

Joyful Company of Singers

Peter Broadbent *Conductor*

Imogen Barford *Harp*

Viktoriya Goncharova *Organ*

Ivan R Deb *Cello*

Francis St. John *Baritone*

A Christmas Fantasia

Friday 16th December 2022
St Gabriel's Church, Pimlico



JOYFUL COMPANY OF SINGERS

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The Friends of JCS



The coronavirus pandemic affected everyone and hit amateur singing particularly. We send a huge 'thank you' to all our Friends who continued to support the choir through this very difficult period.

Friends support us both with donations and as audience members. Friends also support our Youth Fund which has provided bursaries for young conductors to work with us and be coached by our founder-director, Peter Broadbent, one of Britain's leading choral conductors, and Friends' donations have enabled us to engage our new Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon: tonight's programme includes a première of her carol *I syng of a mayden*.

We warmly invite new Friends to enjoy the Scheme's benefits for all who donate regularly a minimum £5 monthly/£60 annually – larger amounts are most welcome!

Friends' benefits include:

- 10% discount on unlimited tickets to JCS own-promotion events
- Pre-concert 'Meet the Musicians' talks and complimentary Friends' receptions at all JCS own-promotion concerts
- Participation in JCS 'Come and Sing' days at discounted rates
- A password-protected Friends page on the JCS website offering choir news and free downloads of JCS copyright audio recordings.
- A free copy of our 'Sing Joyfully' CD
- Discounts on new JCS recordings and archive CDs from our stocks

Join the Friends via the contact form on www.jcos.co.uk or email friends@jcos.co.uk.

Our current Friends

Amanda Abbitt, Kevin Bailey, Hannah Bale, Jenny Ball, Celia Bangham, Carrie Beaumont, Anne Broadbent, Christine Broadbent, Francesca Caine, Philip Caine, Cathryn Caunt, Alicia Cropley, Carolynne Cox, Peter da Costa, Andrew Davison, Jonathan Earl, Philippa Gardner, Elaine Gould, Neville Hargreaves, Dawn Herbert, Sally Irvine, Debbie Johnstone, Mark Johnstone, Rachael Jones, Jonathan Lane, Alexandra Loewe, Andy Mackinder, Yvette Miller, Helen Morton, Peter Murphy, Isabel Nisbet, Bruce O'Brien, Tom Pike, Nigel Richards, Louisa Roberts, Howard Simmons, Janet Stephen, Joanna Thompson, Christopher Williams, Sally Zimmermann and others who prefer to remain anonymous.

PROGRAMME

A Ceremony of Carols

Benjamin Britten

for Women's Choir & Harp (Imogen Barford)

1. Procession 2. Wolcum Yule 3. There is no Rose 4a. That yongë child (Alexandra Loewe)
- 4b. Balulalow (Cathryn Caunt) 5. As dew in Aprille 6. This little Babe 7. Interlude (Harp)
8. In Freezing Winter Night (Jenny Ball & Lorna Perry)
9. Spring Carol (Cathryn Caunt & Debbie Johnstone) 10. Deo Gracias. 11. Recession

The texts are mostly Anonymous 14th or 15th Century except for 4b. James, John and Robert Wedderburn (16th C) 6. & 8. Robert Southwell (1561?-1595) and 9. William Cornish (14??-1523)

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Arr. David Willcocks

Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Ivan R Deb (Cello) Francis St. John (Baritone) Viktoria Goncharova (Organ)

Unto us is born a son

Arr. David Willcocks

INTERVAL

Three Choruses from "The Journey of the Winds"

Paul Reade

for Women's Choir & Harp

Libretto by Jeremy Hornsby

1. The Hurricane 2. The Sirocco 3. Boreas, Wind of the North

God rest you merry, Gentlemen

Arr. David Willcocks

I syng of a mayden (1st performance)

Zoe Dixon

Geburts-Nacht

Damijan Močnik

Wassail Song

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Sleep, Jesus, Sleep

Roxanna Panufnik

Viktorija Dronseikiene (Soprano)

