

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY
1904 - 1994

90th Birthday Gala Concert
Saturday 21st May 1994



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**TUNBRIDGE WELLS
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Saturday 21st May 1994, 7.30 p.m.
at
The Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells

The Dream of Gerontius

by Sir Edward Elgar

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY
with the
BACH LUTHERKIRCHE CHOIR, WIESBADEN
(Director : Klaus Uwe Ludwig)

Concert Conducted by Derek Watmough MBE
Orchestra led by Rita French

SOLOISTS

Shelagh Squires *Soprano*
Richard Braebrook *Tenor*
John Cunningham *Bass*

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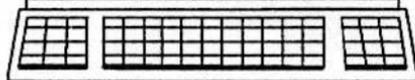
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THE ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

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Chairman:	Helen McNab
Musical Director and Principal Conductor:	Derek Watmough MBE
Honorary Life Member:	A. Smith-Masters

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We are most grateful for the support of Patrons and new ones are always welcome. Please telephone or write to the General Secretary, Mr L. A. Lee, 233 Greggs Wood Road, Tunbridge Wells 0892-521 937.

The choir rehearses on Monday evening from September to April. New members are always welcome and there is a simple private audition. Please contact The Membership Secretary 0892-822048.

The Society acknowledges with grateful thanks the financial assistance from the Borough of Tunbridge Wells.

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CARDINAL NEWMAN'S poem *The Dream of Gerontius* could well have been sub-titled 'A Vision of Death and Judgement', since this is what it is in fact about. Newman jotted it down in odd moments and on rather small pieces of paper - including used envelopes - in 1865 following a period of illness and spiritual desolation. Published shortly afterwards in a monthly journal over the famous initials 'J.H.N.', its compelling mixture of vivid imagination and solid patristic theology made an immediate impression on the Victorian reading public.

The poem had haunted Elgar for many years until, in 1900, the moment arrived and he produced his musical setting, after a summer of very hard work, in response to a commission from the Birmingham Festival. 'This is the best of me', he wrote at the beginning of the manuscript score, conscious that he had given a masterpiece to the world.

The first performance was, however, disastrous. Inadequate soloists and an under-rehearsed choir made a dismal hash of what appeared at the time to be difficult music in an unfamiliar idiom. Almost crushed by disappointment and bitterness, Elgar wrote to a friend: 'I have allowed my heart to open once - it is now shut against every religious feeling and every soft, gentle impulse *for ever*'. He could not, of course, have foreseen that Richter (the conductor at Birmingham) would take the work back to his native Germany and produce it with striking success during the following year, and that within a short time 'Gerontius' would be acclaimed everywhere for what it is: a work of amazing power and originality, combining intensely personal utterance with absolute fidelity to the spirit of Newman's poem; a work which would continue to be loved and performed - as it has been - for nearly a century.

THERE WILL BE AN INTERVAL OF 20 Minutes BETWEEN PARTS 1 & 2

The overture is built on motifs which recur throughout the work, and ends quietly as Gerontius begins to meditate on his approaching death. But this is no gentle good-night, no sentimental Victorian death-bed scene. Gerontius is troubled by doubt and horror and by a frightening visitant 'knocking his dire summons' at the door. He begs his friends to pray for him, and the semi-chorus enters with 'Kyrie eleison' (Lord have mercy). The main choir joins in with invocation of saints and martyrs. With a short-lived return of strength, Gerontius admonishes himself: 'Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man' and makes an affirmation of faith: 'Firmly I believe and truly' (now a well-known hymn). But soon he is again overwhelmed by a 'sense of ruin, which is worse than pain' and by visions of evil which make him 'wild with horror and dismay'. 'Rescue him, O Lord, in this evil hour', the chorus urgently pleads. Gerontius utters his last words on earth: 'Into Thy hands, O Lord'; the Priest (bass) enters dramatically with the Prayer for the Dying: 'Go forth on thy journey, Christian soul!' and the chorus leaps to a blazing B flat major chord with 'Go, in the name of Angels and Archangels'. They are joined by the semi chorus, and the two choirs and bass soloist combine in an impressive ending to the first part of the work.

