

Charlton Kings & Cirencester
Choral Societies



Benjamin Britten Saint Nicolas

James Gilchrist (tenor)

Ian Venables

Awake, Awake,
the World is Young
Louise Booker (mezzo soprano)

Gordon Jacob
Music for Brass

Tewkesbury Abbey
Saturday 27th November 2010
7.30 pm

Girls' Choir of Chosen Hill School
(Director: Sally Marlow)
Boys from Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum
Regency Sinfonia

Conductors: John Wright
Carleton Etherington

Tickets £15 (children 5-16 years £5)
from Tewkesbury Abbey shop (01684 856148) or choir members

The latest recording in Naxos's acclaimed English Song Series (No.21) is a recital of songs by Ian Venables. Performed by the tenor Andrew Kennedy, pianist Iain Burnside and clarinettist Richard Hosford, this programme includes the première recording of the song cycle *On the Wings of Love* (Op.38) for tenor, clarinet and piano. The disc (which has just received an outstanding review in the current *BBC Music Magazine*) also has a selection of some of the composer's best-known songs, including his *Love's Voice* cycle, 'Flying Crooked' (dedicated to Lady Bliss) and his most popular song 'At Midnight'.

This CD (normally priced at £5.99) is now available from 'Sounds Good' in Cheltenham with a special discount of 10% to members of Charlton Kings and Cirencester Choral Societies.

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PROGRAMME

Interludes from Music for a Festival Gordon Jacob

Awake, Awake, the World is Young Ian Venables

Louise Booker (mezzo soprano)

Conductor: John Wright

INTERVAL

Saint Nicolas Benjamin Britten

James Gilchrist (tenor)

Laurence Kilsby (the Boy Nicolas)

Boys from Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum

Girls' Choir of Chosen Hill School, Churchdown

(Director: Sally Marlow)

Sarah Blackford, Jenny Rees (piano duet)

John Wright (organ)

Conductor: Carleton Etherington

Charlton Kings Choral Society
Cirencester Choral Society

Libretto for *Awake, Awake* and *St. Nicolas* can be found in the centre section.

Interludes from *Music for a Festival*

Gordon Jacob
(1895 – 1984)

Intrada
Round of Seven Parts
Interlude
Saraband
Madrigal

Music for a Festival was commissioned for the Festival of Britain in 1951 and was first heard in the Royal Festival Hall, played by the Massed Bands of the Brigade of Guards and the Kneller Hall Trumpets and Trombones. It is the largest and probably best known of Gordon Jacob's works for band. The movements are shared between the full band and an ensemble of four trumpets and three trombones, and it is this small ensemble that plays the Interludes heard in tonight's programme. They seem to hark back to Tudor times in character, in contrast to the movements for band, which are very much of the present day. The Round in Seven Parts is a masterly piece of writing, and all the Interludes contain much good humour.

Awake, Awake, the World is Young (Op.34) Ian Venables (b.1955)

Commissioned in 2000 by Charlton Kings and Cirencester Choral Societies with additional funds from Lady Bliss

A note from the composer

In 1999, I received a joint commission from Charlton Kings and Cirencester Choral Societies, to compose an anthem to celebrate the new Millennium. John Wright, conductor of both choirs at that time, was keen to give me the freedom to respond to the Millennium theme without imposing any pre-conditions upon my creativity. My mind turned to the idea of writing a work that was broadly reflective in character whilst attempting to reaffirm some of humanity's more noble goals and aspirations. These somewhat hazy thoughts were brought into focus by the author Anthony Boden who drew my attention to a section from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam*, that began with the lines "Ring out the old, Ring in the new". This inspired text was ideal for setting. However, Tennyson's visionary poem did lack one vital element, namely the voice of the individual. I therefore needed to find a complementary text. The answer came in the guise of James Elroy Flecker and his celebratory poem, *A New Year's Carol*.

*Awake, Awake! The world is young,
For all its weary years of thought:
The starkest fights must still be fought,
The most surprising songs be sung.*

Here was the element of self-renewal that was essential to my vision of what a Millennium work should represent. Humanity may not have achieved its noblest aspirations, but that does not mean that we should forget them, or indeed give up trying to achieve them. I believe that every individual plays their part in the unfolding of history, and I hope that this work may in some small way help to illuminate that pathway and engage the listener in the challenges of humanity's unfinished journey. By placing Flecker's poem at the centre of the work and flanking it on each side with the Tennyson, I had arrived at a structure upon which to build the music.

