

Bollington Festival **Choir**

Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 St Oswald's Church

Olwyn Bloor *soprano*

Charlotte Yandell *alto*

Steve Thorpe *tenor*

Mike Bell *baritone*

Ian Chesworth *organ*

Dominic Smith *cello*

Donald Judge *conductor*

Camille Saint-Saëns

*Tollite Hostias* from *Oratorio de Noël*

Gabriel Fauré

*Après un rêve*

Jean-Adam Guilain

Selection from *Suites for Organ*

Gabriel Fauré

*Cantique de Jean Racine*

César Franck

*Pièce héroïque*

Charles Villiers Stanford

*Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G*

Camille Saint-Saëns

*Tollite Hostias*

Interval

Maurice Duruflé

*Requiem*

*Tollite Hostias* is the rousing final chorale of the oratorio the Choir performed in December 2017.

*Après un rêve* sets a translation into French of an anonymous Italian lyric in which the singer imagines a romantic flight with his lover, only to wake and realise he was dreaming. On May 19<sup>th</sup> this year millions who watched the Royal Wedding heard it arranged for cello and played by Sheku Kanneh-Mason.

**Guilain** was born in Germany in about 1680 and was named Johann Adam Wilhelm Freinsberg. He moved to Paris as a young man and became thoroughly French, studying with Louis Marchand and writing in the French Baroque style.

*Cantique* sets a paraphrase by Jean Racine of a Latin hymn for Matins *Consors paterni luminis*.

**César Franck** was born in Liège, now in Belgium, in 1822, but lived and worked in Paris where he was professor at the Conservatoire. He has a distinctive harmonic style and many music lovers know his violin sonata with its finale in *canon*. His D minor symphony puts the “thematic development” championed by Liszt and Wagner into a Gallic context. He wrote some of the finest organ music in the repertoire, and taught some worthy successors such as Vierne and Tournemire.

**Stanford** was an Irish composer born in 1852: a child prodigy who performed piano recitals in Dublin and began composing at a very early age. His father wished him to become a lawyer but agreed to him studying music at Cambridge. He went in to study composition in Leipzig with Reinecke and immerse himself in the German music of the time. before settling in England. He was a founding professor of the Royal College of Music, professor at Cambridge, and a renowned teacher whose pupils included Holst and Vaughan-Williams. Like Saint-Saëns, who died in the same year – 1824 – he eschewed modernity in favour of more traditional techniques. While he had a large output including seven symphonies and nine operas, he is best remembered as a composer of fine church music and that most exquisite of part songs – *The Bluebird*. As *Tollite Hostias* is in the same key as the “*Mag and Nunc*” and by a contemporary, it seemed appropriate to follow it, and to conclude the first half, with a reprise.

**Refreshments**, a raffle and publicity about our next exciting season are available at the rear of the church.

**Maurice Duruflé** is the most recent composer in tonight's concert: he lived from 1902 to 1986. Like Saint-Saëns and Stanford, he too eschewed modern trends in music and once famously stormed out of a church, protesting loudly about a performance of a jazz inspired Mass. So it's ironic that some of the piquant harmonies he devises would be perfectly at home in jazz! As a child Maurice was a boarder at a strict Choir school where he was very unhappy. Although he became an accomplished organist and orchestral conductor, and an esteemed teacher, he refused to direct choirs. Despite his fame, he was a shy and reclusive figure seldom seen in the chic cafés and at the society soirées of Paris. In 1945 his father died, inspiring him to begin one of his relatively few compositions – the *Requiem*. He spent much time on it and made three separate versions – with organ (and optional 'cello obbligato), chamber orchestra, and full orchestra. It soon established itself as a worthy successor to the setting by Fauré and has remained popular ever since.

Aged 51, Maurice married Marie-Madeleine, a student 19 years his junior. It was a huge boost to his happiness and confidence. He began to compose more, though his output remained small. Together, they toured the world giving joint recitals to great acclaim, with some, including Maurice, thinking she was the finer player. They had no children. In 1975, they were involved in a serious car accident which left Maurice with terrible injuries, constant pain and many consequent health problems. Marie-Madeleine was his devoted carer for his final 13 years.

