



DUNSFORD SINGERS

WINTER CONCERT

THE ARMED MAN CHORAL SUITE & ADIEMUS

by Karl Jenkins

Chudleigh Church

Saturday 6th December 4pm

and music by

Gjeilo Esenvalds Rutter Chilcott
Tallis Byrd

PROGRAMME

Welcome to the Dunsford Singers' Winter Concert

Conductor/Musical Director: 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 Dartmouth Orchestra, Exeter University Symphony Orchestra, the Exeter University Symphonic Wind Orchestra, and EX4 Chamber Orchestra.

Organist: Dr Peter King We are thrilled to welcome the distinguished organist Dr Peter King to play for us this afternoon. Organist Emeritus of Bath Abbey, and Director of Music there for 30 years, he is described by Chris de Souza of BBC Radio 3 as 'a virtuoso of world class ... he plays with such elan, passion and commitment.' Peter has performed across the world, and we count ourselves exceptionally lucky to have secured his services for our concert in Chudleigh.

Piano Accompanist: Carol Galton

Carol is 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!

Reading: *Resistance* by Simon Armitage (read by Giles Frampton)

This poem was written as a direct response to the war in Ukraine. The harrowing images we all saw on television in 2022 prompted Armitage to write in admiration of Ukraine's resistance, and conveys the message that hope and resilience will prevail in the face of war. It seems a fitting introduction to our singing.

THE ARMED MAN CHORAL SUITE by Karl Jenkins (b 1944)

This suite comprises five movements from Karl Jenkins' longer work *The Armed Man, a Mass for Peace*. Commissioned for the Millennium by Britain's Royal Armouries, it was dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo crisis, and explores the themes of war, its consequences and the hope for peace. We feel that its message resonates strongly as the world faces such appalling conflict today. In the Choral Suite, the movements appear in a different order to the complete work; this creates its own meaning.

Kyrie: *Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy.* The lull before the storm. The *Kyrie eleison* is sung to a lilting waltz, followed by the *Christe eleison* sung as a stylised piece of Renaissance counterpoint, then returning to variations on the *Kyrie*.

Sanctus: Unusually, Jenkins' *Sanctus* has a military, menacing air, at odds with the text which means "*Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts. Heaven is full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.*" This creates a foreboding atmosphere and a deliberately subversive interpretation of what is usually a joyful section of the Latin mass.

Benedictus: *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.* This piece is prized as one of the most achingly beautiful and haunting choral compositions of modern times and is often sung as a 'stand alone' piece. Peace and serenity are interposed by explosive *Hosannas*.

Agnus Dei: *O Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Oh Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace.* After the traumas of war, there is a fragile hope for peace.

Hymn Before Action: However, maybe we need to brace ourselves again for war ...the text here is taken from an 1896 poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865 -1936), expressing feelings of foreboding that Britain is facing hostility from other great nations. The full poem explores ideas of faith and fear, asking for divine intervention and protection for soldiers facing battle. Interestingly, it includes a prayer for the enemy, as if acknowledging the shared frailty of all humanity. Kipling lost his own son, eighteen year old Jack, at Loos in 1915 and spent four

fruitless years searching for his body. By ending the Choral Suite with this piece, Jenkins is reminding humanity of the vigilance needed if we want peace, rather than war.

ADIEMUS: If you are wondering where you first heard this extraordinary piece, it was in 1994, when Delta Airlines commissioned it for their TV advertisement campaign! The brief was to create an inspiring piece in an ethnic and new age style that reflected the global nature of the American airline. *“The sound is universal, as is the language of music,”* said Karl Jenkins. *“It sounds like spiritual music for lay people.”* Its inspirations are gospel, Celtic folk and African music, evidenced by its free-flowing vocals and tribal-like rhythms. The lyrics are in an invented language – a sort of pseudo Latin/pseudo African - sung phonetically with one syllable per note.

INTERVAL

Tea, coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juice and nibbles are available

IF YE LOVE ME by Thomas Tallis (c1505-1585)

Thomas Tallis lived and created sublime choral music during one of England's most turbulent eras. We know little about his early life but by 1530 he was an organist at Dover Priory, a Benedictine establishment. Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries left Tallis jobless on several occasions but by 1541 his sparkling reputation had secured him a post as a singer at Canterbury Cathedral. By 1544 he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, a job for life, accompanying the monarch wherever he went and supplying music for his spiritual needs. Tallis shifted nimbly through composing music for Protestant and Roman Catholic purposes. With Elizabeth I's accession he finally settled to composing pieces to suit the new Anglican church.

The text is taken from the Gospel of John in Tyndale's translation of the Bible in the 1520/30s. Jesus speaks to his disciples, foretelling his own death but promising that God the Father will send the Holy Spirit to comfort them.

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another comforter, that he may bide with you forever. E'en the spirit of truth.

This anthem was certainly being sung in churches by 1550, and by 1565 was available to choirs in a published book. Maybe it was sung here in Chudleigh. If only church walls could talk! Recently it was sung in the Sistine Chapel as part of the service in which Pope Leo XIV and King Charles III prayed together. How surprised Tallis would have been!

