



# Hemiola

St George's Singers

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

VIVAT—concert preview	2
Fine Arts Brass	3
Music for Royal Ears	4-5
Brigit's Musical Diary	6
VIVAT—Russian Style	7
St George's News	8
Tips for vocal health	9
Wakefield Music Library	10
Cheshire Consort	11
Quiz Night	12
The Coronation and me	13
Vietnam Diary	14-15

**ST GEORGE'S SINGERS**

**PRESIDENT:**

Brigit Forsyth

**VICE PRESIDENTS:**

Sue Roper  
Mark Rowlinson  
Stephen Threlfall  
Stephen Williams

**MUSICAL DIRECTOR:**

Neil Taylor

**ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR:**

Calum Fraser

**ACCOMPANIST:**

Jeffrey Makinson

Registered Charity no 508686

Member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies

[www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)

## SAVE MONEY—SING WITH A FRIEND!

Beset by water shortages, economic crises, reduced public spending, and rising unemployment, it may seem a little self-obsessed of us to worry about choir funds. But a big problem faced by all amateur choirs (and by all arts groups and charities) is the increasingly urgent need to maximize resources and minimize costs—yet still attract and reward supporters.

St George's Singers is extremely fortunate. We have a large, committed and energetic 'sales-force' - the choir members themselves, who pound the streets distributing leaflets, hanging up posters and persuading friends and family to come to our concerts for a fantastic evening's entertainment. In recent years the growth of digital channels (email, websites, social media such as Twitter and Facebook) has made this easier, allowing us to distribute concert information more quickly and cheaply.

However, there are still many people who either do not wish or do not have the facility to use email, which we appreciate.

But the problem has now become more acute, with the recent postage increase. A first-class stamp now costs 60p, second-class 50p. So we have regretfully decided that this will be the last issue of *Hemiola* posted to our registered mailing list (though we will of course still mail out concert flyers). The electronic version will continue to be sent to those happy to receive information by email, and it will be available to download from our website. (This will not affect Friends of SGS who will still receive hard copies.)

There are two ways in which you can help us reduce our costs. If you have access to email, please let us email you concert information in future. Secondly, please consider joining the Friends of St George's Singers. It costs only £15 a year for Red Rose, and £30 a year for Gold Rose membership. Friends receive invitations to our annual Friends reception, reserved seats at concerts when available, free coach transport to city centre concert venues, entry to a prize draw at every concert—and more.



Even if you only use the free coach facility, it could save you £10 over the season—and if you're lucky enough to win the prize draw, you get your next concert tickets free, paying for your subscription!

So, please think about becoming one of our Friends. Pick up a leaflet at our next concert (from the Friends table), or contact our Friends Coordinator, Jean Egerton (tel 01625 871371). We hope to see you at our VIVAT! concert—and we look forward to an exciting season next year: a Britten centenary, a taste of France, and a truly 'Gloria-s' concert at the Monastery.

Season brochures will be available from mid-June: pick up a copy at VIVAT!, download from our website, fill in a mailing list slip, or ring Jean Egerton. Thank you!



**Sunday 17 June 2012, 7.30 pm**  
**Gorton Monastery, Manchester**

**VIVAT!**

**Tickets: £15, £12 concessions,**  
**£5 students & children**

**Tel: 01663 764012**

**Email: [tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk)**

**Online: [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)**



Westminster Abbey, founded by King Edgar I and St Dunstan, and scene of royal coronations since Harold II's in 1066

**Apparently, Neil sang**  
**Stanford's *Te Deum***  
**every Founder's Day**  
**when he was at school.**  
**(So he'll be conducting**  
**off copy then?)**

Bass Geoff Taylor's great uncle, Vernon Taylor, was a member of the St Paul's Cathedral Choir, and sang at the coronation of George V in 1911. Geoff inherited the service book from which he sang. It includes a number of the items we'll be singing in VIVAT, including *I was Glad*, *Zadok the Priest*, and *Stanford Gloria*.

## A RIGHT ROYAL DO—VIVAT! PREVIEW

The final concert of our 2011/12 season fast approaches—and what a finale it will be.

On Sunday 17 June, St George's Singers returns to the Monastery to add our own voices to the year's jubilee celebrations, in a concert of music specially written for royal occasions, much of it for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

All your favourite and much loved royal anthems and orchestral pieces will be there: Handel's *Zadok the Priest*; Walton's *Crown Imperial* and *Orb and Sceptre* marches; Vaughan Williams' *Old Hundredth* ('All people that on earth do dwell'); and of course, written for Edward VII, Parry's *I Was Glad*—complete with 'Vivats' to welcome the new monarch.

We'll also be singing other wonderful pieces by some of Britain's greatest composers, written for coronations through the ages, but which may be not quite as familiar. Stanford's glorious and opulent *Magnificat* for double choir, written in 1918, is widely regarded as his finest a capella work, and is (in

the words of Neil Taylor, 'Bach for the Edwardians'. Stanford's *Gloria in Excelsis* was written for George V's coronation in 1911, and was subsequently played at Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953; whilst his *Te Deum*, although originally composed in 1898 for the Leeds Festival, was orchestrated by Stanford himself for Edward VII in 1902.

Dating from around 1920, *O, Clap Your Hands* is a setting of Psalm 47, arranged by Vaughan Williams for chorus, organ, brass, and percussion. The piece is typical of Vaughan Williams' ceremonial works for the church, its joyous mood capitalized upon in a setting of extroverted jubilation. This is a piece clearly designed to fill a cathedral—or a Monastery—with a grand noise.

Royal celebrations of course are nothing without big drums and brass bands—and VIVAT! welcomes Fine Arts Brass, one of the UK's (if not the world's) greatest brass ensembles to join us for the evening. As well as accompanying the choir, the band will be playing two beautiful 'royal' solos: Peter Maxwell Davies' *Farewell to Stromness*, and *Music for a Stuart Masque*, a compilation of various works, in arrangements by members of the band.

St George's Singers' accompanist, Jeffrey Makinson, will be rattling the organ keys in Walton's two magnificent marches: *Crown Imperial*, written for George VI in 1937, and *Orb and Sceptre*, composed for George's

**KEEP CALM**  
**VIVAT!**  
 A FEW TICKETS  
 STILL AVAILABLE

daughter Queen Elizabeth in 1953.

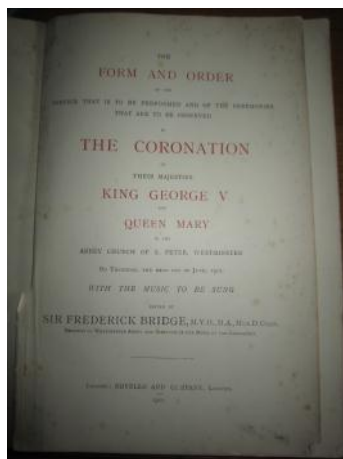
So, whether you're a royalist or a republican, come and enjoy this joyful and exuberant musical extravaganza in Gorton Monastery, a building that, if not as large as Westminster Abbey, certainly rivals it in atmosphere and acoustic brilliance.