The *Requiem* comprises nine movements: *Introit (Requiem aeternam)*; *Kyrie eleison*; *Offertory (Domine Jesu Christe)*; *Sanctus and Benedictus*; *Pie Jesu (alto solo with 'cello obbligato)*; *Agnus Dei*; *Communion (Lux aeterna)*; *Libera me*; *In Paradisum*.

The piece is characterised by a freedom of metre which is in great part due to the constant use of traditional plainchant melodies. Changes of time signature abound in many of its movements. Plainsong has been sung unaccompanied for centuries and the melodies will be familiar to many in the Roman Catholic Church. Sometimes they receive simple harmonic support, but Duruflé gives them remarkable and sometimes discordant harmonies and treats some of them contrapuntally – most brilliantly in the fugal setting of *Kyrie* – much as J S Bach did with the more four-square Lutheran chorales that all his audiences knew.

*Requiem* is a work full of stunning dynamic contrasts, most dramatically in the *Sanctus*, where the music takes us from a hushed *pianissimo* to an incandescent triple *forte* in just a few bars. The piquant harmonies are actually less complex than they might sound – far less so than his contemporary Olivier Messiaen. Duruflé is very fond of adding notes to familiar chords – the final sound is an F sharp major chord with the minor 7<sup>th</sup> (E) added, and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> (G sharp). As mentioned above, such a chord is very common in the jazz Duruflé found not to his taste. Few bars go by without him underpinning a common chord with the note a diminished fifth away – eg C major has a bass of F sharp. This creates a striking and distinctive dissonance and tension. In the *Libera me* he reverses the “thematic development” beloved of Liszt, Wagner and Franck. The initial melody sung by the basses, and taken up contrapuntally by the other voices, is tortured by chromatic twists and dissonant harmonies: but finally a simpler version is sung by the whole choir in unison – in much the same way Fauré set his melody for this text.

The *In Paradisum* is seldom set in other Requiems, the best known being by Fauré who contrives an imitation of the celestial harps. Duruflé's vision is totally different but no less visionary. Setting it in the very unusual key of F sharp major gives it a special mystical quality and the closing harmonies are inspired before the music settles on a chord full of consolation and hope, reminding one of the final cadence of Britten's *War Requiem*. If the technicalities above mean little, listeners can just sit back and enjoy a work full of melody which, despite coming from a socially reticent man, wears its big heart on its sleeve.

### **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to: Rev Veronica Hydon and all at St Oswald's for welcoming us and our audience once again.

...Cheshire Libraries who have supplied the copies of the Duruflé.

...the volunteers running Front of House and providing refreshments tonight.

...our regular piano accompanist Rosalind Hall who has also coached sections of the Choir.

...Steve Kleiser and King Edward Musical Society for the loan of their staging.

## Soloists

**Olwyn Bloor, Steve Thorpe** and **Mike Bell** are long standing members of the Festival Choir who sing regularly as soloists in our concerts and at other venues, often for charitable or community purposes.

**Charlotte Yandell** and **Dominic Smith** both have parents who are in the Festival Choir and we are delighted they're joining us tonight. Charlotte sang a solo in our *Messiah for All* last December. She currently studies at Hull University and sings in choirs and as a soloist in Yorkshire and locally, having given recitals at St Peter's, Prestbury.

**Ian Chesworth** has very kindly joined us as organ accompanist and soloist at short notice. Having shared the RLPO stage with Vassily Petrenko, he is delighted to be a Lead Musician with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and is enjoying his work with Merseycare. Much in demand to run workshops on vocal technique and repertoire, Ian was the keynote speaker at the 30th annual Association of British Choral directors conference and is a regular judge for the BBC's 'School Choir of the Year' as well as local choral competitions. Ian works regularly with several choirs in the North West area.

