

Saturday 19th
December 2015



Merrily on High!

Shepshed
Singers

Directed by
Nicholas Scott-Burt



St Peter & St Paul
Hathern

For many of us it is the music of Christmas which defines the character of the season. For as long as music has been notated, composers have written Christmas carols, hymns, songs and motets, and those which have stood the test of many centuries have often been adapted, added to, reinvented, so that some of the best loved carols possess an unknown provenance which may take them back much further in our history than we would suspect.

Ding Dong! Merrily on high is one of our best loved Christmas carols, and its tune comes from a sixteenth century French book of dances, *Orchésographie*, under the title *Bransle de l'Official*. (*Orchésographie* became the more famous as the source of melodies in Peter Warlock's *Capriol Suite* composed in 1926) The words for *Ding Dong* were written by George Ratcliffe Woodward in 1924, a translation of a French/Latin version which appealed to his love of *macaronic* texts (texts in more than one language). Many subsequent arrangements of the carol have appeared, notably the famous *Carols for Choirs* versions by Charles Wood and the late Sir David Willcocks - and this new setting by the American composer and choir director Mack Wilberg.

O Come all ye faithful is also a translation, this time of the Latin *Adeste Fideles*. No one knows who wrote the carol, but it has at various times been attributed to composers such as Handel, Gluck, Arne and King John IV of Portugal.

Adam lay Ybounden is also of unknown authorship, another macaronic text which dates from 1400, according to the British library. This setting is by the contemporary minimalist composer Howard Skempton. *Resonet in Laudibus* is even older as a text from the mid 1300s, but has many variants and no definitive original version. The composer Jacob Handl (1550-91) is also known as Gallus - Handl and Gallus are the German and Latin words meaning 'Rooster'! In fact his real name was probably *Petelin* - the same word in his native Slovenian.

Lo how a Rose is a modern take on the 16th century Michael Praetorius' hymn *Es ist ein Ros Entsprungen*, in a setting by the English composer David Blackwell. His friend and colleague Alan Bullard dedicated the *Scots Nativity*, based on a traditional lullaby, to his Scottish wife Janet and their daughter Mary.

God rest you merry gentlemen first appears in the Roxburghe Collection of 1847 but is thought to date from the 16th century at latest. It is quoted by Dickens in *A Christmas Carol* and musically is notable for its use of the 'natural minor' or Aeolian mode.

Our first half ends with the beautiful *Virga Jesse* by Bruckner. Bruckner is probably best known as a symphonist, though he was employed for most of his life as an organist, composing many fine motets for the church. This is his setting of the advent text recounting Christ's lineage from the Tree of Jesse - punning on the words *Virga* (branch) and *Virgo* (Virgin) . This is

followed by the famous Pearsall setting of *In Dulci Jubilo* - the tune first appeared in 1305, and has been added to and adapted from composers and poets such as Praetorius, Martin Luther, J S Bach, not to mention the 1975 hit by Mike Oldfield! Pearsall's version (1837) retained the macaronic character of the early versions, with English translations of the original medieval German, and the Latin left intact.

The famous tune *Quem Pastores*, which countless schoolchildren in bygone generations have sung to the words *Jesus, Good above all other*, here appears in an early incarnation by Praetorius, echoing at one point the opening of *Resonet in Laudibus*.

Will Todd (b. 1970) (*My Lord has Come*) is one of the rising stars of English choral music. Also a jazz pianist, he has worked at the Royal Opera House and the Lincoln Centre in New York. Bob Chilcott (*Pilgrim Jesus*) began his career as the solo treble in Sir David Willcocks' famous recording of Fauré's *Requiem* with the a King's College Choir, and this year has just celebrated his 60th birthday. He is widely regarded as the second most prominent living English choral composer (after John Rutter!)

