

# Heathfield Choral Society

conducted by Sebastian Charlesworth  
present a concert performance of

## Henry Purcell's **Dido & Aeneas**

with other works including Chaconne in G  
played by a period ensemble led by Julia Bishop.

Dido: Rebecca Leggett    Aeneas: Sebastian Charlesworth  
Belinda: Danni O'Neill    Sorcerer: Andrew Tipple    Spirit: Hugh Cutting

Saturday

8th June

2024

PROGRAMME



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# Programme

*Words for Dido & Aeneas can be found on p 12 - 14*

**Chaconne in G Minor**  
*(Orchestra)*

**H. Purcell**

**Celestial Music did the Gods Inspire**  
*(Soloists plus chorus)*

**H. Purcell**

**Let Music Join in a Chorus**  
*(Chorus)*

**H. Purcell**

*ed. Peter Young*

## INTERVAL

*Drinks served at the back of the hall.*

## Dido & Aeneas

**Dido:** Rebecca Leggett

**Belinda:** Danni O'Neill

**Aeneas:** Sebastian Charlesworth

**Sorcerer:** Andrew Tipple

**Spirit:** Hugh Cutting

**Sailor:** Nick Howard\*

**Witches:** Frederica Everett\*, Barbara Edwards\*

**Second Woman:** Ruth McDermott\*

**Act 1:** The Palace

**Act 2, Scene 1:** The Cave

**Act 2, Scene 2:** The Grove

**Act 3, Scene 1:** The Ships

**Act 3, Scene 2:** The Palace

*\* Members of the choir*



**Henry Purcell** was born in 1659 in London into a family of musicians. Although his father died when Henry was just five years old, he was placed in the hands of his uncle who continued his musical education. He became a chorister in the Chapel Royal until his voice broke. His first known compositions date from when he was eleven, although he probably started earlier than that.

His earlier works comprised mainly songs and anthems, but around 1680 he started writing music for plays. *Dido and Aeneas* is thought to date from around this time - of which more later! In 1679, he took over as organist at

Westminster Abbey and devoted his efforts to sacred music. He also took on the role of organist at the Chapel Royal, but then in 1687 resumed his connection with the theatre, writing music for a large number of plays - 42 in the last six years of his life alone.

Purcell died in 1695, at the age of around 35. The exact cause of death is unknown - one popular theory is that he caught a chill after returning from a trip to the theatre only to be locked out of the house by his wife! Even if that is true, it doesn't seem to have affected him much as he left his entire estate to her, and he was buried with much pomp next to the organ in Westminster Abbey.

### **Chaconne in G Minor**

Very little is definitively known about this piece. It was probably written around 1680, at a time when theatres were starting to reopen following the restoration of Charles II in 1680. Music was used in the theatre as incidental to the play itself, so it's impossible to determine which play - if any - this piece was written for. Despite being in a minor key, the Chaconne was probably written as a lively dance. It's based on a descending tetrachord - four consecutive notes of a minor scale, leading from tonic to dominant - which became associated with the lament, the most famous example of which is *Dido's* lament from *Dido and Aeneas*, which you'll hear later on.

### **Celestial Music Did the Gods Inspire**

This piece was commissioned by the headteacher of a London school, Mr Maidwell, at whose premises the piece was first performed on 5th August 1689. Purcell may have been pushed for time in its composition, for he re-used the symphony from his 1684 coronation anthem 'My heart is inditing'. The rest of the ode, however, is full of harmonic originality and elaborate word-painting. Rarely performed today, it is scored for SATB and strings, but features an alto solo in the central section. The libretto, by an anonymous 'pupil', champions music as the balm to the cares and evils of the world.

### **Let Music Join in a Chorus**

This is one of the chorus numbers from Purcell's *Yorkshire Feast Song*. It's a setting of a text by Thomas d'Urfey, and was commissioned by the Society of Yorkshiremen, founded in 1687. It was first performed at the Merchant Taylor's Hall at their Yorkshiremen's Feast in 1690. D'Urfey's text, celebrating the outcome of the 1688

"Glorious Revolution" that overthrew Catholic rule, is filled with flattering references to York and describes events of its long history.