**If you go to only one Jubilee celebration concert, then this has to be the one!**

**Want to hear a sneak preview of our VIVAT! concert? On Tuesday 5 June, St George's Singers takes part in Poynton's Diamond Jubilee Arts Festival.**

**The festival runs from Friday 1 to Tuesday 5 June in venues in and around Poynton, and will feature music, arts and crafts from individuals and groups resident in the village. The concert on 5 June forms the finale to the festival, and will feature St George's Singers with VBS Poynton Band.**

**Civic Hall, 7–8.30 pm. Tickets £5, [info@poyntonfestival.org](http://info@poyntonfestival.org).**



## THEY CALL HIM ZADOK

A thousand years before Woody Allen created Zelig, the ultimate gate-crasher, someone put in an appearance at a royal event, and has popped up at every coronation since.

*Zadok the Priest* was Handel's first commission as a naturalized British citizen, and of the four anthems he wrote for the coronation of George II in 1727, it is by far the nation's favourite. *Zadok* has been sung at every coronation since; but its history dates back to the coronation of Edgar I (or Edgar the Peaceful) in AD 973 at Bath. The ceremony was devised by Bishop (later St) Dun-

stan and set the model for the coronation ritual, at which the biblical words relating to Zadok were spoken or sung. Since Edgar had actually been king since AD 959, the coronation was the culmination of his reign rather than the initiation—and the guy died a mere two years after the coronation. But the symbolic coronation was an important event: six other kings of Britain (mis-reported in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as eight kings—plus ça change!) gave their allegiance to Edgar shortly afterwards at Chester.

So who was this bloke Zadok? The son of Ahitub and a de-

scendant of Aaron, Zadok was a priest and a seer who supported David at the time of Absalom's rebellion, when he was made custodian of the Ark of the Covenant. David later appointed Zadok as the one to anoint Solomon as king, and in return for his loyalty, Solomon made Zadok High Priest. His name comes from the verb 'sadeq' meaning 'to be just or righteous'.

So as the orchestral tension mounts through the opening bars, and our voices ring out *ff* in the rousing choral entrance, we'll know who we're singing about.

### An apocryphal tale?

The choir of Westminster Abbey were on tour to one of the former Eastern bloc countries, inculcating the locals into the wonders of English choral music. But every time they sang *Zadok the Priest*, the audience dissolved into hysterics. The choir master finally asked why, and was told that in their language, the word 'zadok' translated as a very rude part of the human anatomy. It is not known if the programme was changed.



Edgar the Peaceful sailing up the River Dee to Chester on his barge, rowed by eight (or six) kings

## THE FINE ART OF BRASS-BLOWING

We're thrilled to welcome Fine Arts Brass (FAB), one of the UK's finest brass ensembles, to perform with St George's Singers at our VIVAT!! concert.

Formed in 1980, and now firmly established at the forefront of the international brass chamber music scene, the ensemble took the name of the place of its first rehearsal, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham University. The group's enduring success is due to its uncanny chameleon-like adaptability

to different audience requirements. These can range from educational concerts for primary school children to broadcasts suitable for BBC Radios 2, 3 or 4. With the combination of their unique versatility of sound, eminent humour and passion for the music they play, it is easy to see why they have toured to over 60 countries and performed in just about every music festival in the UK.

Their repertoire encapsulates all musical genres from the Renais-

sance and Baroque to the sound worlds of the avant garde. Equally, when they play swing, they swing!

They also have a penchant for commissioning new works (over 50 to date) and have enjoyed working closely with the composers who have written for them: James MacMillan, Malcolm Arnold, Robin Holloway, Michael Nyman, John Woolrich and Michael Torke to name but a few.

FAB's discography is no less impressive with a selection of 28 recordings to date with more planned! In the words of *Classical Music Magazine*, they are simply 'exceptional'.

There can be no better band to accompany the wonderful music we'll be singing.



Fine Arts Brass: Angela Whelan (trumpet), Les Neish (tuba), Simon Lenton (trumpet), Chris Parkes (horn) and Katie Jones (trombone)



### What the critics say:

'The Fine Arts Brass ensemble play with fire and verve, adding greatly to the magnificence of the work's climaxes...'

'Dazzling ... wonderfully spirited ... sublime with particularly well matched trumpet playing.'

'We were submerged in enjoyment ... and admiration for the virtuosity displayed.'

'They came, they played, they conquered! Their talent, sense of humour, sensitivity, spirit and lyricism are remarkable.'



**THE TRANSIT OF VENUS-**

**Cul-de-sac theatre**

**1639. A tense drama of love and religious conflict. Two astronomers, William Crabtree and Jeremiah Horrocks, wait to see if Venus will cross the face of the sun. If they're right, it makes them famous and God irrelevant. But will they live to see it?**

**Eric Northey's new play debuts at the Buxton Fringe, United Reformed Church, 16-18 July 7:30pm to 9pm £8 (Child £5, conc £6) Bookings via Opera House or e.northey@gmail.com or 0161 4319131**

# MUSIC FOR ROYAL EARS BY ERIC NORTHEY

For some of us, of a certain age, it was the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953 that introduced us to the experience of 'Royal Music'. A tiny black and white set, in the corner of a dark Bolton kitchen. (If you have tears, dear Reader, prepare to shed them now, as I describe, in touching detail, scenes from early childhood not met with in literature since Dickens' account of the death of Little Nell.)

The flickering ghostly images, 425 lines, the occasional loss of picture as wind shook the aerial; the sound up full volume as grandma had left her ear trumpet at home; and – ah – the magnificent strains of Parry's *I Was Glad* rattling the windows and sending the cat for cover. That was 'Royal Music' indeed, inscribed on the inner ear and destined to last a life-time.

But music for the delight – and sometimes pain – of royal ears, clearly goes back to the dawn of time. Nothing like a thigh bone on a mastodon-skin drum to welcome home the kingly cave warrior, dragging his bison and issuing those time-honoured words that women will hear

down the centuries, 'Cook that! I'm hungry.' And no doubt some singing went on as they

dined. Certainly King David of the Jews could turn a mean hand to psalm writing and lyre plucking, when taking a break from slaughtering Philistines or serenading concubines. And even in slavery, they clearly had enough harps to decorate the willow trees of Babylon.

Closer to home, Jorvik's Viking kings in their mead halls had lyre, harp, bone flute, and pan pipes to help digestion. This is the Danish *I Dreamed a Dream* carved on wood in runes –



clearly, early Eurovision Song Contest material here. It's a bit tum-ti-tumty and might not have sounded that great.

Despite having Heimdallur, the god of singing and divine sound, the results on earth were not always satisfactory. A visitor said that Viking instrumental music suffered from 'a lack of moderation in contact with alcohol'. Clearly brass players involved there then. And an Arab merchant visiting the Danish Court in the 10th century complained, 'Never before I have heard uglier songs than those of the Vikings in Slesvig. The growling sound coming from their throats reminds me of dogs howling, only more untamed'. They clearly needed a Neil Taylor to knock them into shape.

