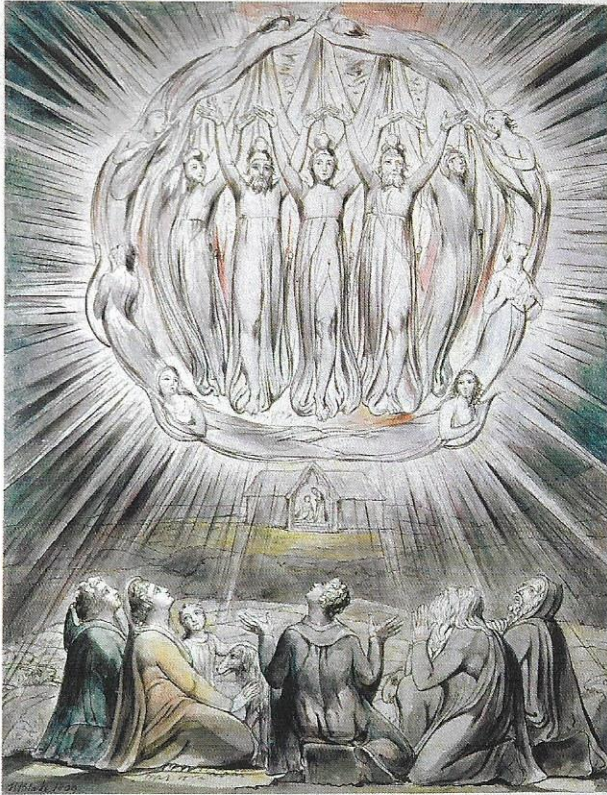


CIRENCESTER
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Conductor: Carleton Etherington



Charlotte Beament
soprano

Katherine Grosset
alto

Richard Edgar-Wilson
tenor

Julian Guidera
~~Matthew Stiff~~
bass

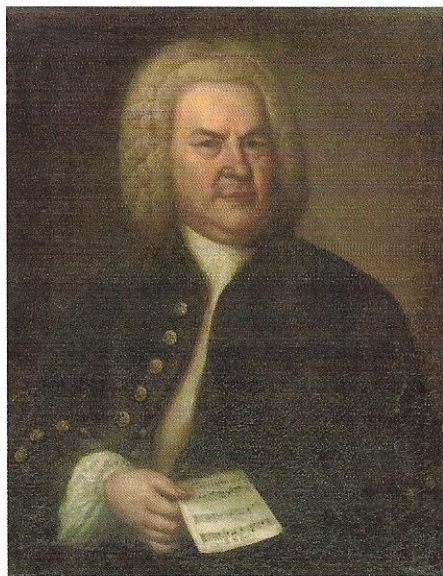
Cirencester Choral Society

Corinium Camerata
Leader:
Andrew Court

Christmas Oratorio
J.S. Bach

7.30 pm Saturday 5th December 2009
The Bingham Hall, Cirencester

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was appointed Kantor of St Thomas's, Leipzig in 1723, a post he held until his death in 1750. Here he was responsible for all the musical composition and performance aspects of the two Lutheran churches in the city – the Thomaskirche and Nickolaikirche – and during this period composed much of his best choral music, including the *Passions* and the *B Minor Mass*. Once appointed, he set himself the task of producing a new cantata for nearly every Sunday and feast day of the year, some sixty cantatas per year, continued over a period of several years. It is no surprise, then, that Bach's time in Leipzig proved to be his most productive in terms of cantata composition.



J.S. Bach, 1748. Portrait by Elias Gottlob Haussmann

The Christmas Oratorio or *Weihnachts-Oratorium* comprises a series of six cantatas for the feast days of the Christmas season. The texts, largely from biblical sources, were probably assembled by the Leipzig post-master-poet, Picander, the librettist of the *St Matthew Passion*. The cantatas were first performed on the six appointed days between Christmas Day and Epiphany in 1734/5 at the two Leipzig churches. Although certainly conceived as a group, the six cantatas have different instrumentation and were not performed together as a single work until 1857. The first English translation, as sung tonight, dates from 1874, the work of the Rev John Troutbeck, published by Novello.

