



Hemiola

S t G e o r g e ' s S i n g e r s

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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

THE SAINTS COME MARCHING IN

Welcome to the first *Hemiola* of our 2012–13 season—and a look back at our final concert of last season. *VIVAT!* was St George's Singers' contribution to the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, and was a splendid evening at Gorton Monastery featuring great music written for coronations through the ages. The amazing Fine Arts Brass provided musical accompaniment, and our President, Brigit Forsyth linked the programme together with narration and readings from Shakespeare.

It was also an opportunity for the Choir to reveal their new 'uniform'. Nothing too radical, but the introduction of a striking red rose for the ladies, and a very smart red pocket square for the gentlemen. (Lessons were provided in the dressing room beforehand on optimum handkerchief folding techniques!) We had lots of compliments from the audience on our new look.

We were thrilled to be invited back to the Monastery a couple of weeks later by director,

Elaine Griffiths, to entertain the guests at a major fund-raising dinner, at which the newly refurbished 'Saints' statues were celebrated, now they have been installed back in the Monastery nave.

Since our former President, Dame Joan Bakewell, introduced us to Elaine Griffiths, we have sung there every year since it re-opened as a unique and inspiring venue for concerts, weddings and community events. It beat London's Gherkin to win Best UK Unusual Venue earlier this year, and has won national acclaim for the way in which the Monastery has retained its integrity as a spiritual and community centre.

Every time we give a concert at the Monastery, St George's gives any profit we make to the

Monastery Trust, to assist with the ongoing work that needs to be done. So we're delighted to have contributed to its continuing success.

Looking forward—after our French concert on 10 November, we have our traditional *Carols and Brass by Candlelight* at St George's Stockport on Saturday 8 December. This year the concert starts at **7.00pm** to make it more convenient for families with children. And as added fun this year, the concert offers more opportunities for children and adults to sing along—so please come and join us. Tickets £12, £10 concession, and only £2 for children—mince pies, mulled wine and fruit juice included.

St George's Singers at the Saints' Supper



Saturday 10 November, 7.30pm
St George's Church, Stockport

Fauré *Requiem, Cantique de Jean Racine*
Debussy *Trois chansons*
Saint-Saëns *Deux choeurs*
Poulenc *Hymne à la Vierge Noire*
Ravel *Trois chansons*
Villette *Hymne à la Vierge*

Tickets: £14, £12 concessions,
£5 students & children
Tel: 01663 764012

Email: tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk
Online: www.st-georges-singers.org.uk



In ascending order of facial hair:
Francis Poulenc, Claude Debussy and
Camille Saint-Saëns

VIVE LA FRANCE!

The tricolor will be flying over St George's Church in Stockport on 10 November as St George's Singers present their next concert, a delightful programme of vocal music by great French composers of the nineteenth century.

The rise of musical nationalism across Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century was greeted in France by the founding of the National Society for French Music, founded in 1871 by Fauré and others at the end of the Franco-Prussian war. Championing modern French composers, and stimulating a revival of

interest in early French music, the Society generated an outpouring of native musical creativity that allowed a whole series

of French composers to escape from the long shadows cast by Wagner and the Romantics.

The beginnings of this revival were heard in the eclectic, cosmopolitan style developed by Cesar Franck. This led into a specifically French movement, represented by Saint-Saëns and Fauré: cool and classic, ordered and restrained, using music as sonorous form rather than expression of feeling or narrative, and relying on subtle patterns of tones, rhythms and colours.

Out of this came a third movement led by a genius of the first rank, Debussy, who introduced changes in harmonic and or-

chestral usage that made him one of the most potent influences on the entire course of twentieth century music, and whose 150th anniversary we celebrate this year.

One aspect of Debussy's style—often overemphasised—is summed up in the term 'impressionism'. Initially applied to a French school of painting that flourished during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the term was coined by a disapproving critic, perturbed by the apparent lack of form and rigour in Monet's painting *Impression: Soleil levant* (*Impression: Sunrise*) in an 1874 exhibition in Paris.



Impressionists tried to capture fleeting moments directly from nature, particularly sunlight and water, two of the most formless yet luminous phenomena in nature. Their musical counterparts, Debussy and his followers, aimed to evoke moods and sensuous impressions mainly

through harmony and tone colour rather than through linear melody and form. They did not seek to express deeply felt emotion or tell a story but to elicit a mood, a passing sentiment, an atmosphere,



Maurice Ravel

relying on allusion and understatement – the ultimate in 'mood music' – rather than the sometimes overwrought outpourings of the Romantics.

But other early influences con-



tributed to the formation of Debussy's music, particularly literature and the symbolist school of poetry. In 1888 he went to Bayreuth, where his first-hand experience of Wagner convinced him of the need to approach music differently. The following year he encountered Javanese music at the World Exhibition in Paris, and found a delight in decoration and an avoidance of symphonic continuity. Russian music (he spent two summers travelling across Europe as pianist to Madame Meck, Tchaikovsky's patron), and the lure of Spain also influenced him, whilst from the French tradition of Saint-Saëns and Fauré he inherited his refined sensibilities and aristocratic taste.