Up Good Christen Folk! is an adaptation by G R Woodward (of *Ding Ding Merrily fame*) of a 1582 tune in the collection *Piae Cantiones*. *There is no Rose* is a carol written by the Shepshed Singers' Music Director Nicholas Scott-Burt, originally composed in 2013 in a simpler version for the choir of Bablake Junior School, Coventry, and tonight being performed for the first time in this four-part version. The words are from an anonymous 15th century carol in English, and contains the Latin refrains *Resmiranda* (something wonderful) *Pariforma* (made the same - i.e. God in persons three), *Gaudeamus* (let us rejoice), *Transeamus* (let us journey) and *Alleluia* (Praise God).

Hark the herald angels sing was originally written in 1739 by Charles Wesley with the opening lines *Hark how all the welkin rings/Glory to the King of Kings*, and to a very sombre tune, at Wesley's insistence. The version we know today is the result of contributions and amendments by a number of composers and poets, notably Felix Mendelssohn who in 1840 wrote a cantata in celebration of the invention of the printing press, from which the well-known version of the carol tune was adapted by W H Cummings to fit the now familiarly evolved version of Wesley's original words.

Mendelssohn, like Bruckner, composed a number of motets for the church, and from a set which embraces all the liturgical seasons, we sing to end our programme this delightful miniature in eight parts, *Frohlocket ihr Völker Auf Erden* (Rejoice ye nations of the Earth) .

The Shepshed Singers wish you the most joyful and restful of Christmases!

Nicholas Scott-Burt



Ding Dong Merrily

arr MackWilberg

ALL: O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O Come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten not created. *O come*

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God,
In the highest; *O come....*

Adam Lay Ybounden
Resonet in Laudibus*

Howard Skempton
Jacob Handl

READINGS:

The Animals' Carol

Charles Causley

Read by Margaret Dartnall

Joseph and the Shepherds

Anon

Read by Jean Hayes

Lo, how a Rose
Scots Nativity

arr David Blackwell
Alan Bullard

ALL: God rest you merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Was born upon this day.
To save us all from Satan's power,
When we were gone astray,
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and Joy.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father,
A blessèd Angel came,
And unto certain Shepherds,
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem, was born
The Son of God by name, *O tidings.....*

The Shepherds at those tidings,
Rejoicèd much in mind,

And left their flocks a feeding,
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessed babe to find, *O tidings.....*

But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray, *O tidings.....*

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood,
Each other now embrace,
This holy tide of Christmas,
All others doth deface. *O tidings.....*

Virga Jesse*
In Dulci Jubilo

Anton Bruckner
Robert Lucas Pearsall

INTERVAL

ALL: It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo!, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold:
When peace shall over all the earth

Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Quem Pastores*

Michael Praetorius

**My Lord has Come
Pilgrim Jesus***

**Will Todd
Bob Chilcott**

READINGS:

Just Another Christmas

Simon Pool
Read by Wendy Burns

An Interview With
Serious King Wenceslas

Oliver Pritchett
Read by Colin Butler & Martin Cooke

**Up Good Christen Folk
There is no Rose**

**arr G R Woodward
Nicholas Scott-Burt**

ALL: Hark! The herald angels sing

Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!

Joyful, all ye nations, rise.

Join the triumph of the skies.

With th' Angelic Hosts proclaim,

Christ is born in Bethlehem!

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,

Christ, the everlasting Lord.

Late in time behold Him come

Off-spring of a Virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,

Hail, the incarnate deity!

Pleased as Man with man to dwell,

Jesus, our Emmanuel. *Hark!.....*

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!

Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings,

Risen with healing in His Wings.

Mild He lays His Glory by,

Born that man no more may die,

Born to raise the sons of earth,

Born to give them second birth. *Hark!.....*

Frohloeket ihr Völker Auf Erden*

Felix Mendelssohn

A merry little mishmash

Nicholas Scott-Burt



* TRANSLATIONS

Resonet in Laudibus

Let praises ring out and joyful acclaim: the one whom Mary bore has appeared to the faithful in Zion. What Gabriel foretold has been fulfilled. Eia, eia, A virgin has given birth to God, as He wished in His divine mercy. This day appeared in Israel, born of the Virgin Mary, is a king.

