

A Sprig of Thyme and a Saxophone

Saxophonist: Naomi Sullivan

Conductor: Jack Apperley

Accompanist: Paul Ayres

Saturday 24th June, 2023

at 7.30pm

St Mary with St Alban

Teddington, TW11 9NN

In Splendoribus Sanctorum
The Bold Grenadier
The Keel Row
The Willow Tree

Janes Macmillan
John Rutter
John Rutter
John Rutter

Six studies in English Folksong
Nos 5 and 6

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The Sprig of Thyme
Down by the Sally Gardens
Abide with Me
O Nata Lux

John Rutter
John Rutter
Christian Forshaw
Christian Forshaw

INTERVAL

The Cuckoo
I know Where I'm Going
Willow Song
Drop Drop Slow Tears

John Rutter
John Rutter
John Rutter
Christian Forshaw

Six studies in English Folksong
No 1
Caprice en forme de valse

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Paul Bonneau

O Can Ye sew Cushions
The Miller of Dee
Afton Water
Te Lucis Ante Terminum
Psalm 121

John Rutter
John Rutter
John Rutter
Christian Forshaw
Christian Forshaw

Please note there has been a change of soloist for this evening's concert.

In Splendoribus

James MacMillan (b.1959)

Born in Scotland, MacMillan studied music at Edinburgh and Durham Universities. After two years lecturing in music at Manchester, he returned to Scotland in 1988 to take up the post of Associate Composer with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. MacMillan works in a variety of genres, embracing ancient and modern elements, as well as sacred and secular. His music is greatly influenced by his faith (he is Roman Catholic and a lay Dominican) and by his Scottish musical traditions.

In Splendoribus Sanctorum, to be sung at the Nativity Midnight Mass, includes four solo trumpet obbligato sections interspersing the choral phrases. In tonight's performance the trumpet part is played on a saxophone. The composer writes that the piece is a "kind of repeated chant, there's not much in the way of harmonisation, just a couple of drones and a shifting, middle part" plus a "fairly virtuosic" trumpet part. In the adagio choral sections, the unison chant followed by parallel fifths sung over a bass drone gives the piece a medieval flavour. The trumpet part which interjects each choral utterance is, by contrast, an exultant allegro of fast triplet semiquavers.

In splendoribus sanctorum,
Ex utero ante luciferum genui te.

In the splendour of holiness,
from the womb before the daystar I
have begotten you.

Jane Purser

A Sprig of Thyme

John Rutter (b.1945)

“For children growing up in postwar England as I did, traditional songs still formed a common musical currency. The first songs we sang were nursery rhymes like *Oranges and lemons* and *Pop goes the weasel*; at school, we warbled *Early one morning* and *Drink to me only* in singing class, and *O God, our help in ages past* and *Holy, Holy, Holy* in morning assembly; at scout camp, we endured *Ten green bottles* and *One man went to mow*. Those of us that sang in choirs were thoroughly familiar with the choral folk song arrangements of Vaughan Williams and Holst; and absolutely everyone could recognise *Rule, Britannia*, *Greensleeves* and the *National Anthem*. Probably none of us stopped to think that this heritage of ‘traditional’ song had been fairly deliberately created: the approved repertoire of nursery rhymes stemmed largely from a BBC radio programme called *Listen with Mother*, the school class singing repertoire from *The National Song Book*, and the hymns we knew from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (middle-of-the-road late Victorian), *The English Hymnal* (edited by Vaughan Williams, rather more high church) and *Songs of Praise* (Vaughan Williams again, mildly radical and strong on social service). Vaughan Williams, who collected folk songs and saw them as crucial to a revival of our national musical consciousness, was also one of the moving forces behind the prevalence of folk songs, which, along with italic handwriting, pottery and the weaving of rush mats, were considered good for the young. It is easy to poke fun at the worthiness, gentility and cultural nationalism of this vanished age, soon to give place to the more frantic, colourful and cosmopolitan ‘60s. Yet the songs it promoted formed a more solid bedrock for a shared musical culture than today’s television jingles, pop songs and football chants. Among the numerous *Keel rows* that fill folk song collections, you can find love songs of exquisite and fragile beauty such as *Down by the sally gardens* and *The sprig of thyme*, drinking songs of picaresque humour such as *The miller of Dee*, lullabies of heart-easing tenderness such as *O can ye sew cushions*. These songs brought me delight and pleasure then, and they still do now, though pleasure has become tinged with nostalgia because, for the most part, they are forgotten and gone from our lives, perhaps forever. These arrangements are an affectionate tribute to their composers and poets; a few were renowned, most were obscure or unknown, but the songs they created were famous, and I remember them fondly.”