The work is divided into three main sections, each reflecting the varying moods and changing emotions of the poems. The anthem opens with a short orchestral introduction that presents the work's principal melodic and rhythmic ideas. The opening chorus, heralds Tennyson's joyous words, "Ring out the old, ring in the new". The music for this very rhythmical and energetic section seeks to express the collective human desire for renewal and hope. In the second and central section of the work the music becomes more reflective with Flecker's words acting as the spokesperson for humanity. A simple organ line accompanies the mezzo - soprano's lyrical and pensive narrative. This section gives way to a lengthy chorus that takes a more contrapuntal path leading to a powerful climax on the word 'Truth'. The music's momentary diatonic feel pulls us away from the complexity of the highly chromatic writing that preceded it, and stands as a powerful musical metaphor. In the third section a return of the anthem's opening material leads to dramatic climax and to the emotional core of the work. At this pivotal moment, the previously intoned music on the words "Ring out" takes on a menacing tone as the music becomes more intense and chromatic. The release finally occurs on the words "Ring out the thousand wars of old, ring in the thousand years of peace". On the last word "peace" the music fades away in a mood of questioning uncertainty. How to end a work can often be problematical for a composer. Originally, I had intended to finish with the penultimate stanza of Tennyson's poem. This would have accorded with the universal hope for an end to all war, and it would certainly have given the work a secular appeal. However, the Millennium should mark the birth of Jesus Christ and so in the end, I decided to round off the work with the final stanza of Tennyson's words, thus echoing the poet's hope that the world could be reborn through Christ's capacity for spiritual renewal. This very thought was brought home to me on New Year's Day in 2000 when I opened *The Sunday Times*. To my astonishment there was the very Tennyson poem that I had just set!

INTERVAL

Saint Nicolas (Op.42)

Benjamin Britten
(1913 – 1976)

1. Introduction
2. The Birth of Nicolas
3. Nicolas devotes himself to God
4. He journeys to Palestine
5. He comes to Myra and is chosen Bishop
6. Nicolas from Prison
7. Nicolas and the Pickled Boys
8. His Piety and Marvellous Works
9. The Death of Nicolas

In 1948, Benjamin Britten was invited by his friend and collaborator Peter Pears to compose a work to celebrate the centenary of Lancing College, Pears being a former pupil. The life of Saint Nicolas was chosen as a suitable subject as Nicolas, patron saint of children and scholars, is a co-patron of Lancing College. Eric Crozier had worked with Britten on previous works and he was engaged to write the libretto, with Haydn's *Creation* as a model. The first performance of the resulting cantata, *Saint Nicolas*, was given at the opening day of the first Aldeburgh Festival in June 1948, with the official première at Lancing's St Mary and St Nicolas Chapel on 24th July as part of the College's centenary celebrations. Britten conducted and Pears sang the role of Nicolas on both occasions.

Saint Nicolas tells of the life and legendary deeds of the fourth century bishop of Myra. It is scored for solo tenor, treble soloists, four-part chorus, a separate girls' chorus, piano duet, organ, percussion and strings, together with two hymns for the congregation. Apart from the solo tenor role, it was written to be performed by amateur singers, with school choirs obviously in mind, given the nature of the commission. Following an introductory movement, a fast-moving chorus sung by sopranos and altos traces the remarkable early years of Nicolas, leading them eventually to proclaim "Nicolas will be a Saint!" Throughout we hear the young Nicolas's repeated chant "God be glorified", with the final chant sung by the tenor, Nicolas, now a man. The third movement sees Nicolas casting off his worldly goods and devoting himself to the service of God. On his subsequent sea voyage to Palestine (Movement 4), narrated by the tenors and basses, Nicolas is mocked by the sailors for prophesying an unlikely storm. But the storm develops, its fury vividly described by the girls' chorus, and chaos reigns on board. Nicolas calls on the men to pray to God for deliverance and the storm abates, a miracle worthy of his subsequent adoption as the patron saint of sailors. Nicolas eventually arrives at Myra and is asked to become their bishop (Movement 5), a development celebrated at the close by the fugal "Serve the Faith" leading into the congregational hymn "All people that on earth do dwell".

The second part of the cantata opens with Nicolas condemned to prison for his faith, bemoaning man's folly and calling on man to turn to God. Movement 7 relates the famous miracle of the Pickled Boys. In a time of desperate famine, mothers seek their missing three small boys, unaware that a butcher has killed and pickled them. Just as they are about to be consumed, Nicolas arrives to restore them to life – "Alleluia!"

Now follows a beautiful andante tribute from the chorus to Nicolas for his forty years of service to the poor and needy, his memory kept alive through the treasured legends of his miracles and marvellous works. Examples are alternately recounted by the women's and men's parts, which, in the Lancing première, were sung by seven separate semi-choruses from four Sussex schools. The movement ends with a short seven part canon, "Let the legends that we tell, praise him with our prayers as well", leading into a repeat of the haunting opening melody.

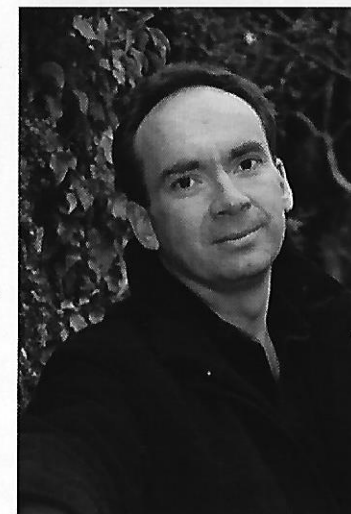
In the final movement, Nicolas prepares for death and the life to come, while the chorus intones the *Nunc Dimittis* as an underlay. All then join together in a fine setting of the hymn "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform".

Soloists

James Gilchrist (tenor)

James began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. He has an international reputation as one of the leading tenors of his generation, being described by *The Independent* as "unsurpassed among lyric tenors in sweetness and technical security, and for his musical intelligence".