Each Part opens with a chorus, except Part II which begins with the beautiful pastoral symphony. As in the *Passions*, the Evangelist tells the biblical story, interspersed with solo arias and recitatives, and choruses and chorales sung by the choir. In Bach's day the congregation would probably have known and joined in the singing of the chorales, based on hymns from the 16th and 17th centuries. Many of the solo movements are parodies, or re-workings, of music from several of the composer's previously written cantatas, a practice commonly adopted to meet the heavy day-to-day demands of the position he held.



Thomaskirche, Leipzig, ca 1918

The orchestration varies between the six cantatas. The trumpets used in Parts I, III and VI are so-called 'Bach trumpets', smaller than the usual ones and shriller in tone, providing a characteristically thrilling backdrop to the celebratory movements. The woodwind section includes three types of oboe: oboes d'amore, in Parts I, II and VI, and cor anglais, today's equivalent of the original oboes da caccia, in Part II, as well as normal oboes. It has been suggested that the scoring of these different oboes may have symbolised the pastoral musical tradition of the shepherds, the main subject of Part II. With the flutes, these lower pitched oboes provide a wonderful, rich accompaniment to some of the solo passages.

The Society last performed the Christmas Oratorio on this same date in 1987, under the direction of Joyce Lang.

Front cover: William Blake, 1809: *Annunciation to the Shepherds*. Watercolour illustration to Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

Tonight's Soloists (*Charlotte Beament, Katherine Grosset and Matthew Stiff appear by kind permission of the Principal of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD)*).

Charlotte Beament (soprano) completed her undergraduate studies with distinction at the GSMD in London earlier this year and was awarded the Anne Wyburd Lieder Prize for her final recital. She has now embarked on a Masters course supported by the Dorothy Willner Scholarship. Charlotte recently sang opera scenes from *Carmen* and *Così fan tutte* in London, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and will soon be performing Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* and Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*. Charlotte was brought up in Hertfordshire with her three older sisters by her parents, who are both musicians. She divides her spare time between keeping fit and eating good food and packs a punch as she is a keen kick-boxer. She hopes to pursue a career in opera but ultimately strives to perform as an international soloist.



Katherine Grosset (mezzo-soprano) grew up in Edinburgh, and gained an honours degree in music from Glasgow University. She has recently completed a Masters in Vocal Training at the GSMD and continues there on her Masters Part 2 with support from the Worshipful Company of Glovers, The Cross Trust, and The Donald Dewar Arts Awards. During 2007 and 2008, Katherine was a peripatetic Kodaly vocal instructor for the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the RSNO Junior Chorus. She also led several 'Mini Music Maker' classes for mothers and infants in various areas across Scotland. Katherine is a firm believer in Kodaly methodology, and shares his belief that singing should be for everybody! Recently Katherine gave a solo performance for the Lord Mayor of London at his Mansion House home, sang

Burns pieces in the City of London Festival, and gave a solo recital in Edinburgh. Her oratorio experience includes Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

Richard Edgar-Wilson (tenor) is well known as a Bach *Evangelist* and an interpreter of the music of Benjamin Britten. He has collaborated with Ivor Bolton, Martyn Brabbins, Philippe Herreweghe, Richard Hickox, Nicholas Kraemer, Sir Charles Mackerras, Marc Minkowski, Sir Roger Norrington and Trevor Pinnock, and has sung with orchestras including City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, London Sinfonietta, Philharmonia, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Le Concert Spirituel. Operatic roles include *Thespis/Mercure Platée* (Palais Garnier Paris), *Don Ottavio* (with Ivor Bolton in Singapore, Portugal), *Tamino* (New Zealand, Portugal), *Electrician* in Adès's *Powder Her Face* (Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen), *Peter Quint Turn of the Screw* (Garsington), *Gonsalve L'heure espagnole* (Grange Park Opera), and *The Father* in the premiere of *The Gentle Giant* by Stephen McNeff (Royal Opera House). Recent and future highlights include Britten's *Death in Venice*; *Letters of a Love Betrayed* and Huw Watkin's *Temptation* for Music Theatre Wales; *Creation* with Sir Charles Mackerras; a Handelian extravaganza at the Bath Festival; and Handel's *Alceste* at the English Bach Festival. (Photo by Clive Barda)



