

DUNSFORD SINGERS



Dvořák Mass in D

plus traditional folk songs, arranged by
Bob Chilcott & Cecilia McDowall

PROGRAMME

Conductor Tim Pithers

Organist David House

Pianist Carol Galton

Summer 2026

www.dunsfordsingers.co.uk



The Dunsford Singers (A Teign Valley Choir)

We are a community choir with most members drawn from the villages of the glorious Teign Valley. We'd like to think we are friendly and welcoming – there are no auditions and not everyone can read music. The choir was formed in Dunsford over a quarter of a century ago, as a WI initiative; eventually male relations and friends were allowed to join! Usually we have over thirty singers but this term has proved particularly challenging with numbers reduced for all sorts of valid reasons. We like singing in four parts where we can (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) and enjoy a wide range of musical styles, performing concerts twice a year in December and June. Whatever it might be, we'll give it our best!.

If you enjoy singing, please consider joining us. Dunsford is just twenty three minutes from Exeter. Have a look at our website www.dunsfordsingers.co.uk and/or contact our secretary: janmiddleton29@gmail.com

Conductor/MD Tim Pithers

Tim is passionate about community and student music-making, and firmly believes that classical music should be made as accessible as possible to performers and audiences alike. He undertook his degree in Music and French at the University of Exeter studying violin, composition and musical direction. Tim studied conducting with Denise Ham at the London Conducting Academy, completing the programme in 2024. He has also studied with Rodolfo Saglimbeni, Dominic Grier and Denise Ham at the George Hurst Conductors' Course at Sherborne Summer School of Music, at the Girton Conducting Course and at other public masterclasses. He enjoys working with ensembles of varying degrees of experience and aims to develop ambitious objectives for amateur groups. As well as holding the role of Musical Director of the Dunsford Singers, Tim is also Conductor of the Exeter University Symphony Orchestra, the Exeter University Symphonic Wind Orchestra, and EX4 Chamber Orchestra.

Organist David House

David was an organ scholar at Truro School, learning with Henry Doughty (Truro Cathedral). When studying Music at Exeter University he was taught by Paul Morgan (Exeter Cathedral), then during a year in London he had further lessons with Richard Popplewell (Chapel Royal). David then trained as a teacher and spent thirty five years in the classroom, the last twenty nine of which were as Director of Music at Colyton Grammar School in East Devon. Now retired, he continues working as an A level examiner, accompanist (both piano and organ) and is both Organist and Church Warden at St Gregory's, Seaton.

Pianist Carol Galton

We are delighted to have Carol as our official accompanist for rehearsals and some parts of our concerts. A pianist and cellist, she came to England from South Africa as a post-graduate student. Carol became a primary school teacher in Devon, much valued for her teaching diploma from the Royal School of Music and her co-ordination of children's music-making at all levels. She continues to teach piano and cello. As well as being a sought-after accompanist and performer, Carol is also a keen vegetable grower!

Antonin Dvorak 1841 -1904

MASS IN D MAJOR

Organist David House

You may know Dvorak best for his iconic *New World Symphony and Slavonic Dances*, both of which reflect his love of traditional Slavic music. He experimented with a rich variety of musical forms including symphonies, symphonic poems and operas, influenced and inspired by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner and Schubert. The echoes of Bohemian folk music are also to be found in his religious choral works, and the lovely Mass in D Major is no exception. It was originally composed in 1887 for the inauguration of his patron Josef Hlavka's chapel at Luzany Castle in Bohemia. The modest building could not accommodate an orchestra or large choir, so Dvorak wrote a mass for organ and a small choir. Tonight we are singing this authentic version. Dvorak was quietly but deeply religious; this intimate arrangement captures his humble spirituality, love for nature and folk-style lyricism. There is a simple yet fervent style, merging the traditional structures of the mass with fresh, folk-inflected melodies and rich harmonies of the Romantic era. In Dvorak's skilful hands, the ancient Latin words of the mass take us to the Bohemian countryside with its little churches, where devout, ordinary folk had worshipped for centuries.

- I. **Kyrie:** A gentle, lilting melody builds in intensity, pleading for God's and Christ's mercy.
- II. **Gloria:** An explosive choral fanfare which then weaves together tenderness and blazing passion, celebrating the glory of God.
- III. **Credo:** This profession of faith unfolds gradually, employing gentle lines sung by the altos with energetic choral responses. In the middle, the dramatic *Crucifixus* evolves into a joyful fugue celebrating the Resurrection.

- IV. **Sanctus:** You will hear folk-like syncopations as the choir attack this movement praising the holiness of God.
- V. **Benedictus:** Dvorak achieves a sense of meditation, reverence and awe in this heartfelt contemplation of blessing.
- VI. **Agnus Dei:** This section moves from darkness into the light, as Dvorak asserts the power of Christ, and skilfully creates an ending of peace and serenity.

Interval

Complimentary drinks will be served

TRADITIONAL SONGS FROM THE BRITISH ISLES, arranged by Bob Chilcott and Cecilia MacDowall. *Lyrics are included for the less well-known songs.*

Pianist Carol Galton

Bob Chilcott b 1955

Hailed as “ a *contemporary hero of British choral music*” by *The Observer* , Chilcott is hugely popular with professional and amateur choirs. Originally a member of the King's Singers from 1985 -1997, he has gained international fame as a composer since 1997. His choral arrangements are accessible yet challenging.

Cecilia MacDowall b 1951

MacDowell read Music at the University of Edinburgh and continued her studies at Trinity College of Music, London and is now regarded as one of the UK's leading composers of secular and sacred choral music. The two songs you will hear tonight are from her collection *A Fancy of Folk Songs* - fresh, witty and expressive!

