

# The Huddersfield SINGERS

Conductor: Philip Honor • Registered Charity N° 507768

Winter Concert

2008

# Ring Out, Wild Bells



Ralph **Vaughan Williams**  
Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Marc-Antoine **Charpentier**  
Messe de Minuit sur des Airs de Noël

Arthur **Wills**  
The Child for Today

Percy **Fletcher**  
Ring Out, Wild Bells

Featuring guest artists:

**Clifton Handbell Ringers**

**Robert O'Connell**, Baritone  
and **Tom Moore**, Organ

**Saturday, 6th December 2008, 7-30pm**

St Paul's Hall, University Campus,  
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For more details, contact the Treasurer, John Broscombe, on **(01924) 495785**

## Acknowledgements

The Huddersfield Singers would like to extend their thanks to the volunteers who have helped in the production of this concert by providing refreshments in the interval, selling tickets and programmes at the door, and being of general assistance behind the scenes. Their contribution has been invaluable.

Financial support towards the cost of this concert is gratefully acknowledged from Kirklees Council, Yorkshire Arts (Arts Council England) and Making Music



# TONIGHT'S GUESTS



## Clifton Handbell Ringers

*Director: David Sunderland*

*Compère: Philip Chadwick*

The original Clifton Handbell Ringers group was formed in around 1890, composed of male members of Clifton Parish Church. Under the guidance of James Fearnley, a Clifton joiner, the band began by playing a few

simple tunes with about two dozen bells belonging to St John's, Clifton Parish Church. Their efforts proved popular and their membership grew, as did their fame, and in around 1895 the team began to enter local and national handbell competitions. A larger set of bells was bought by public subscription, and there were enough members to make two teams of around twelve ringers each; eventually the group owned around two hundred bells.

The start of the Great War in 1914 brought about the demise of the original Clifton Handbell Ringers: the team disbanded on 21st February 1915 and its bells were put into storage at a local mill. The bells remained there for sixty years until they were rediscovered by Peter Fawcett, who was researching the history of the original team. He realised that fifty bells were missing, but he cleaned and repaired what bells he could and gathered together a small group



of enthusiasts. The present Clifton Handbell Ringers was re-established in 1975, and a junior team was formed just three years later.

That junior team is still in existence, but is now called the Clifton Village Handbell Ringers. The team of eight plays off a square table using the traditional Yorkshire 'off the table' style of ringing. The group has been successful at a number of music festivals in the North of England and entertains a wide variety of audiences in venues as prestigious as the Harrogate International Conference Centre and the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. In 1996 the Clifton Village Handbell Ringers represented the country at an International Symposium of Handbell Ringing in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

To ensure the future of the organisation, an ambitious fund-raising programme was started and, combined with help from various funding bodies, enough money was raised to ensure delivery of 140 new handbells in March 2001 and June 2004, replacing the set dating from 1908 at a cost of £30,000.

## **Tom Moore, Organ**

Tom was born in Leicester and started his musical career early, beginning to play the piano at the age of four. He was a treble in Leicester Cathedral Choir, and was inspired to start organ lessons with the Cathedral Assistant Organist, Geoffrey Carter.

After completing his schooling in Leicester, Tom moved to Huddersfield to take a Bachelor of Music degree at the University, majoring in organ studies under Keith Jarvis and taking part in master classes given by Dame Gillian Weir, David Titterington and Peter Hurford. During his time in West Yorkshire he broadcast on radio and television, and was successively organ Scholar at Huddersfield Parish Church and Bradford Cathedral, playing the organ for the Royal Maundy Thursday service in March 1997.

Following graduation in September 1998, Tom was appointed Assistant Organist at Peterborough Cathedral, and eventually returned to Huddersfield University to study for his MA in Music, graduating in September 1999.

In September 2002, Tom assumed his present appointment as Assistant Director of Music at Wakefield Cathedral and Director of the girl choristers of the Cathedral Choir. Tom is also regularly in demand as a freelance recitalist



and accompanist/repetiteur; his engagements in the latter capacity have included: accompanist for the Halifax Choral Society, Yorkshire Philharmonic Choir and Overgate Hospice Choir. He is a member of the teaching staff at Huddersfield University and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield, and has also taught for Leeds College of Music.



