

# Sarisbury Choral Society

## NEWSLETTER

THURSDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021

Welcome to another edition of ramblings from the conductor! I hope the newsletter continues to find you well. We continue our reminiscing through the archive; and find ourselves at the year **2016**.

### From the Archives: 2016

At the beginning of 2015, Winchester City Festival Choir had their annual concert in **January** (or it might have been the beginning of **February**). For the first time, it was held at Thornden Hall in Chandler's Ford, which, when open, is an excellent venue for choral concerts!

The programme for this concert was, I guess, what you would call a "crowd pleasing" one: [Haydn's Nelson Mass](#) and [Vivaldi's Gloria](#). If you click on the Vivaldi link in blue, you'll be able to a unique version of the work, performed by an all-female orchestra and choir in the Pieta in Venice.



In the original conversations about this programme, I hoped that we would be able to feature a Trombone Concerto from roughly the same period, by a composer called Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736 - 1809). Albrechtsberger was an Austrian composer, organist, and music theorist, and one of the teachers of Beethoven. He was an acquaintance of Mozart and Haydn; indeed, he passed away the same year as Haydn. Going off a tangent slightly, 1809 was a very significant year for composers, with the death of Haydn and birth of Mendelssohn. The plan was to have the Principal Trombonist of the BBC Symphony Orchestra [Helen Vollam](#) (pictured above left) to be our esteemed soloist (Helen was one of my patient trombone teachers at University),



but sadly we didn't pull it off... but we were able to showcase two excellent members of the orchestra for this concert, who played a short concerto each. [Fiona Jones](#) (pictured above right) played the [Oboe Concerto](#) by Alessandro Marcello (1684 - 1750) and [Rebecca Toal](#) (pictured left) played the [Trumpet Concerto](#) by Giuseppe Torelli (1658 - 1709).



A great concert, with an excellent team, not forgetting a brilliant quartet of soloists: **Jocelyn Somerville** (soprano), **Felicity Turner** (mezzo), **Adrian Green** (tenor) and **Ed Saddington** (bass). It was great to work with this team again, with the exception of Felicity (pictured left) who I was working with for the first time... and certainly not the last! No choir photos of this gig I'm afraid, apart from one of me losing weight rapidly during the afternoon rehearsal.



For **WCMF 2016**, Winchester City went to **Romsey Abbey** for a Mozart programme (the [Requiem K626](#) and the [Vespers K339](#)) alongside Botley and Overton. The conductor was **David Burgess** and the soloists were **Helen Bailey** (soprano), **Marie-Anne Hall** (mezzo, pictured left), **Adrian Green** (tenor) and **Tom Herring** (bass baritone, pictured right).



Salisbury went to **Winchester Cathedral** to joined forces with Twyford, Itchen Valley and Compton and Shawford for Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius. The role of Gerontius was taken by the tenor **Peter Auty**, which brings me to a random pub quiz fact: Peter Auty began his musical career as a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral. At the age of 13, he sang "Walking in the Air", the theme song of the 1982 animated film, The Snowman, but in the rush to finish the film, his name was omitted from the credits until the film was remastered in 2002. The composer, Howard Blake decided to re-record the song for a commercial for Toys "R" Us in 1985, but Peter Auty's voice had broken by then. So



Aled Jones was chosen instead and the song became a hit single.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/2560349.stm> The role of the angel was

sung by mezzo soprano **Emily Bauer-Jones** who now resides in Australia and the dual role of the Priest (in part one) and the Angel of the Agony (in part two) was bass **Jimmy Holliday** who sings with many of the leading chamber

choirs in this country. The performance was conducted by **Derek Beck**; this was Derek's final time at the podium as Festival Music Director. I don't think he reads the newsletter, but if he does or doesn't, I hope he wouldn't mind adding this extract from an email he sent the day after the concert: *not just the Angel's farewell! But a largely enjoyable swansong for this particular geriatric.* I sent a response to Derek's email: *I will personally miss you being at the helm of WCMF, I know how much work 'behind the scenes' you do and the amount of time and energy you give to the festival... and I'm very pleased that you're not clearing off completely!*

Unusually for me, I was struggling to decide what music to try in the WCFC "Summer Sing" for **June / July**. But then it dawned on me that 2016 was the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616), so it was to the brilliant Songs and Sonnets by the British jazz pianist George Shearing (1919 - 2011) that we turned our attention! I really enjoyed learning these for the summer sing and I hope the singers who were involved did too. If you don't remember what they sound like, click on the link above in blue for a reminder!



In **October**, Salisbury Choral were once again part of a "come and sing" at **St. James' Church, West End, Southampton**. It was a programme of shorter items, that worked as a musical tour around Europe, beginning and ending in England, with Zadok the Priest to start with and I was glad to end. The orchestra was made up of musical friends and colleagues, alongside members of **Northwood String Orchestra**. We had a quartet of soloists for the event: **Elliott Titcombe** (bass) and **Jamie Milburn** (tenor) were loaned to us from St. Michael's Church, Southampton (via Southampton University), alongside **Lillian Sediles** (mezzo soprano) and **Tamsin Stevens** (soprano), who led the vocal warm up and conducted How lovely are thy dwellings.

In **December**, it was an orange carol book year for Salisbury, so we sang items from Carols for Choirs 2. We also added into the programme the delightful "Christmas Day" by Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934). **Sophie Aynsley** played piano and in the organ loft for the second year running was **Will Duxson**. It was also the debut for maestro **Michael Waterson**, who has since gone on to greater things, such as conducting at Eastleigh Football Ground. Extracts from this concert are on the choir website: <https://www.salisburychoralsociety.com/listen/>. Winchester City had a carol concert again at Littleton, which included for the first time, a performance of a work for eight hands at one piano... but more on that in the next episode as I've completely run out of room this time!



Stay safe and keep singing,

*Graham*