For a pleasanter reconstruction try <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dI0MCvpD8uI> on good old YouTube. Or try <http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/music.shtml> to hear

some rather delicate pipe work, as well as *I Dreamed a Dream* played on the lyre.

It's the Middle Ages that really establishes the link between royal courts and music. Wandering musicians, often with an influence of Arab love poetry, gave musical culture to the crowned and balding heads of many a mediaeval court and left us the legacy of the troubadours and trouveres. They slip into English court life through all the inter-marrying, the Crusades and the fact that we owned half of France.

Eleanor of Aquitaine brought French musicians to the court of Henry II. Their son, Richard the Lionheart was reported to be something of a troubadour himself, before he went off for customary slaughtering in the Middle East. Other monarchs, King Thibaut of Navarre and King Alfonso

of Castile, were also reputed to be celebrated musicians in their own rights. We're fortunate to have that mediaeval legacy in the works of Dunstable, Josquin and Ockegham.

For the English, this culminates in the great flowering of the Tudors, which bound together music, politics and religion into



the rich musical culture that is still celebrated by choirs of all shapes and sizes, as well as being sung in the great cathedrals every Sunday.

It helped perhaps, that in Henry VIII we had a monarch who fancied himself as a composer (and many other things besides). He was certainly a 'youth [who] must have some dalliance' and his penchant for more than one or two bits on the side gave us also the twin traditions of Latin and vernacular anthems. For me, Gibbons' *The Silver Swan*—a coded lament for poor Anne Boleyn—is still the simplest and most eloquent justification for republicanism and women's rights.

The Puritans, of course, were a miserable lot who closed the theatres and whose idea of a good time was marathon sessions of psalm sing-alongs. No wonder people welcomed back the libertine Charles II. Besides bawdy ballads about Nell Gwynne ('I'm the Protestant whore,' she cried indignantly when attacked in the Strand)



Henry Purcell

there was the first great English opera composer Henry Purcell. Purcell actually sang at Charles II's coronation and went on to compose versions of *I Was Glad* and *My Heart is Inditing* for James II's coronation and *Come Ye Sons of Art* as a birthday ode for Queen Mary. He also made good use of his royal connections to earn a bob or two by being organist at both the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey.

The next real development of royal music was the German invasion of the 18th century, with G F Handel leading the charge. George I, virtually on his death bed, passed the 'Act of Naturalisation for George Frideric Handel' in 1727, so that Handel could commence writing the famous Four Coronation Anthems – *The King Shall Rejoice*, *My Heart Is Inditing*, *Let thy Hand*, and *Zadok the Priest*, the latter to be used at every Coronation, and countless choral society dos, for the next three hundred years. We have also been blest with *Music for The Royal Fireworks* and the *Water Music*, in case the fireworks get out of hand.

Handel was joined by Bach's youngest son, Johann Christian Bach. He became music master to Queen Charlotte, welcoming, in 1764, the eight-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on his



J C Bach (aka the Quarter-Bach)

grand tour of Europe. The Mozarts were summoned to the palace and the young prodigy played Handel, Bach and Abel at sight, to the amazement of all and sundry. Afterwards he accompanied the Queen in an aria which she sang and she also played the flute, which suggests some degree of real musical accomplishment.

Thomas Attwood – a composer who seems to have been neglected (and it may be the case that some composers warrant neglect) – dominates the early part of the 19th century coronations. Attwood had been a pupil of Mozart, so clearly was no slouch on the keyboard. He wrote an *I Was Glad* for George IV's coronation in 1820, an *Oh Grant the King a Long Life* for William IV in 1830, and would



Victoria at her coronation

have finished an anthem for Queen Victoria had death not inconveniently intervened. (Ah death! That sternest of critics.)

Because Victoria was such a determined long-liver we don't get another coronation anthem until Parry's magnificent *I Was Glad* for the coronation of Edward VII, recycled in 1911 for George V, and again for Elizabeth II in 1953, with

cover versions for the weddings of Charles and Diana, and William and Kate. That 1953 coronation also had Vaughan Williams' *O Taste and See* which many of us would have warbled as boy sopranos, as well as his arrangement of the *Old Hundred*.

As Elizabeth II also looks set to be a long-liver, perhaps it's as well to seize the day and take our chance and sing these wonderful coronation pieces in surroundings (almost) as magnificent as Westminster Abbey.

#### 1953 Coronation facts:

- A seat in the stands along the processional route to the Abbey cost £4
- The coronation was attended by 8,000 guests, and the musical forces included a choir of 400 voices, an orchestra of 600, plus military trumpeters
- A special dish was created for the event: Coronation Chicken (basically cold chicken curry in a sandwich)



## BRIGIT'S MUSICAL CLASSICS

St George's President, Brigit Forsyth, was a surprise guest on Radio 3 at the end of April, when she introduced her personal classical favourites in 'Saturday Classics'.

Brigit presented a diverse selection of music, in particular illustrating her love of the cello. All the big names were there: du Pré, Casals, Yo Yo Ma, Rostropovich (whom Brigit heard live on his first visit to the UK, from the front row of the concert hall).

Her choice included works by Bach (she's trying to learn all the cello sonatas by heart!), Fauré, Shostakovich, Vivaldi, Elgar, Moeran and Glass.

Hidden away amongst the usual masterpieces were some rather more off-the-wall selections. The cellist Beatrice Harrison who persuaded the BBC to record her playing in her garden at night, with nightingales in full voice in the background. Astor Piazzolla's *Liber-*

*tango*, one of the best known Argentinian tango tunes. An astonishing performance of Burt Bacharach's *South American Getaway* from *Butch Cassidy*, played by the 12 cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic, clearly moonlighting from their day job.

And most unusual of all, the *Flight of the Bumble-Bee* played by Yo Yo Ma in a duet with Bobby McFerrin, who uses his voice to pretend to be a cello. (An idea for a concert perhaps ...?)

### STOP PRESS!

**We hope that Brigit will be able to join us at our VIVAT! concert, and entertain us with commentary on some of the works being performed. However, we're waiting to hear whether she can fit this into her busy performance schedule—so, watch our website for more detail!**

### WHO IS BOBBY MCFERRIN?

The son of Robert McFerrin, the first African American to sing a principal role with the New York Metropolitan Opera (and who provided Sidney Poitier's voice in *Porgy and Bess*), and his wife Sara, professor of voice at Fullerton College in Fullerton, California, Bobby McFerrin is a celebrated American singer and conductor, and a diverse musical artist who has won numerous awards for his performances and compositions, including ten Grammy Awards and a Peabody Award for outstanding contributions to American music. With a four-octave vocal range combining pop, world, folk, and jazz elements, McFerrin developed a number of vocal techniques including scat singing, circular breathing, and the ability to imitate a variety of instruments.



Bobby McFerrin

## DE-COMPOSING

What's the first thing a composer says at work?  
*Would you like fries with that?*

What do you call a composer without a significant other?  
*Homeless.*

Why do composers have to be awake by six o'clock?  
*Because most shops close by six thirty.*

What would a composer do if he won a million dollars?  
*Continue to compose until the money ran out.*

A movie director hired a well known composer to write the score for his new family film. After seeing the film, the composer decided that a really different instrumentation would

best fit the mood of the film. So he used the woodwind sections from three of the best jazz bands and the high string sections of three of the best symphony orchestras for the work. Soon after the soundtrack had been added to the film, the composer received an angry message from the director: the film rating board had given his family film an '18' rating for too much sax and violins.

