

DUNSFORD SINGERS
A TEIGN VALLEY CHOIR
SUMMER CONCERT 2024
present

**HIAWATHA'S
WEDDING
FEAST**



and



THE SPRIG OF THYME

Musical Director: TIM PITHERS
Accompanist: CAROL GALTON
Tenor Soloist: ALASTAIR KLEMZ

CONDUCTOR

Tim Pithers is a conductor and musical director based in Exeter, Devon. He is passionate about community and student music-making and firmly believes that classical music should be made as accessible as possible to performers and audiences alike.

He has spent the past year studying conducting with Denise Ham at the London Conducting Academy and has participated in masterclasses with distinguished guest tutors. He has been tutored by Dominic Grier and Rodolfo Saglimbeni at the George Hurst Conductors 'Course at Sherborne Summer School of Music and at the Girton Conducting Course in Cambridge. Tim undertook his degree in Music and French at the University of Exeter where he studied violin with Mary Eade, composition with Joe Duddell and specialised in musical direction.

Tim enjoys working with ensembles of varying degrees of experience and aims to develop ambitious objectives for amateur groups. As well as holding the role of Musical Director of the Dunsford Singers, he is also Conductor of the Exeter University Symphony Orchestra, Exeter University Symphonic Wind Orchestra, Dartmouth Orchestra and EX4 Chamber Orchestra.

ACCOMPANIST

Carol Galton has lived and worked in Devon for the past 36 years. She was born in South Africa where she completed a Masters in Philosophy before coming to the UK to continue as a postgraduate student. At the same time she continued piano and cello studies and received a teaching diploma from the Royal College of Music. She spent 20 years as a primary school teacher in Exeter. In her role as music coordinator she was involved with children's music making at all levels. She now teaches piano and cello, and accompanies instrumentalists and singers, alongside performing. She divides her spare time between vegetable growing, playing chamber music with local musicians and playing cello in the Devon Philharmonic Orchestra.

TENOR SOLOIST

Alastair Klemz is a student at Exeter University studying Accounting and Finance, having just finished his first year. He discovered his love for music ,and specifically singing as a child, whilst a chorister at Tewkesbury Abbey. As well as singing, he enjoys competing as a sprinter over 60 and 100m.

HIAWATHA'S WEDDING FEAST - Samuel Coleridge Taylor

Samuel Coleridge Taylor (C-T) was a mixed race composer born in London in 1875. Although he came from a deprived background, his talent was such that he was accepted, at the age of 15, by the Royal College of Music. C-T played the violin and the piano but his main interest had always been composition.



He became a pupil of C V Stanford, the finest composition teacher in London, and earned the respect of Elgar who considered him "far away the cleverest among the young men". The publisher Alfred Jaeger, whom Elgar immortalised in his "Enigma" Variations, thought C-T was a "genius". He married an Englishwoman and together they raised two children, both of whom became professional musicians. The boy was given the name Hiawatha! In August 1912, C-T collapsed at West Croydon Railway Station. He struggled home alone but became delirious and died from pneumonia on September 1st. He was only 37.



"Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" for solo tenor, chorus and orchestra is based on Longfellow's poem. It dates from 1898 and was enormously popular for many years. In fact, its popularity as a choral work was only rivalled by that of Handel's "Messiah" and Mendelssohn's "Elijah". The "Wedding Feast" together with two sequels which C-T composed, "The Death of Minnehaha" and "Hiawatha's Departure", formed the complete opus, "Scenes from the Song of Hiawatha".

Every year from 1924 to 1939 it was performed at the Royal Albert Hall. For two weeks in the summer, all roads to the hall were packed with capacity audiences and close on a thousand "Red Indian" performers dressed as braves and squaws. They came to sing under the direction of Big Chief Malcolm Sargent. When the war came, many of the braves exchanged their war-paint for battledress. After hostilities ceased, the enormously popular staged events were not revived.

"The Death of Minnehaha" and "Hiawatha's Departure" were less popular than "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" which we are singing tonight. It tells of Hiawatha's wedding to Minnehaha. In the order in which they appear, the main characters are Nokomis (Hiawatha's grandmother); Pau-Puk-Keewis, the handsome dancer of "merry dances"; Chibiabos, "the sweetest of all singers"; and Iagoo, the "great boaster". There is only one solo and that is given, of course, to Chibiabos. "Onaway, Awake Beloved" must rank as one of the finest ever tenor love songs.

Although he was not an innovator and so is not, at least from a historical perspective, an important composer, C-T's music, and "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" in particular, is fluently written, lyrical and, above all, tuneful. We hope you enjoy our performance tonight and go away humming some of the tunes.

By the way, if you like to support amateur music making and are free on Saturday 29th June, the Somerset County Orchestra is giving a rare performance of Stanford's Piano Concerto No.2 in Queen's College, Taunton. This is probably his best work and is very much in the manner of Rachmaninov whose second piano concerto Stanford had recently conducted with the composer as soloist. It should not be missed.

INTERVAL AND RAFFLE DRAW

THE SPRIG OF THYME - John Rutter

"The Sprig of Thyme" is a setting of folk songs for mixed voice choir and small instrumental group or piano which John Rutter published in 1994. You will know at least some of the tunes. As always with Rutter, there is some deft writing in the piano accompaniments. They are designed to add colour to the music without drawing attention away from the tunes themselves. There are also some surprising harmonies, and key signatures which may present a challenge to performers!



The first song, "**The Bold Grenadier**" tells of a young couple who, one morning in May, are spied "a-making of hay". (This seems odd as hay is usually made later in the summer!) She is a "fair maid" and he is a "bold grenadier". She asks him if he will marry her but he replies that he is already married.

