



Bradford on Avon Choral Society

Director Rupert Bevan

CARL:ORFF :CARMINA: 'BURANA'



ELGAR ⊕ From The Bavarian Highlands



St Margaret's Hall, Bradford on Avon. Saturday 16th May at 7.30pm

Musicians

Soprano soloist : **Julia O'Connor**

Contralto soloist : **Catherine Mitchell**

Baritone soloist : **Niall Hoskin**

Pianists : **Jacquelyn Bevan and Penelope Simons**

Conductor : **Rupert Bevan**

The Choir

Sopranos

Pat Astill
Rachel Berger
Maggie Champkin
Ruth Davidge
Sarah Davies
Wendy Dyke
Merle Edwards
Barbara Eichenberger
Pat Green
Anne Ketill
Katie Leighton
Ruth Lewis
Emma Lydon
Mo Minter
Jane O'Mara
Penny Pierce
Rosemary Rees
Lis Rosie
Pauline Seath
Dizzy Way
Julie Weymouth
Jackie Woodhead

Altos

Sue Airey
Janet Broad
Wendy Brown
Aylene Clack
Christine Coath
Judith Dale
Ali Green
Margaret Harkcom
Angela Howard
Megan Jones
Ann Kirkpatrick
Brenda Loftus
Catherine Mitchell
Angela Onions
Marjorie Raymond
Anne Riley
Helen Shields
Val Trentham
Pat Veitch
Lucy Weston

Tenors

John Allison
John Baxter
George Champkin
Peter Hardman
Richard Lewis
Richard Maidment

Basses

David Driscoll
Walter Eglington
Alun Glyn-Jones
Simon Little
Jack Marsh
Jefferey Morris
Charles Osborne
Jim Page
Graham Pictor
Pablo Rodriguez-Vellando
Peter Smith
Ian Stanes

Programme

From the Bavarian Highlands

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

1. **The Dance**
 2. **False Love**
 3. **Lullaby**
 4. **Aspiration**
 5. **On the Alm**
 6. **The Marksmen**
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Interval

Carmina Burana

Carl Orff (1895-1982)

Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi (*Fortune Empress of the World*)

1. **O Fortuna** (*O Fortune*)
2. **Fortune plango vulnera** (*I bemoan the wounds of Fortune*)

Primo Vere (*In springtime*)

3. **Veris leta facies** (*The merry face of spring*)
4. **Omnia sol temperat** (*The sun warms everything*)
5. **Ecce gratum** (*Behold, the pleasant spring*)

Uf Dem Anger (*On the green*)

6. **Tanz** (*Dance*)
7. **Floret silva nobilis** (*The woods are burgeoning*)
8. **Chramer, gip die varwe mir** (*Shopkeeper, give me colour*)
9. **Reie** (*Round dance*)
10. **Were diu werlt alle min** (*Were all the world mine*)

In Taberna (*In the tavern*)

11. **Estuans interius** (*Burning Inside*)
12. **Cignus ustus cantat** (*The Roast Swan*)
13. **Ego sum abbas** (*I am the abbot*)

14. **In taberna quando sumus** (*When we are in the tavern*)

Cour d' Amours (*Court of Love*)

15. **Amor volat undique** (*Cupid flies everywhere*)

16. **Dies, nox et omnia** (*Day, night and everything*)

17. **Stetit puella** (*A girl stood*)

18. **Circa mea pectora** (*In my heart*)

19. **Si puer cum puellula** (*If a boy with a girl*)

20. **Veni, veni, venias** (*Come, come, O come*)

21. **In truitina** (*In the balance*)

22. **Tempus es iocundum** (*This is the joyful time*)

23. **Dulcissime** (*Sweetest one*)

Blanziflor et Helena (*Blanchefleur and Helen*)

24. **Ave formosissima** (*Hail, most beautiful one*)

25. **Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi** (*Fortune Empress of the World*)

Programme Notes

We begin tonight's concert with ***From the Bavarian Highlands Op.27***, a set of six choral songs written in 1894 by Edward Elgar with lyrics by his wife Alice. The early 1890s, when Elgar was still relatively unknown, seem to have been the happiest years of their married life. During this period Elgar and his wife visited Bavaria several times, usually staying in the area around Garmisch which was still a quiet village at this time. In 1894 they stayed at a guesthouse owned and run by Mr and Mrs Henry Slingsby Bethell, a British couple whom they had met the previous year and who introduced them to the local pastimes of partsong singing and schuhplattler, a type of folkdance particular to Bavaria. The Elgars had already begun to collaborate on part songs with Alice either choosing or providing the words and it was following this visit that Elgar set to music a collection of six poems written by Alice in the style of Bavarian folksongs. They are undoubtedly a fond pastiche of Bavarian culture inspired by their recent holiday and show a lighter side to Elgar who is more usually associated with music of a grander scale.