A contemporary composer (who shall remain nameless) is commissioned to write a new orchestral work. He needs the money but is unwilling to put in the work required to compose a new piece, so he comes up with a plan: 'I'll take a piece by some

other contemporary composer and rewrite all the parts backwards! Nobody will know...'. A few months later, at the first rehearsal, the parts are passed out, the conductor gives the downbeat ... and the opening bars of Beethoven's 5th Symphony ring out.

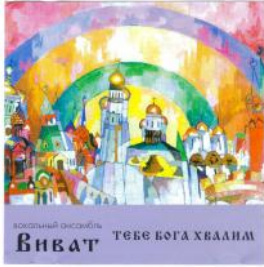
Aaron Copland was in a bookshop when he noticed a woman buying two books--a volume of Shakespeare, and Copland's *What to Listen For in Music*. As the customer turned to leave, he stopped her and asked, 'Would you like me to autograph your book?' The woman looked blankly at the proud composer and asked, 'Which one?'

*Discovered by Ursula Birkett:*  
"To whom then should I better compare the singer than to a drunken man who does indeed get home but does not in the least know by what path he returns?" - from the treatise *De Musica*, dating from about 1100

Knock knock.  
Who's there?  
Phillip Glass.

Knock knock .  
Who's there?  
Phillip Glass.

Knock knock .  
Who's there?  
Phillip Glass ...



## ВИАТ or VIVAT RUSSIAN STYLE BY GWYNETH PAILIN

In addition to the gilded palaces and onion-shaped domes visited on a Russian tour there was an unexpected delight. Wandering round the Church of Elijah the Prophet in Yaroslavl we became aware of a wonderful sound. In a corner of one of the rooms were four men singing Russian church music. The visitors stood spellbound by the sheer quality of the performance – the amazing sonorities, the range of dynamics and the precision of the ensemble work. After they had finished we queued to buy CDs and learned not only that the bass

could sing a low A but that the name of the group was Vivat – which was an extra reason to buy a recording!

The group were founded in 2001 in Nizhny Novgorod with the aim 'to revive and popularize old Russian vocal traditions.'

The following day there was another treat in store in a former church in Uglich and this time we had chairs! The group numbered six and they sang arrangements of Russian folk tunes. One was of the Volga boat song which our own tour

group choir had been trying to master. Again the quality of the singing was almost unbelievable – particularly the quietest sounds imaginable – and I found myself looking round to see what instrument was playing the really low notes. Of course there were CDs for sale and of course I bought one – this time of folk songs.

This male ensemble were called Kovcheg and though they don't have a website they can be found at [www.russianmusic-fest.ru](http://www.russianmusic-fest.ru) (the International Rachmaninov Russian Music Festival) as well as on YouTube.

## OLYMPIC ANTHEMS: FASTER, HIGHER, STRONGER—LOUDER



THE OFFICIAL OLYMPIC Anthem was written by Spyros Samaras (1863-1917), a Corfu-born composer. Although it was first played in 1896, the IOC didn't name it as the official anthem until 1958. It is sung when the Olympic flag is raised and lowered. The words were written by Greek poet Kostis Palamas (1859-1943), a fervent Greek nationalist. The lyrics of the first verse are:

*Immortal spirit of antiquity, / Father of the true, beautiful and good, / Descend, appear, shed over us they light / Upon this ground and under this sky / Which has first witnessed thy unperishable fame, / Give life and animation to those noble games!*



The Miraculous Mercury and Montserrat Caballé, auditioning for *Die Fledermaus*

THE MOST PROLIFIC Olympic composer is John Williams, who wrote official tunes for the 1984, 1988, 1996 and 2002 Olympics. Particularly popular is the Olympic Fanfare he wrote for the 1984 Los An-

geles games, frequently used to accompany TV sporting events.

THE MOST MIRACULOUS Olympic song was *Barcelona*, sung by Queen's Freddie Mercury and Spain's opera star, Montserrat Caballé, at the opening ceremony of the Barcelona games in 1992—indeed a miracle, as Freddie had died in 1991. He had written the song five years earlier when Barcelona had been chosen as the Olympic venue, but the performance had been recorded at an earlier festival, and was shown on the stadium's video screen during the ceremony. The actual theme song was the far less miraculous *Amigos para siempre* (*Friends for ever*) and was sung by José Carreras and Sarah Brightman—the latter popping up again in Beijing 2008, when she sang *You and Me* with Chinese pop star Liu Huan (brave career choice there from the former Mrs Lloyd Webber).

THE MOST POPULAR OLYMPIC song (believe it or not) is *Hand*

*in Hand*, from the 1988 Seoul games. Sung by Koreana, a four-member group, it has been a popular tune in Asia ever since, and is apparently often used for music graduation exercises in the Philippines.

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL music event occurred in Beijing in 2008 when 7-year old Yang Peiyi, whose voice was heard at the Opening Ceremony but who was regarded as not pretty enough to be seen, was replaced on stage by 9-year old Lin Miaoke, who mimed to the song.

THE LEAST MEMORABLE SONG? Pick any one from a long list of over-orchestrated, over-wrought and over-hyped cacophonies.

THE LONDON OLYMPICS will feature a closing ceremony played (well, mimed—it's being pre-recorded) by London Symphony Orchestra and entitled 'A Symphony of British Music'. Fortunately, the Sex Pistols have turned down an invitation to participate.



## ST GEORGE'S SINGERS' NEWS

### Sopranos in the frame

After the fantastic fund-raising efforts of the altos, followed by those (almost as amazing) of the men, it's now the sopranos' turn to practise their wallet-opening skills. So, what's the difference between a soprano and a blackmailer? You can negotiate with a blackmailer.

### Welcome

A warm welcome to soprano Sarah Ashton, who joins us just in time for the final concert of the season.

### Food

Many thanks to Andrea Millington for all her hard work in producing a new edition of the St George's Singers' recipe

book, *Food Glorious Food*. With 52 scrumptious recipes, the book features favourite recipes provided by Choir members, with dishes for every course. Andrea has also provided an electronic version, suitable for downloading to any i-enabled gizmo. Available digitally from any Choir member free of charge—though a small donation to Choir funds would be greatly appreciated!

### Next Season

St George's Singers gets a front page mention in Manchester Camerata's email about their new season. We join them at the Bridgewater Hall on New Year's Eve.

### St George's Church

The refurbishment of St George's Church Poynton is complete—and it looks fabulous. Comfortable, flexible seating, more space, computerized lighting, new sound system—just the place for a Puccini Singing Day! Congrats to Rob the Vicar and his team.

### Poynton Festival

Don't miss Poynton Festival over Jubilee weekend, with SGS in the final concert on 5 June.

