

Goudhurst Parish Church

Sunday 14th December

6.30pm

Have yourself
a merry little
Christmas!

Conducted by Rebecca Miller

Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

www.rtwcs.org.uk



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Hotel
du Vin
& Bistro

Programme
£2

Programme for Christmas Concert

Note: Audience Carol words are printed on a separate sheet

14th December 2014 at 6.30 p.m.

St. Mary's Parish Church, Goudhurst

With:

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

Mayfield Band – directed by Doug Blackford.

Emily Steventon *soprano*

Michael White *baritone*

Jeffrey Gray *organ and piano*

Conducted by Rebecca Miller

Band medley as audience assembles – *Rudolph around the world*

- 1 Soloist & Choir – opening carol – *Once in Royal David's City*
- 2 Audience carol – *O Come All ye Faithful*
- 3 Choir carols – *The Shepherds' Farewell* – by Hector Berlioz
– *Coventry Carol* – traditional
- 4 Organ solo – *Sortie in E^b* by Louis Lefébure-Wély
- 5 Audience carol – *Good King Wenceslas*
- 6 Soloists – *O Holy Night* by Adolphe Adam
– *Ave Maria* (Duet and piano) by Franz Schubert
- 7 Band – *A Christmas Suite* – arr. Stephen Wood
– *Mary's Boy Child* – arr. Jan Van Kraeydonck
- 8 Audience carol – *It Came Upon The Midnight Clear*
- 9 Baritone solo – *Three Kings from Orient Lands Afar* – by Peter Cornelius
- 10 Choir – *Hallelujah Chorus* – from *Messiah* by GF Handel
- 11 Soprano soloist – *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*
– *Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire* (duet)
- 12 Audience carol – *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*
- 13 Farewell and Choir – *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*

Audience played out (Band) – *Merry Christmas Everybody!*

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Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society

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For further information, or to request your complimentary guide to wealth management please contact us quoting RTWCS. In the meantime, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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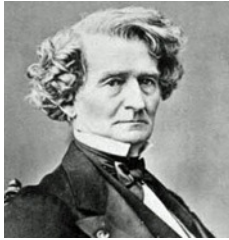
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The Music

Choir Carols:

The Shepherds' Farewell was written by



Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). This beautifully fashioned carol was deliberately composed in an old-fashioned style and originally Berlioz pretended it was written by someone else. But audiences and critics found it delightful, and he eventually acknowledged authorship and incorporated the piece into his most intimate cantata *L'Enfance du Christ* (*The Childhood of Christ*).

*Thou must leave Thy lowly dwelling,
The humble crib, the stable bare.
Babe, all mortal babes excelling,
Content our earthly lot to share.
Loving father, Loving mother,
Shelter Thee with tender care!*

*Blessed Jesus, we implore Thee
With humble love and holy fear.
In the land that lies before Thee,
Forget not us who linger here!
May the shepherd's lowly calling,
Ever to Thy heart be dear!*

*Blest are ye beyond all measure,
Thou happy father, mother mild!
Guard ye well your heav'nly treasure,
The Prince of Peace, The Holy Child!
God go with you, God protect you,
Guide you safely through the wild!*

English word by Paul England

The Coventry Carol was included as part of a traditional mystery play performed in Coventry in the 16th century. In the play, this lullaby is sung by the women of Bethlehem, just before Herod's soldiers come to slaughter their children. The author is unknown, and there have been many arrangements of the melody, the oldest dating from 1591.

*Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.*

*O sisters too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling, for whom we do sing
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.*

*Herod, the king, in his raging,
Charged he hath this day
His men of might, in his owne sight,
All young children to slay.*

*That woe is me, poor Child for Thee!
And ever mourn and sigh,
For thy parting neither say nor sing,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay!*

*Lully lulla, thou little tiny child,
Bye, bye, lully, lullay.*

Organ Solo:

Sortie in E flat major. This virtuoso piece

has been described as one of the organ world's great fun pieces. It was probably commissioned as a showy piece to accompany the departure of bride and groom from church after a society wedding



The French composer. Louis Lefébure-Wély (1817-1869) was a popular Parisian organist of his time and described as "an exceptionally talented dandy", but criticised by the music establishment for not adopting a more traditional "religious style" for his organ compositions!

Soprano Soloist:

O Holy Night is a beautiful carol composed

by Adolphe Charles Adam, a 19th century French composer of popular music, probably better known for his ballet composition, *Giselle*.



The English words of *O Holy Night* are a free translation of the French poem *Minuit, chrétiens* (Midnight, Christians) written by Placide Cappeau. In both the French original and the familiar English versions, the text reflects on the birth of Jesus and of humanity's redemption.

Duet:

Ave Maria (*Hail Mary*): this duet is an arrangement of Franz Schubert's enduring melody. The Latin version of the *Ave Maria* is nowadays so frequently used with this piece that it has led to the misconception that he wrote the tune as a setting for the Roman Catholic *Ave Maria*.



However, interestingly, this song was originally written as part of a cycle of seven songs telling the story of Sir Walter Scott's epic poem *Lady of the Lake* set in the Trossachs.