Recent appearances include *King Arthur* (Concert Spiritual), *Athalia* (Concerto Köln), Haydn's *Creation* (Icelandic Symphony Orchestra), *St Matthew* and *St John Passion* at the Concertgebouw, *Messiah* (St Louis Symphony Orchestra), *Pulcinella* (Scottish Chamber Orchestra), *War Requiem* (Dresden Philharmonic), and *St Matthew Passion* at the Tonhalle in Zurich. James also works regularly with the Academy of Ancient Music, the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, the Sixteen and the King's Consort.



A prolific recitalist, James enjoys successful partnerships with accompanists Anna Tilbrook, Julius Drake, and the harpist Alison Nicholls. His many critically acclaimed recordings include *Die Schöne Müllerin* for Orchid, *On Wenlock Edge* for Linn, and *Intimations of Immortality* for Naxos.

Future engagements include *Alexander's Feast* (Cappell Antiqua), *St Matthew Passion* (Rotterdam Philharmonic), *Die Jahreszeiten* (Royal Flemish Phil), *Finta Giardinera* (AAM), *Serenade for tenor, horn and strings* (Amsterdam Sinfonietta) and *Die Schöne Müllerin* with Anna Tilbrook at the Wigmore Hall.

James first sang as a soloist with Charlton Kings Choral Society in their 50th anniversary performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in 2007. He became the choir's President in 2008 and continues to support its activities enthusiastically.

Louise Booker (mezzo soprano)



Louise graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music with a first class BMus Hons degree, where she studied under Peter Wilson. Her training began with Maria Jagusz, winning a gold medal at the Cheltenham competitive festival. She now continues her vocal training with Robert Dean.

Louise recently sang Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* with Derby Concert Orchestra. She also joined the chorus at Opera Holland Park this season for their productions of Bizet *Carmen* and Debussy *Pelleas et Mélissande*.

Since July 2009 Louise has sung regularly with the Band of HM Royal Marines Collingwood. She has also appeared with the Royal Corps of Signals Band at the

Shrivenham Defence Academy's annual music and fireworks concerts.

Louise has sung recitals throughout Britain, and Oratorio solo appearances have included Mozart *Requiem*, Vivaldi *Gloria*, Haydn *Nelson Mass*, Handel *Messiah* and Handel *Israel in Egypt*. She has played the roles of Chloe in Laura Bowler *Anything Money Can Buy* at both RNCM and the Opera Tête à Tête festival, Pepik in Janáček *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and the Police Constable in Kurt Weill *The Threepenny Opera* (RNCM), Second boy in Mozart *The Magic Flute* (LFO) and Second Witch in Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*

(MJUK). Louise's chorus appearances include Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress* (BYO), Bernstein *Candide* (RNCM), Puccini *Tosca* (LFO), Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin* and Puccini *La Rondine* (RNCM). Louise has also sung in a large number of opera excerpt performances. Her choral appearances include Edward Gregson *Dance Forever the Dance* at the Bridgewater Hall, Ravel *Daphnis et Chloe* and Debussy *Sirens* under Jac van Steen, Mozart *Requiem* at the Bridgewater hall under Sir Colin Davis and the supporting choir behind Paul Potts at the *Royal Variety Show 2007*.

The Boy Nicolas and the Three Pickled Boys

Laurence Kilsby, Salim Jaffar, Louis Morford and Hugo Till

The part of The Boy Nicolas is sung by Laurence Kilsby and those of the Three Pickled Boys by Salim Jaffar, Louis Morford and Hugo Till. The four trebles attend Dean Close Preparatory School and are members of the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum. This is the choir of men and boys who, under the direction of Benjamin Nicholas, sing the weekday services in Tewkesbury Abbey. Whilst this is their primary focus, they also undertake a full programme of tours, broadcasts and recordings. Laurence Kilsby is the BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year and all the boys are regular soloists in the choir - most recently in a live broadcast on BBC Radio 3. For further information on Schola Cantorum, please visit www.scholacantorum.org.uk.

The Girls' Semi-Chorus

Yasmin Beard, Alice Bloom, Isobel Bushby, Flora Corbett, Hannah Crisp, Cherrelle Ford, Paige Green, Nicole Jones, Alice King, Emily Moseley, Harriet Norfolk, Holly Smith, Lisa Spencer, Emily Stone, Megan Townsend.

The semi-chorus of sopranos and altos is described in Britten's score as 'semi-chorus in the gallery'. The 15 girls who form tonight's semi-chorus, alas, have no gallery, but do have their own space in the Abbey. Directed by **Sally Marlow**, they are all Lower 6th form students from Chosen Hill School in Churchdown, have been singing together for 18 months and are also part of the school Senior SATB choir. They perform regularly at school concerts and gathered enthusiastic audiences during a spell of busking in St Malo in the summer when on the school Music Tour. Next year's programme includes movements from Bob Chilcott's *Little Jazz Mass*. All the girls are taking part in the school production of *Oliver* next spring.