As well as a lovely selection of secular choral songs by Debussy, Ravel and Saint-Saëns, the Choir will also be performing sacred works by Poulenc and Pierre Villette (his popular *Hymne à la Vierge*), and of course Fauré's much loved *Requiem*.

This concert promises to offer an evening of musical delights: serene, atmospheric, and (of course) elegantly French.



Pierre Villette

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS ...

Amongst the works in our French concert is a group of songs by Maurice Ravel, settings of poems written by the composer himself, who infused a deliberately medieval feel to them. However, the third of the songs, *Ronde*, could just as easily have been written today rather than 100 years ago as an example of the generation gap!

Ronde relates how the old men and women of the village warn the young people against going down to the woods. Amongst the trees lurks a menagerie of creatures who are waiting to attack, kill, enchant or even devour unsuspecting young

men and women. Amongst these vicious predators can be found:

Striges—bloodsucking female demons, half-women/half-bird, often associated with vampires.

Korriganes—evil spirits condemned to live on earth in a penitential state and who like to dance around fountains. They give themselves away when they cannot enumerate the full list of the days of the week!

Babayagai—a hag who flies around on a giant mortar, using the pestle as a rudder, kidnaps and eats small children, and who lives in a hut that stands

on chicken legs. (Some deeply traumatic food-related psychosis behind this one!)

Satyrs—half-human/half-goat creatures who roam around the forests, these are followers of Pan and Dionysus, lovers of wine and women, and ready for every physical pleasure. Ravel (who was clearly a man ahead of his time) took the trouble to include female satyrs in his list as well—thus avoiding trouble with the Equal Opportunities Commission.

So, next time you go walking in Macclesfield Forest—remember the words of the song, and keep a careful eye open!



What do you mean, you don't know where TGI Thursday is?

REQUIEM FOR REMEMBRANCE

Our concert on 10th November falls on the day before Remembrance Sunday. So it is entirely fitting that the central work of the evening is Fauré's *Requiem*.

Recognised at an early age as having exceptional musical gifts, Fauré was sent when he was nine to the École Niedermeyer in Paris—the country's leading institution for training church musicians.

The slightly archaic flavour which infuses some of Fauré's best loved songs owes much to this early training, and is the clue to the basic musical thought behind the *Requiem*.

Primarily a composer of lyric pieces, his works avoid any display of virtuosity, and his refined, highly civilised music embodies the aristocratic qualities of the French tradition.

In contrast with his harmonic and melodic style, which pushed boundaries for his time, Fauré's rhythms tended to be subtle and repetitive, with little to break the flow of the line.

His musical personality is revealed most fully in nearly one hundred songs, set largely to French texts. His music has been described as Hellenic, its clarity, balance and serenity recalling the classic spirit of ancient Greek art—qualities to the fore in his *Requiem*.

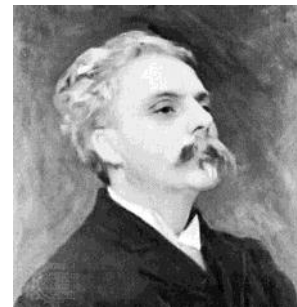
In 1885 Fauré's father died, his mother following her husband to the grave two and a half years later. It was between these two bereavements that he wrote his *Requiem*. It was first performed at the Church of the Madeleine in 1888, and later again at Fauré's own funeral service in 1924.

Unlike the requiems of Berlioz and Verdi, Fauré's does not underline the terrors of judgement, but instead concentrates on the idea of

eternal rest—which concept opens and closes the work.

We are thrilled to welcome two wonderful young soloists to sing with St George's Singers in the *Requiem*, as well as presenting solo items by Gounod and Poulenc. Baritone Daniel Shelvey is a rising star at the Royal Northern College of Music, and soprano Ella Taylor has already achieved nationwide fame, winning the 2010 BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year competition. Ella (whose father happens to be St George's Singers' own Musical Director, Neil) will be singing with the Choir for the first time at this concert.

And as a special treat, a flute and piano duet will entertain the audience before the concert, setting the mood for a very special evening.



Gabriel Fauré



'No external effect detracts from its sober and somewhat severe expression of grief: no disquiet or agitation disturbs its profound meditation, no doubt tarnishes its unassailable faith, its quiet confidence, its tender and peaceful expectation.'
– Nadia Boulanger, who conducted the first performance of Fauré's Requiem in England.

SYMPHONY OF (LESS THAN) A THOUSAND BY MICHAEL CALUM

In October 2011 I was a Deva Singer. We took part in the first performance of Mahler's 8th Symphony in Oporto, Portugal, alongside members of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic choir and Southport Bach

Choir, in Oporto's new Casa da Musica.

