

The text of *Valiant-for-Truth* (composed in 1941 as a tribute to the composer's friend Dorothy Longman) comes from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. While not being a religious man, Vaughan-Williams nonetheless found the story deeply absorbing, and based his opera of the same name on it also. The character Mr Valiant-for-Truth is named after a scripture passage in Jeremiah; he is a pilgrim from the City of Destruction who has to fight battles with three allegorical assailants: Wildhead, Inconsiderate and Officious.

John Rutter writes as follows of his *Sprig of Thyme* folk-song collection:

“For children growing up in post-war England as I did, traditional songs formed a common musical currency. These songs brought me delight and pleasure then, and they still do now, though pleasure has become tinged with nostalgia because for the most part they are forgotten and gone from our lives, perhaps forever. This album is an affectionate tribute to their composers and poets; a few were renowned, most were obscure or unknown, but the songs they created were famous, and I remember them fondly.”

Bob Chilcott was born in Plymouth and was a chorister and graduate of King's College, Cambridge. After a spell as a freelance singer and arranger of orchestral music for BBC Radio, he joined The King's Singers and composed many of the items in their repertoire. His arrangement of *God so Loved the World* (John 3:16) was commissioned by the Lovers Lane United Methodist Sanctuary Choir in Dallas. *Were You There?* is a traditional negro spiritual.

Sir William Walton wrote the music for *A Litany* at the age of sixteen, when he had already been a chorister at Christ Church, Oxford, for six years. Its words are by the 16th century poet Phineas Fletcher. Walton was essentially self-taught in music, being supported by the sponsorship and patronage of eminent Oxford musicians together with Osbert Sitwell. He composed *Façade* when he was 20 and *Belshazzar's Feast* when he was 29.

Mary Westley studied music at Reading University, and is now Assistant Director of Music at Crosfields School, Reading, as well as Director of Music at St John's Church, Mortimer.

Elizabeth Collins studied at the Royal College of Music where she trained as an accompanist before going on to work as a rehearsal pianist at the Royal Academy of Dance. She now freelances as an accompanist and piano teacher, and is the Music Specialist at Home Farm School, Woolhampton.

Cantemus:

Sopranos: Deborah Cox, Leanne Cox, Sarah Holland, Jevan Johnson-Booth, Joyce Refausse

Altos: Dinny Barker, Alison Jestico, Bridget Procter, Lynne Salt, Heather Sims

Tenors: Geoff Anderson, Ian Walker, David Wilcox

Basses: Mike Ananin, Andrew Blake, Stephen Blinman, Ian Haslam

St Leonard's Church

Sunningwell

presents

a concert on the themes of Spring and Lent

performed by

CANTEMUS
NEWBURY

Director: Mary Westley

with

Elizabeth Collins – Piano

Saturday 15th March 2008 at 7.30pm

In aid of the Jewel Porch restoration project

www.cantemus-newbury.org.uk

Programme

Let thy Merciful Ears, O Lord Thomas Mudd (1619 -1667)

Call to Remembrance O Lord Richard Farrant (1530-1580)

Remember not, Lord, our Offences Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Out of the Deep Thomas Morley (1557-1603)
(Soloist: Heather Sims)

Solo

Andante in G major from Sonata KV545 (Mozart)

Elizabeth Collins, piano

Salvator Mundi Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

Hear my Prayer, O Lord Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

Three English Folk Songs Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958)

The Dark-Eyed Sailor ~ The Spring Time of the Year ~ Just as the Tide was Flowing

Interval

The Sprig of Thyme *arr* John Rutter (b. 1945)

The Bold Grenadier ~ The Keel Row ~ The Willow Tree ~ The Sprig of Thyme ~ Down by the Sally Gardens ~ The Cuckoo ~ I Know where I'm Going ~ Willow Song ~ O Can ye Sew Cushions? ~ The Miller of Dee ~ Afton Water

God so Loved the World Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)
(Soloist: Jevan Johnson-Booth)

Were You There? *arr* Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

A Litany William Walton (1902-1983)

Valiant-for-Truth Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958)

Notes on the Music

Thomas Mudd was born in Peterborough. He was a chorister at Peterborough Cathedral (1619), and organist there (1631-2), at Lincoln (1662), at Exeter (1664) and at York (1666). This piece, originally wrongly attributed to Thomas Weelkes, is the Collect for the 10th Sunday after Trinity.

Richard Farrant was a choirmaster, playwright and theatrical producer noted for creating the Blackfriars Theatre that hosted children's companies. He became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in the reign of Edward VI, but resigned in 1564 on being appointed master of the children of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. His plays, on classical themes, are all lost. In 1569 he became Master of the Chapel Royal, concurrently with his Windsor post.

Henry Purcell was one of the greatest composers of the Baroque period and one of the greatest of all English composers. His earliest surviving works date from 1680 but they already show a complete command of the craft of composition, combining elements of the French and Italian baroque and traditional English forms. *Hear my Prayer* forms the opening section of an unfinished work begun in September 1682. In time Purcell became increasingly in demand as a composer, and his theatre music in particular made his name familiar to many who knew nothing of his church music.

Thomas Morley was organist at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. He is thought to have composed several songs for Shakespeare to use in his plays, along with many ballads, lute-songs, anthems and madrigals. Like Byrd and Tallis in their turn, Morley held a monopoly for music-printing granted by Queen Elizabeth I.

Thomas Tallis was organist at Waltham Abbey until it was dissolved by Henry VIII, after which he became organist and Gentleman of the Chapel Royal. He spanned the transition from use of Latin motets to English anthems in the liturgy during the Tudor period, being responsible for many harmonisations of plainsong responses still used in church services today. He is perhaps best known for his 40-part motet *Spem in Alium*, his *Canon* on Psalm 67, and the eponymous theme of Vaughan-Williams' string *Fantasia*. The antiphon *Salvator Mundi*, one of two settings by Tallis, was written for the office of Matins on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

In the early 1890's, **Ralph Vaughan-Williams** began to be very active in the collection and study of over 800 English folk-songs, often scribbled down as the country-folk he met on his travels sang them to him. From their idioms and patterns he revitalised his own compositions, establishing a new nationalist style in place of the foreign romantic influences he had worked under from his studies with Bruch and Ravel. Tonight's three songs are from a 1913 set of five, the other two in the set being *The Lover's Ghost* and *Wassail Song*.