### **Robert O'Connell, Bass-Baritone**

Robert started singing at school, where he also took up the piano. As his voice broke he joined the Surrey Youth Choir, first as a tenor and subsequently as a bass. In 1997 Robert successfully auditioned for the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, with which he sang until 2003.

A music graduate of Huddersfield University, Robert studied singing with Paul Wade as part of his degree and took several solo and chorus roles in both University and local productions over the three-year course. During his time at university, Robert also became a founder member of Opera Works, an exciting new company with which he gave acclaimed contemporary performances of pieces such as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Employed as a singing teacher at Wakefield Girls' High School, Robert is a firm believer in developing singing at a 'grass roots' level, and encourages his pupils to join local choirs whenever possible.

Robert is a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers and also sings regularly at Manchester Cathedral as a Deputy Lay Clerk. He currently studies with John Powell.



### **Will Mace, 'Cello**

Will Mace grew up in Sheffield and studied the cello with Anna Shuttleworth and Susan Lowe. After studying for a degree in Music at Hull University, Will took a PGCE and became a secondary school music teacher.

He now teaches part-time and runs music education projects; recent projects have been performed at the National Festival of Music for Youth. Will has also assisted with an education project at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival.

He plays regularly with the Bolton Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of Square Chapel.



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# PROGRAMME

## CHOIR AND ORGAN

Ring Out, Wild Bells . . . . . Percy Fletcher

## CLIFTON HANDBELL RINGERS

Walking in the Air . . . . . Howard Blake

Irish Jig . . . . . Traditional

The Christmas Song (“Chestnuts Roasting”) . . . . Mel Tormé and Bob Wells

Takeda Rhapsody . . . . . Tomoko Kanzaki

Black and White Rag . . . . . George Botsford

David Sunderland *Director*

Philip Chadwick *Compère*

## ORGAN

Chorale Prelude, ‘Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme’, BWV 645 . . . J. S. Bach

Pastorale, ‘Gesù Bambino’ . . . . . Pietro Yon

Tom Moore *Organ*

## CHOIR AND ORGAN

Messe de Minuit sur des Airs de Noël . . . . . Marc-Antoine Charpentier

I Kyrie

II Gloria

III Credo

IV Sanctus & Benedictus

v Agnus Dei

Jane Hoyle *Soprano*

Lynne Ninkovic *Soprano*

Richard Hallas *Counter-tenor*

Matthew Pollard *Tenor*

Philip Rayner *Baritone*

Tom Moore *Organ*

★ INTERVAL ★



CHOIR AND ORGAN

**The Child for Today** .. . . . . Arthur Wills

- i Prelude
- ii Up! good Christen folk, and listen
- iii The first Christmas
- iv What drew you, shepherds from the hill?
- v Christmas reality
- vi The Celtic Monk's rune
- vii Postlude

Catherine Rice *Soprano*

Tom Moore *Organ*

CLIFTON HANDBELL RINGERS

**Teddy Bears' Picnic** .. . . . . John Walter Bratton

**In a Persian Market** .. . . . . Albert William Ketèlbey

**The Shepherds' Farewell** .. . . . . Hector Berlioz

**Close Every Door** .. . . . . Andrew Lloyd Webber

**Troika** from *Lieutenant Kijé* .. . . . . Sergei Prokofiev

David Sunderland *Director*

Philip Chadwick *Compère*

CHOIR, GUEST SOLOISTS AND ORGAN

**Fantasia on Christmas Carols** .. . . . . Ralph Vaughan Williams

Robert O'Connell *Bass-baritone*

Will Mace *Cello*

Tom Moore *Organ*



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# PROGRAMME NOTES

## **Percy Fletcher: Ring Out, Wild Bells**

Percy Fletcher (1879–1932) was born in Derby, played violin, piano and organ, and, like many English composers in the early twentieth century, made his living as a Musical Director in various London theatres. Soon after going to His Majesty's Theatre in 1915 he directed the very long-running *Chu Chin Chow*, for which he did much of the orchestration, and later composed its successors, *Cairo* in 1921 and *The Good Old Days* in 1925.