Part II opens with a subdued but magical orchestral introduction pointing the words 'How still it is!' which Gerontius sings as his soul is borne forward towards the Just and Holy Judge. He is joined by his Guardian Angel (mezzo-soprano) and a richly theological dialogue ensues, interrupted before long by a chorus of Demons, snarling with impotent malice in a devilish double fugue. As their 'sour and uncouth dissonance' dies away, Gerontius questions eagerly: 'Shall I see my dearest Master when I reach His throne?' He is warned by the Angel that 'the flame of the Everlasting Love doth burn ere it transform'.

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The distant chorus of 'Angelicals' is now heard for the first time; and the music mounts with excitement as the Angel sings 'We now have passed the gate and are within the House of Judgment'. As they reach the threshold, the full chorus enters in massive seven-part harmony: 'Praise to the Holiest in the height' - the beginning of an extended and magnificently laid out choral sequence. When this is over, the Angel tells Gerontius: 'Thy judgment now is near'. The bass soloist, impersonating the angel who comforted Christ in Gethsemane, makes an impassioned plea in intensely chromatic descending scales:

'Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee . . .
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee'.

The chorus (Gerontius' friends on earth) take up the plea for mercy; and the Angel, knowing it to be granted, sings a few bars of rapturous thanksgiving.

Now follows the judgment scene which is the climax of the whole work. After a tremendous orchestral build up, Gerontius, pierced by a brief glimpse of the Most Fair and, in effect, judging himself, utters a great cry: 'Take me away and in the lowest deep . . . There let me be'. The choir sings in the quietest whisper the opening words of Psalm 90: 'Lord, Thou hast been our refuge in every generation', after which a most beautiful relaxed melody is announced by the orchestra. This is taken up by the Angel, who sings farewell to Gerontius and leaves him suffering happily in purgatory as the chorus brings the work to a quiet, serene close.

K.M.

DEREK WATMOUGH is a Yorkshireman who studied classical languages and later, music at the University of Durham. As a teenager he played a violin in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and a European tour with them in 1955 inspired him to travel there as often as possible and to speak, however falteringly, a few European languages.

Derek has held teaching posts at the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe (where he remembers the renowned conductor Richard Hickox as a chubby, rosy-cheeked son of a local Vicar), at Skinners' School, Tunbridge Wells and finally at Beacon Community College in Crowborough.

His first concert as Conductor of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society in 1973 included Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*. Since then he has been appointed conductor of the Mid-Sussex Sinfonia and occasional conductor of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra, a fact of which he is especially proud since he is the only non-full-time professional conductor to be invited.

Derek is also well known as a pianist with the Sussex Camerata and with the Little London Trio who perform music in venues in Sussex, though recently the Sussex Camerata have done a lunch-time recital in St Bride's, Fleet Street.

For many years Derek has written reviews for the Kent and Sussex Courier and for the Green Room Music Club and this type of writing is something he particularly enjoys.

KLAUS UWE LUDWIG was born in 1943 in Göttingen: studied Church Music at Heidelberg. 1966 A-examination, studied vocal soloist and conducting at Mannheim. 1967 Concert Diploma for artistic organ playing 'with distinction'. 1977 Director of Church Music (when appointed at the age of 33, one of the youngest persons awarded that degree). *

Since 1978 at the Lutherkirche, Wiesbaden. Conductor of the Wiesbaden Bach Choir, of the Bach Orchestra Wiesbaden, of the 'Kleine Kantorei' (small choir) and of the Johan-Walter-Kreis (for late-medieval and Renaissance music).

For the Children's Choir he composed children's operas such as 'Die Regentrude' (Rain Gertie), 'Kalif Storch' (Caliph Stork), 'Jocko, der Neffe (Jocko, the Nephew) and 'Der Kaiser und die Nachtigall' (The Emperor and the Nightingale).

Klaus Uwe Ludwig does not see his task as specializing in certain subjects. The performances of J. S Bach's complete organ works in 1980 were followed by those of Max Reger's complete organ works.

Ludwig's repertory includes old music as well as known and unknown romantic works. The studies of contemporary music show their result in the many first broadcasts in the Lutherkirche since 1979. Broadcasts, productions of records and CDs, as well as tours in and outside of Europe complete the artistic image.

THE SOLOISTS

SHELAGH SQUIRES, mezzo-soprano, commenced her musical studies at the Guildhall School of Music, after winning a scholarship and county major grant. After Graduation, she joined the Phoenix Opera Company under the direction of Joan Cross and Ann Wood, and subsequently the Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Operas.