Baritone Solo and choir:

The Three Kings is a carol consisting of two beautifully interwoven themes written by the 19th-century German, Peter Cornelius. The solo baritone sings the story of the Epiphany while the choir quietly sings the chorale "How brightly shines the morning star", which is also of German origin, originally composed by Philipp Nicolai in 1599. The chorale theme was also used by JS Bach in his cantata, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, first performed in 1725.

*Three kings from Persian lands afar,
To Jordan following the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
Where the new-born King of the Jews may be,
Full Royal gifts they bear to the King:
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering*

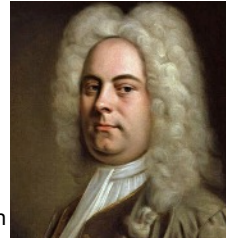
*The star shines out with a steadfast ray,
The Kings to Bethlehem make their way,
And there to worship they bend their knee,
As Mary's child in her lap they see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King,
Gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.*

*Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem
The kings are trav'ling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace,
Shall lead thy heart to its resting place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring:
Offer thy heart to the infant King, offer thy heart!*

Choir:

Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever. *Hallelujah!*

The words of the famous chorus from Handel's sacred oratorio *Messiah*, composed in 1741 and first performed in Dublin the following year.



The work *Messiah* is in three parts, part II of which covers Christ's Passion and his death, and closes with this *Hallelujah* Chorus – a definitive statement of the belief in the glory of God.

The custom of standing for the chorus originates from a belief that, at the London premiere, King George II did so, an action which would have obliged everybody to stand. However, there is no convincing evidence that the king was actually present at this or any performance of *Messiah*. Nevertheless, the custom of standing for performances of the *Hallelujah* chorus persists!

Solo Singers:

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

is a song introduced by Judy Garland in the 1944 musical *Meet Me in St. Louis*. It was written by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane.



It remains one of the most popular Christmas songs in America.

Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire

is the subtitle of a piece entitled *The Christmas Song*, and originally known as *Merry Christmas to you*. It is another popular American song dating from the time of the second world war

It was written by Bob Wells and Mel Tormé during a blistering hot summer in 1944 as an effort to "stay cool by thinking cool."

We Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy new Year!

The performers

Conductor Rebecca Miller is acclaimed as a compelling and energetic force on the podium. Highly regarded for her sophisticated music making and command of varied composers and styles, she is also praised for her ability to communicate with audiences of all ages.

Born in California, Rebecca completed her studies in piano at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She studied conducting at Northwestern University and at the Aspen Music Festival, and was the Paul Woodhouse Junior Fellow in Conducting for two years at London's Royal College of Music.

First Prize winner in the fourth Eduardo Mata International Conducting Competition, she has guest conducted prestigious orchestras in Mexico, as well as the Teresa Carreño Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Elsewhere she has guest conducted the London Sinfonietta, the Orchestra of the Swan, and Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra (Israel), and conducted extensively in the USA, including orchestras in Houston, Huntsville, Reno, Williamsport, Santa Cruz, and in New York. She is proud to be one of the Southbank Sinfonia's only regular guest conductors, and upcoming engagements include concerts in Mexico, London, and California.

From 2007 to 2010 Rebecca was Resident Conductor of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra in New Orleans, and previously was Conducting Fellow of the Houston Symphony. 2014 saw her debut with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, with the Royal Northern Sinfonia at the Ryedale Festival and the Sage Gateshead, and with the BBC Concert Orchestra – both at the Royal Festival Hall and at the Royal Albert Hall as part of the 2014 BBC Proms.

Having previously released two CDs for Signum Records she has five forthcoming recordings to be released in the next two years - with the OAE performing CPE Bach, Royal Northern Sinfonia (Haydn), BBC Concert Orchestra, and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Jeffrey Gray was an Academical Clerk (Choral Scholar) at Magdalen College, Oxford where he read Music. After leaving Oxford, he sang in Worcester Cathedral Choir and held teaching posts in Worcestershire and then in York. From 1994 to 2002 he was Director of Music at Monmouth School in South Wales, where he directed the school's celebrated Choral Society, which performed in Cardiff with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera and toured widely throughout Europe and The United States. From 2002 to 2005 he was Director of Music at Caterham School.

At present he teaches at The King's School, Rochester, The Junior King's School, Canterbury and Marlborough House School. He also sings in Rochester Cathedral Choir and is an examiner for the ABRSM.

Emily Steventon is a versatile mezzo-soprano who recently gained a Masters with distinction on the prestigious Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Whilst studying she won financial awards from The Guildhall School, The Ann Driver Trust, Barbican Music and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Emily has worked with the Mark Morris Dance Company performing their 'Bedtime' Schubert set at The Edinburgh Festival Theatre, The Cardiff Millennium Centre and Snape Maltings. She has also performed in a diverse range of operas and recorded for the BBC.

Most recently Emily has completed an Opera Gala tour with 'Merry Opera' and performed Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Battle Choral Society.