Matthew Stiff (bass) studied at the University of Huddersfield for both his BMus (Hons) and MA (Perf) before moving to GSMD. It was here that he met Ben, Mike and Jon and the vocal harmony group G4 was born. Since his time on the television show *The X Factor*, Matthew, as a member of G4, has sold over 1.5 million albums, has had five sell-out tours and has worked with such people as Lesley Garrett, Sir Cliff Richard and Robin Gibb. Since the group split up in 2006, Matthew has returned to his classical roots, performing Mozart and Gilbert & Sullivan operas on the stage with Opera North and concert works such as Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. With the Support of a Maidment Scholarship administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund, he is currently in his first year on the GSMD Opera Course.

Christmas Oratorio

Johann Sebastian Bach

English translation by Rev J Troutbeck

PART I

On the first day of the festival of Christmas

1 Chorus

Christians, be joyful, and praise your salvation,
Sing, for today your Redeemer is born.
Cease to be fearful, forget lamentation,
Haste with thanksgiving to greet this glad morn!
Come, let us worship, and fall down before Him.
Let us with voices united adore Him.

2 Recit (*Evangelist-Tenor*)

Now it came to pass in those days that there went
out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the
world should be enroll'd, And all went to enrol
themselves, ev'ry one to his own city.

And there also went up Joseph from Galilee, out
of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of
David, which is called Bethlehem, for he was of
the house and family of David, to enrol himself
with Mary his betrothed wife, being great with
child. And when they were there the days were
fulfilled that she should be delivered.

3 Recit (*Alto*)

See now the bridegroom, full of grace, The hero of
King David's race, To save and heal the earth Doth
stoop to mortal birth, See now the Star of Jacob
shining, Its beams delight our eyes, Up, Zion, and
forget thy sad repining, for high thy bliss doth
rise.

4 Air (*Alto*)

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection
The purest, the fairest, this day to receive.
Thou must meet Him with a heart with love
o'erflowing,
Haste then, with ardour the Bridegroom to
welcome.

5 Choral

How shall I fitly meet Thee,
And give Thee welcome due?
The nations long to greet Thee,
And I would greet Thee too.
O Fount of light, shine brightly
Upon my darken'd heart;
That I may serve Thee rightly,
And know Thee as Thou art.

6 Recit (*Evangelist-Tenor*)

And she brought forth her first-born Son, and she
wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him
in a manger, because there was no room for them
in the inn.

7 Choral (*sopranos*) and Recit (*bass*)

For us to earth He cometh poor,
*Who rightly can the love declare That fills our tender
Saviour's breast?*

Our redemption to secure,
*Yea, who can understand, or share His grief for man by
sin oppress'd?*

And rich in heaven to make us stand,
*Himself the Son of God will give,
That we may be redeem'd, and live;*
All number'd with His angel band.
So now for this as Man behold Him born.
O Lord, have mercy!

8 Air (*bass*)

Mighty Lord and King all glorious,
Saviour true, for man victorious,
Earthly state Thou dost disdain.
He who all things doth sustain,
Who all state and pomp supplieth,
In a lowly manger lieth.

9. Choral

Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefil'd,
Within my heart, and there recline,
And keep that chamber ever Thine.

PART II

On the second day of the festival of Christmas

10 Symphony

11 Recit (*Evangelist-Tenor*)

And there were shepherds in the same country,
abiding in the field, keeping watch over their
flocks by night. And lo, an angel of the Lord stood
by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round
about them, and they were sore afraid.

12 Choral

Break forth, O beauteous, heavenly light,
And usher in the morning;
Ye shepherds, shrink not with afright,
But hear the angel's warning.
This child, now weak in infancy,
Our confidence and joy shall be,
The pow'r of Satan breaking,
Our peace eternal making.