### Message to Don

Sorry to hear bass Don Sanders is not well. All good wishes—and hope to see you back soon!

## EGG-CELLENT NEW SOPRANO JOINS ST GEORGE'S



Meet Mabel, the latest recruit to the ranks of the St George's Singers' sopranos. Mabel lives with her owner, Virginia Fox (no jokes about foxes in hen-houses

please!) in Macclesfield, and has already made a big contribution to the choir. Every week she provides six beautiful eggs for sale at Tuesday rehearsals in aid of choir funds. (Mabel's eggs are so eagerly sought that they sometimes don't actually make it into the rehearsal room, but are swiftly paid for and smuggled out by some less than community spirited Singers! Their names have been noted.)

Mabel lives with friends in beautifully appointed free-range

accommodation. Virginia recently moved her into different housing with new flat-mates. This has not met with Mabel's wholehearted approval, and as a result she has instigated an egg-laying go-slow protest (only two eggs per week currently). However, Virginia thinks this will be a temporary measure, designed as a short-term protest, rather than as a negotiating tactic for long-term additional Poultry Resource benefits, and is confident that Mabel will be back to her usual cooperative self very soon.

For those of a fowl inclination, Mabel is a Black Rock hen, a breed that is ideally suited to roaming freely around gardens, and renowned as a good layer. Black Rock hens are highly productive, and are bred from very special and uniquely selected strains of Rhode Island Red and Barred Plymouth Rock in the East of Scotland.

With thick feathering to protect her from the elements, a vigorous constitution and immune system, and a body large enough to be insulated from wet and cold, Mabel should be able to produce strong egg shells for many years to come—and should continue to lay probably well into her dotage.

As can be seen from the photo, Mabel is a very pretty hen, and, naturally adorned in her St George's Singers' colours of red and black, will be a splendid addition to the sopranos, particularly in works such as *Hen in Alium*, *Lay a Garland*, *Rejoice in the Hen*, *Gloria in Eggcelis*, *Eggs Benedicamus Domino* and the all-time favourite, *Now is the Month of Laying*.

Mabel has already raised her initial target of £10 for the Choir—and looks set to raise even more in the coming months.

Researchers into the impact of music on a chicken's egg laying came to the conclusion that rock music may be more effective at increasing egg production, but classical music (which came in a close second to rock) is actually what chickens prefer. Rock apparently stresses the birds out, by annoying them. (Well, would you like Led Zeppelin in your ears 8 hours a day?) Classical music on the other hand soothes them, resulting in happier hens and easy-cook eggs.



This article was found on the 'Cardiff Singer of the World' website. We thought it might be of use to any members of St George's thinking of applying—for tickets to the final concert that is—and anyone else interested in maintaining good vocal health.

## TIPS FOR GOOD VOCAL HEALTH

Consultant laryngologist Tom Harris shares his top tips on maintaining good vocal health. Here are some of the many things you can do to help prevent problems developing in healthy voices.

### Rest

If you have a throat infection or laryngitis it is best to rest your voice. Do not speak more than you absolutely have to. A day off work when an infection is acute may save you a week off later on, especially if you have a vocally demanding job.

### Steam

Steam inhalations are very soothing for strained, laryngitic voices. The steam reduces inflammation and irritation very effectively.



Graham was having second thoughts about his vocal coach's recommended steam inhalation treatment

### Water

Drink plenty of water. Six to eight large glasses of water a day are usually recommended. The mucous that lubricates your vocal

folds, nose, throat and chest depends on the water content in the body. If you do not drink enough the laryngeal mucous becomes thick and sticky and may interfere with efficient voicing. Vocal folds that are dry are also more vulnerable to damage with excessive or inefficient voice use.

### Posture

Efficient voice production is helped by maintaining good posture. Poor posture can distort your neck/back alignment affecting the resonating spaces in the throat and the control of the laryngeal muscles. It can also affect your

breathing pattern, reducing your ability to control the breath and putting strain on your voice.

### Breathing

Take regular exercise to maintain a good lung capacity. Try not to speak when you are out of breath or speak for too long on one breath. Air is the fuel for your voice. If you have too little air available your voice can become strained and tired.

### Relaxation

Tension in the body tends to generalize and may affect the larynx. Tight tense muscles do not work as efficiently as relaxed muscles and may result in fatigue and discomfort. Jaw, neck and shoulder exercises can help keep the voice relaxed and clases in such things as Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates or Alexander Technique will help improve your general fitness, lung capacity and posture.

### Warm-up

The vocal muscles are like any other muscles in the body; they are less vulnerable to injury and

perform better when warmed up before exercise. A useful selection of warm-up exercises can be found on the Voice Care Network website ([www.voicecare.org.uk](http://www.voicecare.org.uk)).

### Warm-down

It is also important to warm the voice down after use, especially



Rachel's relaxation was so deep she was totally unaware that her Bridgewater Hall debut was about to start

after singing or speaking against noise. Noisy environments tend to make us speak louder and higher in pitch. Higher pitches are produced with stretched thinned vocal folds. If the muscles that control pitch are over-used, the voice may begin to fatigue more quickly. Exercises that focus on your lower pitch range are likely to relax the pitching mechanism and reduce vocal fatigue.

Tom Harris is a Consultant Laryngologist. He ran the Lewisham Multidisciplinary Voice Clinic, is the Founding Chairman of the Voice Research Society (now the British Voice Association) and opened one of the first Multidisciplinary Voice Clinics in the UK in 1982. Tom has been an Honorary Senior Lecturer for Guy's, King's and St Thomas's Hospital Trust, a Consultant to RADA and a member of the editorial board of *The Journal of Voice* (USA).



In view of the threatened water shortages this year, the basses decided to find alternative ways of lubricating their vocal folds

## WAKEFIELD MUSIC LIBRARY SAVED

Wakefield Music Library, threatened with closure for the past few months, has been taken over by Fresh Horizons, a local social enterprise in Huddersfield, who will manage the new music service, which is to be renamed the Yorkshire Music Library.

They aim to provide an online reservation system where customers can view the library catalogue and reserve music. They also hope to develop an

'ask the expert' area on the website, where experts from various fields of music offer their knowledge and expertise to members and societies that need help in choosing repertoires, or general advice about venues, music arrangements etc. The site will also provide links to performances by orchestras and choirs and allow news to be posted to the site on concerts, new stock, and other local support organisations.

A new website will be launched soon, and the Library will be moving to its new location on Red Doles Lane, Huddersfield on 14th May.

SGS Librarian Gwyneth Pailin particularly wishes to thank all St George's members who wrote individually to their MPs, Councillors and other influencers to ensure that our serious concerns were registered, and acted upon.



The altar of Notre Dame de Paris



An Old English Rose named in honour of Benjamin Britten



## A SEASON OF RARE DELIGHTS

St George's 2012-13 Season Brochure will be published in June, detailing another exciting programme of works for the coming season. Highlights include:

French sacred and secular choral music, including Fauré's *Requiem*, and *Cantique de Jean Racine*. Whilst the *Requiem* is known by all choral music lovers, the rest of the programme offers some rare treats, with songs by Debussy (in his 150th anniversary year), Ravel, Poulenc, Villetta and Saint-Saëns which may be new to most of our audience. We're thrilled that the 2011 Young Chorister of the Year, Ella Taylor, will be lending her beautiful voice to the *Requiem*.