Photo
Richard Haughton



Michael White is a baritone from the Cranbrook area who studied in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He enjoys a busy schedule of oratorio and recital work and has a particular passion for twentieth century English song. In this genre he has had the pleasure of working with Graham Johnson, Sarah Walker and Catherine Wilson among others. Michael is adept at contemporary music and has had a song cycle composed for him which he premiered in London. Recent performances have included the baritone solo roles in Fauré's Requiem, Stainer's *Crucifixion* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.



The Mayfield Silver Band

We welcome back the **Mayfield Silver Band**, and a special welcome to Doug Blackford in his first year as the new Musical Director of the Band. Having taken over the baton in January, Doug's emphasis on achieving higher musical standards through enjoyment of the music, and through giving younger players the space and encouragement to shine, has paid dividends, and the band has had a very successful summer season. Highlights were a rousing "Last Night of the Proms" concert, featuring a unique collaboration with a local bagpiper, and "Tea and Tunes", an outdoor afternoon concert at their base, overlooking the beautiful High Weald.



You can find more details of the band at www.mayfieldband.co.uk or on their facebook page. If you haven't been to a brass band concert before, why not check out their concert dates in 2015, or catch them at Mayfield's Christmas 1914 Truce concert next Saturday, the 20th, which promises to be a very special evening. New players, of all ages and abilities, including beginners, are always welcome.

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a vibrant community of people from all walks of life who share a passion for classical, mixed voice choral singing. We welcome everyone who shares our love of singing and wishes to listen to, learn about or perform beautiful live music. Our aim is to inspire both members and audiences alike through public performances and engagement of high quality professionals to assist us.

RTWCS is registered charity – no 273310. Please refer to our website for all details.

Interested in singing with RTWCS? – Why not give us a try!

We welcome enquiries from potential new members of the society, whether experienced or not. We do not hold auditions, and we always give newcomers the opportunity to join one or two rehearsals before deciding whether they wish to become a member.

We are singing Bach's wonderful *St Matthew Passion* in the spring of 2015. Anyone wishing to take advantage of the opportunity of participating in one of the choral repertoire's greatest compositions (see back cover), please telephone our registrar (Jane Walters) on 01892 543158 or the general secretary (Trevor Hurrell) on 07770 823104. Alternatively please visit the membership section of our website:

www.rtwcs.org.uk

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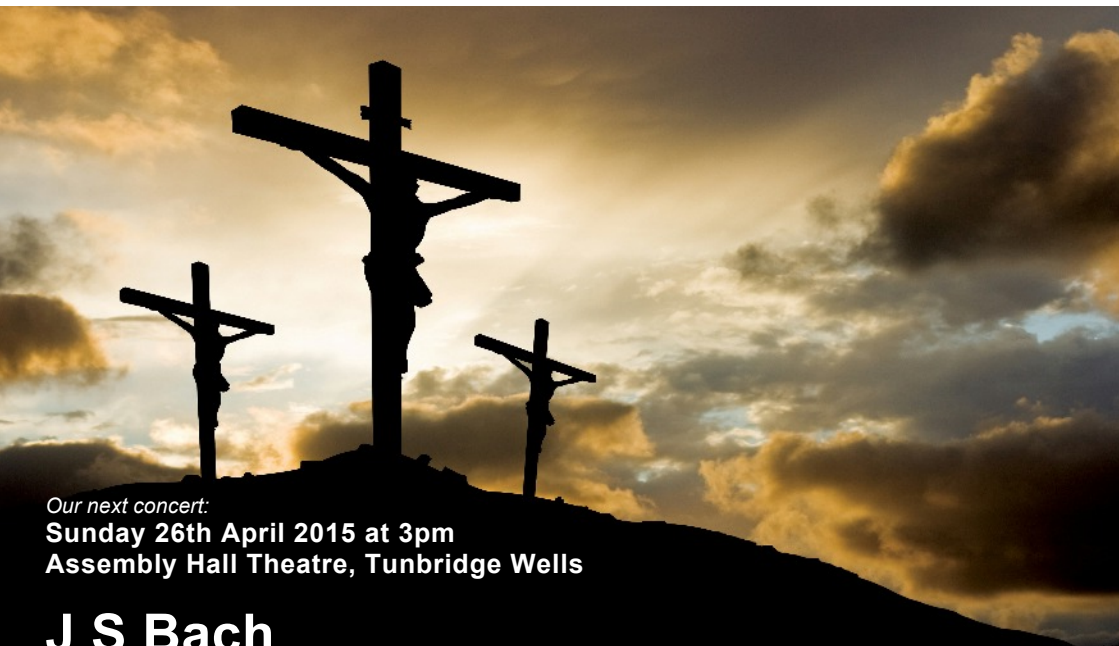
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RTWCS also acknowledges the continuing financial support of Burfields House Wealth Management Ltd.



Our next concert:

Sunday 26th April 2015 at 3pm
Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells

J S Bach ***Saint Matthew Passion***

Royal Tunbridge Wells

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with
London Handel Orchestra
Gwilym Bowen – *Tenor (as the Evangelist)*
Robert Rice – *Bass (as Jesus)*
Ruth Holton – *Soprano*
Clare McCaldin – *Mezzo*
Greg Tassell – *Tenor*
Alex Ashworth – *Bass*

Rebecca Miller – Conductor

Tickets:

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