She became a member of the English National Opera in 1972 and has remained there as a principal mezzo since that time. During these years she has sung a wide and varied repertory of roles among which have been :- Annina - *Der Rosenkavalier*, Sorceress - *Dido & Aeneas*, Thisbe - *La Cenerentola*, Emilia - *Otello*, Filippyevna - *Eugene Onegin*, Herodias - *Salome*, Ulrica - *Masked Ball*, Ottavia - *Coronation of Poppea*, Mrs Sedley - *Peter Grimes*, Margret - *Wozzek*, Mercedes - *Carmen* (also at Earls Court and in Japan) and Jezibaba - *Rusalka*.

As well as many performances in this country, her career has taken her overseas singing in Vienna, Japan, North America including the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and in Norway at the Bergen International Music Festival.

She moved to Tunbridge Wells in 1970 and now studies with Josephine Veasey.

RICHARD BRAEBROOK, tenor, was born in Huddersfield, now lives in Tunbridge Wells and is at present in his tenth season with English National Opera. He studied at the Royal College of Music, then with Gerald English and is currently studying with Keith Bonnington who is also a member of the English National Opera. Since leaving the Royal College of Music, he has sung with the BBC Singers and with the D'Oyley Carte Opera Company, travelling extensively in both Great Britain and abroad. In 1983 he was first prize winner in the World International Singing Festival in Rio de Janeiro. Richard sings regularly with many of the leading choral societies in the UK ranging from oratorios of Handel and Bach Passions to the works of Elgar and Britten. Recent performances include Handel's *Messiah*, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* among many others, and lately Verdi's *Requiem* with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society.

As well as his accomplishments as an operatic artist, Richard is just as much at home singing in cabaret as on the concert stage, including engagements at the Cafe Royal, London and aboard the SS Canberra and Sea Princess for the P&O Shipping line.

JOHN CUNNINGHAM was born in Wigan, Lancashire in 1948. He studied at Manchester Polytechnic and for over ten years followed a career as a Chartered Librarian. He studied singing with John Cameron, and was soon fulfilling an average of four professional engagements per week in fringe opera, oratorio and work in the light music field, at which stage he decided to leave librarianship and embark on a professional singing career.

On the operatic stage he has worked with the English National Opera for several years singing and understudying many roles, received with critical acclaim by the national press. Engagements also include working with the National Theatre Company and appearing as a guest artist at the Henley Music and Arts Festival as well as the Brighton and France - Jersey Festivals.

John also pursues a busy concert and recital career throughout the country, having sung with many choral and music societies and in the major concert halls in London, including the Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican and the Queen Elizabeth Hall. The bass timbre of his voice, allied to his unusually wide range, enables him to sing most of the bass as well as the baritone repertoire.

He has experience of music of all eras, and a vast collection and repertoire of artsongs and popular ballads, suitable for all occasions. In the light music field, he regularly performs in a variety of venues.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society had its beginnings in the late Autumn of 1904 when an announcement in the Kent & Sussex Courier invited "Ladies and Gentlemen with good voices" to take part in rehearsals of Brahms's *Requiem*, conducted by Mr Francis J. Foote. There was a good response to this invitation as on November 25th the Courier reported that there were nearly 100 voices, but there were still vacancies for Tenors and Basses - this, in spite of the fact that there was already a large choir in the town known as the Tunbridge Wells Vocal Association.

The performance of Brahms's *Requiem* took place on Wednesday, May 10th, 1905 in the Great Hall and there was a glowing report in the Courier only two days later. At the end of the report Mr Foote announced that he would begin rehearsals of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* next autumn. *The Dream of Gerontius* may have been rehearsed but no performance was given and, in fact, it was the Vocal Association who gave the first performance in Tunbridge Wells of Elgar's masterpiece in March 1907, having received a telegram from Elgar wishing them every success. Mr Foote's choir concentrated their efforts on Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* and in the same concert on May 2nd 1906 also sang Brahms's *Song of Destiny* and the Kyrie and Gloria from the *Mass in G Minor* by Francis Foote. (Mr Foote wrote several compositions.) Herr Hans Wessely, "the celebrated Austrian violinist" played Max Bruch's Violin Concerto, so there was much variety in this concert.

