

Joyful Company of Singers

Peter Broadbent - Conductor

St Gabriel's Pimlico, London, SW1V 2AD

Boundless

Music by

**Byrd, Weelkes, Walton, W H Harris,
John Casken, Zoe Dixon and Paul Reade**

Friday 23rd June 2023 at 7pm



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 Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon.

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 Copley, 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, Steve Sanders, Howard Simmons, Janet Stephen, Joanna Thompson, Christopher Williams, Sally Zimmermann and others who prefer to remain anonymous.

PROGRAMME

Sing Joyfully
Ave Verum Corpus
Haec Dies William Byrd (1539?-1623)

Faire is the heaven William H Harris (1883-1973)

Lines Written in Early Spring (First performance) Zoe Dixon (b.1999)

Seascapes Paul Reade (1943-1997)
1. *Gaze North-East* 2. *On Some Island* 3. *The Vikings*

Uncertain Sea (First London performance) John Casken (b.1949)

INTERVAL

For dappled things John Casken

Songs of Oisín Paul Reade

1. *Scel Lem Duib (Winter Song)* 2. *Ben Bulbin (The deserted mountain)*

3. *The Blackbird of Derrycairn*

Cathryn Caunt (Soprano)

Cantico del Sole William Walton (1902-1983)

Bring us, O Lord God William H Harris

When David heard Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

Death hath deprived me

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending

Programme notes by Peter Broadbent

The two great composers whose Quatercentenary we mark this year, **William Byrd** and **Thomas Weelkes**, left a legacy of wonderful vocal music, but they were markedly different in character and influences.

The pieces by **William Byrd** in this programme are all settings of religious texts, one in English and two in Latin. Byrd was famously allowed by Elizabeth I to continue to write and publish music, despite being a Roman Catholic. His large output is mostly sacred choral music; his secular vocal music consists largely of solo songs and he did not follow the paths of the many English composers who imitated the Italian madrigal, developing a great tradition of their own. His ease with polyphonic textures ranks with the music of Palestrina, and this is clear in *Sing Joyfully* and *Haec Dies*. The simplicity and directness of his *Ave Verum Corpus* demonstrates the great sincerity of his faith, and the adding of the words *Miserere mei* (Have mercy on me) to the traditional text displays a particularly personal investment in the music.

One of Byrd's pupils was Thomas Morley, who was the most influential madrigalist of his day, and who had a great influence on the young **Thomas Weelkes**, who published two major collections of madrigals by the time he was twenty-four. He was invited by Morley to contribute to the famous collection *The Triumphs of Oriana* (1601), and his contribution *As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending* is widely quoted as a superb example of word-painting. Weelkes was appointed organist at Chichester Cathedral, but his life went somewhat downhill after this, and he was in constant trouble with his employers, described as a "common drunkard and a notorious swearer and blasphemous".

For the last part of his life his output was largely church music, mainly for the Cathedral, but he is still regarded as one of the finest madrigalists. In this concert we present one of his sacred madrigals, *When David heard*, followed by one of his most personal works written in memory of his great friend and mentor Morley, *Death hath deprived me*, and we finish with his most famous secular madrigal *As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending*.

Sir William Henry Harris KCVO was a lifelong Church Musician – organist, choirmaster, composer and teacher. He won a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music when he was 16 and served in a number of prestigious positions in various Cathedrals and University churches until in 1933 he was appointed organist at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, a post he held until his retirement in 1961. Amongst other highlights of his performing life was conducting at the Coronations in 1937 and 1953. He is represented by his two deservedly best loved anthems, the settings of Spenser's *Faire is the Heaven* and of Donne's *Bring us, O Lord God* which was sung at the funeral of the late Queen last year.

Our Composer-in-association **Zoe Dixon** chose for her third commission from the JCS to set a poem by Wordsworth, and the contrasting of Nature's goodness and "what man hath done to man" was one of the ideas which sparked the emphasis of this programme. The romantic language of Wordsworth is echoed in Zoe's setting by a harmonic richness and a very natural expression of the text.

