

# *Summer Concert*

**Saturday 25th June 2022, 7.00pm**

**St Mark's Church  
Primrose Hill, London**

**Charity No: 1151170**



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# *Welcome*

Good evening and welcome to our Summer 2022 concert.

We have a varied repertoire to perform for you this evening, which includes pieces by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten, as well as a selection from The American Song Book. We are very pleased to have one of our regular soloists, Ben Seifert, performing again this evening, as well as Marija Struckova playing piano for us tonight. It is a great disappointment that our long-standing sister orchestra, Hampstead Sinfonietta, is unable to join us this evening but with a small, select group of singers we are delighted to be accompanied by Marija.

As ever, our thanks are owed to our Musical Director, Benjamin Wolf, for his hard work and dedication while teaching us this sometimes challenging repertoire; to our accompanist, Gill Cracknell, who was unable to be here this evening; to St. Saviour's Church and the Rev. Paul Nichols for our new base, and to St. Mark's Church and the Rev. William Gulliford for the continued welcome for many of our concerts.

Thanks must also go particularly to Nick Jackson for organising the concert this evening and to the rest of the committee for making the choir function smoothly.

And finally, thanks to all of you who have come to support us this evening!

Lucinda Sturgis

Chair - Royal Free Music Society Choir

# **Programme**

## ***Rejoice in the Lamb***

Benjamin Britten 1947

## ***Five Mystical songs***

Ralph Vaughan Williams 1911

### **INTERVAL**

## ***Soloists' medleys***

## ***Songs from The American Songbook***

***Blue Moon*** 1934

***Moon River*** 1961

***Chattanooga Choo Choo*** 1941

**END OF CONCERT**

**Conductor:**

Benjamin Wolf.

**Baritone:**

Benjamin Seifert

**Pianist:**

Marija Struckova

**Choir soloists:**

Emma Dunning (Alto)

Robert Salmon (Tenor)

**The Royal Free Music Society would like to thank their  
loyal patrons:**

Patsy Henley, Billy Elkins

Our next concert is planned for  
**November 2022**

If you are interested in joining the choir, we warmly welcome  
new members. Find out more at: [www.royalfreesociety.org.uk](http://www.royalfreesociety.org.uk)

# Programme Notes

## *Rejoice in the Lamb* Benjamin Britten

Britten was commissioned by the Reverend Walter Hussey in 1943 for “some music for our Jubilee celebrations next September”. Britten recalled a work by the 18th century poet Christopher Smart. It was written while Smart was recuperating in a lunatic asylum which is reflected in the prose. Britten is praised for his meticulous interpretation of the words and the use of every opportunity and musical trick to reflect the spirit and originality of the poem.

It is a wonderfully obtuse piece of music, eccentric in places but very deeply affecting in others. Despite its wildly differing sections it hangs together coherently, a rollercoaster of emotion somehow kept in check.

### **Chorus**

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; Give the glory to the Lord, And the Lamb.  
Nations, and languages, And every Creature In which is the breath of Life.  
Let man and beast appear before him, And magnify his name together.  
Let Nimrod, the mighty hunter, Bind a leopard to the altar And consecrate his spear to the Lord.

Let Ishmail dedicate a tyger, And give praise for the liberty In which the Lord has let him at large.

Let Balaam appear with an ass, And bless the Lord his people And his creatures for a reward eternal.

Let Daniel come forth with a lion, And praise God with all his might through faith in Christ Jesus.

Let Ithamar minister with a chamois, And bless the name of Him That cloatheth the naked.

Let Jakim with the satyr Bless God in the dance, dance, dance, dance.  
Let David bless with the Bear—the beginning of victory to the Lord—to  
the Lord the perfection of excellence.

Hallelujah, from the heart of God,  
And from the hand of the artist inimitable,  
And from the echo of the heavenly harp  
In sweetness magnificent and mighty.  
Hallelujah.

### **Solo**

For I will consider my cat Jeoffry.  
For he is the servant of the living God. Duly and daily serving him.  
For at the first glance of the glory of God in the East he worships in his  
way.  
For this is done by wreathing his body seven times round with elegant  
quickness.  
For he knows that God is his saviour.  
For God has bless'd him in the variety of his movements.  
For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.  
For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty, from whom I take  
occasion to bless Almighty God.

### **Solo**

For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.  
For - this is a true case - Cat takes female mouse - male mouse will not  
depart, but stands threat'ning and daring.  
If you will let her go, I will engage you, as prodigious a creature as you  
are.  
For the Mouse is a creature of great personal valour.  
For the Mouse is of an hospitable disposition.

## **Solo**

For the flowers are great blessings.

For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's creation.

For the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary.

For there is a language of flowers.

For the flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ.

## **Chorus**

For I am under the same accusation with my Saviour,

For they said, he is besides himself.

For the officers of the peace are at variance with me, and the watchman  
smites me with his staff.

For the silly fellow, silly fellow, is against me, and belongeth neither to  
me nor to my family.

For I am in twelve hardships, but he that was born of a virgin shall  
deliver me out of all,

For H is a spirit and therefore he is God.

For K is king and therefore he is God.

For L is love and therefore he is God.

For M is musick and therefore he is God.

For the instruments are by their rhimes.

For the shawm rhimes are lawn fawn / moon boon and the like.

For the harp rhimes are sing ring / ring string and the like.

For the cymbal rhimes are bell well / toll soul and the like.

For the flute rhimes are tooth youth / suit mute and the like.