Until 1920 the choir was known as the Francis Foote Choir, but in that year it was decided to revive an old title and to call the group The Tunbridge Wells Choral Society. Evidently there was a choir of this name as far back as 1862. Francis Foote continued to be their conductor until 1942, when he retired. The Society appointed Sydney Ansell as chorus master and the main concerts were conducted first by George Weldon and then by John Hollingsworth - conductors of the Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra.

After the war it took a little while for the choir to settle, both Albert Croucher and Robin Miller being conductors for short periods and then came Dr Harold May in 1953. Trevor Harvey took over in 1964 and it was during his time that our present conductor, Derek Watmough, began his association with the Society as accompanist. When Trevor Harvey left in 1972 Derek worked with Myer Fredman for three seasons and took over as chief conductor in 1975, Myer having gone to Australia. We felt pleased indeed when Derek was awarded the M.B.E. in 1992.

Over the years there have been a number of guest conductors including Sir Adrian Boult and Richard Hickox and, of course, Klaus Uwe Ludwig who, along with his choir, we are very happy to have with us today.

There have been many highlights over the 90 years of continuous "singing in the choir". Francis Foote and the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society gave the opening concert (*The Messiah*) at the Assembly Hall and, earlier, there were a number of *al fresco* concerts - some of them rained upon of course! *Elijah* (1917) was successfully performed at Bredbury on Mount Ephraim, as was *Merrie England* (1928) in Dunorlan. In 1949, 50 and 51 the Society joined with other choirs from East Sussex to sing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at Glyn-debournne where one of the soloists was Kathleen Ferrier. The conductor was Dr Reginald Jacques. During Trevor Harvey's time the choir performed at one of the Robert Mayer Concerts at the Festival Hall, Mr Harvey being the regular conductor of that series of concerts.

Over such a long period of time there have obviously been many ups and downs, but the main aim has always been to perform the greatest choral music to as high a standard as forces and finances will allow and to give enjoyment.

THE BACH-CHOR WIESBADEN

The Choir was founded in 1978 and since then Klaus Uwe Ludwig has been its director. The Choir reside in the Lutherkirche Wiesbaden and regularly sing in concerts and services. Up to now performances have also taken place during travels in Great Britain, Poland and the U.S.A. Apart from a-cappella works of all musical epochs, the repertory of the Bach-Chor includes the following oratorios: *The Last Judgement* (Buxtehude); *B-minor Mass*, *St Matthew Passion*, *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* (Bach); *The Creation*, *Missa in tempore belli* (Haydn); *Requiem*, *Coronation Mass*, *C-minor Mass* (Mozart); *The Saviour's Last Hours* (Spohr); *E-minor Mass* (Bruckner); *German Requiem* (Brahms); *Christmas Oratorio* (Saint Saëns); *B-flat minor Mass*, *Stabat Mater* (Dvorak); *Te Deum*, *Psalmus Hungaricus* (Kodály); *In Terra Pax* (Martin); *King David* (Honegger); *Gloria* (Poulenc); *Requiem* (Duruflé). Recordings of the Bach-Chor have been made and published: *'The Saviour's Last Hours'* (Louis Spohr, first ever recording) and *'In Terra Pax'* (Frank Martin). Attached to the Bach-Chor Wiesbaden are some other musical groups, among them the *'Kleine Kantorei'* (small choir), a-cappella

works of all epochs as their most important task. There is also the the Children's Choir with some first performances and also reproduction of LPs and CDs of, e. g., Klaus Uwe Ludwig's children's operas 'Die Regentrude', based on Theodor Storm's text, and 'Kalif Storch' (Caliph Stork), based on Wilhelm Hauff's tale.

Translation: Wolfgang Weber

THE BACH CHOIR LUTHERKIRCHE WIESBADEN

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
B. Blasig	U. Ambrosius	W. Heck	G. Geissler
L. Bokowski	U. Barth	G. Klaesius	H-E. Götting
C. Buck	H. Eser	K. Uwe Ludwig	A. von-Issendorf
A. Gabriel	C. Hutchison	H. Luedtke	U. Jetter
M. Geissler	U. Jetter	C. Rödiger	R. Schmidt
B. Gillert	C. Krüger-Jansen		H-M. Schreiber
B. Götting	H. Merz		W. Weber
E. Greitzke	K. Nimmo		F. Winkler
C. Grosse-Natrop	B. Schmidt		
S. Hausen	C. Schneider		
C. Kürschner	H. Weber		
D. Kuhlemann	G. Wilhelm		
B. Kutnewsky	J. Wollstädter		
T. Marek			
C. Mülverstedt			
B. Pfännmüller			
K. Schmidt			
G. Seelbach			
G. Suhr			
J. Wollstädter			

