

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

Christmas Concert

Handel: *Messiah* (excerpts)

**Plus other choral and instrumental music
with audience carols**

Conductor: Roland Millar

Soprano: Debbie Millar

Organist: Ian Shaw



WITH THE WADHURST BRASS BAND

Sunday 11th December 2011

6.30pm St Mary's Church, Goudhurst, TN17 1AN

Royal Tunbridge Wells
**CHORAL
SOCIETY**

RTWCS is a Registered Charity No: 273310
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Programme: £1

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Programme *(Separate audience song sheet available free)*

1. Audience and choir

It came upon the midnight clear
Traditional (arr. Sullivan)

2. Choir and soloist

Messiah:
And the glory of the Lord
Behold, a virgin that shall conceive
O Thou that tellest good tidings
Handel

3. Choir

Our Lady and child Moore
Sussex carol Traditional (arr. Willcocks)
The shepherds' farewell Berlioz

4. Audience and choir

O little town of Bethlehem
Traditional (arr. Vaughan Williams,
descant Armstrong)

5. Wadhurst Brass Band

Christmas crackers Woodford
Candlelight carol Rutter

6. Choir

O men from the fields Cooke
Coventry carol Traditional (arr. Shaw)
I saw three ships Traditional (arr. Humphris)
Away in a manger Kirkpatrick (arr. Llewellyn)

7. Audience and choir

As with gladness men of old
Kocher (arr. Willcocks)

8. Soprano solos

The little road to Bethlehem Head
O holy night Adam

9. Choir and soloist

Messiah:
Pifa (Pastoral symphony)
There were shepherds
Glory to God
For unto us a child is born
Handel

10. Audience and choir

O come, all ye faithful
Traditional (arr. Willcocks)

About the composer: George Frederic Handel (1685 – 1759)

Handel was, like most composers of his day, a fast worker, but few of his scores show such evidence of having been written at white heat as that of *Messiah*, which was set down on paper in a mere 24 days, between 22 August and 14 September 1741. Earlier the same year he had received an invitation from the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to visit Dublin in order to give some concerts in aid of charitable institutions in the city, and it was probably with this impending concert tour in view that he composed his new oratorio.

The first performance of *Messiah*, on 13 April 1742, was the culminating point of Handel's stay in Dublin. It was given at Neal's Music Hall in Fishamble Street, a room designed to hold about 600 people but which, thanks to an announcement in Faulkner's Dublin Journal which intimated that "The stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the favour of the Ladies not to come with Hoops this Day" and that "The Gentlemen are desired to come without their swords", in fact managed to accommodate an audience of 700. The orchestra was led by Matthew Dubourg, with soloists and a chorus of sixteen men and sixteen boys.

Messiah was performed for the first time in England a year later, on 23 March 1743, at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. It has subsequently gone on to become probably the most popular oratorio of all time and is a much loved tradition, being performed at the great celebrations of Christmas and Easter.



The Performers

Roland Millar – Conductor

Roland Millar is an experienced choral and orchestral conductor and has been music director of the Forest Row Orchestra in East Sussex since 1994. He previously directed the Baroque Singers and the Grosvenor Orchestra, both based in Tunbridge Wells, and before that he conducted the West Sussex County Boys Choir. Roland has also sung with choirs in London and across the South East for over 20 years and continues to maintain a busy schedule of solo and choral singing.



Debbie Millar – Soprano

Debbie has been active locally as a singer for almost 30 years, singing with various chamber choirs in Kent and in London during this time. She was one of the first voice students at the Guildhall School Junior Department and subsequently participated in the Deller Academy, taking solo roles including Monteverdi's Vespers. Debbie regularly performs as a soloist and her repertoire includes *Messiah*, *Christmas Oratorio*, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Faure's *Requiem*.



Ian Shaw – Organist

Ian Shaw held an organ scholarship at St John's College Cambridge and a John Stewart of Rannoch Scholarship in Sacred Music and pursued further study at the Sweelinck Conservatorium, Amsterdam and Goldsmiths College, London. He has been Assistant Organist at Durham Cathedral and Director of Music at St Peter's Eaton Square. He has also enjoyed eleven years on the music staff of Scottish Opera. Recent compositions include a song cycle for Rebecca Bottone, *A Breath of Nothing*, and a commission for Magdalen College, Oxford. His work has been described as 'redoubtable' by *The Scotsman* and 'sometimes amusing' by the Dean of Durham.



The Wadhurst Brass Band

Brass bands thrive in East Sussex and Wadhurst is no exception – a brass band has prospered in the village since the late 1800s. The present band owes its' life to Algy Hoare. Algy has been involved with brass bands and their music since he was a tot and as a teacher at the Secondary School, now Uplands Community College, he introduced brass lessons in the 1950s. He formed a school band in 1957, success leading naturally into the "Youth Band" that evolved in 1974, then into the "Wadhurst Brass Band" that we know today. The band has developed a friendly and welcoming style in which players both young and old are able to develop their musicianship. In 1998 Algy handed his baton over, until it was eventually passed back to him in January 2009.

Summer venues throughout East Sussex and West Kent have included Hever Castle, Chartwell, Chevening House, Penshurst, Tonbridge Castle and the bandstands at Eastbourne, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Pantiles, together with local fetes in East Sussex villages and concert tours in France, Belgium and Germany. All are perfect backdrops on a summer's day, to introduce overseas and home visitors to the very English sound of a brass band; we hope you enjoy their evocative sound in mid-winter!



Forthcoming concerts to be given by the choir

Early Spring Concert 2012

Sunday March 11th, 3.00pm
The Assembly Hall Theatre,
Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LU

Orff: *Carmina Burana*



Late Spring Concert 2012

Saturday May 19th, 7.00pm
The Assembly Hall Theatre,
Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LU

Verdi: *Requiem*



If you enjoy singing...

... why not come and join us for our next concerts? The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society aspires to choral excellence, giving a life-enhancing experience for our members and audience. Rehearsals are held on Mondays at 7.30pm, normally at St John's Church, Tunbridge Wells. We welcome singers of all levels of experience. Prospective members are not required to audition and can come to several rehearsals before committing to joining.

To find out more contact Trevor Hurrell on 07770 3104 (email hurrellt@googlemail.com) or visit our website at www.rtwcs.org.uk.



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For further information about the Society visit our website:
www.rtwcs.org.uk

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a member of NFMS ("Making Music") and is a Registered Charity No 273310.