In addition to his music for the theatre, Fletcher composed prolifically and in all instrumental genres, from the *String Quartet* (1910) to the *Epic Symphony* (1926) for brass band. He also wrote much choral music, including an Easter cantata for small church choir, *The Passion of Christ* (1921), after the model of Stainer's *Crucifixion*, as well as many shorter choruses such as tonight's opener, the carol *Ring Out, Wild Bells*, in which Fletcher sets words from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* in a polished style owing something to Elgar.

—Philip Honnor

## **J. S. Bach: Chorale Prelude, 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme'**

This piece is the first of the six Schübler Chorales. The chorale is recognisable as "Zion hears the watchmen's voices" and is heard in the tenor part of the texture, upon a reed stop. The work shot to fame as a result of its being used in the Lloyd's 'Black Horse' television advert during the nineties!

## **Pietro Yon: Pastorale, 'Gesù Bambino'**

Based loosely on the theme *Adeste Fideles*, this piece possesses a beautiful, lyrical melody which swings gently along thanks to its  $\frac{12}{8}$  metre. The theme is heard first on the swell Hautbois and later, after a modulation of key, upon a pair of flutes. The composer is best known for his *Toccatina* for a solitary flute stop, but this lesser known composition is equally worthy of performance.

—Tom Moore

## **Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Messe de Minuit**

The music of Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634–1704) has been little known and, until recently, less appreciated. The reasons for this are not musical but political. His attempts to obtain an appointment at the court of Louis XIV were successfully blocked by Lully, the court favourite, who had obtained a

virtual monopoly of all musical production and publication from the King in 1672. It was only after Lully's death in 1682 that Charpentier could make even modest headway.

In his early twenties Charpentier had studied in Rome, probably with Carissimi, on whose style much of his output is based, and it is the Italianate warmth of his style that makes Charpentier's output so much more attractive to modern listeners than Lully's formal French coldness. The *Messe de Minuit* (Midnight Mass) survives in *Meslanges*, a manuscript collection now in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, where it is entitled *Messe de Minuit pour Noël, à 4 voix, flûtes et violons*. It was probably written in the 1690s for use at St Louis, the principal Jesuit church in Paris, where much of Charpentier's sacred music was performed. The immediately attractive quality of the music stems from the use of traditional French carols to provide the material for each section of the Mass (for example, *Joseph est bien marié* in the Kyrie, returning at the Crucifixus) as well as from Charpentier's love of contrast between soloists, duets, trios, choruses and dance-style instrumental accompaniments.

### **Arthur Wills: The Child for Today**

Arthur Wills OBE (b. 1926) was organist of Ely Cathedral from 1958 to 1990, and Professor of Organ at the Royal Academy of Music from 1964 until 1992. He is also a prolific composer and a well-known organ recitalist. His carol sequence, *The Child for Today*, was composed in 1976 and consists of five carols framed by an instrumental prelude and postlude for the organ.

The *Prelude* is in two parts, each beginning with the same harmony, the second, quieter section being a pre-echo of the opening of the second carol of the sequence. The first carol is the well-known *Up! good Christen folk, and listen*, in which Wills uses the refrain melody (*Ding-dong, ding*) as the bass-line of the verses. The second carol, *The first Christmas*, expands the harmonies of the *Prelude* into a lilting cradle-song setting of an anonymous poem.

*What drew you, shepherds from the hill?* is an unaccompanied setting of Raymond Gilbert's poem about the disbelieving onlooker refusing to go with the shepherds, while the same poet's *Christmas reality* is set to jaunty rhythms and deals with the contrast between modern commercialised Christmas and the original Christmas message. The final carol, *The Celtic Monk's rune*, is an atmospheric Epiphany carol whose first two phrases are then used as the musical basis of the closing *Postlude*.

## Texts for The Child for Today

Up! good Christen folk, and listen

*Rev. George Ratcliffe Woodward*

*Ding-dong ding:*

*Ding-a-dong-a-ding:*

*Ding-dong, ding-dong:*

*Ding-a-dong-ding.*

Up! good Christen folk, and listen

How the merry church-bells ring,

And from steeple

Bid good people

Come adore the new-born King.

**The first Christmas**

*Anonymous*

A star was his night-light,

His quilt was the sky,

And soft sang his mother

In case he should cry.