Future Programmes: Charlton Kings Choral Society

Saturday 18 December at 7.00 pm

Family Carol Concert

St Mary's Church, Charlton Kings

Saturday 2 April 2011 at 7.30 pm

*'Last Night of the Proms' Concert
with Cirencester Community Orchestra
and other local choirs*

Sundial Theatre, Cirencester

Beethoven: *Choral Fantasia*
Handel: *Zadok the Priest*
Elgar: *Land of Hope and Glory*
Parry: *Jerusalem and I was glad*

Tuesday 3 May 2011 at 7.30 pm

St George's Day service

Gloucester Cathedral

Saturday 9 July 2011 at 4.00 pm

Holy Apostles' Church, Charlton Kings

Festival Plus Concert in the Cheltenham Music Festival

Britten: *Rejoice in the Lamb*
Finzi: *Lo, the Full Final Sacrifice*
Bernstein: *Chichester Psalms*

with Sebastian Field (countertenor)
Conductor: John Wright

Ian Venables (b 1955) Awake, Awake, the World is Young (Op.34)

Words from:

In Memoriam
by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (Canto CVI)
and

A New Year's Carol
by James Elroy Flecker.

1. Chorus

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;

Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
The year is going, let him go;

2. Chorus and Mezzo Soprano

Awake, awake! The world is young,
For all its weary years of thought:
The starkest fights must still be fought,
The most surprising songs be sung.

And those who have no other Gods
May still behold, if they bestir,
The windy amphitheatre
Where dawn the timeless periods.

Then hear the shouting-voice of men
Magniloquently rise and ring;
Their flashing eyes and measured
swing
Prove that the world is young again.

I was beyond the hills and heard
That old and fervent Goddess call,
Whose voice is like a waterfall,
And sweeter than the singing-bird.

O stubborn arms of rosy youth,
Break down your other Gods, and turn
To where her dauntless eyes do burn -
The silent pools of Light and Truth.

3. Chorus

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of our times;
The year is going.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold,
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

*(Commissioned in 2000 by Charlton Kings and
Cirencester Choral Societies with additional funds
from Lady Bliss)*

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Saint Nicolas (Op 42) A Cantata

Words by Eric Crozier

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I. Introduction

Chorus

Our eyes are blinded by the holiness you
bear,
The bishop's robe, the mitre and the cross
of gold
Obscure the simple man within the Saint.
Strip off your glory, Nicolas, and speak!

Nicolas

Across the tremendous bridge of sixteen
hundred years
I come to stand in worship with you
As I stood among my faithful congregation
long ago.
All who knelt beside me then are gone.
Their name is dust, their tombs are grass
and clay,
Yet still their shining seed of faith survives
In you!
It weathers time, it springs again
In you!
With you it stands like forest oak
Or withers with the grasses underfoot.
Preserve the living Faith for which your
fathers fought!
For Faith was won by centuries of
sacrifice
And many martyrs died
That you might worship God.

Chorus

Help us, LORD! to find the hidden road
That leads from love to greater Love,
from faith To greater Faith.
Strengthen us, O LORD!
Screw up our strength to serve Thee with
simplicity.

II The Birth of Nicolas

Chorus (women) and The Boy Nicolas

Nicolas was born in answer to prayer
And leaping from his mother's womb he
cried

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Swaddling-bands and crib awaited him
there,
But Nicolas clapped both his hands and
cried

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Innocent and joyful, naked and fair
He came in pride on earth to abide.

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Water rippled *Welcome!* In the bath-tub by
his side;
He dived in open-eyed: he swam: he cried

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

When he went to Church at Christmas-
tide,
He climbed up to the font to be baptised.

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Pilgrims came to kneel and pray by his
side.
He grew in grace, his name was
sanctified.

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

Nicolas grew in innocence and pride.
His glory spread a rainbow round the
countryside.
'*Nicolas will be a Saint!*' the neighbours
cried.

GOD BE GLORIFIED!

III. Nicolas devotes himself to God

Nicolas

My parents died.
All too soon I left the tranquil beauty of
their home
And knew the wider world of man.
Poor man! I found him solitary, racked

By doubt: born, bred, doomed to die
In everlasting fear of everlasting death:
The foolish toy of time, the darling of
decay -
Hopeless, faithless, defying God.

Heart-sick, in hope to mask
the twisted face of poverty,
I sold my lands to feed the poor.
I gave my goods to charity
But Love demanded more.

Heart-sick, I cast away
all things that could distract my mind
From full devotion to His will;
I thrust my happiness behind
But Love desired more still.

Heart-sick, I called on God
To purge my angry soul, to be
My only master, friend and guide.
I begged for sweet humility
And Love was satisfied.

4. He journeys to Palestine

Chorus (men) and Semi-Chorus

Nicolas sailed for Palestine
Across the sunlit seas.
The South West Wind blew soft and fair,
Seagulls hovered through the air,
And spices scented the breeze.

Everyone felt that land was near:
All dangers now were passed:
Except for one who knelt in prayer,
Fingers clasped and head quite bare,
Alone by the mizzen-mast.

The sailors jeered at Nicolas,
Who paid them no regard,
Until the hour of sunset came
When up he stood and stopped their
game
Of staking coins on cards.

Nicolas spoke and prophesied
A tempest far ahead.
The sailors scorned such words of fear,
Since sky and stars shone bright and
clear,
So '*Nonsense!*' they all said.

Darkness was soon on top of them,
But still the South Wind blew.
The Captain went below to sleep,
And left the helmsman there to keep
His course with one of the crew.

