



Heathfield Choral Society

with Heathfield Community College Choir

present

A Christmas Concert

Conducted by Sebastian Charlesworth
and accompanied by Gavin Stevens

Baritone Soloist: René Bloice-Sanders

Saturday 10th December 2022

7.30pm



PROGRAMME

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Programme

The words for this evening's audience carols can be found on page 10

Audience Carol: Once in Royal David's City (v1 solo)

Solo: Theodore Butcher

Winter, from Folk Songs of the Four Seasons Ralph Vaughan Williams

- The Children's Christmas Song
- Wassail Song
- In Bethlehem City
- God bless the Master

Audience Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Reading: The Foolish Fir Tree

Henry van Dyke

Read by Francesca Hunt

In Terra Pax

Gerald Finzi

Treble: Theodore Butcher; Baritone: René Bloice-Sanders

~~~ **INTERVAL** (*drinks served at rear of hall*) ~~~

## **Angel's Carol**

John Rutter

## **The Little Road to Bethlehem**

Michael Head

*Solo: René Bloice-Sanders*

## **Reading: Year's End**

Richard Wilbur

*Read by Francesca Hunt*

## **Audience Carol: God rest ye merry, Gentlemen**

## **Adam lay ybounden**

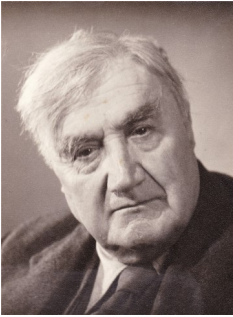
Boris Ord

## **On Christmas Night**

Bob Chilcott

*Solos: Theodore Butcher and René Bloice-Sanders; and the Heathfield Community College choir*

- This is the truth
- Adam lay ybounden
- A spotless Rose
- The Cherry Tree Carol
- O little town
- Sweet was the song
- Rejoice and be merry
- This is the truth (II)



**Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 - 1958)** is one of the pillars of the English musical establishment. Born in Gloucestershire, he studied the piano and violin at both the Royal College of Music and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was heavily influenced by the First World War, in which he served on active duty despite his age. Although perhaps best known as a symphonist, he wrote a number of choral works, several of which the choir has sung in previous years. He died in 1958.

**“Folk Songs of the Four Seasons”** was originally written in 1949 as a cantata for women’s voices, and its first performance boasted a choir of over 3,000 women! Grouped into four sections to match the seasons, we are singing the four songs associated with winter, using an arrangement for mixed voices completed by John Whittaker earlier this year. This is its first performance in the UK, and possibly the world!



**Gerald Finzi (1901 - 1956)** was born in London to a relatively prosperous family and studied music from the age of 15 under Ernest Farrar. His early life was marked by sadness—his father died when he was eight, Farrar was killed on the Western Front and he lost three brothers around the same time. All of which may have contributed to his rather bleak outlook on life. Although he composed some orchestral music, he is

best known for his choral works, which were performed regularly at the Three Choirs Festival. Although much more content after he had moved to the country, this happiness was not to last. He was diagnosed at the age of 50 with Hodgkin’s disease, and died 5 years later, leaving a large collection of eighteenth century music and having saved several rare apple varieties from extinction.

Although not a Christian, Finzi found great inspiration in Christian beliefs, and Christmas held a special significance, set in the depth of winter. **“In Terra Pax”** begins with this chill quiet, and extracts from Robert Bridges’ poem - sung by the baritone soloist - frame the work. The words of St Luke are then sung by the choir, with the angel’s words sung by a treble. At the climax the bells ring out exultantly in the voices and piano, which must echo the memories of Finzi’s youth as a bell ringer. The choir closes the piece in quiet with the words “And on earth peace, goodwill to all men.”

**John Rutter (1945 - )** is one of Britain's best known - and best loved - composers. His works are chiefly choral, and include carols, anthems and extended works such as the Gloria, Requiem and Magnificat. His "**Angel's Carol**" uses his own text, and comprises three stanzas with the Latin refrain "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." Originally written for the winner of a choirboy and choirgirl competition, it was later rearranged for mixed voices and is today one of his most recorded carols.

**Michael Head (1900 - 1976)** was very much a local boy, having been born in Eastbourne. His time at the Royal Academy of Music was interrupted by the First World War, but he completed his studies after the war, and won a number of prizes for composition and singing. He toured extensively as a singer and also worked as a musical examiner. Most of his works are songs, of which "The Ships of Arcady" is probably the best known. "**The Little Road to Bethlehem**" is a Christmas carol with words by Margaret Rose.

**Boris Ord (1897 - 1951)** was an organist and choirmaster of King's College, Cambridge, but today is probably best known for his setting of "**Adam lay ybounden**", his only known composition. The original text is held at the British Library, and dates from around 1400. Although most often performed at Christmas, the first two stanzas relate the story of Genesis chapter 3. It's not until the third and final stanza that we find a vague allusion to the redemption of man by the birth of Christ, but even this link is widely debated. An alternative arrangement will be sung in the Chilcott.



**Bob Chilcott (1955 - )** was born in Plymouth, and has become one of the world's most widely performed composers and arrangers of choral music. His compositional output reflects his wide taste in music styles and his commitment to writing music that is both singable and communicative. He has been involved in choral music most of his life. He was a chorister and then a choral scholar in the choir of King's College, Cambridge, and was a member of The King's Singers for whom he made a number of popular arrangements of well-known songs from all genres. As well as being a full-time composer he is also a highly

acclaimed choral conductor. He has been privileged to conduct many choirs all over the world. He is Principal Guest Conductor of The BBC Singers and in 2019 he was appointed Principal Conductor of Birmingham University Singers. His music has been widely recorded by many choirs and groups including The King's Singers, Tenebrae, and The BBC Singers.