The collection of songs was dedicated to Mr and Mrs Henry Slingsby Bethell. Despite the musical score being superior to the text, these songs show a remarkable sense of collaboration between Edward and Alice as well as a deep rooted love of Bavaria and its culture, all the time conveying a sense of happiness and contentment. Each of the songs has as a subtitle the name of

a place in Bavaria but these seem to be remembrances of places they visited and admired rather than having any thematic relevance to the song in question.

The opening song, 'The Dance', is subtitled Sonnenbichl, which is located north of Garmisch, in view of the Zugspitze. Using alternating dance and march rhythms, this song illustrates the dancers singing of drinking, dancing and thoughts of love. This is followed by a more graceful song, set in Warberg, a village to the west of Garmisch. 'False Love' tells the sad story of the cruel dashing of a young man's amorous hopes as he arrives at his lover's door, only to find a rival has beaten him there.

'Lullaby', the third of the group, is set in Hammersbach, to the south of Garmisch. In this song, the altos take the role of a mother, singing her baby son to sleep in safety, whilst the full chorus sing distantly of 'dancing gay' as 'zithers play', in an attempt to distract and entice her away from her maternal dedication.

The next song is 'Aspiration' and is inspired by the chapel of St Anton, in the neighbouring village of Partenkirchen. Set in a snowy landscape, with falling snowflakes represented in the piano accompaniment, it celebrates the pilgrims' piety as they await divine guidance.

In contrast, the full chorus is used to great effect in the fifth song, 'On the Alm', the high mountain pastures where cattle are grazed during the summer. This song tells of a young man eagerly climbing the mountain to meet his love who is tending the cattle there. The tenors and basses represent the man singing longingly of his love; the sopranos and alto echoing his words in a Jucche (yodelling) sound, as if in an Alpine valley; another representation of Bavarian culture.

The whole set of songs is brought to a rousing conclusion by 'The Marksman'. In this final song the marksmen tramp across the landscape as they muster for the hunt to brisk, staccato rhythms whilst reminding each other to be brave and have a steady eye. There is a more peaceful interlude as the sun sets over the mountains before the hunters return home triumphantly.

Tonight you will hear Elgar's original version of ***From the Bavarian Highlands*** with piano accompaniment which Elgar completed in 1895. The following year he wrote an orchestral accompaniment and it was this version that was first performed in 1896 at the Worcester Choral Festival when it was conducted by Elgar himself. Subsequently, he arranged three of the songs as an orchestral suite. This repeated attention to these songs shows his affection for them and their connection to a happy period of his life.

Following the interval we return the Bavaria with Carl Orff's 'scenic cantata' ***Carmina Burana***. Born in Munich into a military family in 1895, Orff studied

piano from a young age and developed an interest in theatre but it was soon apparent that his interest lay in composing original music rather than studying to be a performer. In 1911, aged 16, Orff published a collection of songs and then produced a series of larger scale works including *Zarathustra* for baritone, chorus and orchestra and an opera titled *Gisei, der Opfer* which shows the influence of composers such as Debussy in the unusual choice of instruments in his orchestration. Orff studied at the Munich Academy of Music until 1914 when he left to serve in the German Army during the Great War during which he was severely injured. Afterwards, he held various positions at opera houses in Mannheim and Darmstadt, later returning to Munich to pursue his music studies.

In the mid-1920s, Orff began to formulate a concept he called *elementare Musik*, or elemental music, which was based on the unity of the arts as symbolized by the ancient Greek Muses, and involving tone, dance, poetry, image, design, and theatrical gesture. Like many other composers of the time, he was influenced by Igor Stravinsky, particularly *Les noces* (The Wedding) with its relentless, spellbinding rhythms which appealed to Orff. He also began adapting musical works of earlier eras for contemporary theatrical presentation, including Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* (1607). Orff's German version, *Orpheus*, was staged under Orff's direction in 1925 in Mannheim, using some of the instruments that had been used in the original 1607 performance. Monteverdi's opera was almost forgotten by the 1920s, however, and Orff's production met with reactions ranging from incomprehension to ridicule.

Still working with his ideas of *elementare Musik*, in 1924 he founded the Günther School for gymnastics, music, and dance with Dorothee Günther in Munich and worked there as the head of a department from 1925 until the end of his life. There he continued to develop his theories of music education, which gained world-wide acceptance, and the idea that music should be available to all regardless of cultural and social background. In 1930, Orff published a manual titled *Schulwerk*, in which he shares his method of conducting. Orff also edited 17th-century operas. However, these various activities brought Orff very little money.