Technically the Deva Singers don't exist. People who helped the Hallé match the forces of the

CBSO for Birmingham's Mahler 8 in 2010 were asked to help Liverpool with their own performance in the Anglican cathedral; then Liverpool was asked to provide the voices for Oporto. At some stage we extras needed a name, and as most came from Chester ... only later did it emerge that Deva (Roman name for Chester) tends to be associated with the local lunatic asylum.

So there we Devas were on the

charter jet to Oporto, heading for our fourth Mahler 8 in a year. After a bumpy landing in a rainstorm, our coach ride to the hotel gave us a first view of the Casa da Musica, described by Lonely Planet as 'a gigantic piece of raw crystal'. They're not wrong.

We settled down to a strenuous cycle of rehearsals, sightseeing and excellent food. Oporto is a picturesque and historic city with some unusual attractions (the railway station with the astonishing wall-tiles, for example) and an attractive shabbiness. Rehearsals were quite another matter. The choir seating plan was constantly being rethought (I never sat in the same seat twice) and the German conductor, Christoph Koenig, addressing us in English and the orchestra in Portuguese took some getting used to. To crown it all,

what we had expected to be a final rehearsal with 'visitors allowed by rehearsal pass only' turned out to be a performance in all but name, to a full house.

But in the end it was worth it. With choirs of 94 adults and 42 children, and an orchestra of 117, we were nowhere near a thousand, but we fitted the space. We had some excellent soloists, and choirs and orchestra gave their all. We got a standing ovation, and the added roar when Christoph brought the choir to our feet made it very clear that we had done a good job.



The exterior of Oporto's Casa da Musica and (right) the interior



Rebecca Nelsen

SING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH ST GEORGE'S

What will you be doing on the last night of 2012? If you haven't got your celebrations sorted yet, why not come and listen to St George's Singers at the Bridgewater Hall and bring in 2013 in style.

The Choir has been invited by Manchester Camerata to join them on stage in this year's prestigious Opera Gala. We'll be singing popular opera choruses including Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (*Nabucco*), Anvil Chorus (*Il Trovatore*), chorus from *Eugene Onegin*, Triumphal Scene (*Aida*), Soldiers Chorus (*Faust*) and other favourites.

The conductor for the evening is Robert Ziegler, and young American soprano Rebecca

Nelsen will be joining orchestra and chorus, and singing arias from Puccini, Verdi, Tchaikovsky and Strauss.

Recent reviews in the European and American press have called Rebecca 'extraordinary' and 'a star' and she has already sung lead roles in some of opera's most prestigious venues.

Tickets are £52, £42 and £32, available from the Bridgewater Hall Box Office, tel 0844 907 9000.

Pre-concert dining and entertainment is also available at the Hall to make your New Year celebrations one to remember.

We hope to see you there!

Monday 31 December 2012
8.00 pm
New Year's Eve Gala
The Bridgewater Hall
Manchester



PUCCINI IN POYNTON—SINGING DAY

Following the great success of Mozart's *Requiem* last year, Musical Director Neil Taylor has chosen another sacred work, this one full of great tunes and grand choruses: Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. And as you would imagine from Puccini, there's lots of dramatic expression, gorgeous melodies and operatic highlights.

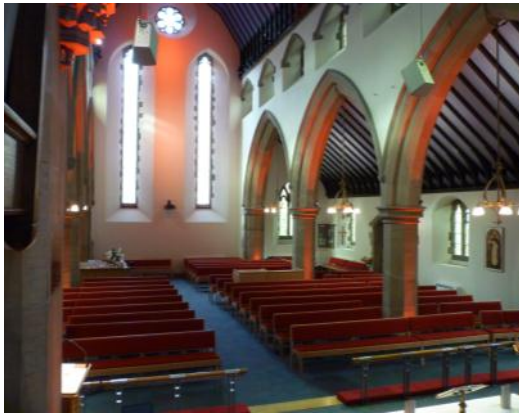
Giacomo Puccini (christened Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria) was born in Lucca in 1858, and along with the names, inherited the long musical traditions of his family. Generations of Puccinis had served as organists, teachers and choir masters at San Martino in Lucca, largely concerned with church music (though one Michele had briefly attempted an opera). The young Giacomo was expected by tradition to follow the family example and devote his life to the musical life of Lucca. He was a chorister at San Martino from the age of ten, and began his organist's duties at fourteen, a position being kept warm for him by his uncle Fortunato Magi, until he was old enough to take it on professionally.

Then fate intervened. In 1876 the young Giacomo went to Pisa to see a performance of Verdi's *Aida*, a trip that changed the course of his life, and his life's work. Four years later, he finished his studies at the Istituto Musicale Pacini in Lucca, and in the autumn of 1880 he left the city to begin studying in Milan and take up his real vocation: opera.

Before leaving Lucca, however, he had to write a graduation piece, for which he wrote *Messa di Gloria*, a work that marked the end of his apprenticeship. Although well received the work was not published in Puccini's lifetime, and was only

rediscovered again in the 1950s by an American priest, Father Dante del Fiorentino, whilst researching in Italy for a biography of the composer. He met Puccini's musical secretary who showed him the manuscript of the *Mass*. Excited by his discovery, Father Dante edited the work for publication in the United States under the title *Messa di Gloria*. The work was first performed on 12 July 1952 in Chicago.