Chilcott: Ar Hyd y Nos/All Through the Night

This much-loved tune first appeared in a 1784 Welsh songbook. The English words we are singing were composed by Sir Harold Boulton in English in the late 1800s. The serene beauty of this traditional Welsh song is given an elegant twist in an arrangement anchored by a flowing piano accompaniment.

Chilcott: Composed on Westminster Bridge

Wordsworth's poem is given the 'Chilcott treatment', as his musical arrangement captures the beauty of the early morning, the slow majesty of the opening words, the rippling undercurrent of the Thames and a general sense of grandeur.

*Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

Chilcott: Skye Boat Song: This tune was composed in 1782, originally a lament for unrequited love, in the style of an '*iorran*', a Gaelic rowing song. In the 1870s, new lyrics by Sir Harold Boulton connected it to the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie's escape after his defeat at Culloden. Listen out for the piano part, with its nimble arpeggios and chord clusters, capturing the turbulent movement of the waves as the prince is rowed to safety from Benbecula to Skye.

MacDowall: Green Bushes: This song first appeared in broadside ballads of the 1820s but it is probably much older. As usual in these scenarios of faithless lovers, it's Spring and the nightingales are singing ... the pastoral idyll is juxtaposed against the tale of a damsel who forsakes her true love. At least she repudiates her new lover's offer of a fine new wardrobe of clothes, and settles for the promise of loyalty and constancy ...

*As I was a walking one morning in Spring,
For to hear the birds whistle and the nightingales sing,
I saw a young damsel, so sweetly sang she:
Down by the Green Bushes he thinks to meet me.*

*I stepped up to her and thus I did say:
'Why wait you my fair one, so long by the way?'
'My true Love, my true Love,' so sweetly sang she,
'Down by the Green Bushes he thinks to meet me.'*

*'I'll buy you fine beavers and a fine silken gown,
I will buy you fine petticoats with the flounce to the ground,
If you will prove loyal and constant to me
And forsake you own true Love, I'll be married to thee.'*

*'I want none of your petticoats and your fine silken shows:
I never was so poor as to marry for clothes;
But if you will prove loyal and constant to me
I'll forsake my own true Love and marry thee.*

*Come let us be going, kind sir, if you please;
Come let us be going from beneath the green trees.
For my true Love is coming down yonder I see,
Down by the Green Bushes, where he thinks to meet me.'*

*And when he came there and he found she was gone,
He stood like some lambkin, forever undone;
'She has gone with some other, and forsaken me,*

So adieu to Green Bushes forever,' cried he.

MacDowall: O No, John!: A rather decisive young lady (from Somerset, or Norfolk, or Sussex) maintains a lofty rejection of her lover's advances until he almost gives up, upon which she hastily changes her mind, realising that the single state might have disadvantages!

*On yonder hill there stands a creature, who she is I do not know;
I'll go and court her for her beauty; she must answer yes or no ...
O no, John!*

*My father was a Spanish Captain, went to sea a month ago.
First he kissed men, then he left me, bid me always answer no ...
O no, John!*

*O Madam, in your face is beauty, on your lips red roses grow,
Will you take me for your lover? Madam, answer yes or no ...
O no, John!*

*Madam, I will give you jewels, I will make you rich and free,
I will give you silken dresses – Madam, will you marry me? ...
O no, John*

*O Madam, since you are so cruel, and that you do scorn me so,
If I may not be your lover, Madam will you let me go?
O no, John!*

*I will stay with you forever, if you will not be unkind,
Madam, I have vowed to love you – would you have me change
my mind? O no, John!*

*O hark, I hear the church bells ringing, will you come and be my
wife?
Or dear Madam, have you settled to live single all your life?
O no, John!*

Over the Wave: The text is from the traditional poetry of the Ojibwa tribe. Its beautiful melody and lilting cadences transport us to their ancestral homelands near the Great Lakes. Famed for their dream catchers and their birchbark scrolls, these First Nation people have a rich heritage of poems and songs.

*Who, maiden, makes this river flow?
The Spirit, he makes its ripples glow,
But I've a charm that can make thee, dear,
Steal over the wave to thy lover here.
Who, maiden, makes this river flow?
The Spirit, he makes its ripples glow,
Yet every blush that my heart would hide
Is mirror'd for me in the tell-tale tide.
And though thou sleep on the farthest side,
Round which these dimpling waters smile,
Yet I've a charm that can make thee, dear
Steal over the wave to thy lover here ...*

Chilcott: O Danny Boy

A song set to the exquisite *Londonderry Air*, this arrangement captures every ounce of poignancy, lyricism and the power of a love that is faithful unto eternity. Not a dry eye in the house ...

Chilcott: Shenandoah

This gorgeous song appears to have originated with 18th century Canadian fur traders travelling down the Missouri River in canoes. Lyrics vary, but tend to focus upon the idea that a trader is in love with the daughter of the Oneida Iroquois chief, Shenandoah. The canoeists were great singers, and by the early 19th century the song had evolved into a sea shanty in some arrangements.

CHOIR MEMBERS

Soprano: Julie Cooney, Ruth Frampton, Jo MacDonald,
Christine Marsden, Jan Middleton, Mary Sansom
Alto: Jo Jenkin, Kath Keating, Leslie Pearman
Tenor: Steve Cook, Giles Frampton, Lorraine Hart,
Ray Mallett
Bass: Antony Galton, Sam Guyah, Don Oliver, Jan Traylen,
John Sawyer

Future Dates:

Rehearsals begin on Monday 21 September 2026 in Dunsford Village Hall - 7.30pm-9:00pm.

Winter Concerts – Saturday 5 December at 4pm (Chudleigh Parish Church) and Sunday 13 December at 4pm (St Mary's Church, Dunsford)).

Come and sing with us!

<http://www.dunsfordsingers.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/dunsfordsingers/>