In 1934, Orff came across the 1847 edition of the *Carmina Burana* by Johann Andreas Schmeller. *Carmina Burana* ("Songs from Beuern") is the name given to a manuscript collection of poems and dramatic texts mostly from the 11th or 12th century, although some are from the 13th century. The pieces are satirical, bawdy, and irreverent in nature and were written in a mixture of languages principally in medieval Latin and Middle High German with some with traces of Old French or Provençal. Most of the poems and songs appear to be the work of Goliards, travelling clergy and scholars who wrote poetry satirizing the Catholic Church during a period when the Latin idiom was the *lingua franca* across Italy and Western Europe. The

manuscripts reflect an international European movement, with songs originating from France, England, Scotland, Aragon, Castile and the Holy Roman Empire and the collection preserves the work of a number of important poets of the period, including Peter of Blois.

Orff chose and organised 24 of these poems into a libretto. His selection covers a wide range of topics: the fickleness of fortune and wealth, the ephemeral nature of life, the joy of the return of Spring, and the pleasures and perils of drinking, gluttony, gambling and lust; subjects as relevant today as they were in the 12th century. Orff completed his *Carmina Burana* in 1935 and it was first staged in 1937 in Frankfurt by the Frankfurt Opera. The premiere was an enormous success and subsequently Orff wrote to his publisher Schott Music, "Everything I have written to date, and which you have, unfortunately, printed, can be destroyed. With *Carmina Burana*, my collected works begin."

There has been much debate and analysis of Orff's relationship with German fascism and the Nazi party. At first, the Nazi regime was nervous about the erotic tone of some of the poems in *Carmina Burana* and following its premiere performance, the unfamiliar nature of the rhythms used led it to be denounced with racial taunts but this view was revised in light of it containing the 'disciplined music that our time requires'. They eventually accepted the piece and *Carmina Burana* increased in popularity in Nazi Germany after it was endorsed by Goebbels, becoming the most famous piece of music composed in Germany at the time and bringing Orff considerable financial success for the first time. Orff's masterpiece greatly appealed to the Nazi regime, to whom its rhythms, as one critic put it, were reminiscent of the "stamping columns of the Third Reich". When *Carmina Burana* was first performed at La Scala, in 1942, it was as a showpiece for fascist values.

Orff himself had some Jewish ancestry but he disguised this and it did not stop him responding to calls from the Nazi regime to produce new music. After the war Orff underwent a process of de-nazification by the American authorities and during this time he asserted that he had helped to establish the White Rose organisation, a German anti-Nazi resistance movement, although there is no other evidence of this. However, his claim was accepted by the American denazification authorities and he was allowed to continue composing for public performances and to receive royalties from *Carmina Burana*. The popularity of the work continued to rise after the war, and by the 1960s it was well established as part of the international classic repertoire. Orff continued to compose large-scale works based on antique words, including further two collections of ancient poems intended to be performed as a triptych alongside *Carmina Burana*, but none came close to matching its success.

The work was originally scored for very large forces including a large orchestra, percussion and two mixed choirs but Orff also authorised other

versions to allow smaller groups the opportunity to perform his work. Tonight you will hear the reduced version for two pianos, mixed chorus and percussion produced by Orff's disciple, Wilhem Killmayer, in 1956 and authorised by Orff himself.

The overarching plot of the work is about the concept of the Wheel of Fortune. The main theme is the struggle of hope, love, happiness and the pleasures of an earthly life against the cruelties of fate; the music goes through many stages, gradually increasing in joyfulness until the end, when that joy is shattered by the initial 'O Fortuna', which represents the wheel of fortune having made a complete turn, bringing the miseries of life back after having tempted man with its joys. It opens and closes with 'O Fortuna, velut luna', an invocation to Fortune, which will be familiar to many from its use in numerous films and commercials. The remainder of the work is divided into three sections, each focussed on a common theme: Springtime, In the Tavern and Cours d'Amor (The Courts of Love).

The first of these sections, Springtime, comprises poems of a pastoral nature but with erotic undertones suggesting the idea of revival and growth. The use of plainsong dominates the first two poems. The third poem changes the mood with the male voices leading and accelerating celebration of spring. Other poems are then interspersed with instrumental dances with the singers in the final poem declaring they would decline the world if only the Queen of England would lie in their arms. It has been suggested that this may be a reference to Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of King Henry II.