## **Dido and Aeneas**

© Lindsay Kemp

Dido and Aeneas is Purcell's most famous work. Familiar to audiences long before the rehabilitation in recent decades of Monteverdi and Handel, it is the best-known opera to have been composed before Mozart, and probably the world's favourite opera in English.

The story, adapted and much streamlined from Virgil's Aeneid, tells of the love between the Trojan hero Aeneas and the recently widowed Carthaginian queen Dido, and of her subsequent suicide after he is tricked into leaving to fulfil his destiny as founder of Rome. Although it has been criticised for the mediocre quality of its verse, its structure is clear and concise, but of course it is Purcell's music that gives the work its true dignity. The final scene – from Dido's stricken recitative ('Thy hand Belinda'), through the famous lament spun memorably over a resigned, repeatedly falling bassline, to the final heartbroken chorus – is distinguished by music whose power to move never fails.

Aeneas is a sketchy figure in comparison to Dido, but his chastened anticipation of the queen's reaction to his departure, and his subsequent shamefaced appearance before her, are among the most theatrically effective passages in the opera. Yet Dido and Aeneas would not enjoy the popularity it does if it did not also appeal in its tunefulness, evocative power and harmonic richness. Short it may be, but it encompasses enough – courtly rejoicing, rumbustious hornpipes, humorously grotesque witches – to make it one of the most tightly packed hours of opera ever composed.

### **ACT I**

Dido, queen of Carthage, cannot bring herself to admit her love for the Trojan prince Aeneas, a guest at her court; he is soon to resume his journey in search of a site for a new city to replace Troy. Her sister and confidante Belinda and her courtiers persuade Dido to speak her love and the act ends with general rejoicing.

### **ACT II**

A sorceress and her witches plot the downfall of Dido and Carthage. Their plan is to "conjure up a storm" and force the lovers to take refuge in a cave, where an elf, disguised as Mercury, will remind Aeneas of his duties. Meanwhile, Dido and Aeneas, having spent the night together, are being entertained in a grove by Belinda and a courtier. A storm arises and the lovers are separated; Aeneas enters the witches' cave and is commanded by the false Mercury to leave Carthage.

### **ACT III**

At the quayside Aeneas's men are preparing to leave. The witches gloat over their victory and sing of their delight. Back at court, Dido has been informed of her lover's planned departure and seeks Belinda's counsel. The queen confronts Aeneas, silences his excuses and dismisses him. After her lament ("When I am laid in earth"), Dido kills herself. Cupids mourn her, scattering roses on her tomb.



**Rebecca Leggett** (*Dido*) is part of the 11th edition of 'Le Jardin des Voix' 2023/24, the young artist programme of Les Arts Florissants, touring Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* internationally with William Christie and Paul Agnew; venues include Teatro alla Scala, the Lincoln Center NYC and the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms 2024.

Rebecca is a keen early music soloist and is currently one of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's 'Rising Stars' for 2023/25.

Her 2024 concert highlights so far include a programme of Bach at the Wigmore Hall with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra at The Sheldonian Theatre and Bach's *Easter Oratorio* with the OAE at London's Southbank Centre conducted by Peter Whelan.

Rebecca was a finalist at the Kathleen Ferrier Award 2023 with pianist George Ireland at the Wigmore Hall, a recipient of the Coro Nuovo Young Musician of the Year 2018, and whilst studying at the RCM she won the 2020 Brooks van der Pump English Song Competition. Alongside George Ireland, Rebecca received first place at the 2022 London Song Festival's British Art-Song Competition, selected by Sir Thomas Allen.

Song is high on the agenda for Rebecca and in recent years she has given recitals for the Lewes Song Festival, Thames Concert Series, Ludlow Song Weekend, London Song Festival and the Brighton Festival. She has also been an Emerging Artist for the Oxford Lieder Festival and the London Song Festival.

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**Danni O'Neill** (*Belinda*) is a 2021 Masters graduate with distinction from the Royal Academy of Music with part scholarship. She is taught by Raymond Connell. At the RAM, Danni was awarded the Michael Head Prize for English Song, notably performed a Solo Cantata BWV202 with Rachel Podger and received a DipRAM for an outstanding final recital.