Originally titled *Mass for Four Voices and Orchestra*, the work is likely to have derived its *Messa di Gloria* designation from the



importance this setting gives to its wonderful second movement, the *Gloria*, which lasts for almost half the performance time of the whole piece and exhibits the drama and power befitting the glory of the song of the angels.

Puccini went on to write some of the world's favourite and most performed operas. He loved life, fast cars (he was nearly killed in one accident), and was never seen without a cigarette or his favourite Toscana cigars. Whilst writing *Turandot*, he was diagnosed with throat cancer and, although initial treatment in Brussels was successful, his heart couldn't take the strain and he died in 1924 with the opera unfinished. His death was announced to the

stunned audience at a performance in Rome of *La Bohème*.

Last year the Singing Day had to move from its usual home due to the refurbishment of St George's church in Poynton. We all enjoyed Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church for its spaciousness and comfort (though our volunteer chefs had a few problems in the kitchen with unfamiliar equipment!). However, this year

we're back to our normal venue in Poynton—and we know that our visitors will find a great improvement from their last Singing Day in the church.

A 3-month programme of refurbishment was completed earlier this year, with new seating, display screen, flooring, heating (hurray!) and lighting installed. The church not only looks splendid, but it is much warmer, more comfortable and altogether offers a welcoming environment for a singing day.

Singing Day, 19 January 2013

Spend a day singing Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, with St George's Singers, under the expert and inspiring direction of Neil Taylor.

£22 including music hire, tea and coffee all day.

Our Singing Days are very popular—early booking recommended.

Download an application form from our website www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, or email gillian.m.banks@gmail.com, or tel 01925 213949.

DON'T FORGET: our famous and delicious home-made soups, sandwiches and cakes are available at lunch and tea.

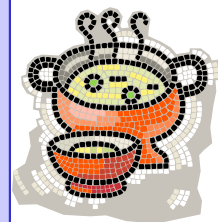


Giacomo Puccini

Stranger than fiction ...

In 1909, Puccini's wife Elvira publicly accused her maid Doria Manfredi of having an affair with the composer. However, according to documents found in the possession of a descendant of the Manfredi family in 2007, Puccini was actually having an affair with Giulia, Doria's cousin. After being publicly accused of adultery, Doria Manfredi committed suicide. An autopsy determined, however, that Doria had died a virgin, refuting the allegations made against her. Elvira Puccini was prosecuted for slander, and was sentenced to more than five months in prison, but thanks to a payment made to the Manfredi family by Puccini, Elvira was spared having to serve the sentence.

And they say opera plots are unrealistic!



ST GEORGE'S SINGERS' NEWS



New members

Welcome to new SGS member Phil Egerton in the tenors. Phil has 'graduated' from the Learn to Sing course we ran a couple of years ago, and is finding singing just as exciting and exhilarating as golf. The only difference: he hasn't yet found the choral equivalent of the 19th hole. Sorry, Phil—you're a tenor; it's bad for the voice. Should have been a bass.

New life friend

Peter Giles, who sang with us for many years, has continued to look after our website even though he no longer sings with us. In appreciation of all his hard work and expertise, we're delighted to announce we have invited him to become a Life Friend.

Christmas raffle

We're running another Christ-

mas raffle this year, with the prize a fabulous hamper stuffed with goodies for your Christmas table. Seek out a ticket seller at rehearsals or at concerts.

Christmas CD on sale

Don't miss our new Christmas CD, *The Christmas Life*,—as featured on Classic FM—on sale at forthcoming concerts, from any Choir member, or via our website.

SPEND AND RAISE MONEY FOR SGS

It's easy to raise money for SGS:

Log onto our website:

www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

Click on 'Online Shopping'

Follow the instructions.


As Christmas approaches, please don't forget about St George's Singers' charity online shop. Spend and Raise is a website that hosts dozens of well-known shops, and through which we can all raise money for the choir totally painlessly. Just log on to the SGS website, click on 'Online Shopping' on the left-hand menu, and follow

the instructions to the Spend and Raise site. (Alternatively, type in www.spendandraise/sgsonline/ into your browser and go straight there). You can then pick the shop you want from the A-Z menu, and will be directed to their website—exactly as you would if you went straight to them. You pay no more for the goods, but eve-


ry time you enter their shop through our own website, the store will donate a percentage of the sales value to the Choir. M&S, House of Fraser, Amazon—just three of the dozens of shops on the site. Everyone wins—so please think about it! Even if it's a few pence per transaction, it all adds up.

Money guru and bass stalwart David Robson has been giving SGS invaluable advice on all matters financial for many years, as well as his more recent role on publicity. His day job, though, is far more exciting—or is it ...?