Christmas wouldn't be the same without our traditional *Carols and Brass by Candlelight* at St George's Church in Stockport, with VBS Poynton Band. This

is swiftly followed by New Year's Eve, which sees St George's Singers back at the Bridgewater Hall with Manchester Camerata in the traditional operatic knees-up, this year featuring soprano Rebecca Nelsen.

The Singing Day in January 2013 sees us back at our home base, St George's Church in Poynton, with a fabulous day's singing in Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. Puccini knows a good tune when he hears one, so if you've never been to one of our Singing Days before, this might be the year to start.

Debussy's anniversary year is followed by an even bigger musical celebration: the centenary of Benjamin Britten's birth. Choral and orchestral music will be on the programme, with some of Britten's



best loved works from his youth through to the mature works of his later life.

May will see the Choir on tour to Paris, and then we end the season with some Handel, Vi-



valdi (and who knows what else!) at a summer concert in the Monastery. With a concert title of 'Gloria' - you'll get the general impression!

Download from the website, pick up a copy at our VIVAT concert, or join our mailing list. Don't forget—a season ticket saves you money!





Sue Taylor received a charming note of thanks from the family, following our singing at the Requiem Mass.

**“We have had numerous comments from friends, colleagues and clergy to say how fitting it was to have the choir belting out the hymns – just as my Mother used to do at St Chads.**

**“I should appreciate you passing on my very best regards and tell them all that they did a great job. Mum would have loved it!”**



**How many sopranos does it take to change a light bulb?**

**One. She holds the bulb and the world revolves around her.**

**How many altos does it take to screw in a light bulb?**

**None. They can't get that high.**

**How many tenors does it take to change a light bulb?**

**Four. One to change the bulb and three to bitch that they could have done it if they had the high notes.**

**How many basses does it take to change a light bulb?**

**None. They're so macho they prefer to walk in the dark and bang their shins.**

## HOW MANY SINGERS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB? BY JEAN EGERTON

On Monday 16th April twenty intrepid Singers travelled by road, rail and foot to St Chad's Church, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester where we were to provide choral music for a funeral. Normally The Cheshire Consort, the group of Singers who earn funds for the choir by performing by request, have the happy task of singing at weddings, so this engagement was a bit of a departure from our usual role.

We had not had any opportunity for rehearsal but had been assured the music was very straightforward and we had all spent some time familiarising ourselves with the emailed copy of an unfamiliar but rather lovely piece, *Missa de Angelis*, a Gregorian Mass arranged by Christopher Moore. Was I the only one to find that, although the notes were easy, fitting the words to them was less so?

The first on the scene were Dave and Anne Francis with me in tow, planning to have a discussion with the organist before the rest of the choir arrived. (Sue Taylor had disappeared to the wilds of North Wales, leaving Anne holding the score!) Having eventually found our way into the church we were met by an elderly gentleman (the term 'ancient retainer' immediately sprang to mind) who introduced himself as Damien, the Sacristan.

Damien was delighted to see us as he immediately spotted an opportunity to enlist our help with a little task. He led us to the front of the church where he had been about to change a light bulb. This may sound simple, but the light bulb in question was some fifteen feet above the floor and approximately the size of a large melon. He asked us to hold the stepladder, but gallant Dave, probably with visions of having

to deal with a serious first aid incident, stepped in and insisted on taking over. There followed a nerve-wracking five minutes which felt like thirty, especially to Anne who could hardly watch. Two altos anxiously gripped the ladder as the valiant bass carefully climbed the step ladder and standing precariously at full stretch on the top step, successfully unscrewed the old bulb and fitted the new one. Meanwhile Damien helpfully explained that the screw thread was very liable to cross, causing the bulb (which cost £34) to blow when switched on. To everyone's relief the operation was concluded successfully and without mishap just as the rest of the choir arrived.

From that point on the proceedings became increasingly surreal. It was carefully explained that there were no toilet facilities in the church: the pub and café over the road allowed churchgoers to use their facilities but expected them to partake of some refreshment in return. Alternatively, the toilet in the adjacent priest's house could be used by special arrangement and only under the close supervision of a church officer in case anyone took a fancy to the priest's iPod.

The choir were to sing from the organ loft which was reached via a tiny spiral staircase accessed through a convincing replica of the Grotto at Lourdes. Once in position in the organ loft, we could see nothing of the body of the church but floated, out of sight, high above the events unfolding below. The powerful incense rising up to our perch accumulated to such a level that it was in danger of rendering singing impossible.

We were told that the musical component of the service had been changed as the priest felt

that several movements of the Mass were inappropriately cheerful for a funeral service. Consequently the order of service we had been sent in advance was significantly different from the one that the mourners had been given—and neither of which bore a great deal of resemblance to the service that was actually conducted below. To those of us unfamiliar with the complexities of the catholic requiem mass, it was all very confusing.

Fortunately the organist proved to be a tower of strength. Moving silently from his seat at the organ to whisper in Anne Francis' ear at every transition, he shepherded us calmly and authoritatively through the many parts of the service. With his help and a certain amount of hasty (but quiet) paper shuffling we managed to sing the right bits at approximately the right time. He even remembered to complement us on our singing!

The deceased was a lady who had been a stalwart of the church and was clearly remembered with genuine affection and gratitude by the priests. She had presided over the accounts of the church with great efficiency, taught in the Sunday school and sung her heart out' in the choir for many years. Her family spoke eloquently and movingly of their debt to her as she strived to ensure they benefited from an education to a level far higher than she had been able to access.

Though the experience had been at times little short of Pythonesque, it was, I felt, a privilege to have been able to make a contribution to the celebration of the life of such a dedicated and determined lady.

## QUIZ NIGHT – BRAINS IN HARMONY

BY DAVE FRANCIS



The winning team of Lorraine, Helen and Rodney—with George making an invaluable contribution on his specialist subject, Root Vegetable Cropping Rates in the Tundra, 1835 to 1969

Each section of the Choir is taking it in turns to organise fund-raising activities. The contribution of the tenors and basses to the fund-raising campaign was a Quiz Night, held on Saturday 28 April at the Church Hall. It was attended by about 60 people, organised into teams of 4 (ish).

In the best tradition of such quizzes, plenty of daft names were chosen to identify the teams, such as Don't Knows,

Clueless, Wytches of Whalley, and George Osborne Ate My Wallet. Rounds of questions were provided by Mark Warrington and Dave Francis. Mark had agreed to be the question master but was unable to attend due to family illness, so Dave took on this role, with Michael Peat as scorer.

In addition to rounds of questions read by the quizmaster there were two table rounds, to be worked out throughout the evening, 'Scrambled names of musicians' and 'Name that face'.

At the interval a hotpot supper was served. Providing a hot

meal for 60 people was an interesting challenge, but with the help of kitchen supremo Peter Farrington and a large number of slow cookers borrowed from various choir members, the hungry were fed. Thanks also to John Pears for organising the raffle during the break.