13 Recit (*Evangelist-Tenor & Soprano*)

And the angel said to them,
Be not afraid; behold, I bring you good tidings
of great joy, which shall be to all the people. For
today is born to you in the city of David, a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.

14 Recit (Bass)

What God to Abraham revealed He to the
shepherds doth accord to see fulfilled.

To shepherds, lo! our gracious Lord
His purposes unfoldeth. That blessing which,
in days of old, He to a shepherd first foretold,
A shepherd first beholdeth.

15 Aria (Tenor)

Haste, ye shepherds, haste to meet Him;
Why should ye delay to greet Him?
Haste this gracious Child to see,
Glad and joyful ye should be,
Of His wondrous love partaking,
Him your hope and comfort making.

16 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And this is the sign to you: Ye shall find a babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a
manger.

17 Choral

Within yon gloomy manger lies
The Lord who reigns above the skies:
Within the stall where beasts have fed
The Virgin-born doth lay His head.

18 Recit (Bass)

O haste ye then! ye shepherds, go, Since you this
wonder know, And seek for God's Almighty Son
Within a manger lying lowly; And there, beside
that cradle holy, In sweet harmonious tone, Sing
all with one accord To soothe your infant Lord.

19 Air (Alto)

Slumber, beloved, and take Thy repose,
Soon wilt Thou waken, our joy and salvation.
O! may Thy breast find gladness and rest
In our heartfelt exultation.

20 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude
of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying:

21 Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on the
earth unto men in whom He is well pleased.

22 Recit (Bass)

'Tis right that angels thus should sing,
To us this day such joy doth bring;
Come then, our voices let us raise,
And join with them in songs of praise.

23 Choral

With all Thy hosts, O Lord, we sing,
And thanks and praise to Thee we bring;
For Thou, O long expected Guest,
Hast come at length to make us blest.

INTERVAL

(20 minutes)

Refreshments on sale in the Bingham Suite

PART III

On the third day of the festival of Christmas

24 Chorus

Hear, King of angels, though falter our voices,
O! when Thy Zion before Thee rejoices,
Let her endeavour be pleasing to Thee.
Hear us, O Lord, when we offer our praises,
Hear when Thy Zion glad thanksgiving raises,
Joying Thy mighty salvation to see.

25 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And when the angels were gone from them into
heav'n, the shepherds said one to another -

26 Chorus

Let us even now go to Bethlehem, and see this
thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath
made known to us.

27 Recit (Bass)

He bids us comfort take, And free His Israel doth
make, Relief to Zion hither sendeth, And all our
sorrow endeth. Ye shepherds, see what He hath
done, Haste, make his glory known.

28 Choral

The Lord hath all these wonders wrought,
His great love these gifts hath brought,
Then let all Christian men rejoice,
And give him thanks with cheerful voice.
Lord, have mercy.

29 Duet (Soprano & Bass)

Lord, Thy mercy, Thy compassion, Comforts
us and sets us free; Of Thy wondrous love and
kindness, Thou dost heal our sin and blindness,
And our gracious Advocate Thou wilt be.

30 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And they came with haste, and found both Mary
and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger.
And having seen it, they made known abroad
concerning the saying which had been spoken
unto them about this Child. And all that heard it
wonder'd at the things which had been spoken
unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all
these things, and ponder'd them in her heart.

31 Air (Alto)

Keep, O my spirit, this blessing and wonder
Close within thyself contained.
O! by the wonders thy Saviour hath shew'd thee.
Of His great mercy, be thy feeble faith sustained!

32 Recit (Alto)

Yes, yes! my heart will keep and ponder The things
that in this hour of grace, To its own happiness, It
learns about this heav'nly wonder.

33 Choral

Thee with tender care I'll cherish,
Live to Thee, die to Thee;
Thus I shall not perish;
But with Thee abide for ever

Joyfully, peacefully,
Where life endeth never.

34 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, even as it was told unto them.