AUDITING




What my friends think I do




What my mom thinks I do




What society thinks I do



What the partners think I do



What I think I do



What I actually do

SING WHILE YOU WORK BY DEBRA SALLAWAY

Some of you may have seen the recent BBC television series headed by Gareth Malone, 'Sing While You Work'. This was a six-episode series of four newly-convened workplace choirs that ultimately became a competition, with the final held at the Eisteddfod.

One of these choirs was started at Manchester Airport where my brother Richard works as an air traffic controller. As he is an 'old-hand' at X Factor auditions he put himself forward and was fortunate enough to get in.

As well as passing the audition to be in the choir, he also had a successful audition to sing a solo. A

beautiful tenor voice was discovered and, as Gareth put it as they had a latte together in Costa Coffee in the terminal building, 'wow, your voice just goes on and on and on ...'.

The choir did a concert under the wings of Concorde and I was fortunate enough to be in the elite group of 'Richard Sallaway's family and friends' who had front-row seats. The front row was a little unexpected and as the BBC cameras were straight at Gareth and then on to me I adopted that good choir rehearsal pose of sit up straight, legs uncrossed, and (very importantly) tummy in!

The choir was hidden in Concorde and processed down to the stage where they proceeded to do many takes of 'Learning

to Fly' by the Foo Fighters (with the BBC giving us clear guidance as to the 'art' of clapping).

After having been to a few rehearsals and singing under the direction of Gareth, my brother said, 'you know, this singing lark, I really "get it now"'. Having sat through the concert I realised that Gareth is very charismatic and engaging and he really does look as young as he does on the television.



Richard Sallaway, the Singing Controller, at his day job—nowhere near as difficult as reaching that top A

As an air traffic controller my brother, like his colleagues, very much lives in his own little world in the control tower and rarely comes into contact with other members of staff at the airport. The choir changed that as it included security staff, baggage handlers, the padre, duty-free staff, firemen etc. It was soon apparent that the

choir united people with the simple common aim of creating beautiful music – what we, here at St George's Singers, have known for years.

Sadly, the airport choir didn't get through to the final but it is possible that the choir will continue. The view seems to be that the choir can be used as great PR for the airport – a united workforce that sings with one voice.

Will Richard audition for St Georges Singers? Sadly no, his band, 'The Injectors', continue to be the home for his lovely voice.

Was I a proud sister? You bet I was!

Would I have liked to take Gareth home with me? Well now you come to mention it ...



Choir master Gareth Malone demonstrating one of the professional conductor's techniques for communicating with the basses

Gareth and the Manchester Airport choir



'Thank you so much for your wonderful singing at our wedding service. The songs sounded amazing, particularly *For the beauty of the earth*. The service felt more special because of your singing and the atmosphere it created. Thank you so much for helping to make our wedding day so perfect.'



CHESHIRE CONSORT—A SUMMER OF WEDDINGS

BY SUE TAYLOR

The Consort has had a busy and successful summer singing at four weddings around the county, in churches ranging from St Ann's in Manchester, to delightful country churches in Tarporley, Hooton and Lower Peover. The feedback has been extremely positive, with

expressions such as 'You made our day so special', 'The beautiful singing blew us away', 'We can never thank you enough for the wonderful music' featuring regularly in thank-you letters and emails.

At our last wedding the guests even burst into spontaneous

applause when the Consort sat down having sung three pieces during the signing of the register! Calum Fraser conducts with good humour and patience and keeps cool even when the vicar and the bride have different orders of service. Jeff Makinson and Tim Kennedy accompany us, so the guests have a free organ recital as well—Jeff has had lots of practice at Widor's *Toccata*! During the season the Consort will have earned almost £2,000 for SGS as well as giving Tim, Jeff and Calum professional opportunities to showcase their talents. We also earned enough to give ourselves a treat: a very successful singing day with Calum for which Julia accompanied. This gave us valuable time to develop repertoire and discuss the future direction of

the Consort as a very worthwhile service to local brides and a way of supporting SGS. This commitment to the group requires considerable goodwill and time as well as high quality musicianship from the members of the Consort. It also needs a willingness to drive round Cheshire lanes and provide the petrol. In future we will limit the number of weddings at which we sing to a maximum of six per year in order not to eat into regular choir rehearsals and performances. Singing with the Consort is good fun and an enormous privilege sharing in the most important days in people's lives. And we mostly get a free lunch and a chance to visit some very good Cheshire pubs! Well done, and a huge thank-you to all the members of the Consort.

TWITTER: WHAT IS IT, AND WHY BOTHER? BY SUE MASON



Twitter jargon made easy:
Hashtag—a very badly delivered joke
Retweet—a period of contemplation for clergy with vocal impediments
Shorturls—vertically challenged members of the aristocracy
Timelines—wrinkles resulting from squinting at Twitter feeds
Chat catcher—Neil Taylor (on a bad rehearsal night)

I remember a time when my friends would look askance when I spoke about my email account and the friends with whom I communicated across the world. In those days email was the prerogative of techies and nerds (and me). Access was through a dial-up telephone line and retrieving mail was an expensive business and you could only read your own mail on your own computer.