Nicolas swore he'd punish them
For mocking at the Lord.
The wind arose, the thunder roared,
Lightning split the waves that poured
In wild cascades on board.

Water-spouts rose in majesty
Until the ship was tossed
Aft, aback, astern, abeam,
Lit by lightning's livid gleam,
And all aboard cried,
'*Lost!*'

*Lightning hisses through the night
Blinding sight with living light! Ah!*

Spare us! Save us! Saviour!
Man the pumps! Axes! Ah!

*Winds and tempests howl their cry
Of battle through the raging sky! Ah!*

Life-boats! Lower away!
Spare us! Save us! Saviour!

*Waves repeat their angry roar,
Fall and spring again once more! Ah!*

Let her run before the wind! Shorten sail!
Reef her! Heave her to!

*Thunder rends the sky asunder
with its savage shouts of wonder! Ah!*

Pray to God! Kneel and pray!

*Lightning, Thunder, Tempest, Ocean
Praise their God with voice and motion.*

Nicolas waited patiently
Till they were on their knees
Then down he knelt in thankfulness
Begging God their ship to bless
And make the storm to cease.

Nicolas and Chorus (men)

O God! We are all weak, sinful, foolish
men.
We pray from fear and from necessity - at
death, in sickness or private loss.

Without the prick of fear our conscience
sleeps, forgetful of Thy Grace.

Help us, O God! to see more clearly.
Tame our stubborn hearts.
Teach us to ask for less
and offer more in gratitude to Thee.

Pity our simplicity, for we are truly pitiable
in Thy sight.

Amen.

The winds and waves lay down to rest
The sky was clear and calm,
The ship sailed onward without harm
And all creation sang a psalm
Of loving thankfulness.

Beneath the stars the sailors slept
Exhausted by their fear, while I
Knelt down for love for God on high
And saw his angels in the sky
Smile down at me,
And wept.

V. Nicolas comes to Myra and is chosen Bishop

Chorus, *Nicolas and semi chorus*

Come stranger sent from God!
Come, man of God!
Stand foremost in our Church and serve
this diocese,
As Bishop Nicolas, our shield, our
strength, our peace!

*I Nicolas, Bishop of Myra and its diocese,
shall with the unfailing grace of God,
defend His faithful servants, comfort the
widow and the fatherless, and fulfil his will
for this most blessed Church.*

Amen!

*Place the mitre on your head
to show your mastery of men!*

Amen!

*Take the golden robe that covers you
with Christ's authority!*

Amen!

*Where the fine dalmatic woven with
the cross of faith.*

Amen!

*Bear the crozier as a staff and
comfort to your flock!*

Amen!

*Set the ring upon your hand in
sacramental sign, in sign of wedlock
with thy God!*

Amen!

Serve the Faith and spurn his enemies,
Serve the Faith!

ALL VOICES AND CONGREGATION

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice!
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

O enter then his gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto,
Praise, laud and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? the Lord our God is good:
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

Amen.

VI. Nicolas from Prison

Nicolas

Persecution sprang upon our Church
And stilled its voice.
Eight barren years it stifled under Roman
rule:
And I lay bound, condemned to celebrate
My lonely sacrament with prison bread,
While wolves ran loose among my flock.

O man! the world is set for you as for a
king!
Paradise is yours in loveliness.
The stars shine down for you, for you the
angels sing,
Yet you prefer your wilderness.

You hug the rack of self,
Embrace the lash of sin,
Pour you treasures out to bribe distress.
You build your temples fair without and
foul within:
You cultivate your wilderness.

Yet Christ is yours, Yours!
For you he lived and died.
God in mercy gave his Son to bless
You all, To bring you life,
And Him you crucified
To desecrate your wilderness.

Turn, turn away from sin! Ah! bow
Down your hard and stubborn hearts!
Confess Yourself to Him in penitence,
And humbly vow
Your lives to Him, to Holiness.

VII. Nicolas and the Pickled Boys

Chorus and *Semi Chorus*

Famine tracks us down the lanes,
Hunger holds our horses' reins,
Winter heaps the roads with snow.
O we have far go!

Starving beggars howl their cry,
Snarl to see us spurring by
Times are bad and travel slow.
O we have far to go!

*We mourn our boys, our missing sons!
We sorrow for three little ones!
Timothy, Mark and John are gone!*

Landlord, take this piece of gold!
Bring us food before the cold
Makes our pangs of hunger grow
O we have far to go!

*Day by day we seek to find
Some trace of them, but oh! unkind!
Timothy, Mark and John are gone!*

Let us share this dish of meat.
Come, my friends, sit down and eat!
Join us, Bishop, for we know
That you have far to go!

*Mary meek and Mother mild
Who lost thy Jesus as a child*

Timothy, Mark and John are gone!

Come, your Grace, don't eat so slow!
Take some meat.

Nicolas

O do not taste! O do not feed
On sin!
But haste to save three souls in need!

The mothers' cry
Is sad and weak,
Within these walls they lie
Whom mothers sadly seek.

Timothy, Mark, and John
Put your fleshly garments on!
Come from dark oblivion!
Come! Come! Come!
Come!

Chorus

See! see! Three boys spring back to life,
Who, slaughtered by the butcher's knife,
Lay salted down! And entering,
Hand-in-hand they stand and sing
Alleluia! Alleluia to their King!