Danni recently made her Wigmore Hall solo ensemble debut with Solomon's Knot and professional Opera Chorus debut in Lille and Luxembourg Opera Houses performing Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Handel's *Semele* with the Concert D'Astree and Emmanuelle Häim. Choral work includes performances with prestigious ensembles such as The Sixteen, Polyphony, Gabrieli Choir, Academy of Ancient Music, BBC Singers, Recordare Chamber Choir, The Marian Consort and Danni is a regular soprano at St. Paul's Knightsbridge.

Recent solo engagements include Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with The Hanover Band; Second Woman/Witch with Helsinki Baroque Orchestra - Musiikkitalo; premier of Cecilia McDowall's *Bird of Time* with Ealing Choral; Telemann's *Cantata* at Baroquestock; London Early Opera *Hogarth's Garden*; Handel's *Dixit Dominus* for Southwell Festival in Southwell Minster; Peasblossom in RAO's *A Midsummer Nights Dream*; and Nanetta in Verdi's *Falstaff* for the RAO Opera Scenes.



**Andrew Tipple** (*Sorcerer*) studied at the Royal Academy of Music as the recipient of the Elton John scholarship and later the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he was a member of the Alexander Gibson Opera School, graduating in 2013. Whilst there he was the recipient of the ABRSM scholarship.

Recent operatic performances have included Performing as Benoit in *La Boheme* at Nevil Holt Opera Festival, Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* at the Kilden theatre Norway; Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin* and Antonio in *Le nozze di Figaro* at Garsington Opera and Talpa in *Il Tabarro* at Wexford Festival Opera. He has performed as a member of many eminent opera companies, including the Bayreuther Festspiele, and the Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Andrew is also an experienced oratorio singer having performed a wide range of repertoire with recent performances including Bach's *B minor Mass* at Lichfield Cathedral and Bach's *St John Passion* at Norwich Cathedral. Other notable performances have included Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with the Oxford Bach Choir, Haydn's *Creation* in Glasgow University Chapel, Bach's *St John Passion* at Arundel Cathedral and Paisley Abbey and Bach's *Magnificat in D* at King's Place London.

Andrew was involved in music from a young age, starting as a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral. In 2005 he was appointed as a Choral Scholar at King's College Cambridge, whilst studying for a BA in History.



**Hugh Cutting** (*Spirit*) is a former choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, and a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music where he was a member of the International Opera Studio. On graduating, he was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal, presented by HRH The Prince of Wales. In the autumn of 2021, Hugh became the first countertenor to win the Kathleen Ferrier Award and is the first countertenor to become a BBC New Generation Artist (2022-24).

This season Hugh makes his debut at Opernhaus Zürich singing Monteverdi madrigals in Christian Spuck's ballet setting. Upcoming concert engagements include multiple appearances at the Wigmore Hall alongside Iestyn Davies and Ensemble Guadagni, La Nuova Musica, The English Concert, and The Sixteen; a world premiere with the BBC Philharmonic and an appearance at the Oxford Lieder Festival; Handel's *Messiah* with The Sixteen and Harry Christophers and with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Adrian Lucas; Bach's Christmas Oratorio with Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras and John Eliot Gardiner; Bach's B Minor Mass with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Vaclav Luks; Bach's St Matthew Passion with the Finnish Radio Orchestra and Nick Collon and in a European tour with Collegium Vocale Gent and Philippe Herreweghe, as well as multiple projects with Les Arts Florissants and William Christie including *Polinesso* in Handel's *Ariodante* and *Arsace Partenope*.

Hugh frequently collaborates with pianist George Ireland, lutenist Danny Murphy and composer Piers Connor Kennedy both in recital and concert.

Hugh has recorded Purcell Royal Odes and Birthday Odes for Queen Mary with The King's Consort and Robert King alongside Iestyn Davies and Carolyn Sampson, and *Lamento* with Iestyn Davies and Fretwork for Signum Classics.