Sweet Dreams Form a Shade (1st performance)

Jonathan Lane

Hark! The herald angels sing

Arr. David Willcocks

Ding Dong! Merrily on high

16th C. French harmonised Charles Wood

PROGRAMME NOTES

Most of the movements of *A Ceremony of Carols* were composed by Britten during the dangerous sea crossing of the Atlantic in 1942. The Swedish ship on which he and Peter Pears had obtained passage called in at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where the composer purchased a copy of *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*, which seemed to spark the idea of the carol sequence, because five of the poems in the finished composition were contained in the anthology. The piece soon became an enormously popular addition to the repertoire of boys' and women's choirs. The composer as always writes with great understanding of both voices and the harp, in which the women of the JCS will be accompanied by Imogen Barford.

Peter Broadbent met the composer Paul Reade when he was invited to conduct the first performances of a children's opera, *David and Goliath*, in 1975. The opera was a great success, and when planning a concert for his school choir, St. Angela's Singers, which was to feature Britten's piece, he commissioned Paul and the librettist of the opera, Jeremy Hornsby, to collaborate once again on a Cantata. Hornsby's imaginative libretto had the named winds of the world being summoned by King Aeolus, the mythological ruler of the winds. The three main winds are represented in the three choruses taken from the Cantata *The Journey of the Winds*. The vivid characterisation, melodic invention and economy are typical of this composer's writing.

The first of the world premières is our second commission for Zoe Dixon, our Composer in Association, who has chosen to set the mediaeval text *I syng of a mayden that is makeless*, which also appears in *A Ceremony of Carols*. This is a beautiful setting which captures the essence of the poem beautifully. The second première is an atmospheric and sensitive setting of words by William Blake: *Sweet Dreams Form a Shade* is by one of our singers, Jonathan Lane, whose assured choral writing has appeared in JCS programmes several times.

Our relationship with charities for the blind and partially sighted is continued in this concert, not only by featuring Zoe Dixon's music, but also engaging the baritone Francis St. John and cellist Ivan R Deb who join the choir and organist Viktorija Goncharova in Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, concluding our celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the composer's birth.

We also feature the arrangement of the beautiful Ukrainian carol *Sleep, Jesus, Sleep (Spy, Isuse, Spy)* by composer and JCS Vice-President Roxanna Panufnik - all the proceeds from the sale of the piece go directly to the British Refugee Council to help refugees of all nationalities to find their feet here in the UK. We are proud that we are one of over 30 choirs who will be performing the carol this Christmas, and particularly delighted that we will be accompanied in this work (and others in this concert) by Ukrainian organist Viktoria Goncharova, who has herself had to escape the Russian invasion.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

Trad. arr Willcocks

1. O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:

*O come let us adore him, (x 3)
Christ the Lord!*

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
O come etc.

3. See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:
O come etc.

4. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest:
O come etc.

5. Yea, Lord we greet Thee
Born on Christmas morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing
O come etc

UNTO US IS BORN A SON

Trad. arr Willcocks

1. *All*

Unto us is born a son,
King of choirs supernal :
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

2. *Choir only*

Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their Owner know
E'en cradled in a manger.

3. *Men's voices*

This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.

4. *Women & children*

Of his love and mercy mild
Hear the Christmas story:
O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory!

5. *All*

O and A and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino.

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

Trad. arr. Willcocks

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

2. From God our heav'nly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The son of God by name:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

3. The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoicèd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding,
In tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway
This blessèd babe to find:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

(Choir only)

4. But when to Bethlehem they came
Whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:
(All) *O tidings of comfort and joy.*

5. Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Mendelssohn arr. Willcocks

1. Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

2. Christ by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

JOYFUL COMPANY OF SINGERS



One of Europe's prominent chamber choirs, the Joyful Company of Singers is known for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the 16th Century to the present day, including many first performances.