For the bassoon rhimes are pass class and the like.

For the dulcimer rhimes are grace place / beat heat and the like.

For the clarinet rhimes are clean seen and the like.

For the trumpet rhimes are sound bound soar more and the like.

For the trumpet of God is a blessed intelligence and so are all the  
Instruments in Heav'n.



For God the Father Almighty plays upon the harp of stupendous  
magnitude and melody.

For at that time malignity ceases and the devils themselves are at peace.  
For this time is perceptible to man by a remarkable stillness and serenity  
of soul.

Hallelujah, from the heart of God,  
And from the hand of the artist inimitable,  
And from the echo of the heavenly harp  
In sweetness magnificent and mighty.  
Hallelujah..

## ***Five Mystical Songs*** Ralph Vaughan Williams

Ralph Vaughan Williams was amongst the most famous of English composers in the early twentieth century. He was very much influenced by Tudor music and English folk-song. His music marked a distinct move away from the German style of the 19th century English music.

The *Five Mystical Songs* were written between 1906 and 1911. The work is based on four poems by seventeenth-century Welsh-born English poet and Anglican priest George Herbert (1593–1633), from his 1633 collection *The Temple: Sacred Poems*. Vaughan Williams was an atheist at the time (he later settled into a "cheerful agnosticism"), but this did not prevent him using overtly religious verse as inspiration.

### **No 1 Easter**

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With him mayst rise:  
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art.  
The cross taught all wood to resound his name,  
Who bore the same.  
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song  
Pleasant and long:  
Or, since all music is but three parts vied  
And multiplied,  
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

## **No 2 I got me flowers**

I got me flowers to straw thy way;  
I got me boughs off many a tree:  
But thou wast up by break of day,  
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sun arising in the East,  
Though he give light, and th'East perfume;  
If they should offer to contest  
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,  
Though many suns to shine endeavour?  
We count three hundred, but we miss:  
There is but one, and that one ever.

## **No 3 Love bade me welcome**

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'  
Love said, 'You shall be he.'

'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,  
I cannot look on Thee.'

Love took my hand and smiling did reply,  
Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.'

'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'

'My dear, then I will serve.'

'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'  
So I did sit and eat.

## **No 4 The Call**

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:  
Such a Way, as gives us breath:  
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:  
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:  
Such a Light, as shows a feast:  
Such a Feast, as mends in length:  
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:  
Such a Joy, as none can move:  
Such a Love, as none can part:  
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

## **No 5 Antiphon**

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,  
My God and King.

The heav'ns are not too high,  
His praise may thither fly:  
The earth is not too low,  
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,  
My God and King.

The church with psalms must shout,  
No door can keep them out:  
But above all, the heart  
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,  
My God and King.

# The Royal Free Music Society

The Royal Free Music Society Choir was formed in 1995 by a group of healthcare professionals working in the Royal Free Hospital. It has grown into a large and vibrant choir with members from the hospital and the local area. The choir normally performs three concerts a year and recent performances have included Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Mozart's *Requiem*, Mozarts' *Coronation Mass* and a new composition by Benjamin Wolf, our musical director, in collaboration with the Zemel Choir. Before Covid we invited a French choir to join us at our summer concert, and we had a trip to sing in Rome. If you would like to sing with us (we don't audition newcomers), please visit our website: [www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk](http://www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk).

## **Conductor: Benjamin Wolf**

Benjamin Wolf works as a conductor, composer, pianist and academic, specialising particularly in Jewish music. He is Musical Director of the Zemel Choir, the choirs of Belsize Square Synagogue, the Wallace Ensemble and the Royal Free Music Society, and is founder of the bOYbershop quartet. He has performed for major Jewish and interfaith festivals and events in the UK and Europe, and also for BBC documentaries and broadcasts. He is also Senior Lecturer in Music at Regent's University, London, and has published articles regarding both Jewish music and the institutional systems of classical music in the twentieth century.

## Benjamin Seifert (Baritone)

Benjamin read Modern Languages at St Peter's College, Oxford. He then trained on ENO's *The Knack* and at the Royal Academy of Music. In 2004, he performed as a soloist in Orlando Gough's *For the Public Good* at ENO and has since sung at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Cadogan Hall, the Purcell Room and the Wigmore Hall.



Benjamin has worked with the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company at Buxton, British Youth Opera, Grange Park Opera, Opera Holland Park, Opera by Definition, Tête à Tête Opera and Arcola Opera.

Operatic roles include Colas (*Bastien & Bastienne*), Zaretsky (*Eugene Onegin*) Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Don Giovanni, the Count, (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bill Bobstay (*HMS Pinafore*), the Foreman (*Trial by Jury*) and Marcello (*La Bohème*) at the Soho Theatre, winning the Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production.

Benjamin had the role of the Mayor in Pop Up Opera's *Docteur Miracle*, a short excerpt of which was performed live on Radio 3's *In Tune*. His oratorio work includes *Messiah*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Fauré's *Requiem* and the *St Matthew Passion*.

## **The Choir**

### **Soprano:**

Catherine Hughes, Edna Young, Elizabeth Segu, Janet High,  
Mary Goyder

### **Alto:**

Annie Sedley, Emma Dunning, Lucinda Sturgis, Mireille Levy,  
Sophie Jackson, Tahlia Migliorati

### **Tenor:**

James Kennedy, Richard Haydon, Robert Salmon

### **Bass:**

Ashitey Ollennu, Nick Jackson, Saul Lanyado



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