**Sebastian Charlesworth** (*Aeneas*) was appointed Musical Director of Heathfield Choral Society in May 2019. He is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he initially trained as a bassoonist. On graduating, and deciding that the best thing to do with a degree in bassoon was to pursue a career in singing, he has for the last decade been working as a professional chorister and soloist on both the concert and opera stages. As a session singer, he can be heard on many

recent blockbusters including multiple scores for composers including Danny Elfman and the late Scott Walker.

In recent years, conducting/musical direction has become a mainstay of his work and, alongside HCS, he is MD for the chamber choir New Sussex Singers and has worked as guest conductor with Musicians of All Saints, Lewes. He is a teacher of both singing and bassoon in five different schools and travels the world with the company Moving Performance, facilitating transformational leadership programmes within businesses. In his 'spare' time, he enjoys fine dining, home improvement and spending as much time as possible with his wife Hannah, and young sons Hugh and Magnus.





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# The Choir

## Sopranos

Julie Bell  
Sue Carter  
Sarah Christie  
Kathryn Dewhurst  
Jacqui Downing  
Barbara Edwards  
Frederica Everett  
Susan Garden  
Carol Kemp  
Jacqui Locker  
Ruth McDermott  
Georgina Penticost  
Colleen Robinson  
Gill Stevens  
Caroline Thompson  
Mary Wilce  
Hillary Wilson  
Jeni Woodhouse  
Alison Wright-Reid

## Altos

Carolyn Burgess  
Jenny Crisford  
Linda Davis  
Linda Dearsley  
Liz Delves  
Barbara Duncan  
Viv Durne  
Shineen Galloway  
Pat Harwood  
Ann Kenward  
Anne Lewis  
Jenny Mayhew  
Kate Peckham  
Jane Thomas  
Susan Tranter  
Cornelie Usborne

## Tenors

Phillip Brooks  
Nick Dibb  
Nick Howard  
Peter Lewis  
Brian Newman  
Nick Rees

## Bass

Hugh Bell  
Howard Burgess  
Howard Jones  
Bernard Maishman  
Richard Penticost  
Peter Perry  
Chris Thompson  
Colin Thompson  
Steve Tolhurst

# Ensemble

## Violin:

Julia Bishop (Leader)  
George Clifford (2nd)

## Viola:

Jan Schlapp

## Cello:

Catherine Rimer

## Harpichord:

Nicholas Houghton

We would like to thank: Colin Harwood and Thomas Ballantine Dykes for Front of House support; Jeni Woodhouse for Concert Management; and Linda Davis, our First-Aider. Also all our advertisers for their support.

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## **ACT THE FIRST**

### **BELINDA**

Shake the cloud from off your brow,  
Fate your wishes does allow;  
Empire growing,  
Pleasures flowing,  
Fortune smiles and so should you.

### **CHORUS**

Banish sorrow, banish care,  
Grief should ne'er approach the fair.

### **DIDO**

Ah! Belinda, I am prest  
With torment not to be Confest,  
Peace and I are strangers grown.  
I languish till my grief is known,  
Yet would not have it guest.

### **BELINDA**

Grief increases by concealing,

### **DIDO**

Mine admits of no revealing.

### **BELINDA**

Then let me speak; the Trojan guest  
Into your tender thoughts has prest;  
The greatest blessing Fate can give  
Our Carthage to secure and Troy revive.

### **CHORUS**

When monarchs unite, how happy their state,  
They triumph at once o'er their foes and their fate.

### **DIDO**

Whence could so much virtue spring?  
What storms, what battles did he sing?  
Anchises' valour mixt with Venus' charms  
How soft in peace, and yet how fierce in arms!

### **BELINDA**

A tale so strong and full of woe  
Might melt the rocks as well as you.  
What stubborn heart unmov'd could see  
Such distress, such piety?

### **DIDO**

Mine with storms of care opprest  
Is taught to pity the distressed.  
Mean wretches' grief can touch,  
So soft, so sensible my breast,  
But ah! I fear, I pity his too much.

### **BELINDA AND SECOND WOMAN**

Fear no danger to ensue,  
The Hero Loves as well as you,  
Ever gentle, ever smiling,

And the cares of life beguiling,  
Cupid strew your path with flowers  
Gather'd from Elysian bowers.