Formed in 1988 by conductor Peter Broadbent, the choir first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1990. Since then, it has maintained its profile in the music world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions leading to many invitations to perform. Concert appearances include most of the leading UK festivals and regular concert tours in Europe, broadcasting in many countries as well as on BBC and Classic FM. A discography of over 25 CDs includes Rachmaninov's *All-night Vigil* on Nimbus: 'beautifully characterized and shaped by Peter Broadbent' (International Record Review).

The JCS has also instituted a Youth Fund to encourage the development of young choral conductors, singers and composers. The first composition competition was won by young Australian composer Chris Williams, this concert includes the world première of our commission from our first-ever Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon.

SOPRANOS

Amanda Abbitt, Jenny Ball, Felicitas Biskup, Cathryn Caunt, Viktorija Dronseikiene, Jane Metcalfe, Carrie Beaumont, Margaret Green, Wendy Norman, Louisa Roberts, Rebecca Trumper

ALTOS

Bernice Arthur, Philippa Gardner, Elaine Gould, Debbie Johnstone, Alexandra Loewe, Hannah Bale, Lorna Perry, Joanna Sleight, Joanna Thompson.

TENORS

Nick King, Richard Milnes, Mark Johnstone.

BASSES

Kevin Bailey, Tim Bull, Andy Mackinder, Tom Spanyol, Peter da Costa, Jonathan Lane, Christopher Williams.

Peter Broadbent - Conductor

Peter is one of Britain's leading choral conductors and whose experience ranges from brass bands to large-scale choral works, opera and musicals. In addition to his work with the Joyful Company of Singers since our creation, he has conducted the London Mozart Players, Divertimenti Chamber Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Southern Sinfonia, the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Apollo Voices and the BBC Singers, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.



Engagements outside the UK include concerts with the Debrecen Philharmonic Orchestra & Kodály Chorus in Hungary, a broadcast with the National Chamber Choir in Dublin and a European tour with the World Youth Choir in 2006. He gives workshops and master classes throughout Europe, and as the first Director of Training for the Association of British Choral Directors he helped to instigate and develop choral conducting courses.

In 2007 he was presented with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award by the Hungarian Ministry of Education & Culture for his services to Anglo-Hungarian relations and in 2017 was presented with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit.

Peter was awarded an MBE in the 2022 New Year's Honours for his service to music.

Frank St John - Baritone

Originally a choral singer, Frank has been a member of some of the most prestigious groups in the UK. These include the Taplow Youth Choir, under Gillian Dibden MBE, the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, under Ben Parry and the London Youth Chamber Choir, under Suzi Digby OBE. Frank remains an active professional choral singer, singing regularly at St Martin-in-the-Fields and other London churches.



Beyond his work as a choral singer, Frank is also in demand as an opera singer, performing regularly in the Opera Holland Park Chorus. Performances at OHP include *Un ballo in maschera* (2019), *Carmen* (2022), *HMS Pinafore* (2022) and *Eugene Onegin* (2022). Frank also performs regularly with the OHP Inspire programme, performing in community settings. Frank's most recent role with the Inspire programme was as The White Rabbit in Will Todd's family opera *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

In 2018-19, Frank undertook choral conductor training with Sing for Pleasure, one of the country's leading providers of musical education. Following the theme of community engagement, Frank has been in post as Choral Director at the Hillingdon

Music Hub since 2018. Frank is also a conductor and singing teacher in several schools in Hillingdon and is proud to be delivering high-quality music education to singers of all ages throughout the borough.

Completing his Masters in Music Performance (with Distinction) as the winner of the London College of Music's coveted Sam Mackover Scholarship in 2016, Frank undertook a Doctorate in Music Performance at the University of West London. Frank is extremely grateful to the Elizabeth Eagle-Bott Memorial Fund for their financial support with his doctoral studies, having won three Major Awards from the charity since 2016. Frank is set to finish his doctoral studies in January 2023.