And all the brown cattle

Came close to his bed

To see the wee baby

Asleep in their shed.

**What drew you, shepherds from the hill?**

*Raymond Gilbert*

What drew you, shepherds from the hill?

Why have you come this way

At dead of night, when all is still?

What if your sheep should stray?

What is this talk about a light?

Surely it was the moon.

How could the sky appear more bright

Than at the height of noon?

No light was visible down here.

It must have been a dream

That filled your rustic hearts with fear,

And left you with this theme.

Tell the story how from glory

God came down at Christmastide,

Bringing gladness,

Chasing sadness,

Show'ring blessings far and wide.

Born of mother, blest o'er other,

*Ex Maria Virgine,*

In a stable

('Tis no fable)

*Christus natus hodie.*

His carols were praises

Of love and goodwill

That rose to the midnight

So clear and so still

To herald the earliest

Christmas we know.

When Jesus was little

A long time ago.

Why all this talk of heav'nly song

Incomparably sweet?

What was it made you rush along

This sleeping village street?

Whose new-born son is he the Host

Would have you come to see?

Is not a manger quite the most

Unlikely place to be?

No, I will not go on with you,

Nor be by nonsense led.

You act like madmen through and through;

Just leave me to my bed!

Misguided man, your loss is great,

Not for your eyes at morn

The Saviour's form in lowly state,

Which shepherds now adorn.

## Christmas reality

*Raymond Gilbert*

Crib in the market electric'ly lit,  
Past which the shoppers unconsciously flit,  
Far from reality – distance and time –  
Picture of Christmas, but oh how sublime!

Waxen-faced Joseph, Madonna in blue,  
Babe of tough plastic, and star fixed with glue,  
Offer their witness to men in the street,  
Tell of a story all sugary-sweet.

Was this how Jesus came into the world?  
Is this the story the Bible unfurled?  
Was all so lovely the eye to behold?  
And was it thus the evangelists told?

## The Celtic Monk's rune

*Gertrude Dimmock*

Star-gleam leads me  
Down to the sad seashore,  
Where the grey waves beat  
On the wild, the sad seashore.

Star-gleam leads me  
To the lands over the waters.  
I must go, I must go  
To the lone lands over the waters.

Star-gleam led them,  
The Wise Men with their gifts,  
To the Babe at Bethlehem,  
Bearing their precious gifts.

Beauty was absent that night long ago,  
Dirt in the straw and no heat to give glow,  
Foul was the smell of that cave in the rock,  
Nothing to draw those who minded their flock.

In that poor slum, oh so draughty and chill,  
There in conditions more likely to kill,  
Born was the Lord Christ, his glory quite hidden,  
Earth all around full of sins to be ridden.

Glory to God whose dear Son did there thrive!  
Praise to the Lord who such filth did survive!  
Thanks for a baby so soon to be man!  
Thanks for a Saviour fulfilling your plan.

Star-gleam showed them  
The place of the Holy Babe,  
He that was Christ the King,  
God's Son, But a helpless Babe.

Grew He to manhood  
Showed men the Father's love,  
Died He for Man's sin,  
Died He for love, for very love.

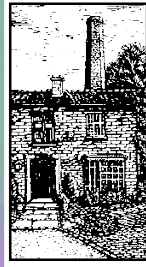
Star-gleam calls me  
'Show this in other lands'  
O'er the lone hills going  
To the far off, the unknown lands.

He that goes with thee,  
The bright, the morning star.  
Over the seas, the waters,  
Follow the Star, the shining Star.

## Ralph Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols

The popular *Fantasia*, which dates from 1912, is heard tonight in Vaughan Williams' arrangement for organ and 'cello. It is based on three English carols, *The truth sent from above* (Herefordshire), *Come all you worthy gentlemen* (Somerset) and *On Christmas Night* (Sussex), while fragments of other well-known carols appear in the instrumental accompaniment from time to time.

—Philip Honor



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**Purcell** *O Sing unto the Lord*, **Handel** *Salve Regina*, **Haydn** *Little Organ Mass*  
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*Elly Bosworth*, Soprano, *Robert O'Connell*, Baritone and *Tom Moore*, Organ

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