Three small boys

Alleluia!

Semi-chorus

Alleluia!

All voices

ALLELUIA!

VIII. His piety and marvellous works

Chorus

For forty years our Nicolas,
Our Prince of men, our shepherd and
Our gentle guide, walked by our side.

We turned to him at birth and death,
In time of famine and distress,
In all our grief, to bring relief.

He led us from the valleys to
The pleasant hills of grace. He fought

To fold us in from mortal sin.

O! he was prodigal of love!
A spendthrift in devotion to
Us all and blessed as he caressed.

We keep his memory alive
In legends that our children and
Their children's children treasure still.

Chorus (women) and (men)

A captive at the heathen court
Wept sorely all alone.

'O Nicolas is here, my son!
And he will bring you home!'

'Fill, fill my sack with corn!' he said:

'We die from lack of food!'

*And from that single sack he fed
A hungry multitude.*

Three daughters of a nobleman
Were doomed to shameful sin,
Till our good bishop ransomed them
By throwing purses in.

*The gates were barred, the black flag
flew,*

*Three men knelt by the block
But Nicolas burst in like flame
And stayed the axe's shock.*

'O help us, good Nicolas!
Our ship is full of foam!'
He walked across the waves to them
And led them safely home.

*He sat among the bishops
who were summoned to Nicaea:
Then rising with the wrath of God
Boxed Arius's ear!*

He threatened Constantine the Great
With bell and book and ban:
Till Constantine confessed his sins
Like any common man.

Chorus

Let the legends that we tell,
Praise him, with our prayers as well.
We keep his memory alive
In legends that our children and
Their children's children treasure still.

IX. The death of Nicolas

Nicolas with choral underlay

DEATH, I hear thy summons and I come
In haste, for my short life is done;
And O! my soul is faint with love,
For Him who waits for me above.

LORD, I come to life, to final birth.
I leave the misery of earth,
For light, by Thy eternal grace,
Where I shall greet Thee face to face.

CHRIST, receive my soul with tenderness,
For in my last of life I bless Thy name,
Who lived and died for me,
And dying, yield my soul to Thee.

*Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart
in peace,*

According to Thy word.

*For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation
Which Thou hast prepared before the face
of all people.*

*To be a light to lighten the Gentiles
and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost.*

*As it was in the beginning, is now and
ever shall be, world without end, Amen!*

ALL VOICES AND CONGREGATION

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Amen!

**Future Programmes:
Cirencester Choral Society**

Tuesday 14th December at 7.30 pm

*Carols for choir and audience
and instrumental music
for the festive season*

(in support of the Campaign for Cirencester Parish Church)

Cirencester Parish Church

Jenny Rees and Carleton Etherington, *piano*
Therese de Souza (Glos. Young Musician 2010), *violin*
Anthony Hammond, *organ*

Saturday 7th May 2011 at 7.30 pm

Parisian Sacred Music:

Cirencester Parish Church

Faure: *Requiem*
Vierne: *Messe Solennelle*.

Saturday 11th June 2011, 1.00 - 6.30 pm

Open workshop on Mozart's Requiem

Ralph Allwood,
Director of Music, Eton College

Cirencester Parish Church

Saturday 10th December 2011 at 7.30 pm

Handel: *Messiah*

Cirencester Parish Church

Ian Venables

Ian was born in Liverpool in 1955 and educated at Liverpool Collegiate Grammar School. He studied music with Professor Richard Arnell at Trinity College of Music, London and later with Andrew Downes, John Mayer and John Joubert in Birmingham. His compositions encompass many genres, and in particular he has added significantly to the canon of English art song. Described as '...one of the finest song composers of his generation...', he has written over 50 works in this genre, which includes six major song-cycles, *Venetian Songs - Love's Voice Op.22* (1995); *Invite to Eternity Op.31 for tenor and string quartet* (1997); *Songs of Eternity and Sorrow Op.36 for tenor, string quartet and piano* (2004); *On the Wings of Love Op.38 for tenor, clarinet and piano* (2006); *The Pine Boughs Past Music Op.39 for baritone and piano* (2009) and *Remember This Op.40 - A Cantata for soprano, tenor, string quartet, and piano* (2010). Other songs for solo voice and piano include, *Two Songs Op.28* (1997) and *Six Songs Op.33* (1999-2003) as well as 'A Dramatic Scena' for countertenor and piano - *At the Court of the poisoned Rose Op. 20* (1994). His songs have been performed by national and internationally acclaimed artists that include: Andrew Kennedy, Roderick Williams, Patricia Rozario, Ian Partridge, Howard Wong, Nathan Vale, Peter Wilman and Nicholas Mulroy. His many chamber works include a *Piano Quintet Op.27* (1995) - described by Roderic Dunnett in the *Independent* as '...lending a new late 20th Century dimension to the English pastoral...' and a *String Quartet Op.32* (1998), as well as smaller pieces for solo instruments and piano. He has also written works for choir - *Awake, awake, the world is young Op.34* (1999), organ - *Rhapsody Op.25* (1996), brass and solo piano. He is an acknowledged expert on the 19th century poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds, and apart from having set five of his poems for voice and piano, he has contributed a significant essay to the book *John Addington Symonds - Culture and the Demon Desire* (Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000).