Imogen Barford - Harp

Imogen Barford's busy freelance career has covered an extremely wide range of activities: concerto soloist; orchestral work with all the major London orchestras (the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, London Symphony, BBC Symphony, London Philharmonic, and English Chamber Orchestras) as well as opera (English and Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne and Garsington), ballet (English National Ballet, Scottish Ballet and Ballet Rambert) and film work; extensive chamber music with her own group JEUX and the Endymion Ensemble; contemporary music (Lontano and the London Sinfonietta) and early music on original instruments; plus regular appearances in all the major concert halls, radio and TV broadcasts, recordings and foreign tours, in recent years with the London Symphony Orchestra, under conductors

such as Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Bernard Haitink. Other recent work ranges from playing the solo harp in Handel's Saul at Glyndebourne, and Gluck's Orfeo at the Edinburgh Festival, to appearing at the London Jazz Festival at the Barbican, and premiering pieces for flute-violin-harp trio.

Her commitment to contemporary music has led to numerous first performances, and commissioning awards, and in 2013 Imogen began commissioning a series of harp solo works from prominent British composers including Simon Holt, Robert Saxton, Julian Phillips, Mark Anthony Turnage and Hannah Kendall.

Imogen read Music at Cambridge University and continued her studies at the Royal Academy of Music where she won the coveted recital diploma. In 2005 she became Head of Harp at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. Imogen has given masterclasses in Europe and all over the UK, and is a frequent jury member for International Harp Competitions. In 1994 she was made an honorary associate of the Royal Academy of Music 'for distinguished service to the music profession'.



Viktoria Goncharova - Organ

Viktoria is a graduate of the Donetsk Music Academy named after Sergei Prokofiev in Ukraine, where she obtained a degree in solo piano performance, piano accompaniment, piano teaching and chamber music performance. In addition, she completed her master's degree in Music and Culture Studies in 2004, undertook further professional studies as an assistant professor of piano at the Donetsk Music Academy and qualified as a university lecturer and solo concert artist in 2007. Viktoria has published more than 40 articles, books and piano teaching methodology manuals in Ukraine, Russia and Europe and gave papers at many music conferences in Ukraine and abroad. She was awarded a PhD in Music and Culture Studies by the National Academy of Culture and Arts Management in Kiev, Ukraine in 2014.

Viktoria has been teaching students of all ages and levels for 22 years. Her students won prizes at several prestigious international piano competitions and performed throughout Ukraine, Russia and Poland. Between 2015 and 2022 Viktoria has worked as a solo artist at the Donetsk Philharmonic Hall, regularly giving recitals on both piano and organ. She has performed extensively in Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Germany and Austria and is a member of the Rachmaninov Society, the Russian Association of Piano Duets and the Piano Accompanists' Guild. A prizewinner of many national and international piano competitions, she received awards from the Union of Moscow Architects, Radio Russia and Accademia Pianistica Siciliana (Italy) for her performance artistry. Viktoria has served as a jury member at several national and international music competitions. She recorded a CD with Alexei Balashov, the oboist and soloist of the Moscow State Philharmonic in 2013. In addition, she has been the founder and organizer of the 2016 International Music Competition in Donetsk, Ukraine, which attracted hundreds of young participants from several countries. Viktoria has recently moved to the UK where she is continuing to develop her performance and teaching careers.



Ivan R Deb – Cello

Ivan is studying at the Centre for Young Musicians, a division of the Guildhall School of Music, based in London, preparing for his diploma in music performance (DipABRSM) which is equivalent to the first year of university, having passed every previous grade with distinction. He also has a DipABRSM for piano performance and is working towards an LRSM in piano performance (equivalent to a complete undergraduate degree). Performances to date include playing at the Royal Albert Hall and at The Barbican with the London Schools Symphony Orchestra and being part of the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Junior Artists Overture programme.



Our next performance:
Rachmaninov & Reger 150th Anniversary Concert
Thursday 30th March 2023 at 7pm
St. Gabriel's Church, Pimlico
Reger - Geistliche Lieder
Rachmaninov - Liturgy of St. John of Chrysostom

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