AVE VERUM CORPUS by William Byrd (c1540 -1623)

William Byrd was a pupil of Thomas Tallis, probably in the Chapel Royal. In his thirties he became a Roman Catholic, yet served under Protestant monarchs and wrote both sacred and secular music, of which nearly 600 pieces survive. He is remembered as one of the most important and influential of English composers. *Ave Verum Corpus* is a hymn sung during holy communion. The words have been attributed to Pope Innocent VI (1282 -1362).

In translation: *Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary, having truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind, from whose pierced side water and blood flowed: be for us a sweet foretaste in the trial of death! O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus, O Jesus, son of Mary, have mercy on me, Amen.*

ORGAN SOLO by Dr Peter King

Reading: *Only in Sleep* by Sara Teasdale (read by Jan Middleton)

We thought you might like to hear the poem before we sing Esenvald's beautiful arrangement. The lyrics offer a nostalgic and poignant vision of childhood memories as the American poet Sara Teasdale (1884 -1933) remembers her best friends Louise and Annie, and their playtime is re-enacted in her dreams.

ONLY IN SLEEP by Eriks Esenvalds (b 1977)

If you've never heard this before, you're in for a treat. The pensive and rhapsodic music reflects the surreal atmosphere of the poem. Many people say it evokes a deep, emotional response about the innocence of childhood, the transience of human life and the yearning for a past we can never recover. Enjoy the subtle chords, harmonies and soaring soprano descant.

Soloists: Hazel Linney, Jan Middleton and Julie Cooney

READING: *Winter, from Love's Labours Lost* by William Shakespeare

(read by Liz Robin)

With apologies to any Joans or Marians in the audience, and some reassurance that the crabs mentioned are crab apples, not creatures!) This poem describes a winter from the late 1500s, probably well-remembered from Shakespeare's childhood in Stratford upon Avon. The contrast of the warmth inside and the cold outside, where the owl hoots, isn't so far away from our own lives in rural Devon!

* the parson's "saw" probably means his "sermon"

'* 'keel the pot' means stirring to cool the contents

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail
And Tom bears logs into the hall
And milk comes home frozen in the pail;
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
"Tu whit, tu who!" A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,

And birds sit brooding in the snow
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl
"Tu whit! Tu whu!" A merry note!
While Greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

MID-WINTER by Bob Chilcott (b 1955)

Born in Plymouth, Chilcott went on to become a boy chorister at King's College, Cambridge and was a member of the famous King's Singers from 1985 -1997, singing tenor. He has written many beautiful compositions for children's and adult choirs. With a characteristically memorable tune, Christina Rosetti's famous poem is given a new, appealing musical setting with a beguiling accompaniment.

A SPOTLESS ROSE by Ola Gjeilo (b 1978)

How blessed we are to have modern composers like the Norwegian Gjeilo. He has injected new life into choral singing but always includes beauty and lyricism. Here he offers a joyful and melodic setting of a famous 16th century text, celebrating the coming of the Christ Child, in the cold of winter. It's as if Gjeilo's music was always meant to accompany these lyrics. Somehow, the cold Scandinavian winter is reflected in the lilting music.

A spotless Rose is blowing, sprung from a tender root. Of ancient seers' foreshowing, of Jesse promised fruit. Its fairest bud unfolds to light amid the cold, cold winter, and in the dark midnight. The Rose which I am singing, whereof Isaiah said, is from its sweet root springing in Mary, purest maid; through our God's great love and might the blessed babe she bare us in a cold, cold winter's night.

CHRISTMAS LULLABY: by John Rutter (b 1945)

Sir John Rutter has recently celebrated his 80th birthday. He is one of the best known and loved English choral composers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He's as busy as ever, and this month is conducting at the Royal Albert Hall and Smith Square Hall in London, Cambridge, Guildford and Bath Abbey. Maybe it wouldn't be nearly Christmas without one of Rutter's beautiful carols. For the tender *Christmas Lullaby* he wrote his own words, focusing on iconic aspects of the Nativity and urging reverence for the Christ Child and His mother.

**We wish you all a peaceful season of Advent,
a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2026**

CHOIR MEMBERS:

Soprano: Caroline Brimblecombe, Julie Cooney, Ruth Frampton, Sue Jury, Hazel Linney, Jo MacDonald, Jan Middleton, Diana Petit, Verity Stiff, Emily Vantreen

Alto: Jo Jenkin, Kath Keating, Erica Lee, Leslie Pearman, Liz Robin, Juliet Speed, Toria Wimpenny,

Tenor: Steve Cook, Giles Frampton, Lorraine Hart, Mike Lee, Ray Mallett

Bass: Gerald Battersby, Sam Guyah, Jan Traylen, John Sawyer

If anyone is interested in joining our friendly choir, which is less than half an hour up the Teign Valley Road, please contact our secretary Jan Middleton janmiddleton29@gmail.com Not everyone can read music and there are no auditions.

Future Dates:

Rehearsals begin on Monday 19 January 2026 in Dunsford Village Hall - 7.30pm-9:00pm.

Summer Concerts – **Saturday 6 June (St Mary's Church, Dunsford)** and **Saturday 13 June (St David's Church, Exeter)** when we'll be performing the gorgeous Dvorak Mass in D and folk songs collections by the modern composers Bob Chilcott and Cecilia McDowall.

Come and sing with us!

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

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