreatus.

In mundo nascitur,
Pannis involvitur,
Praesepe ponitur
Stabulo brutorum
Rector supernorum.
Perdidit, -dit, -dit,
Perdidit, -dit, -dit,
Perdidit spolia princeps infernorum.

Magi tres venerunt,
Parvulum inquirunt,
Bethlehem adeunt,
Stellulam sequendo,
Ipsum adorando,
Aurum, thus, thus, thus,
Aurum, thus, thus, thus,
Aurum, thus, et myrrham ei offerendo.

Omnes clericuli,
Pariter pueri,
Cantent ut angeli:
Advenisti mundo,
Laudes tibi fundo.
Ideo, -o, -o,
Ideo, -o, -o,
Ideo Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Ding dong! merrily on high

Ding dong! merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "Io, io, io!"
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Sussex Carol

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring,
On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring
News of great joy, news of great mirth
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the new born King.

Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night,
All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night,
Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and forever more, Amen.

Make We Merry

I Make we merry

Make we merry, both more and less,
For now is the time of Christmas!

Let no man come into this hall,
Nor groom, nor page, nor yet marshall,
But that some sport he bring with all.

Make we merry....

If he say that he cannot sing,
Some other sport then let him bring,
That it may please at this feasting.

Make we merry....

If he say naught can he do,
Then for my love tell him no,
But to the stocks then let him go.

Make we merry....

Anonymous (c. 1500)

II The time draws near (1849)

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound.

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry bells of Yule.

Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

III The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap (1900)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown.
And all the flowers looked up at him,
And all the stars looked down.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936)

IV All this night shrill chanticleer (1630)

All this night shrill chanticleer,
Day's proclaiming trumpeter,
Claps his wings and loudly cries,
'Mortals, mortals, awake and rise!

See a wonder Heaven is under,
From the earth is ris'n a sun,
Shines all night though day be done.

Wake O earth, wake ev'rything,
Wake and hear the joy I bring,
Wake and joy for all this night,
Heaven and ev'ry twinkling light,

All amazing, still stand gazing,
Angels, powers and all that be,
Wake and joy this sun to see.

Hail, O Sun, O blessed Light,
Sent into the world by night,
Let thy rays and heav'nly powers
Shine in this dark soul of ours;

For most duly Thou are truly
God and man we do confess.
Hail, O Sun, of Righteousness!

William Austin (1587-1634)

V Moonless darkness stands between

Moonless darkness stands between.
Past, the Past, no more be seen!
But the Bethlehem-star may lead me
To the sight of him who freed me
From the self that I have been.

Make me pure, Lord: Thou art holy;
Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly;
Now beginning, and alway:
Now begin on Christmas day.

Moonless darkness stands between.
Past, the Past, no more be seen!

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

VI Sweet was the song

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,
When she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lullaby.
'Sweet babe,' quoth she,
And rocked him sweetly on her knee.

'Sweet babe,' quoth she,
'My Son, and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn.'
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lullaby.

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,
When she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lullaby.
'Sweet babe,' quoth she,
And rocked Him sweetly on her knee.

Anonymous (16th Century)

VII Let others look for pearl and gold

Let others look for pearl and gold,
Tissues, or tabbies* manifold:
One only lock of that sweet hay
Whereon the blessed baby lay,
Or one poor swaddling-clout*, shall be
The richest New-Year's gift to me.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

*tabbies = silk taffetas

*clout = cloth

VIII Make we joy now

Refrain

Make we joy now in this fest
In quo Christus natus est.
[In which Christ is born]
Eya!

A Patre Unigenitus

[The Only-begotten of the father]
Is through a maiden come to us:
Sing we of him and say 'Welcome,
Veni, Redemptor gentium'.
[Come, Redeemer of the nations]
Refrain.

Agnoscat omne seculum,
[Let every age perceive (that)]
A bright star made three kings come
Him for to seek with their presents,
Verbum supernum prodiens.
[The high Word forthcoming]
Eya.