'In Taberna' is a hedonistic celebration of the pleasures of food, eating and drinking. This section consists of songs for male voices celebrating masculinity and lamenting the fate about to befall a swan roasting on the spit. This is followed by the Abbot of Cockaigne (the same mythical place where physical comforts and pleasures are always at hand as Elgar described in his 'Cockaigne Overture') singing of his venial sins before concluding with a raucous round of drinking toasts from the chorus.

The songs of the final section 'Cours d'Amor' are more lyrical throughout than the previous sections. They are based on a common theme of carnal love ranging from the frustrations of unrequited love to the passion of consummation. The section opens with soprano and baritone solos setting the scene. The soprano sings of being a young girl wearing a red dress with the male chorus watching on. She sings of her choice between chastity and surrender, encouraged to the latter by the male chorus. Her final choice is celebrated in the penultimate song before returning to 'O Fortuna' reminding us all that we are ruled by Fate.

Catherine Mitchell - 2015

Biographies

Julia O'Connor – soprano – was born and educated in East Sussex. She studied at The University of York where she gained a Bachelor of Music and later trained with English National Opera and Mary King.

Julia performs widely in opera, oratorio and in chamber ensembles. Most notably with Vox8 Chamber Choir and Bath Consort.

Operatic roles have included; Belinda in *Dido & Aeneas*, Lady in *The Fairy Queen*, Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, Mabel in *Pirates of Penzance*, Flora in *La Traviata*, Cousin in *Madam Butterfly* and most recently Ellen Orford in BathOpera's sell out production of *Peter Grimes* by Benjamin Britten.

Julia has performed the soprano solos in many of the great oratorio works including: Poulenc *Gloria*, Bach *St Matthew Passion*, *St John Passion* (University of York), a world première of a chamber oratorio about the life of William Blake written for his 250th Anniversary in St James' Church Piccadilly, Tippett *A Child of Our Time*, Handel *Israel in Egypt* (Canticum Chamber Choir), Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb* and *A Ceremony of Carols* (East Surrey Choral Society), Brahms *German Requiem*, Jenkins *Requiem*, Saint-Saens *Oratorio de Noel*, Haydn *Nelson Mass*, Mozart *Requiem*, Mozart *Coronation Mass* and Schubert *Magnificat* (John Ruskin Choral Society), Vivaldi *Gloria*, Dvorak *Stabat Mater* and Rutter *Magnificat* (Bromley Ecumenical Singers), J S Bach *Cantata No. 140* (Bradford on Avon Choral Society), Mozart *Missa Brevis in D*, C P E Bach *Magnificat*, Bach *Christmas Oratorio* (Bath Cantata Group), Mozart *Mass in C Minor* (Calne Choral Society) and Brahms *German Requiem* (Chew Valley Choral Society).

Catherine Mitchell – contralto – is a member of the choir and studies singing with Ruth Davidge.

Niall Hoskin – baritone – Niall began singing at Sherborne School and appeared in Dorset Opera's first productions. He then went to Clare College, Cambridge, where he was a Choral Scholar, read Modern Languages, and began singing as a soloist. There followed ten years teaching in Wakefield, singing in choirs and smaller ensembles and performing widely in oratorio. He now lives just outside Bristol with his wife Judith and a small but vocal Jack Russell called Dimple. He recently relinquished the day job of teaching French and German and is active as a singer with a varied solo schedule. He is building a reputation as a freelance translator; his version of the Mozart/Strauss *Idomeneo* was performed at the Buxton Festival. He relaxes by running the occasional half-marathon.

Opera has included title roles in Monteverdi *Orfeo*, Mozart *Don Giovanni*, Verdi *Macbeth*, Wagner *The Flying Dutchman*, Puccini *Gianni Schicchi* and Falstaff in operas by Nicolai, Verdi and Vaughan Williams. He also sang Pilgrim in a concert performance of Vaughan Williams *Pilgrim's Progress* and created the role of Major Evers in Eric Wetherell *A Foreign Field*.

Concert highlights have included: Elgar *Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and *Caractacus*; Mendelssohn *St Paul* and *Elijah*; the Bach Passions, Haydn *Creation* and *Seasons*; Mahler *Songs of a Wayfarer* and *Eighth Symphony*. In the Ellington centenary year, Niall appeared with the Stan Tracey Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, in the Three Choirs Festival and on Radio Three in performances of Music from the Sacred Concerts.

Niall's song recital work has encompassed repertoire in English, French, German and Russian. He has performed Schubert and Schumann cycles, as well as works by composers as diverse as Shostakovich, Moeran, Duparc and Finzi.

Future plans include choral works by Orff and Jonathan Bielby; Stravinsky *The Rake's Progress* and Verdi *La Traviata*; and a new look at Schubert's *Winterreise*.