Now that nearly everyone has an email account and wifi allows access to online hotmail accounts, organisations like St George's can manage their communications quickly, effectively, globally and above all cheaply. Did I hear that one of our singers was contacted recently as she clambered around in the Himalayas?

So it makes sense to use all available technology to pro-

mote ourselves as St Georges Choir to the good people of the Himalayas and beyond. Imagine a network of people all interested in music, passing on information about concerts venues, dates and reviews. Brilliant! How to do it, then.

- 1 You personally need to have a Twitter account on www.twitter.com.
- 2 Choose a name for yourself – it can be a pseudonym.
- 3 Select an easy to remember password.
- 4 Log into Twitter.
- 5 Then start to FOLLOW @stgeorgessinger.
- 6 Post your first 'tweet' to @stgeorgessinger.
- 7 If you want to follow anyone else (Rio Ferdinand, Lady Gaga?) then you can find their @ by searching.
- 8 When @stgeorgessinger posts a tweet, (if you have chosen to follow), then the

tweet will appear in your time line.

- 9 You can RT (RETWEET) to your followers when information comes through.
- 10 You can mention @stgeorgessinger in any of your tweets (eg what a brilliant rehearsal we had last night. Come and hear me sing on November 10th).
- 11 You can ONLY use 140 characters – that includes punctuation and spaces. Succinct R Us.

If all else fails then get a 12-year-old to show you how it all works. Good luck! I look forward to seeing the numbers of followers rocket.

Some names to get you started:
 @neiltailora
 @mrcalumfraser
 @andrea_mill
 @MBJFarnsworth

BRIDGET AND JOHN'S LONG MARCH

Alto Bridget and bass John Ovey are keen walkers, often seen out striding across the moors and uplands of the Peak District. When they set out for a walk on 28th March 2012, however, this was no stroll in the park—an 800 mile trek round Britain faced them.



Looking over the Firth of Forth on the eve of departure

After starting at Edinburgh, and soon passing North Berwick the furthest point north of their walk, the first leg took them to Newcastle upon Tyne (stopover to buy new boots for Bridget!), and the beautiful beaches of Northumberland, reaching Holy Island on the Tuesday of Holy Week, with a blizzard blowing straight in their faces. Then down to the seaside resort of Saltburn, starting point of the Cleveland Way, a 109 mile trail across the North Yorks Moors. Four days later they arrived at Sutton Bank, from which you get one of the most beautiful views in England.

The walk had to be halted then, to allow Bridget and John to visit their 4-day-old grandchild in London, but two weeks later they were back in Yorkshire, and heading across to West



Approaching Sutton Bank on the North Yorkshire Moors, looking down over sparkling water and the Vale of York

Yorkshire through the Dales, then south to Leicestershire, and Eydon in Northamptonshire, where they enjoyed the best gourmet meal they'd ever had. After a little luxury, it was back to reality and a night in the Edge Hill castle (site of the first civil war battle), before turning south.

Food was obviously still uppermost in their thoughts, as they then stopped at Alresford in Hampshire, famous for its watercress, and often featured on food programmes. Approaching Winchester they picked up the South Downs Way ('you do realise the Downs

also have ups, don't you Bridget?' was John's comment after a particularly hard day) with marvellous views across to the Isle of Wight, and after another four days hard walking, they arrived in Arundel and a big family gathering.

But—only half way there! Still heading east they walked through Newhaven, visited Beachy Head, their furthest south, and Hastings before turning left and walking into London.

The final stretch now lay ahead. A bit of cheating here (train to Gloucester!) but then back on foot to the Brecon Beacons, leading them to Hay-on-Wye

and onto Offas Dyke, which they followed all the way to Welshpool, reaching their destination on 3 July – 14 weeks after starting out.

One has to ask: why? Well, for fun of course!

According to John, 'It was a wonderful experience for both of us, joining up on foot as many friends and relations as possible, seeing sights and meeting interesting folk along the way.'

'Human kindness was abundant, and the best thing for us was the simplicity of our daily

Over Seven Sisters to Beachy Head



Over Seven Sisters to Beachy Head

rhythm. We've worked out we walked for a total of 74 of our days away, covering 800¾ miles in all, some days being as long as 18 miles, but others shorter.'



From Skirrid Fawr, the Holy Mountain, north of Abergavenny on the last leg of our walk.



John and Bridget celebrating their arrival at Newhaven—and the sun's arrival after a very wet day



Bronte Bridge above Howarth in West Yorkshire.



A PERUVIAN ADVENTURE BY SUSAN HODGSON



Moche treasures

Peru. Land of the Incas. Treasure house of the Conquistadors. Home of Machu Picchu. And here we were!