First published in 2011, **“On Christmas Night”** is a musical celebration of the Christmas story, presented as a sequence of eight original carols. Chilcott calls upon several familiar carol melodies within his own settings, resulting in an impressive array of styles and moods, from comforting and reflective to jubilant, swinging, and folksy.



**René Bloice-Sanders’** vocal training began in Canterbury Cathedral Choir and he joined the National Youth Choir of Great Britain in 2004. In 2010 he graduated from The University of Nottingham with a BA (Hons) and received a Distinction for his Masters in Vocal Studies at the Royal Academy of Music in 2013. There he studied under the tutelage of Ryland Davies and Audrey Hyland and received the Nora Carstairs Bland Award

2012/2013. Working professionally in London and around the UK, René now studies with David Barrell.

On the operatic stage René was proud to reach the semi-final of the inaugural 2019 “Opera: By Voice Alone” competition and has performed the roles of Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Raimbaud (*Le Comte Ory*), Eugene Onegin (*Eugene Onegin*), Marcello (*La bohème*), Belcore (*L’elisir d’amore*), Morales/Dancairo (*Carmen*), Larkens (*La Fanciulla del West*), Marco (*Gianni Schicchi*), Salieri (*Mozart and Salieri*), Orfeo (*L’Orfeo*), Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Baron Duphol (*La Traviata*), and Valet II (*Don Quichotte*). He has worked with companies such as The Grange Festival, Garsington Opera Festival, Wexford Festival Opera, Opera Holland Park, Ilford Opera and Opera South East.

**Theodore Butcher** (treble) is a student of Reed’s School in Surrey, and studies singing with Sebastian Charlesworth. He is also a chorister at Hampton Court Palace.



**Sebastian Charlesworth** was delighted to be 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 across 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.



**Gavin Stevens** has been accompanist for Heathfield Choral Society since 1999. He went to the Royal Academy of Music where he studied composition, piano and electronic music; winning the Arthur Hinton prize at the end of his first year for performing his compositions in a recital. Gavin has worked for over 30 years as a teacher of piano, composition and, since 2011, guitar. As a pianist he gives frequent piano recitals where he likes to include

works by 20th Century British composers alongside his own music and more standard repertoire. As a composer he has written four piano sonatas and a wide variety of other works for piano, an increasing number of works for guitar including three books of studies and a set of Impromptus. Gavin has also written for choir and Heathfield Choral Society has performed two of these works. He is currently working on a cello sonata, a set of nocturnes for piano and a setting of six poems in Cornish for choir and small orchestra. Gavin has also been accompanist for Phoenix Choir Eastbourne since 2014 and Music Leader at Emmanuel URC Worthing since 2011. He lives in Angmering, West Sussex with his wife Tracy and daughter Megan.



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**Heathfield Choral Society -**

our next concert:

**Saturday May 13th 2023, Heathfield State Hall**

**The Seasons**

*By Josef Haydn*

His popular oratorio, and follow up to “The Creation”

*Please reserve the date!*



## The Choir

### Sopranos

Sue Carter  
Sarah Christie  
Kathryn Dewhurst  
Barbara Edwards  
Francesca Hunt  
Carol Kemp  
Jacqui Locker  
Ruth McDermott  
Sarah Norris  
Georgina Penticost  
Colleen Robinson  
Gillian Stevens  
Caroline Thompson  
Mary Wilce  
Hillary Wilson  
Jeni Woodhouse

### Altos

Helen Baldwin  
Jenny Crisford  
Linda Dearsley  
Liz Delves  
Viv Durne  
Shineen Galloway  
Danielle Gregory  
Pat Harwood  
Moira James  
Ann Kenward  
Jenny Mayhew  
Kate Peckham  
Jane Thomas  
Susan Tranter

### Tenors

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

### Basses

Michael Chapman  
Martin Clay  
Ray James  
Bernard Maishman  
Richard Penticost  
Chris Thompson  
Steve Tolhurst

*The choir are joined this evening by two guest singers, Rachel Allen (sop) **and** Larry Charlesworth (bass). Their support is gratefully acknowledged.*



Heathfield Community College's Music Department is very excited to be taking part in Bob Chilcot's 'A Christmas Night'. It is a fantastic opportunity for our students to experience singing in a local venue as well as part of a 4-part harmony choir. The department prides itself on offering students a wide range of opportunities for performance. These include Brighton Children's parade and travelling to other countries on tour. This evening encapsulates our mission as a department to allow our students a rich musical experience. Thank you to Heathfield Choral Society for inviting us and we hope we can build on this performance to allow for more opportunities to sing together.