John Rutter

Songs of Solace

Christian Forshaw (b.1972)

“The juxtaposition of saxophone and voices has been central to my work as a composer, arranger and performer for almost 30 years. The way sound can morph from one to the other in an almost imperceptible way has fascinated musicians from all genres for over a century. My own concept of sound derives from my days as a chorister. That aesthetic has always been central to the way I approach the saxophone, aiming to phrase and resonate like a singer. I enjoy the way there is so much common ground between the two, but that they are also able to depart from each other and explore their own uniqueness. The pieces performed tonight are extracts from my collection, *Songs of Solace*, which span a number of centuries, but there is very much common ground in the way each piece invites the listener to a place of stillness and reflection. The arrangements at times ask the saxophone to sit within the ensemble as another voice, but at other times call it to rise out of the texture in a more soloistic way.”

Christian Forshaw

Naomi Sullivan - Saxophonist

Naomi lives and works as a freelance saxophonist in London. She has been Head of Saxophone at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire since 2008 and also teaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Naomi is currently performing with the Laefer Quartet and Sounding Cities. As a chamber musician she has recorded with Flotilla, Syzygy and the Gemini Ensemble. She has played with many major UK orchestras as well as for touring with musical theatre productions.

Her work in education has led to projects across the UK and beyond working with Live Music Now, BCMG, Aldeburgh Young Musicians as well as the National Young Orchestra.

She studied at Chetham's School of Music with Jim Muirhead, Royal College of Music with Kyle Horch and Northwestern University with Fred Hemke.

Paul Ayres

Paul Ayres was born and bred in the suburbs of London, studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist. His works have been awarded prizes in composition competitions in Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA, and he has received over one hundred commissions from musical groups of all shapes and sizes.

Most of Paul's output is choral, vocal, small-scale instrumental, and music for theatre. He genuinely finds as much joy in writing a very simple arrangement of, say, a nursery rhyme for beginner violinists as in constructing a large-scale score for professional performers. A particular creative interest of Paul's is exploring the interplay between popular styles and baroque/classical forms, and his works frequently use cross-reference, numerical patterns, and humour.

Paul conducts City Chorus and Questors Choir, accompanies Concordia Voices and Harrow Choral Society, and is a frequent deputy with many other choral ensembles in the London area. He enjoys leading music workshops with children, playing keyboards for improvised comedy shows, and devising cryptic crosswords. Please visit www.paulayres.co.uk to find out more.

A CD of Paul's music, recorded by the chapel choir of Selwyn College Cambridge, has recently been released on the Regent label. The disc contains 21 compositions and arrangements, including "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs" which we commissioned for Neil Ferris's final concert as conductor of Concordia Voices. Copies are on sale tonight.

Jack Apperley

Jack is the Music Director of Goldsmiths Choral Union, the Imperial College Chamber Choir and Concordia Voices. He is also the conductor of University Upper Voices at the University of Birmingham.

Jack is an Assistant Chorus Master of the London Symphony Chorus. This role has seen Jack prepare the chorus for performances of Liszt's *Faust Symphony*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Britten's *Spring Symphony*, Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Luther Adams'

In the Name of the Earth. In Spring 2019 Jack conducted the London Symphony Orchestra Community Choir in David Lang's *The Public Domain* in the Barbican Centre.

Jack is in increasing demand as a conductor and Chorus Master both in the UK and across Europe. Recently, Jack has been engaged by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Chorus as well as the Gothenburg Symphony Vocal Ensemble. Jack has also been contracted by the Choeur de Radio France and following a successful masterclass with the Hungarian National Choir, Jack has been invited to conduct the ensemble in their 2022-2023 Season in Budapest.

Concordia Voices

Concordia Voices is a well-established chamber choir of about 30 mixed voices and is directed by Jack Apperley. Our regular accompanist is the composer and arranger Paul Ayres.

The choir performs regularly in south-west London where it is based. We have also toured abroad and to other locations in the UK as well as taking part in local musical events. Concordia Voices enjoy performing music from a wide repertoire ranging over 4 centuries and we have a keen interest in performing the work of contemporary composers.

Concordia Voices rehearse on Sunday evenings from 6.45pm to 9pm in Hampton Hill. We are a small, friendly choir and new singers are warmly welcome. If you are interested in joining us please contact our secretary for more information at, secretary@concordiavoices.org or visit our web site for information on how to join the choir. www.concordiavoices.com

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Jackie Allen	Lindsey Baldwin	Barry Fisher	Alan Baldwin
Lynda Beament	Clare Brown	Colin Flood	Adam Brown
Viviane Hardy	Julie Hall	Clive Hall	Philip Congdon
Julie Langridge-John	Peggy Hannington	David Wilson	Matt Greenway
Julia Lavery	Jane Newman		Christopher Johnson
Margaret Lord	Barbara Orr		Tim Rowett
Ruth Parker	Jane Purser		
Fiona Rowett	Anne Rowett		
Helen Sugiyama	Janet Taylor		

Concordia Voices Future Concerts

2nd December 2023

St James Church, Hampton Hill

Christmas music with Surrey Brass

Including Chilcott's – Wenceslas

20th April 2024

St Mary's Church, Twickenham

Dance

Palmeri – Misatango

Whitacre – 5 Hebrew Love Songs

Conte – 2 Mexican Folk Songs

Telemann – Jehovam Omnes Gentes