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Sopranos	J. Mitchley	G. Feast	Tenors
M. Audsley	J. Molineau	J. Finch	M. Beresford
B. Batchelor	M. Motimore	J. Finlay	D. Day
A. Bell	J. Nash	N. Fletcher	R. Ewins
B. Benson	M. Nopper	D. Flint	J. Harding
J. Bishop	M. O'Sullivan	P. Flood	J. Holt
D. Bruce	E. Phillips	E. Gall	A. Lee
S. Chandler	W. Roszak	R. Gray	L. Lee
M. Chapman	M. Smith	A. Grey	K. Mitchell
V. Cunningham	A. Spillman	M. Guy	G. Stredder
J. Davison	E. Staden	J. Heritage	G. Thirkell
L. Dobson	M. Standen	B. Hewett	T. Walter
J. Dunstall	L. Stroud	F. Lee	Basses
J. Eckett	M. Thatcher	C. Lewis	C. Bacon
S. Ellman	J. Thorpe	J. Lewis	P. Ball
M. Foley	M. Thorpe	J. Lindeyer	M. Barker
R. Gilbert	E. Tompsett	J. Lowdon	M. Clarke
F. Hanshard	K. Wallwork	E. MacDougal	R. Dunstall
O. Hansard	E. Ward	P. Maxwell	R. Gosling
C. Hare	E. Webb	J. Menage	R. Griffiths
B. Hazelden	Altos	D. Mitchell	C. Hare
P. Hillen	C. Bigwood	M. Norton	J. Heritage
A. Holt	J. Blake	S. Phelps	M. Hudson
L. Hull	M. Blyth	A. Salkeld	A. Hull
D. Hutchison	E. Carr	J. Scholes	M. Rees
E. Jackson	R. Clark	G. Stewart	C. Rogers
E. Jefferson	O. Clarke	J. Stredder	E. Scott
J. Jessup	E. Crusoe	C. Sumner	F. Shorter
S. Jones	W. Davies	B. Tattersall	J. Spary
H. McNab	L. Davies	S. Taylor	C. Steward
M. Marshall	S. Day	J. Wadey	P. Webb
G. Martin	P. Doran	D. Waldron	
B. Maw	H. Dolton	M. Wood	
K. Miller	P. Eastman		

ORCHESTRA

Saturday / 21st 1994. *Elgar's Dream of Gerontius*

Violin 1

Rita French *Leader*
Harry Saunders
Susan Baker
Felicity Smith
Nina Bentley
Cynthia Eraut
Sally Brooke-Pike
Raymond Alexander

Violin 2

Jenny Moore
Muriel Parker
Mary Findlay
Anne McWatt
Barbara Hebditch
Deborah Kirk
Marie-France Ouelet
Gillian Ripley

Viola

Lynn Whitley
Jane Taunton
Margaret Wilson
Bill Ball
Philippa Kings
Jane Pamment

Cello

Chloe Allman-Ward
Alison Howard-Lucy
Anita Strevens
Sarah Stewart-Pennink
Valerie Haynes
Rosemary Lee

Double Bass

John Bass
Oliver Springett
Simon Taunton
Alan Pearce

Flutes

1. Patrick Taggart
2. Ian Audsley
Pic. Nancy Strevens

Oboes

1. Christine Geer
2. Caroline Kehoe
Cor Ang. Debbie Rich

Clarinet

1. Jane Rhind
2. Christopher Taylor
Bass. Stephen Rhind

Bassoon

1. Alson Holman
2. Caroline Stinton
Contra. Tanya Weeks

Horns

1. David Clack
2. Frank Cottey
3. Patrick Strevens
4. Wendy Balcome

Trumpet

Gary Wyatt
Chris Weldon
Richard Baker

Trombone

1. Alan Gout
2. Effie Sparkshall
3. Robin Turner

Tuba

Steven Wassell

Harp

Pauline Rogers

Timps/Percussion

Kate Fish
Francis Beuttler
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