*James Matthews, Head of Music*

## Carols

### Once in Royal David's City

Once in Royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed.  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for His bed.  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ that little child.

He came down to earth from Heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all.  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall.  
With the poor and mean and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour Holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him  
Through His own redeeming love,  
For that child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in Heaven above;  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

### O little town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And Peace to men on earth  
For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love

Cont/—

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born to us today  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell  
O come to us, abide with us  
Our Lord Emmanuel

## God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

God rest you merry, gentlemen  
Let nothing you dismay  
For Jesus Christ our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas 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 Heavenly Father  
A blessed 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 of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy.

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**Publishers:**

Folk Songs: Oxford University Press  
In Terra Pax: Boosey & Hawkes  
On Christmas Night: Oxford University Press  
Carols: Oxford University Press

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## Words, “In Terra Pax”

*Baritone solo:*

A frosty Christmas Eve  
when the stars were shining  
Fared I forth alone  
where westward falls the hill,  
And from many a village  
in the water'd valley  
Distant music reach'd me  
peals of bells aringing:  
The constellated sounds  
ran sprinkling on earth's floor  
As the dark vault above

with stars was spangled o'er.  
Then sped my thoughts to keep  
that first Christmas of all  
When the shepherds watching  
by their folds ere the dawn  
Heard music in the fields  
and marveling could not tell  
Whether it were angels  
or the bright stars singing.

*Chorus:*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

*Treble solo:*

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

*Chorus:*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*Baritone:*

But to me heard afar  
it was starry music  
Angels' song, comforting  
as the comfort of Christ  
When he spake tenderly  
to his sorrowful flock:  
The old words came to me  
by the riches of time  
Mellow'd and transfigured  
as I stood on the hill  
Heark'ning in the aspect  
of th' eternal silence.

*Poem by Robert Bridges*

*Bible reading from Luke Ch2, vv8 -14*

Heathfield Choral Society invite you to...

An Open Rehearsal ~  
come and  
have a  
sing with us!



Save  
the  
date!

Monday 16<sup>th</sup>

January 2023

7.30pm - 9.30pm

Horam Village Hall

Come along and meet us, our amazing conductor Sebastian and equally amazing accompanist Gavin!

We are a friendly non-audition choir and are always happy for new members to join us, this event will be open to all - no experience necessary....and all music provided, so why not come along and see what we do?

Further details to be announced soon.

To register interest please email [treasurer@heathfieldchoral.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@heathfieldchoral.org.uk)

[www.heathfieldchoral.org.uk](http://www.heathfieldchoral.org.uk)



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**Heathfield Choral Society** was formed in 1945 and now has a membership of around 55 singers drawn from Heathfield and the surrounding towns and villages. It is recognized as one of the most enterprising choirs in the area, performing regularly with professional orchestras and soloists. Its concerts have included a wide variety of sacred and secular works and first performances in the area. In 2009 the choir gave the first performance in East Sussex of Howard Goodall's work, *Eternal Light*, and in November 2016 joined an international group to perform this work in New York's Carnegie Hall – a great honour for the choir, of whom around 25 were able to take part.

As a founder member of the Eastbourne and District Choirs' Association, the Society has played a pivotal role in extending the work of choirs in the area, by promoting open rehearsals, combined concerts and co-operation between member choirs. The choir supported South Downs Opera's productions of *Tosca* (2012) and *Aida* (2015).

The Society welcomes new singers, and is very happy for you to try a couple of rehearsals before joining. **There are no auditions!** Please contact Jenny at [membership@heathfieldchoral.org.uk](mailto:membership@heathfieldchoral.org.uk) for more information, or speak to a choir member.


*If you would like to be included on our mailing list, please email  
[publicity@heathfieldchoral.org.uk](mailto:publicity@heathfieldchoral.org.uk) or visit our website  
[www.heathfieldchoral.org.uk](http://www.heathfieldchoral.org.uk)*

We would like to thank: Mike Woodhouse, Colin Harwood and Tom Norris for Front of House support; and Jeni Woodhouse for Concert Management. Also all our advertisers for their support.

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