A solis ortus cardine
[From the rising of the sun]
So mighty a lord is none as he;
And to our kind he hath him knit,
Adam parens quod polluit.
[Which our father Adam defied]
Refrain.

Maria ventre concepit,
[Mary conceived in her womb]
The Holy Ghost was ay her with,
Of her in Bethlem born he is,
Consors Paterni luminis.
[Sharing in the light of his Father]
Refrain

O Lux beata Trinitas,
[O Light of the Holy Trinity]
He lay between an ox and ass,
Beside His mother maiden free,
Gloria tibi, Domine!
[Glory to thee, O Lord!]
Refrain

Anonymous (15th Century)

ANDREW GRIFFITHS – Musical Director



Andrew Griffiths enjoys an enviable reputation as a dynamic and versatile young conductor with a particular flair for opera and choral music.

He has conducted productions for The Royal Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Opera Theatre Company, Early Opera Company, Mid Wales Opera, Bampton Classical Opera and Iford Festival Opera. In concert he has appeared with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Swan, Southbank Sinfonia and the Orpheus Sinfonia, and he is regularly engaged to broadcast and record with the BBC Singers.

Andrew has worked at Glyndebourne, ENO, Scottish Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Opera Collective Ireland, and with the BBC Symphony and Scottish Symphony Orchestras, as well as on numerous Royal Opera productions (including *The Ring* and the world première of *The Minotaur*), under such conductors as Pappano, Bychkov, Elder, Gardiner and Mackerras. He is often engaged for projects outside the standard operatic canon, and is particularly experienced in Baroque repertoire and the music of the last 50 years. Much sought-after as a vocal coach, he works frequently with the singers at the National Opera Studio and The Royal Opera.

In constant demand as a choral conductor, Andrew's engagements for the BBC Singers have included the world première of John Pickard's *Mass in Troubled Times*, recordings of 20th century American repertoire, and broadcasts of Howells, Parry, MacMillan and Martinů. He regularly directs the choirs at Dartington International Summer School, and has appeared in concert with the BBC Symphony Chorus, New London Chamber Choir, and Hong Kong's *Tallis Vocalis*. He is Musical Director of Kingston Choral Society and chamber choir Londinium, whose debut recording, *The Gluepot Connection*, was recently released to widespread critical acclaim.

A pianist, viola player and singer by training, Andrew began his musical education as a Quirister and Scholar at Winchester College, and read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he held a Choral Exhibition. He studied conducting under Martyn Brabbins in Glasgow, and trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio and at Scottish Opera, before joining the Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artist programme. He is a former principal viola of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and a founder member of vocal consort Stile Antico. In 2008 he was chosen to receive the Wagner Society's Bayreuth Bursary.

Andrew's recent and forthcoming engagements include his debuts conducting for The Royal Ballet (*Medusa*, music by Purcell) and the Royal Northern Sinfonia (*B Minor Mass*), a return to the Orchestra of the Swan (Beethoven/Thea Musgrave), Assistant Conductor for *Agrippina* at The Royal Opera, and a programme of Flemish polyphony with the BBC Singers at the Barbican Hall.

AERON PRESTON - Organ



Welsh pianist Aeron Preston read Music at St John's College, Cambridge, and worked as a secondary school teacher in both the public and private sectors. He now works primarily as an accompanist and répétiteur, accompanying choral societies and solo singers, and playing as a répétiteur for opera productions across Wales and the Marches. He completed a PGDip in Advanced Pianoforte Studies (Répétiteur) at the Wales International Academy of Voice, and was a Young Artist répétiteur for 2020/2021 at the National Opera Studio in Wandsworth. He holds the Associateship of the Royal College of Organists, and has recently been appointed organist at St Paulinus' Church, Crayford. He has also recently become the accompanist for Harlow Chorus.

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