He is President of the Arthur Bliss Society, as well as being the Chairman of the Ivor Gurney Society. His continuing work on the music of Gurney has led to orchestrations of two of his songs (2003) - counterparts to the two that were orchestrated by Herbert Howells - and newly edited versions of Gurney's *War Elegy* (1920) and *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody* (1919-1921), with Philip Lancaster. His music is published by Novello and Company Ltd and has been recorded on the Signum, Somm and Naxos labels.

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John Wright (conductor)

John has been the conductor of Charlton Kings Choral Society since the 1980s and as well as giving many concerts in the Cheltenham area, he has taken them on foreign tours to Rennes, Göttingen, Oslo, Gothenburg and Annecy. For three years he was also the conductor of Cirencester Choral Society, and it was during this time that *Awake, Awake, the World is Young* by Ian Venables was commissioned by the two choirs.

John studied music at Trinity Hall, Cambridge (where he was organ scholar) and the Royal Academy of Music. Since first moving to Gloucestershire in 1982 he has identified himself with a wide range of local music activities and pursued much of his career as a teacher. He now works as a freelance musician, and is organist of St Peter's Church, Leckhampton, an examiner for the ABRSM, and a teacher of piano and organ. John is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and has given recitals and accompanied choirs in many churches and cathedrals throughout this country and abroad, including Cheltenham's twin towns of Sochi and Göttingen. He appears frequently as a piano accompanist, and has also been a guest conductor with Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra.



Several of his choral compositions have been published, and he is newsletter editor of the Arthur Bliss Society. He has also worked closely with the Holst Birthplace Museum in Cheltenham. In 2003 he received two awards from Cheltenham Arts Council in recognition of his contribution to music in Gloucestershire.

Carleton Etherington (conductor)

Carleton has been Conductor of Cirencester Choral Society since January 2005. He is Organist and Director of Music of Tewkesbury Abbey. Here he directs the Abbey Choir and accompanies the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum, four of whom are singing the parts of The Boy Nicolas and the Three Pickled Boys in this evening's concert. Carleton combines his post at Tewkesbury with freelance teaching and performing. He is also Conductor of Pershore Choral.



Carleton was educated at Chetham's School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music where he studied organ with Peter Hurford and David Sanger and was awarded the Recital Diploma. In 1992 he won first prize at the Paisley International Organ Competition and the following year won the Royal College of Organists' "Performer of the Year" competition. He held posts at St Bride's Fleet Street and Leeds Parish Church before taking up his present appointment in 1996. He is Chairman of the Gloucestershire Organists' Association and a Council Member of the Royal College of Organists.

He has performed throughout Europe, Australia and the USA and has won considerable acclaim for his CD recordings, both as soloist and accompanist.

Carleton broadcasts frequently on the BBC, with Tewkesbury Abbey being a popular choice for Radio 3's Choral Evensong. On Christmas morning this year, Carleton will be directing the Abbey Choir in a live BBC 1 television broadcast of Sung Eucharist from Tewkesbury.

Jenny Rees and Sarah Blackford (piano)

Jenny Rees is a freelance professional musician and teacher and studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. She accompanies Cirencester and Stroud Choral Societies. Sarah Blackford was a music scholar at Marlborough College and gained first class honours in Music at Oxford University in 2009. She now has a post at Cirencester College while continuing to study piano and hopes in future to work for a higher degree in musicology.

Charlton Kings Choral Society

In 1956 a group of Charlton Kings residents met to discuss the possibility of forming a choir in the village, and from humble beginnings Charlton Kings Choral Society was founded the following year. Over the years the Society has progressed from being a village choir to take its place as one of the three main choral societies of Cheltenham. The membership now stands at about 100 singers who come from all over Cheltenham and the surrounding area. However the Society still remains proud of its roots in the village of Charlton Kings. The



choir gives two main concerts with orchestra and soloists each year in November and May. In addition there is a family carol concert in St. Mary's Church, Charlton Kings, and smaller scale summer concerts have been performed in recent years. The Society has had a long association with the Regency Sinfonia, who have accompanied the choir with great distinction over the years, and also with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, who have provided soloists drawn from opera course students on many occasions. The choir has made four foreign tours: to Brittany in 1995, to Germany (Göttingen) in 1999, to Norway and Sweden in 2002, and Annecy (Cheltenham's twin town) in 2010. They have performed with the Orchester Göttinger Musikfreunde, and also the choir of the Jacobikirche, Göttingen as part of town-twinning celebrations. The choir's repertoire is wide-ranging, and innovative programmes in recent years have included the rarely performed *Morning Heroes* by Sir Arthur Bliss and *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* by Karl Jenkins, after which the Gloucestershire Echo reported: "Many concert-goers clamouring for tickets were disappointed - the Pump Room concert was a sell-out". New works have been commissioned by the choir, including *Awake, Awake, the World is Young* by Ian Venables in 2000, *In Praise of Earth's Beauty* by the choir's conductor John Wright in 2004, and *Under the Wide Sky* by Guy Turner in 2009. To celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2007 the choir performed Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Cheltenham Town Hall, with James Gilchrist as the tenor soloist. The Society is delighted to have James now as its President. For its summer activities the choir has established a tradition of singing Choral Evensong in English cathedrals, with a visit to Salisbury in 2006 and a similar event in Bristol in 2008. For the last three years they have also sung at the annual St George's day service in Gloucester Cathedral, performing anthems by John Sanders, Arthur Bliss and John Wright.