"**The Keel Row**" tells of the keelmen of Newcastle-on-Tyne. They lived in Sandgate and it was their job to transfer the coal from the river banks to the waiting collier ships by means of boats known as keels. "O Weel may the keel row" means "Let the boat be rowed quickly and safely". Due to its quick beat, the tune is used as a trot march by both the Household Cavalry and the Royal Horse Artillery.



See link for more story!<https://northumbrian-words.com/2019/10/28/the-tyneside-keels/>

"**The Willow Tree**" tells of a man who was once rich but who is now poor. As a result, his lover has left him to die beneath the willow tree. The weeping willow is a symbol of sadness, loss and death.

In "**The Sprig of Thyme**", for sopranos only, a young woman's sprig of thyme is stolen by a "false young man". But time goes on and the woman's hope is that she will soon find a man to whom she can give her heart. "The Sprig of Thyme" was the very first song that Cecil Sharp, the most important pioneer in the Edwardian folk song revival, collected when he heard it being hummed by a gardener mowing a vicarage lawn in Somerset in 1903.

"**The Sally Gardens**" may have been situated on the banks of the river at Ballysadare near Sligo. It was there that the residents cultivated trees to provide roofing material. The words are by W B Yates but were suggested by an old folk song. In 1909 Herbert Hughes set the words to a traditional tune, "The Maids of Mourne Shore". The song tells of a young man who loses his lover as the result of some over-enthusiastic love making! Rutter's arrangement is for tenors and basses only.

"**The Cuckoo**" tells of a young woman who meets a man who courts her but who is "false-hearted, he would kiss me and go". At first the song seems to rehabilitate the oft-maligned cuckoo, painting it as a "pretty bird" whose song heralds summer, but the opening stanza is repeated at the end. Don't be beguiled by surface attractiveness! This is, perhaps, the most elaborate of the eleven arrangements. The tune is modal: it uses a scale other than the usual major and minor ones.

In "**I know where I'm going**", a Scottish song, a young woman pines for her lover, Johnny. He has something of a bad reputation but he is, to her, "bonny" and "the fairest of them all". She is besotted by him but it is "the dear" (the devil) "who knows who she'll marry". So perhaps she's not so certain where she's going after all! The arrangement is for sopranos only.

"**The Willow Song.**" Willows again feature in the eighth song, the only one which is unaccompanied. A young man has been abandoned by his lover. The melody and words date from the 16th century. In Shakespeare's "Othello", Desdemona sings an adapted version of the song as she begins to fear her husband's jealousy.

"**O Can Ye Sew Cushions**" seems to be a lullaby. The words make little sense and are possibly intended to represent baby talk. The arrangement is for sopranos and altos only.

"**The Miller of Dee**" comes from the Chester area of northwest England. In the Middle Ages, a weir was built on the River Dee to maintain a water supply for the mills built on its banks. To the miller, the mill is everything. It is "both parent, child and wife". It is only at the very end of the song that we learn that he is, however, something of a royalist! Rutter's arrangement is for tenors and basses.

The final song, "**Afton Water**" is Scottish. The River Afton is in Ayrshire, Scotland. The singer asks the river to flow gently so as not to waken his lover who sleeps on its bank. Here the alternating chords in the piano accompaniment are clearly intended to represent the unhurried movement of the water.

Notes compiled by Don Oliver.

DUNSFORD SINGERS SUMMER CONCERT CHOIR:

Sopranos:

Julie Cooney, Ruth Frampton, Jeanie Honey, Daphne Leversedge, Jo Macdonald, Jan Middleton, Diana Petit, Mary Sansom, Verity Stiff, Ros Tripp.

Altos:

Barbara Cross, Jo Jenkin, Kath Keating, Marie McGahey, Leslie Pearman, Juliet Speed, Toria Wimpenny.

Tenors:

Steve Cook, Giles Frampton, Lorraine Hart, Francis Leversedge, Ray Mallett, Mike Wimpenny.

Basses:

Gerald Battersby, Alan Edwards, Anthony Galton, Peter Goodchild, Don Oliver, John Sawyer, Jan Traylen.

Future Dates:

Winter rehearsals 2024 begin on Monday 16th September in Dunsford Village Hall from 7.30pm.

Concert in St Mary's at 4pm on **Sunday 1st December 2024**

Concert in TVCH Christow at 7.30pm on **Saturday 7th December 2024**

Come and sing with us!

DUNSFORD SINGERS



www.dunsfordsingers.co.uk
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<p>WHAT DID YOU DO THIS YEAR?!</p> <p>FILLED MY LUNGS MAXIMISED MY OXYGEN INTAKE CORRECTED MY POSTURE LEARNED TO CONTROL MY DIAPHRAGM RELAXED AND IMPROVED MY MOOD WORKED MY NUMERACY IMPROVED MY LANGUAGES LISTENED TO OTHERS CHALLENGED MY BRAIN FOCUSED ON TEAMWORK LAUGHED WITH FRIENDS MADE MISTAKES AND IT WAS OK NO REALLY!</p> <p>CLASSICAL, MODERN, OPERA, SHANTY</p>	<p>COME AND TRY US FOR FREE</p> <p>£45 PER TERM (3 PER YEAR) MUSIC USUALLY PROVIDED NO AUDITIONS NO NEED TO SIGHT-READ SOME HOMEWORK EXPECTED VOLUNTEER TO HELP AT EVENTS CONCERTS TWICE A YEAR</p> <p>MONDAY NIGHTS 7.30-8PM DUNSFORD VILLAGE HALL EX6 7DA WARM WELCOME!</p> <p>MAESTRO! TIM PITHERS</p>
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