### **BELINDA**

See, your Royal Guest appears,  
How Godlike is the form he bears!

### **AENEAS**

When, Royal Fair, shall I be blest  
With cares of love and state distress?

### **DIDO**

Fate forbids what you pursue.

### **AENEAS**

Aeneas has no fate but you!  
Let Dido smile and I'll defy  
The feeble stroke of Destiny.

### **CHORUS**

Cupid only throws the dart  
That's dreadful to a warrior's heart,  
And she that wounds can only cure the smart.

### **AENEAS**

If not for mine, for Empire's sake,  
Some pity on your lover take;  
Ah! make not, in a hopeless fire  
A hero fall, and Troy once more expire.

### **BELINDA**

Pursue thy conquest, Love; her eyes  
Confess the flame her tongue denies.

### **CHORUS**

To the hills and the vales, to the rocks and the mountains  
To the musical groves and the cool shady fountains.  
Let the triumphs of love and of beauty be shown,  
Go revel, ye Cupids, the day is your own.

## **ACT THE SECOND**

### **SORCERESS**

Wayward sisters, you that fright  
The lonely traveller by night  
Who, like dismal ravens crying,  
Beat the windows of the dying,  
Appear! Appear at my call, and share in the fame  
Of a mischief shall make all Carthage flame.  
Appear!

### **FIRST WITCH**

Say, Beldam, say what's thy will.

### **CHORUS**

Harm's our delight and mischief all our skill.

**SORCERESS**

The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate,  
As we do all in prosp'rous state,  
Ere sunset, shall most wretched prove,  
Depriv'd of fame, of life and love!

**CHORUS**

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! [etc.]

**TWO WITCHES**

Ruin'd ere the set of sun?  
Tell us, how shall this be done?

**SORCERESS**

The Trojan Prince, you know, is bound  
By Fate to seek Italian ground;  
The Queen and he are now in chase.

**FIRST WITCH**

Hark! Hark! the cry comes on apace.

**SORCERESS**

But, when they've done, my trusty Elf  
In form of Mercury himself  
As sent from Jove shall chide his stay,  
And charge him sail tonight with all his fleet away.

**CHORUS**

Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho! [etc.]

**TWO WITCHES**

But ere we this perform,  
We'll conjure for a storm  
To mar their hunting sport  
And drive 'em back to court.

CHORUS [in the manner of an echo.]

In our deep vaulted cell the charm we'll prepare,  
Too dreadful a practice for this open air.

**BELINDA** [Repeated by Chorus]

Thanks to these lonesome vales,  
These desert hills and dales,  
So fair the game, so rich the sport,  
Diana's self might to these woods resort.

**SECOND WOMAN**

Oft she visits this lov'd mountain,  
Oft she bathes her in this fountain;  
Here Actaeon met his fate,  
Pursued by his own hounds,  
And after mortal wounds  
Discover'd, discover'd too late.

**AENEAS**

Behold, upon my bending spear  
A monster's head stands bleeding,

With tushes far exceeding  
Those did Venus' huntsman tear.

**DIDO**

The skies are clouded, hark! how thunder  
Rends the mountain oaks a sunder.

**BELINDA** [Repeated by Chorus]

Haste, haste to town, this open field  
No shelter from the storm can yield.

**SPIRIT**

Stay, Prince and hear great Jove's command;  
He summons thee this Night away.

**AENEAS**

Tonight?

**SPIRIT**

Tonight thou must forsake this land,  
The Angry God will brook no longer stay.  
Jove commands thee, waste no more  
In Love's delights, those precious hours,  
Allow'd by th'Almighty Powers  
To gain th' Hesperian shore  
And ruined Troy restore.

**AENEAS**

Jove's commands shall be obey'd,  
Tonight our anchors shall be weigh'd.  
[Exit Spirit.]  
But ah! what language can I try  
My injur'd Queen to Pacify:  
No sooner she resigns her heart,  
But from her arms I'm forc'd to part.  
How can so hard a fate be took?  
One night enjoy'd, the next forsook.  
Yours be the blame, ye gods! For I  
Obey your will, but with more ease could die.