35 Choral

Rejoice, and sing, rejoice, and sing,
your gracious King
As Man is born, and lays aside His glory;
He is ador'd as Christ and Lord,
And ev'ry tongue repeats the wondrous story.

24 Chorus (repeat)

Part IV (*On New Year's Day, the Festival of the Circumcision*) and **Part V** (*On the Sunday after New Year's Day*) are not included in this evening's performance.

PART VI

On the festival of the Epiphany

54 Chorus

Lord, when our mighty foes assail us
O! may it for our peace avail us
To rest upon Thy mighty pow'r.
Our only trust, do Thou befriend us,
All needful strength and succour send us,
To keep us safe in danger's hour.

55 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor & Bass)

Then Herod called the wise men privily, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said,

Go your way, and enquire exactly for the young child, and when ye have found Him, bring me word, that I may come and worship Him also.

56 Recit (Soprano)

Thou traitor, thou but seek'st the Lord to kill,
And triest ev'ry craft to work on Him thy will.
But He whose pow'r no tongue can tell
Is kept in all his ways.
E'en now, thy false and wicked heart, In spite of all
its craft, its trait'rous part
Before the Lord thou seek'st to kill displays.

57 Air (Soprano)

Nought against the pow'r He wieldeth
Can our feeble arm prevail,
Nought doth all our might avail.
When his voice th' Almighty shews,
All the earth before Him yieldeth,
Fall at once His mighty foes;
Them no pride from ruin shieldeth.

58 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And they, when they had heard the King, went their way. And lo, the star which they had seen

in the east went before them, until it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly, and coming into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother; and falling down, they worshipped Him, and having opened their treasures, they offer'd him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

59 Choral

Beside Thy cradle here I stand,
O Thou that ever livest,
And bring Thee, with a willing hand,
The very gifts Thou givest.
Accept me; 'tis my mind and heart,
My soul, my strength, my ev'ry part,
That Thou from me requirest.

60 Recit (Evangelist-Tenor)

And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed by another way to their own land.

61 Recit (Tenor)

Depart! enough, my treasure I retain,
With me He doth remain,
And while I live will not forsake me;
He to His kind embrace, With soft and gentle grace
And sweetest tenderness will take me.
Now as my bridegroom I receive Him,
And all my heart's devotion give Him
Full well I know He loveth me,
And I too love Him heartily,
And for His honour live.
What foe from me this joy can rend
That He vouchsafes to give?
Thou, Jesus, art my constant friend,
And in distress I cry to Thee –
Lord, help, my shield and succour be.

62 Air (Tenor)

Ye foes of man, your might is shaken,
Dismay no more in me ye waken,
My strength, my shield is ever near.
What though with fear ye strive to fill me,
And threaten in your rage to kill me,
Behold! My Saviour dwelleth here.

63 Recit (Soli)

O'er us no more shall fears of hell,
No more shall sin or death prevail,
Our Saviour, Jesus, will not fail.

64 Choral

Now vengeance hath been taken
On all the foes of man,
And Christ doth end in triumph
The conflict He began.
Sin, Death, and Hell, and Satan,
Their mighty Victor own;
And Man doth stand forgiven
Before His Father's throne.

About the Choral Society

Cirencester Choral Society, founded in 1863, currently has 120 members. We are a registered charity largely dependent on our members' subscriptions and fundraising initiatives. We value the help we receive from some of the local companies in the town but we are always keen to talk to anyone who would like to sponsor our concerts or help in other ways.

Our Conductor **Carleton Etherington** has been directing us since January 2005. He is Organist of Tewkesbury Abbey, directs the Abbey Choir and accompanies the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum. Carleton features on many CD recordings and broadcasts regularly on the BBC. Our accompanist **Jenny Rees** also joined us in January 2005. She is a freelance professional musician and teacher, and has assembled (and is one of) the instrumentalists who perform with us tonight under the banner of *Corinium Camerata* – see back cover.

If you have experience in choral singing and an enthusiasm and a commitment to attend weekly rehearsals, we would be pleased to meet you. We practise on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30 pm at St Peter's Hall, St Peter's Rd, Cirencester. Our season runs from September to May. Rehearsals for our May 2010 concert begin on Tuesday 5th January.