The current exhibition of visual art inspired by St. Francis of Assisi was not in my mind when I chose to include **Sir William Walton's** *Cantico del Sole* in the programme, but rather the identification of all parts of nature as having almost human attributes. Walton wrote the piece for the Cork Festival in 1974, where it was first performed by the BBC Singers under Stephen Wilkinson. It now seems strange to remember that

the BBC then maintained two professional choirs of the highest quality. The text is in Umbrian dialect, although Walton used a modernised spelling. After a four-part setting of the opening stanza, the choir is divided between upper and lower voices in antiphonal phrases until an emphatic unison on the words *for the second death shall do them no harm* leads into a four-part closing section.

Paul Reade (1943-1997) spent the first part of his professional life as a répétiteur. After studying at the Royal Academy of Music, he went on to the London Opera Centre and worked for a while at the Sadlers Wells Opera Company (later ENO), so his understanding of the voice was considerable.

He wrote a significant amount of instrumental music, including music for television such as the very popular *Victorian Kitchen Garden*, the music for which he turned into a Suite, and for which he won an Ivor Novello Award in 1991. The music for the TV adaptation of *Jane Eyre* made a big impact, and his theme music for *The Antiques Roadshow* remains a favourite. His large-scale ballets for Sir David Bintley's Birmingham Royal Ballet – *Hobson's Choice* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* - have a regular place in the repertoire.

In the 1980s he wrote a setting of a poem by Ian Serraillier for Guy Prothero and the English Chamber Choir called *St. Brendan and the Fishes*, which later became part of the JCS repertoire. He was looking for suitable texts to write a companion piece when he found a collection of Irish Poems edited by John Montague which had some wonderful English-language versions of ancient Irish verse, and these texts he used for both *Seascapes* and *The Vikings*, which were written for the Joyful Company. Paul would have been 80 in January this year, and I am sure he would have continued to produce wonderful music in all genres had he lived beyond the age of only 54.

John Casken (b.1949) was born in Barnsley and studied at Birmingham University with John Joubert and Peter Dickinson, then at the Warsaw Academy of Music. He has been a lecturer at Birmingham and Durham Universities and spent 16 years as Professor of Music at Manchester. His students include Sir James MacMillan.

His extensive output includes music in most genres, a great deal of orchestral and chamber music and two operas, *Golem* and *God's Liar*, both of which have been performed in several countries.

His choral music is an important part of his work, and we are pleased to be giving the London Premiere of *Uncertain Sea*, in which he conflates two poems by Katrina Porteous, one of which is in Northumbrian dialect. This was commissioned by the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain in 2014, and *For dappled things*, a setting of Gerard Manley Hopkins' *Pied Beauty*, was written as a present for the 60th Birthday of James MacMillan in 2019. In his own words:

Composers are often asked to describe their music – an impossible request – but when I was recently asked by the Cheltenham Festival to do this in five words, I decided that windswept, dreamy, turbulent, melancholic and painterly just about sums it up. I also value colour, the vivid and dramatic, and I strive for a beauty of sound as well as a poetic utterance.

Faire is the Heaven – W H Harris

Faire is the heaven where happy soules have place
In full enjoyment of felicitie;
Whence they do still behold the glorious face
Of the Divine, Eternall Majestie;

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
Which all with golden wings are overdight
And those eternall burning Seraphins
Which from their faces dart out fiery light;

Yet fairer than they both and much more bright
Be the Angels and Archangels
Which attend on God's owne person without rest or end
These then in faire each other farre excelling
As to the Highest they approach more neare
Yet is that Highest farre beyond all telling

Fairer than all the rest which there appeare
Though all their beauties joynd together were;
How then can mortal tongue hope to expresse
The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

Lines Written In Early Spring - Zoe Dixon

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

For dappled things – John Casken

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

***Cantico del Sole* - William Walton**

Altissimu, omnipotente bon Signore,
Tue so le laude, la gloria e l'honore et onne
benedictione.

Ad Te solo, Altissimo, se confano,
et nullu homo ène dignu te mentovare.

Laudato sie, mi Signore cun tutte le Tue
creature,
spetialmente messor lo frate Sole,
lo qual jorna, et allumini noi per loi.
Et ellu è bellu e radiante cun grande splendore:
de Te, Altissimo, porta significatione.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora Luna e le stelle:
in celu l'ài formate clarite et pretiose et belle

Laudato si, mi Signore, per frate Vento
et per aere et nubilo et sereno et onne tempo,
per lo quale, a le Tue creature dà
sustentamento.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sor'Acqua,
la quale è multo utile et humile et pretiosa et
casta.

*Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the
honour, and all blessing.*

*To You alone, Most High, do they
belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your
name.*

*Be praised, my Lord, through all your
creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light
through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his
splendour!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister
Moon and the stars, in heaven you
formed them clear and precious and
beautiful.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through
Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather through which
you give sustenance to Your creatures.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister
Water,
which is very useful and humble and
precious and chaste.*

Laudato si, mi Signore, per frate Focu,
per lo quale ennallumini la nocte:
ed ello è bello et iucundo et robustoso et forte.

*Praised be You, my Lord, through
Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night and he
is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.*

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora nostra matre
Terra,
la quale ne sustenta et governa,
et produce diversi fructi con coloriti fiori et
herba.

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister
Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who
produces
varied fruits with coloured flowers and
herbs.*

Laudato si, mi Signore, per quelli che perdonano
per lo Tuo amore
et sostengo infirmitate et tribulatione.

*Praised be You, my Lord, through those
who give pardon for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.*

Beati quelli che sosterranno in pace,
ca da Te, Altissimo, sirano incoronati.

*Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by You, Most High, they shall be
crowned.*

Laudato si mi Signore, per sora nostra Morte
corporale,
da la quale nullu homo vivente po' scappare:
guai a quelli che morrano ne le peccata mortali;
beati quelli che trovarà ne le Tue sanctissime
uoluntati,
ca la morte secunda no'l farrà male.

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our
Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no living man can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those who will find Your
most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no
harm.*

Laudate et benedicete mi Signore et rengratiate
e serviteli cun grande humilitate.

*Praise and bless my Lord, and give Him
thanks
and serve Him with great humility.*

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)

Bring us, O Lord God - W H Harris

Bring us, o Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of Heaven,
to enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light;
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears or hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity,
in the habitations of thy glory and dominion,
world without end.

John Donne (1572 - 1631)

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 and we now support our first-ever Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon.

SOPRANOS

Amanda Abbitt, Jenny Ball, Cathryn Caunt, Jane Metcalfe, Clare Vincent-Silk, Carrie Beaumont, Jessica Blake, Margaret Green, Wendy Norman, Louisa Roberts.

ALTOS

Hannah Bale, Francesca Caine, Elaine Gould, Debbie Johnstone, Alexandra Loewe, Lorna Perry.

TENORS

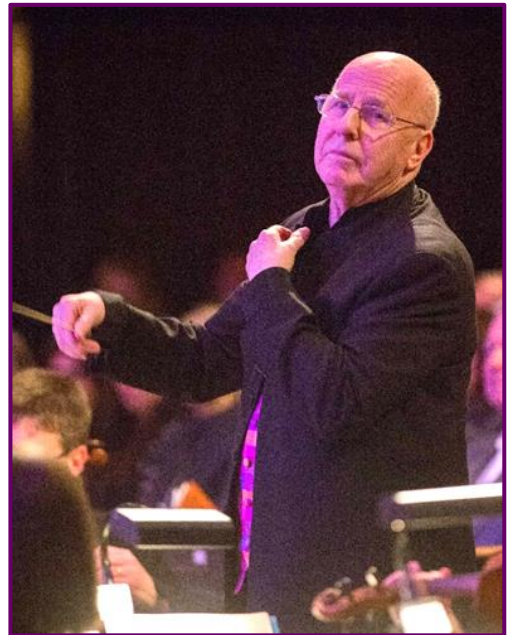
Mark Johnstone, Nick King, Peter Murphy.

BASSES

Kevin Bailey, Tim Bull, Andy Mackinder, Peter da Costa, Jonathan Lane, David Lowe, Robin Osterley, 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.



Our next performance:

16th November 2023 at 7pm – ‘Remembrance’

Programme includes Bax’s *Mater Ora Filium*, the *Requiem* by Pizzetti, John Casken’s *Memorial for the fallen and lost* and a further premiere of a work by our Composer-in-Association, Zoe Dixon.

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Follow JCS on Facebook and Twitter to get notice of our concerts and to share our news. There are links from the jcos.co.uk homepage.



www.jcos.co.uk

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