Jacquelyn Bevan – piano – learned the piano 'by ear' at a very young age. A pupil of Caroline Diffley at Kent Music School, Dennis Dance at the Guildhall, and Kenneth Mobbs at Bristol University. She went on to pursue a career as music teacher and lecturer in secondary, further and higher education. Since 1996, she has concentrated on performing and composition, and in 2006 formed Duo Paradis with Cressida Nash, putting on numerous chamber concerts in village and city churches across the South West. In September 2011 they performed sonatas by Mendelssohn and Moscheles at the Mendelssohn-Haus in Leipzig. Jacquelyn is now accompanist for the Dartington-based South West Music School and the Mid-Somerset Festival.

Penelope Simons – piano – has recently returned to the UK after 20 years living and working in Canada and the USA, performing and teaching advanced level piano and music classes at Minot State University in North Dakota from 2002 to 2012.

She won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London at the age of 11 as a Junior Exhibitioner and continued her studies there in the graduate and post-graduate programme. Her post-graduate work was at London University. She has a PhD from the University of North Dakota in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Dr Simons has performed piano concertos with orchestras and collaborated in chamber music and solo recitals with international artists. Many of her piano students have won prestigious prizes and scholarships and now have exciting careers in music themselves.

Rupert Bevan – conductor – has been the Music Director of the Bradford-Choral on Avon Society since 1996. He was born into a musically talented family, and although not pursuing a professional music career himself – unlike several of his siblings – he is nonetheless prominent in the music circles of Bath and Wells, and beyond, where he performs as a tenor soloist and organist. He is the Choir Master and Organist for St John the Evangelist RC Church in Bath. He is an environmental scientist and Director of Zander Corporation whose work involves the revitalisation of arid, contaminated and exhausted land for agricultural use on the borders of the great deserts.

Summer Charity Concert

GLORIA

Conductor: **Rupert Bevan**

Organ/Piano: **Jacquelyn Bevan**



With soloists and members of Bradford on Avon Choral Society

Works include Vivaldi *Gloria* and other choral pieces.

At St Mary the Virgin Church, Limpley Stoke

On Friday 10th July at 7.30pm

Tickets £10 to include a glass of wine, purchased on the door or from The Galleries shop Freshford, or choir members.

All proceeds to the Church's Fabric Appeal

Are you a supporter of the Bradford on Avon Choral Society?

If so, you may like to know that we have a **Friends of Bradford Choral** which we launched in September 2013. Our aim is to build up a network of supporters who, for an annual fee of £20 for an individual member, and £30 for a couple, receive a number of benefits including ticket price discount, an invite to occasional social events, a free concert programme and reserved seats. The money raised in this way enables us to have a small orchestra at some concerts in order to enhance the performance for our audience. Friends to date include our President, Dr Anthony Crossland and his wife, Captain David Davidge RN, Robin Davies, Josie Griffith and Chris Hodge.

If you would like to find out more please contact our Friends' Secretary, Sarah Davies, at:-

e mail: sarahdaviesofwinsley@gmail.com

or write to her at: 22 Tynning Road, Winsley, Wiltshire, BA15 2JJ

We look forward to hearing from you!

About the choir ...

Bradford on Avon Choral Society was founded in 1986 as a community choir for the local area. Its members are enthusiastic amateurs who enjoy being part of the great British tradition of choral singing. The choir give performances twice a year, in December and May, with an occasional summer event.

The Choir will perform a charity concert on Friday 10th July in this church at Limpley Stoke parish church of St Mary the Virgin in aid of its fabric appeal.

The choir will be back at Christmas time to sing in Christ Church in Bradford on Avon on Friday 11th December. The concert will include **Britten's *St Nicholas*** as well as carols and readings.

The Choral Society always welcomes new members. No audition is required – just a commitment to attend the Wednesday evening rehearsals regularly and enjoy your singing!

For further details please contact either Rupert Bevan (01761 436745) or Sarah Davies (01225-862965), or contact us via email by having a look at our website: <http://www.boachoral.org.uk/>

... and thanks to ...

The choir members are indebted to **Jacquelyn Bevan**, their regular accompanist, for her help in preparation for this concert.

And they would also like to thank **Dave F Smith** for designing and painting the eye-catching artwork for the posters and flyers, and also used on the cover of this programme.



Thank you to **Wiltshire Council Performing Arts Library** for supplying the music used in tonight's concert.



The Choral Society support and are supported by Making Music, the charity promoting voluntary music making and encouraging all kinds of music groups and individuals to be part of a vibrant multi-cultural music scene.