**THE SORCERESS AND HER ENCHANTRESSES  
(CHORUS)**

Then since our Charmes have sped,  
A Merry Dance be led  
By the Nymphs of Carthage to please us.  
They shall all Dance to ease us,  
A Dance that shall make the Spheres to wonder,  
Rending those fair Groves asunder.

**ACT THE THIRD****FIRST SAILOR** [Repeated by Chorus]

Come away, fellow sailors, your anchors be weighing.  
Time and tide will admit no delaying.  
Take a boozy short leave of your nymphs on the  
shore,

And silence their mourning  
With vows of returning  
But never intending to visit them more.

**SORCERESS**

See the flags and streamers curling  
Anchors weighing, sails unfurling.

**FIRST WITCH**

Phoebe's pale deluding beams  
Guiding more deceitful streams.

**SECOND WITCH**

Our plot has took,  
The Queen's forsook.

**TWO WITCHES**

Elissa's ruin'd, ho, ho!  
Our plot has took,  
The Queen's forsook, ho, ho!

**SORCERESS**

Our next Motion  
Must be to storme her Lover on the Ocean!  
From the ruin of others our pleasures we borrow,  
Elissa bleeds tonight, and Carthage flames tomorrow.

**CHORUS**

Destruction's our delight  
Delight our greatest sorrow!  
Elissa dies tonight and Carthage flames tomorrow.

**DIDO**

Your counsel all is urged in vain  
To Earth and Heav'n I will complain!  
To Earth and Heav'n why do I call?  
Earth and Heav'n conspire my fall.  
To Fate I sue, of other means bereft  
The only refuge for the wretched left.

**BELINDA**

See, Madam, see where the Prince appears;  
Such Sorrow in his looks he bears  
As would convince you still he's true.  
[enter Aeneas]

**AENEAS**

What shall lost Aeneas do?  
How, Royal Fair, shall I impart  
The God's decree, and tell you we must part?

**DIDO**

Thus on the fatal Banks of Nile,  
Weeps the deceitful crocodile  
Thus hypocrites, that murder act,  
Make Heaven and Gods the authors of the Fact.

**AENEAS**

By all that's good ...

**DIDO**

By all that's good, no more!  
All that's good you have forswore.  
To your promis'd empire fly  
And let forsaken Dido die.

**AENEAS**

In spite of Jove's command, I'll stay.  
Offend the Gods, and Love obey.

**DIDO**

No, faithless man, thy course pursue;  
I'm now resolv'd as well as you.  
No repentance shall reclaim  
The injur'd Dido's slighted flame.  
For 'tis enough, whate'er you now decree,  
That you had once a thought of leaving me.

**AENEAS**

Let Jove say what he will: I'll stay!

**DIDO**

Away, away! No, no, away!

**AENEAS**

No, no, I'll stay, and Love obey!

**DIDO**

To Death I'll fly  
If longer you delay;  
Away, away!.....  
But Death, alas! I cannot shun;  
Death must come when he is gone.

**CHORUS**

Great minds against themselves conspire  
And shun the cure they most desire.

**DIDO**

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me,  
On thy bosom let me rest,  
More I would, but Death invades me;  
Death is now a welcome guest.  
When I am laid in earth, May my wrongs create  
No trouble in thy breast;  
Remember me, but ah! forget my fate.

**CHORUS**

With drooping wings you Cupids come,  
To scatter roses on her tomb.  
Soft and Gentle as her Heart  
Keep here your watch, and never part.



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**Our next concert:**

**Saturday 30th November 2024**

**"In Praise of Music"**

*- a selection of music to celebrate St Cecilia's Day.*

**Joining the choir.**

The Society welcomes new singers, and is very happy for them to try a couple of rehearsals before joining. **There are no auditions!** Please contact Jenny at [heathfieldchoral.membership@gmail.com](mailto:heathfieldchoral.membership@gmail.com) for more information, or speak to a choir member. We will also be holding an Open Rehearsal on 9th September—for more information, see our website.

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