We flew into the capital Lima after a 24- hour journey from Manchester to find it overcast and chilly. Despite its tropical location, Lima is influenced by the Humboldt Current, which brings cold water up from the Antarctic, and the Andes which run just east of Lima, together turning the city into a pretty dreary place for six months of the year. But there were still lots of interesting places to see: the cathedral, Moche ruins, grand Spanish colonial buildings, and a wonderful museum of pre-Columbian artefacts, proving that the Incas were just one in a long line of innovative civilisations in the region. We also came across a protest march: the teachers were striking. All very good natured—so far!



A farmer with his llamas on the way to market



Statue of Pachacutec in Cuzco, ninth king of the Incas.

Traditional boats on Lake Titicaca



A tough day followed: a 4 am start and a long bus ride to Colca Canyon, deeper even than the Grand Canyon, but losing out to its North American rival in overall spectacle as it lacks the same majestic vistas. However, the

real reason for going to Colca was for something else: El Cruz Condor, the condor crossing. The best time of day to see them is early morning or late afternoon, as they soar through the canyon on the thermals. Unfortunately the journey took

Another enchanting surprise was to see nearly all the local people wearing traditional regional costume. Every region of Peru has its own particular fashion. Many of the costumes are beautifully embroidered, and there is a vast range of hats:



How to build a reed island

longer than expected (torrential rains a few months earlier had taken out the main road, and a long detour had to be taken) so we missed the massed fly-past—but still managed to see some late arrivals, who gave us a fabulous aerial display of synchronized flying. *El Condor Pasa* ('the condor flies past') incidentally was written by a Peruvian composer, Robles, in 1913, based on Andean folk tunes, and was made famous in 1970 by Paul Simon.

We also saw, with great excitement, our first llamas—or were they alpacas? A quick lesson from our very knowledgeable local guide on the difference: if the tail is up, it's a llama; if it's down, it's an alpaca. For half an hour or so we eagerly identified different varieties and colours of 'cameloids' - a sport that quickly palled as we realised that if there's one thing that's not in short supply in Peru it's llamas and alpacas!

bowlers (introduced by English Victorian engineers, and taken up by Peruvian ladies with enthusiasm) or elaborate caps. Ladies everywhere wear big shawls across their shoulders, slings to carry children, firewood, shopping, domestic appliances ...

It was at Colca that some of the party also felt the first effects of altitude sickness. The remedy is coca leaf, which the inhabitants of the high Andes chew all day to alleviate the effects of the altitude. Weak-kneed trippers are considered too puny to withstand the real thing, so the coca comes either as tea or as sweets. (Strong suspicion that this is more of a marketing ploy than a genuine remedy!)





The main square in Arequipa

That night in Arequipa dinner in a great restaurant. Peru has a surprisingly good cuisine—traditional Peruvian mingled with an influx of international sophistication. Beans, grains and potatoes form the staples (Peru is home to the potato, of which there are thousands of varieties!) but there is an excellent selection of vegetables and fruits. Alpaca is usually on the menu (delicious!) but one thing we didn't feel like trying was guinea pig.

Another 5am start to catch a flight to Puno—the highest point of the trip at 12,400 ft. Puno stands on Lake Titicaca, and it was from here that the Incas mi-



The Sacred Valley

grated across the land in the twelfth century to establish their empire. The people who live there now are called Los Uros, inhabiting floating islands which they build themselves from reeds. Their life is simple—they live mainly by barter—but very harsh, with life expectancy on the islands nearly 20 years less than for the general Peruvian population.

Back at the hotel, and altitude sickness now grips in earnest. All night the sound of the oxy-

gen cylinder clanking up and down the hotel corridor was clear evidence of the frailty of the European constitution!

But a new day, and a new adventure. This time, a train from Puno to Cuzco. Scheduled to leave at 7am, the train actually left an hour earlier—the

striking teachers were threatening to attack it so Peru Rail devised this cunning plan to thwart them. The most dangerous bit wasn't a mob of angry teachers though—it was getting out of Puno station. The rail line went directly through the middle of the market, whose vendors just left their produce on the track, then moved back in once the train had passed.

Cuzco—another beautiful, mountain-ringed city. Formerly the Inca capital, most of the population speak Quechua as well as Spanish. The chance I'd

been waiting for—to try out my three words of Quechua. Our local guide looked a bit puzzled

at first, until I repeated it, this time with the consonants in the right order. 'Hanac pachacussicuinin'. It's about happiness and heaven, she said. Yeah! I can speak Quechua!

A visit to the Inca ruins at Sacsaywaman ('sexy woman'), with its precision-engineered buildings, then dinner at a restaurant, with a fabulous dance troupe, who presented dances from different Peruvian regions. Lots of Andean pan pipes, and a very bizarre rendition of Mozart's Symphony No 40—on pan pipes, guitar and bongo.