Charlton Kings Choral Society is affiliated to and acknowledges the financial support of the Cheltenham Arts Council, and is a member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies. The Society is an equal opportunities organisation and a registered Charity No. 291743.

Cirencester Choral Society

The Society has its origins in the renaissance of choral singing that accompanied the spread of the Oxford Movement in the mid 19th century. The name of the Society is first recorded in print in October 1863, with Frederick Helmore, one of the leading choral musicians of the day, offering singing classes in the town. Thus began a history* which, though not entirely seamless, has so far seen 22 conductors - 21 brave men and one brave woman - taking up the challenge of bringing large scale choral performances

to the people of Cirencester, with the relatively modest resources that a small provincial town can provide.

Highlights have included the visit of Sir Hubert Parry in 1905 to conduct his oratorio *Job*, the patronage of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Reginald Jacques and Herbert Howells, and the tenure of Peter Maxwell Davies as conductor in 1959/60, now Master of the Queen's Music, but then on the staff at Cirencester Grammar School. For many members, though, the highlight is simply the enjoyment and pride of working with others to achieve musically what at first sight (and often hindsight) seems impossible!

The Society's core programme of two main concerts per year (May and December) is supplemented by fund-raising musical events for charities and choral workshops open to non-members. The Society aims to support the careers of young professional musicians by giving them opportunities to perform in our concerts, either as orchestral players or as soloists. The Choir has a versatile accompanist in Jenny Rees. In addition to her weekly duties, Jenny composed a setting of Psalm 148 for the Society's December 2006 concert, and now regularly assembles the Corinium Camerata for the Society's concerts. Strong links have been developed with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London from which many of the young soloists are drawn.



As it approaches its 150th anniversary, Cirencester Choral Society is in good heart. Under the sound financial management of its long serving treasurer, supported by members' fundraising efforts, the Society has kept ticket prices affordable and membership fees at very reasonable rates compared with many of its peers. Concerts attract very good audiences and membership levels remain healthy. Over several years, sufficient funds have been saved for the purchase of brand new staging, enabling the Society, and other visiting choirs, once again to perform big choral works in the refurbished Cirencester Parish Church, thereby making a real contribution to the cultural life of the town. As its long history has shown, however, the key to the success of the Society at any time has lain ultimately in the quality of its musical direction. It is a tribute to the skill and professionalism of its present conductor, Carleton Etherington, that the Society's performance standards are invariably well reviewed and enjoyed by audiences and visiting soloists and musicians alike.

The Society is a member of Making Music (formerly the National Federation of Music Societies), and is a registered Charity, No 276649.

* *Bright Faces, The Story of Cirencester Choral Society and its Conductors*, by Lorna Lane and Tim Page, is available from the Society at £5 per copy.

Patrons of Charlton Kings Choral Society

The Society would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks the support received from all patrons:

Mrs M Aven	Dr A Jeans	Mrs M Rae
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If you have enjoyed this concert, and would like to support the Society in a positive way, then why not consider becoming a Patron. You will receive one ticket for each of our two main concerts and be able to attend social functions. Alternatively you can join our mailing list for future concerts. Contact Elizabeth Mayne on 01242 521797 for further details and an application form.

New Members

The Society is always looking for new and enthusiastic singers to join the choir. If you are under 25 and in full time education, then the Society can offer you free membership. If you are interested, please contact the secretary Pat Hemming by email: secretary@ckcsonline.org.uk.

Officials of Charlton Kings Choral Society

President: James Gilchrist
Vice-President: Diggory Seacome
Conductor: John Wright
Rehearsal Accompanist: Peter Meason
Chairman: Margaret Walker
Treasurer: Philip Morley
Secretary: Pat Hemming

Tel: 01242 709524 / 0784 5943064 secretary@ckcsonline.org.uk

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Officials of Cirencester Choral Society

Chairman: Phil Tubbs

Deputy Chairman: Andy Crane

Secretary: Dorothy Andrews

Treasurer: Anne Smith

Membership Secretary: Anne Vickers

Conductor: Carleton Etherington

Accompanist: Jenny Rees

New Members

We always welcome interest from prospective new members. If you are interested in applying for membership, please visit the 'Contact us' page of our website www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk where you will find a link to information about what we look for in our members and a short application form. Other pages of the website will tell you more about our activities. You can e-mail us at enquiries@cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk. If you do not have internet access, or would like to speak to us, our Membership Secretary, Anne Vickers (01285 659114) would be pleased to hear from you.

The Regency Sinfonia

The Regency Sinfonia comprises musicians who have busy schedules as freelance musicians in the Midlands and West of England, playing in a variety of different orchestras and in a myriad of musical styles. Their versatility and knowledge of the repertoire means that they are much in demand, playing as they do for over a dozen different choral societies in the area, in addition to their own commitments.

Enquiries concerning The Regency Sinfonia should be made to: Diggory Seacombe, 7a Queen's Parade, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3BB.
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www.pinkskydesign.com