Following his collaboration with Gareth Malone on the BBC programme *Sing While You Work* Ian's work-based choirs sing a range of styles, but mostly modern pop; and Ian loves encouraging people who have never sung before to stand up and perform. His other choirs are musically diverse giving Ian opportunities to conduct big choral works with orchestra as well as a cappella chamber choir music.

Ian was privileged to conduct the northern première of Jonathan Dove's *There was a Child* with KEMS Choir and orchestra. This was the first amateur performance of the moving piece and everyone involved was proud to perform it in the presence of the composer.

Ian is resident MD and singing coach at the Capitol Theatre, working with students on the nationally renowned acting course at Manchester Metropolitan University and is proud that some of his students currently have major leads in West end productions and touring shows. Having trained as a singer to postgraduate level at the RNCM Ian is in demand as a singing teacher and vocal coach and works with students of all levels on a range of repertoire at his home teaching practice in Arley. Always keen to be at the cutting edge Ian has completed the 'Advanced Singing and the Actor' teaching course with the internationally respected vocal coach Gillyanne Kayes.

As an organist, Ian has studied with Keith Wright (Durham), Roger Fisher (Chester) and the late David Sanger. He has played in many cathedrals up and down the country as well as accompanying a great variety of works. He plays regularly in Arley Hall as well as at Great Budworth Parish Church.

**Andrew Dean** was due to play for us, having done so on at least three previous occasions. In late 2017, Andrew was diagnosed with a brain tumour and had surgery in December. Undeterred, he was soon back teaching, playing and directing his choir at St Thomas, Mellor, with his musical abilities unscathed. While Andrew continues to make good progress and was hopeful, until very recently, of being with us tonight, he has been advised to do something musicians find extremely hard – to take life a bit easier! As you can see from Ian's biography, professional musicians often have extremely busy lives with multiple roles, and organists very often have busy Sundays with church commitments. So we are very grateful to Ian for filling the vacancy and for finding time to rehearse with us additionally last Tuesday. We wish Andrew all the very best for his continued recovery.

## **Bollington Festival Choir**

### **Sopranos**

Chris Anderton	Olwyn Bloor	Sandra Chorlton	Sue Cooper	Val Cutter
Lynne Froggatt	Dot Graham	Fran Hennell	Jenny Kendal	Sarah Rutherford
Moore Taylor				

### **Altos**

Sally Bence	Chris Brear	Adrienne Fox	Liz Goodwin	Mary Halloran
Pat Hill	Chris Holohan	Barbara Kleiser	Lynn Knowling	Jane Lewis
Audrey Meecham	Irene Mills	Liz Molloy	Cherry Smith	Judith Smith
Jenny Thorpe	Janet Welch	Charlotte Yandell	Geraldine Yandell	

### **Tenors**

Jim Kendon	Gordon Rowlands	Roger Taylor	Steve Thorpe	Paul Yandell
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### **Basses**

Mike Bell	Francis Graham-Smith	Philip Hodgkinson	Steve Kleiser	Ambrose Smith
Craig Stagg	David Ward			

## **2018-19**

Please take away one of our brochures for the coming Season, which promises to be as exciting and varied as any since the Choir was founded in 1964. For Christmas, we have Charpentier's *Midnight Mass* and what are probably regional or UK premieres of music by Buxtehude and Pavlica, before we let our hair down with a catchy, jazzy cantata about Noah and the Ark.

We are delighted that the acclaimed Mezzo Kathryn Rudge will join us for our Festival Opera Evening. All are welcome as audience or singers – in *Messiah for All* or (without audition) in the regular Choir, and especially the enlarged opera chorus.

The Choir will also be taking part in the Festival Parade and the opening concert *Best of Bollington*, when we will preview our opera evening and also celebrate the opening of Bollington's Railway 150 years ago, courtesy of Hector Berlioz and words from one or two choir members!

While it isn't a Choir event, it's connected to the Railway theme and it's hoped Choir members and local people of all ages will come to another planned Festival event in May. Donald Judge is devising *The Bollington Railway Cassation* to celebrate the anniversary with a short cycle of songs to be rehearsed and performed by massed voices, regardless of music-reading ability or previous experience, in a single session!