The result of the quiz? The clear winners, the Deaf Tones, had just three members – Helen Rollison, Lorraine and Rodney Lighton. Impressive brain power, eh?

Even more impressively, the event raised around £320 for the Choir. Very well done gentlemen!

**This year's Young Musician of the Year culminated in a final featuring three phenomenal young players: cellist Laura Van Der Heijden (the ultimate winner), pianist Yuanfan Yang (yet another Chetham's student in the final), and Charlotte Barbour-Condini, a recorder player. So seldom do we hear the recorder on the concert platform, we thought it was the ideal time to find out more about them from St George's alto Helen Rollison**



## LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE RECORDER

BY HELEN ROLLISON

When did you last see a recorder player on the television or hear one on the radio? Now ignoring the recent prominence of Charlotte Barbour-Condini on Young Musician of the Year, when was it? The most likely answer is that you can't remember as the occurrences are few and far between. Radio 3 occasionally plays a baroque recorder concerto or sonata but usually around 1am! Therefore, most people's impressions of the recorder come from primary school recorder groups and as a result the recorder has an image problem.

The recorder is a good class instrument because, like singing, everyone can join in with little technique required. Its simplicity however, is also its downfall; you hardly ever hear a recorder played well! In the UK, school recorder playing is in decline with many primaries not offering recorder at all. Where it is offered children

often prefer guitar or drums, as their favourite band has these, or are moved by parents and teachers onto other wind instruments. This has had knock effects on the National Youth Recorder Orchestras struggling to fill its courses and although the majority of UK music colleges offer recorder as a first instrument, they are rarely oversubscribed. More locally, the Stockport Recorder College was founded for students to continue playing the recorder after primary school. It continues to meet every Saturday, but now caters for ages 7-18+ and teaches complete beginners to beyond grade VIII. In the 1970s it had over 100 students, but now struggles to get 30.

In contrast, however, recorder courses for adults of all standards are often full and recorder playing among the retired is flourishing through the U3A, local council classes and the Society of Recorder Players.

There are approximately 20 recorder orchestras in the UK, ranging from one-to-a-part chamber groups to 60+ player ensembles with nine different sizes of recorders. This is not to mention the numerous professional recorder soloists and ensembles working in the UK. However, concerts by many of these groups struggle for an audience.

Charlotte Barbour-Condini's participation in the Young Musician finals gave the recorder a well needed media boost and demonstrated that it is a proper instrument, not just a stepping stone. Hopefully this will increase media coverage of the recorder and encourage recorder players and teachers to spread the joy of playing. And, maybe, next time you see an advert for concert involving the recorder, you might just think of attending.



A video of the rehearsal for the 1953 coronation attended by Andrea can be found at <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/coronation-rehearsal/query/01001600>

## THE CORONATION, SOPRANO FUNDRAISING AND ME BY ANDREA MILLINGTON

I was born on 2nd June and in 1953, as a child, enjoyed the coronation celebrations. There were street parties, a Sunday School party, a school party and more. At each one anyone with 2nd June as their birthday was given a present. I did very well!! Some of them involved dressing up too and my mother, a very good needle-woman, made a number of outfits. I particularly remember being a Coronation Gypsy (an odd concept) and wearing a lovely red taffeta dress and bolero all edged in red, white and blue ribbon. On reflection it looked like a possible soprano outfit for Spanish Gold meets VIVAT?



HM modelling one of Andrea's Mum's creations

Good friends and neighbours took me with them to the procession rehearsal in the Mall. What a treat that was! Everything happened as it would on the day but minus the Queen and Royal Family. We had seats in a stand in the Mall and a great view. England's weather was not kind and at some point later in the day the heavens opened and we were all soaked to the skin. My mother greeting us as we returned home thought I had fallen in the Thames, to the annoyance of our friends who had looked after me very well!

A brace of Darcys—for no particular reason



© BBC www.bbc.co.uk/love

Westminster Abbey where the coronation took place became a special place for me and my musical home. I was fortunate to go to Grey Coat Hospital a school in Westminster (train from the suburbs) and our choir concerts with the boys of Westminster School all took place in the Abbey. Now, somewhat older, I am with the rest of the country, celebrating the coronation again.



Andrea as she was at the Coronation in 1953

As part of the sopranos fundraising initiative Sue Sawyer offered a tour of Lyme Hall and Gardens and one of the dates available was 2nd June. So what could be better than to share my birthday on this Jubilee year with Irene Gibbons (SGS soprano) and old friends Val and Ted on a day at Lyme Park. I think Mr Darcy emerging from the lake will have to be imagined as Sue couldn't quite manage that. Never mind—we can dream!

Blue Peter Badge then Mabel (Virginia's hen) would get one for her delicious eggs. There are handicrafts, cards, marmalade etc, all contributing to fundraising.



Lyme Park—and THAT lake

The sopranos have been very busy and will continue fundraising throughout the term. The plants have been in great demand and the cakes, well, what can I say, eaten and enjoyed, just excellent. If we had an SGS equivalent of a

So this year on my Coronation Day birthday I hope to have a super day out, celebrate and look back nostalgically over the Jubilee weekend and look forward to our St George's Singers Jubilee celebration concert VIVAT on 17th June.



## OUR VIETNAM TRIP BY ANTHEA SLATER

Hanoi is MAD. A swarm of motorbikes carrying everything from double beds to whole families. Crossing the road is an achievement, needs courage to walk slowly straight across, whilst the traffic weaves around on all sides. A colourful, different way of family life on the streets. The sky thick with electric cables all seemingly balanced on the trees. Food wonderful, people very friendly.



Over-night train north to Sapa. Four to a tiny cabin with bunk benches, very cosy with our fellow

passengers taking it in turns to move! The night was very noisy; bumping, bouncing, clanking, clanging and totally devoid of sleep! Then travelled by bus as the sun rose over the mountains. Beautiful.



Spent day walking with minority ethnic groups Black Hmong, Glay people, and the Red Dzao, wonderful insight into their very modest lives. Thick mist and shared trail with buffalos, the red

mud was very slippery. Giggles rather than views, and covered in mud, I had to go to dinner in my pyjamas! No kidding!! Cooking lesson in Hanoi. Chef took us around the fascinating market first, then on with aprons, just like Master Chef. Our efforts were to be our

lunch. Great fun, learnt loads, interesting tastes. Astonishingly everywhere Xmas trees, elaborate gingerbread houses, Santas and SNOWMEN!

Packed small rucksack for 'home stay' and told it would be cold and communal, but we hardy folk from the UK thought the weather was good. Amazing bus journey to Mai Chau Village (isolated until 1990s), wooden houses, animals below and sleeping above. People were weaving or backs bent over the rice fields. Buffalo wandering around and fabulous mountain views.

All slept together on the floor, very matey! We woke at 3.30 to rousing chorus of cocks crowing in three different keys, dogs barking and assorted rural noises. However we were warm, so dosed fitfully until coffee. Breakfast was hot bread and omelette all prepared in a tiny kitchen with just a wood fire.