Virga Jesse

The rod of Jesse hath blossomed: a Virgin hath brought forth God and man: God hath restored peace, reconciling in Himself the lowest with the highest. Alleluia.

Quem Pastores

[Glory to Christ] whom the shepherds praised, the shepherds to whom the angel said 'Be not afraid, the King of glory is born'. Now the glory of the angels has shone forth to men on earth; the Virgin Mother has newly given birth and brought joy, and the true son has lightened the darkness. Christ is born today of a Virgin: a King is born without earthly father.

[Glory to Christ] to whom the wise men came., bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh; they offered these gifts with true heart to the Lion of Judah (lit victory).

Today remission of our sins is granted; let guilty mankind rejoice. Light has shone from heaven, peace has now been restored, she who bore the Saviour has remained sinless. Christ is born today of a Virgin: a King is born without earthly father.

To Christ the King, Son of God, given to us through Mary, let praise, honour and glory worthily and truly resound. The great name of the Lord is Emmanuel, which means, God with us. Let us rejoice in the salvation of the Redeemer Lord; this is the day and the year of rejoicing. Children, raise your voices together and make music, sing with reverent voice and clap your hands.

Frohloket ihr Völker Auf Erden

Rejoice, ye people of the earth, and praise God!

The redeemer is come, whom the Lord has promised.

He has revealed his justice to the world. Hallelujah!

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Nicholas Scott-Burt

Nicholas Scott-Burt enjoys a busy and varied freelance career as a composer, conductor, organist and pianist. He has been Music Director of the Shepshed Singers since September and also conducts the Daventry Choral Society. He is organist at Bablake School, Coventry, teaches piano (classical and jazz), organ and composition there and also at Uppingham School and the Robert Smyth Academy in Market Harborough; he is an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, both on the main and the jazz panels, and has contributed widely as a composer and arranger to recent ABRSM piano publications.

As a composer he has written over 100 works for a broad variety of media, from "pop songs" to symphonic scores, and in 2012 gained a PhD in composition from the University of Bristol. His most recent works include the *Desiderata Dances* for piano and strings, (premiered in May 2015); and a *Trio en Chocolat* composed for his violinist wife Cathy and cellist son Harry, who (with him as pianist) perform frequently as the *Scott-Burt Piano Trio*.



SHEPSHED SINGERS is a group of mixed voices from Shepshed, Loughborough and the surrounding area of Charnwood and beyond. The choir was founded over 35 years ago and has just enjoyed its first season under its new Music Director, Nicholas Scott-Burt.

The Singers' repertoire includes a variety of sacred and secular pieces and the choir aims to present a major classical concert each year.

The choir have regular overseas tours that provide a valuable opportunity for singers to perform in grand or unusual venues.

For further information about the choir, including how to book for an event or become a member or patron, please visit www.shepshedsingers.org.uk.



Shepshed Singers 2016

COME & SING:

Carmina Burana by Carl Orff

A one day workshop

Saturday 16th January

at Trinity Methodist Church Centre

Royland Road, Loughborough

Workshop Leader: Nicholas Scott-Burt

Registration: 10am. Performance: 5.30pm

Cost is £15. Music provided.

Advanced booking is essential.

Please pick up a detailed leaflet and form or download one from www.shepshedsingers.org.uk

Saturday 16th January 5.30pm

CARMINA BURANA

Workshop Performance

Trinity Methodist Church Centre,

Royland Road, Loughborough

Entry £5

Saturday 7th May 7.30pm

SPRING CONCERT

Barrow Parish Church

Saturday 22nd October 7.30pm

AUTUMN CONCERT WITH ORCHESTRA

to Include Mozart's Mass in C Minor

Emmanuel Church, Loughborough

www.shepshedsingers.org.uk

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