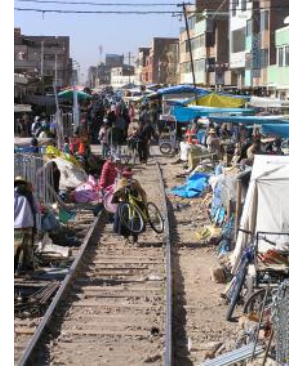
We're getting closer to the main event now. Through the Sacred Valley to Ollantaytambo, an ancient Inca settlement where the inhabitants still live in many ways as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. We stayed overnight in the most beautiful 'posada' - a former monastery, overlooked by mountains, with a glorious sunset to welcome us. Then onto Machu Picchu. We cheated of course, and got there by train, watching the genuine travellers on the mountain sides, with their man-size backpacks, crawling up the Inca Trail—and thankfully ordered another coffee.

Machu Picchu did not disappoint. You walk up the mountain side, shrouded in trees, get to the top, turn a corner—and there it is. The view you've seen a hundred times before, but now in real life. Even the hundreds of tourists crawling over it can't destroy the magic of this place.

So, back to Lima—and onto another plane, this time to Iquitos, the mad capital of the Peruvian Amazon. Onto a small boat there, necessitating some rapid luggage re-deployment. Take out the fleeces to store in left luggage, put in the T-shirts and anti-malarials, and cram it all into a backpack.

If anything, the Amazon was even more stunning than the rest of the trip. Jungle walks (by day and night—don't try that without a guide!), piranha fishing, treks to visit local Amazon tribes, afternoons relaxing in the hammocks, and everywhere vibrant wildlife: butterflies and birds of every colour, tarantulas, iguanas, monkeys, a resident tapir, and most wonderful of all, pink river dolphins (and they really are bright pink). Impossible to capture on camera, they toy with the tourists, leaping out of the water, diving under the boat, emerging somewhere completely different, then swimming off with a big laugh.

And this is just a fraction of the adventure!



Puno market



Fish supper—piranha of course



The Chief of the local Amazon tribe



The phut-phut rush hour in Iquitos

St George's Singers

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

St George's Singers was formed in 1956 by Rev Eric Chapman and Geoffrey Verney, organist and choirmaster of St George's Church, Poynton in Cheshire, where the Choir still rehearses every Tuesday night. Geoffrey's dream was to build a community choir, capable of performing major choral works to a high standard and which would attract singers and audiences from neighbouring towns. Geoffrey died in 1964, but his legacy was nurtured by his successors Duncan Eyre, Ray Lomax and Stephen Williams, and is continued by our present Musical Director, Neil Taylor. St George's Singers is now recognised as one of the leading and most innovative choirs in the North West of England, performing an astonishingly varied repertoire, and with around 100 members drawn from an area far beyond the community of Poynton. We present at least four major concerts a year, in venues including The Bridgewater Hall, Gorton Monastery, Manchester Cathedral and Royal Northern College of Music, hold annual Singing Days, and tour regularly in the UK and abroad. St George's Singers continues to explore and expand the boundaries of choral music. Entry to the Choir is via audition, and new members are welcome to come along to rehearsals at any time.

ST GEORGE'S 2012-2013 SEASON

Saturday 8 December 2012

St George's Church, Stockport
Carols & Brass by Candlelight

Monday 31 December 2012 Bridgewater Hall

New Year's Eve Gala
Opera highlights
with Manchester Camerata

Saturday 19 January 2013

St George's Church, Poynton
Singing Day - Puccini *Messa di Gloria*

Saturday 23 February 2013

Royal Northern College of Music
Britten at 100
Choral and instrumental music to
celebrate Benjamin Britten's centenary

Sunday 23 June 2013

Gorton Monastery
GLORIA!
Vivaldi *Gloria*, Handel *Dixit Dominus* and
other works

Ticket Hotline: 01663 764012

Email: tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk

Online: www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Win a copy of St George's Singers' latest carol CD, *The Christmas Life*, by answering the following questions. Email answers to publicity@st-georges-singers.org.uk by 7th December 2012. First correct entry received wins—editor's decision will be final! Open to everyone.

1 Who was the classical composer whose image featured on the cover of the Beatles' *Sgt Pepper* album?

2 What did Beethoven, Miles Davis and Barbra Streisand have in common?

3 In French it's 'la bémol', in German it's 'as'. What is it in English?

4 Busy Scale Dude—who is he?

5 Where is the world's largest pipe organ?

6 Who invented the Do-Re-Mi scale?

7 Who wrote the tune to *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*?

8 How many 'conquests' are attributed to Don Giovanni in Leporello's famous 'Catalogue aria'?

9 Who wrote the words to the carol *The Christmas Life* on St George's Singers' latest CD?

10 Who wrote *Five Grins*, or *Mona Lisa's Moustache*?

For any children coming to our carol concert on 8th December, you might need to know:

HOW TO PLAY THE TRIANGLE

1 Place the triangle in your non-

dominant hand.

2 Hold the clip between the thumb and third finger.

3 Place your index finger above the clip.

4 Position the open end of the triangle close to the hand holding it.

5 Hold the triangle at eye level.

6 Strike the triangle on the bottom cross bar, either near the closed corner, or on the closed side near the top.

7 Use the natural weight of the beater to strike the triangle naturally.

8 Use the fingers and wrist when using the beater, not the whole arm.

Simple eh!