If you are interested in helping or joining us, please contact Phil Tubs, Chairman (01367 253762) or Anne Vickers, Membership Secretary (01285 659114), or visit our website at www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk

Our members

Soprano

Dorothy Andrews, Janet Bayley, Liz Beak, Sybil Bride, Sue Burton, Pamela Clayton, Janine Coleridge, Alison Crooks, Anne Davies, Sandra Dent, Irene Devitt, Pamela Fisher, Marta Ferro, Alison Goodall, Jenny Hall, Julia Hasler, Diana Heywood, Judith Ivison, Patsy Jackson, Angela Jones, Valerie Joyce, Catherine Kirwin, Valerie Lambert, Beryl Le Bars, Billie Llewelyn, Mary Ludbrook, Diane Martin, Margaret McIvor, Anne Mingins, Margaret Mullin, Shirley Nicholas, Penny Phillips, Susie Rigsby, Jacqueline Shepherd, Dot Stanway, Wiggy Talbot Rice, Ruth Terry, Anne Vickers, Amanda Wheatley, Caroline Wild, Jacqueline Wilson

Alto

Frances Angus, Sarah Borg, Jenny Bradley, Sophie Brown, Gemma Butcher, Nicola Childs, Dreena Chamberlain, Heather Church, Mary Clayton, Fiona Cordiner, Diana Crane, Cordelia Dean, Caroline Fry, Fiona Fry, Julia Gibson, Dorothy Hartridge, Ruth Hayman, Claire Hoad, Ingela Jacob, Ineta Katle, Sonia La Fontaine, Lorna Lane, Mary Macdonald, Liz McGlynn, Olivia Murray, Alison Norris, Pamela Orchard, Laura Patterson, Ann Pole, Ann Price, Catherine Price, Patricia Quinlan, Caroline Rae, Jane Read, Margaret Reynolds, Audrey Short, Anne Smith, Chris Sutton, Janet Turner, Pamela Varey, Ghislaine Venn, Adrienne Winter, Gill Young, Joanna Young, Shan Zamiri

Tenor

Amiyo Banerjee, Andy Crane, Rob Crow, Mike Harvey, Ros Ivison, John Liptrot, Alastair Macdonald, John Martin, Graham Shearn, Robin Thompson, Ann Williams, Michael Winter

Bass

John Appleton, Digby Bew, Bernard Crooks, William Brereton, Richard Davies, Garth De Courcy-Ireland, Anthony Eyre, Raymond Fenton, Keith Greenwood, John Hicks, Richard Kent, Nigel Kinson, Richard Mullings, Tim Page, Philip Parkinson, Nick Pride, John Rees, Geoff Richards, Bob Selby, Alan Huw Smith, Graeme Tonge, Phil Tubbs

Corinium Camerata

Flute: Jane Groves, Lucy Rees; *Oboe & oboe d'amore:* Andrew King, Charlotte Bird;
Oboe and cor anglais: Rachel Porter, Ros Honeywill

Trumpet: Stuart Paul, Paul Harris, Rob Miller

Timpani: James Bower

Harpsichord: Jenny Rees

Violin 1: Andrew Court, Sonia Nash, Elin White, Nicolette Brown;

Violin 2: Richard Thompson, Therese De Souza, Rachael Birkin, Margaret Debley;

Viola: January Tewson, Emily Docherty;

Cello: Caroline Simpson, Margaret Wills; *Double Bass:* Robin Davies

Future Choral Society Concerts

Saturday 1 May 2010

Cirencester Parish Church (to be confirmed)

**Haydn – 'Nelson' Mass
Mozart – Solemn Vespers**

Saturday 27 November 2010

*(Joint concert with Charlton Kings Choral Society
in Tewkesbury Abbey)*

**Britten – St Nicolas
Venables – Awake, awake, the world is young**

*Tickets go on sale one month before the concert dates and
are available from members, from the Cirencester Visitor Information
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www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk*

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