The junk that we slept on in Halong Bay

13/12/2011

Fascinating 4-hour bus trip to the beautiful Halong Bay. Mopeds carrying large pigs and assorted animals, new babies and mountains of assorted food; difficult see the driver. Weather was clear and bright, took small boat to huge caves, climbed 420 steps for an amazing view. Small beach for swim; fabulous. Very impressed with our comfortable junk. Superb food, one course was a fish served in a fishing net made out of a whole carrot.

Water puppets in Hanoi, musicians played very beautifully on unusual instruments, the one stringed *dunbow* player was memorable. Small theatre, full audience. Highly painted puppets were manipulated by skilled folk up to their thighs in



Orchestra for the Water Puppets.....they were excellent

14/12/2011

..Slight difference in walking styles!!

06/12/2011



water. Cycle ride, rickety arm-chair attached to an old bike. Imagine being in the middle of the M25, manic! Motorbikes, mopeds, taxis, cars, buses all came within an inch.

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. He looks in a peaceful doze, died in 1969 aged 79. Saw his modest houses, and admired the temple on one stilt.

Visited 'Hanoi Hilton' the very austere prison, heard of such torture and cruelty, very sobering. Fascinating details of Viet culture, history and philosophy. Very impressed with their outlook on life and yet they live within a communist society. Fifty-four different ethnic groups all respected and preserved.

Rainy Hue was practically under water. Explored pagodas, temples, tombs and enjoyed all the history, but missed the views. The huge numbers of motorbikes and drivers were all swaddled in bright coloured plastic ponchos. Bewildering scene of fast-moving colour in the driving rain. Impressed with how folk cope every day in such difficult circumstances, especially when life is lived so much on the street.

pretty streets filled with small shops Working on a farm, given traditional costumes of brown shirt/conical hat. Prepared herb bed, fed with dried and washed seaweed, watered with two cans suspended from our neck. John looked wonderful and worked harder than anyone keeping his lovely big smile! Lemongrass hot footbath afterwards, very welcome.

Cookery demonstration. Fill pancake with pork and prawn, crisp, then put in rice paper, fill with mixed greens roll into a fat sausage, dip in chilli sauce. Delicious! We ate rather a lot and then were brought five other gorgeous dishes but always with sticky rice! Food generally fantastic, we have enjoyed Pho, hilal, amazing seafood, BBQ of wild boar (missed the goats nipples), tried snake wine, elephant ear (fish) whole coconuts to drink. Live snake and paddy field chicken (rat) also offered. Tummies all okay, no nasty smells, flies or mosquito bites.

Flight to Saigon. Shock to be in a noisy city again. Saigon was rocking! Party time for everyone. Tiny children in red and white, queuing to post their letter to Santa. Snow White and seven Santas on motor bikes! We went to the 23rd floor of the Sheraton for the view, fantastic.

Our excellent guide told details about the life in this beautiful country. Very thought provoking and humbling that the Viet people forgive and look to the future whilst their children are

still being born deformed thanks to Agent Orange. Photos were particularly harrowing. We crawled through the Cu Chi tunnels (widened for the



22/12/2011  
Many many food boats on the Mekong

non-Viet visitor!) and were staggered at their ingenuity. A very sobering experience, much moved by these exposures to war atrocities.

Mekong Delta, travelling by small boat for the day to Can Tho. 35 degrees - humid. Chinese warehouse, beautiful temples, sweet 'factory', water heaving with every market and village life activity, a really fabulous experience. Later on we climbed up Sam Mountain for a wonderful sunset. A fittingly glorious finale to our Vietnamese adventure.



18/12/2011

Cham Museum and climbed the Marble Mountain. Deep inside, the Vietcong had an operating theatre during the war. Hoi An Japanese bridge, Chinese temples, Buddhist buildings, ancient houses,



27/12/2011  
Tonle Sap, 2nd largest fresh water lake in the World. In the wet season the houses are nearly submerged

## St George's Singers

For more information, please contact:

Peter Marcus (Chair), 01904 784455  
chair@st-georges-singers.org.uk

Jacqui Smith (Secretary), 01625 533779  
enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk

David Robson (Publicity), 07764 235261  
publicity@st-georges-singers.org.uk

Hemiola Editor: Susan Hodgson  
susan.hodgson28@btinternet.com



Find us on the web at:

[www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)



To receive a regular copy of *Hemiola*, complete the Mailing List registration on the website, or contact the Publicity Officer.

### ST GEORGE'S 2012-2013 SEASON OUTLINE PROGRAMME

10 November 2012  
Fauré *Requiem*, plus  
Debussy, Poulenc, Ravel,  
Saint-Saëns and Villetta

8 December 2012  
*Carols & Brass by Candlelight*

31 December 2012  
*New Year's Eve Gala*,  
Bridgewater Hall

19 January 2013  
Singing Day—  
Puccini *Messa di Gloria*

23 February 2013  
*Britten at 100—*  
100th Anniversary Concert

23 June 2013  
*Gloria!*  
Vivaldi and Handel  
at The Monastery

Ticket Hotline: 01663 764012  
tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk  
www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

## MANCHESTER SINGS

### RNCMSU Bach Ensemble

A word of congratulations to the students of the RNCM for their terrific series of free concerts over the spring and summer in St Ann's, Manchester. The RNCMSU Bach Ensemble is organized by the Students Union, and was created to give students an opportunity to play and sing more Bach and to bring more Bach performances to Manchester audiences. Next concert: Friday 15 June, 1pm. Entry free, but donation to church restoration appreciated.

Summer is coming, and with it the festivals. **Buxton Festival** ([www.buxtonfestival.co.uk](http://www.buxtonfestival.co.uk), 7–25 July) has lots of goodies this year, amongst them:

**Tim Kennedy** and Catherine Hall-Smith return to Buxton

Fringe with *Songs of Sentiment*, lovely romantic Italian songs by Tosti, and English songs by Quilter and contemporaries. Tim and Catherine were nominated for a small ensemble award in last year's Fringe, so don't miss their lunchtime concert in the beautiful acoustic of St John's Church, 13 July, 1pm.

Handel's *Jephtha*, with the Orchestra of the Sixteen and Festival Chorus, conducted by Harry Christophers, with Susan Bickley, James Gilchrist and Gillian Keith. Other operas include Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiade*, Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, and Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*.

On the choral front **A cappella Chor Villach** from Austria, and **Sveti Sedmoschislenitchi (The Seven Saints)** from Russia both

give one performance. Solo recitalists include baritone Mark Stone (who sang with us in *St John Passion*) in a programme of Delius, Ireland, Orr and Quilter; soprano Claire Rutter; and Gillian Keith.

If masses are your thing, Buxton Madrigal Singers perform masses by Mozart (*Spatzenmesse*), Haydn (*Nelson Mass*) and Howells (*Collegium Regale*) on the three festival Sundays.

If you prefer things out of the mainstream, there are also intriguing concerts around Gilbert & Sullivan, a 21st century take on Handel's arias, a homage to Kathleen Ferrier, and an early music street band.

A happy summer of singing!

