

Esplanade Presents



# THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

A pipe organ performance by  
**Marc Rochester** (UK)

featuring the choirs of  
Methodist Girls' School  
Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' Secondary School  
Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus (Toa Payoh) Secondary School

conducted by  
Jennifer Tham



esplanade  
theatres on the bay  
singapore

**19 Dec 08, Fri, 7.30pm**  
**Esplanade Concert Hall**

# Programme

## Part One – Organ Solo

- |   |  |     |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély (1817 – 1870)<br><i>Marche (Op.122 No.4)</i>        | 4'  |
| 2 | Edwin H Lemare (1865 – 1934)<br><i>Berceuse</i>                                      | 6'  |
| 3 | Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770 – 1846)<br><i>Variations in Finale (Op.90)</i> | 18' |
| 4 | Franz Liszt (1811 – 1886)<br><i>Die Hirten an der Krippe (S186 No.3)</i>             | 3'  |
| 5 | Marcel Lanquetuit (1894 – 1985)<br><i>Toccata in D</i>                               | 6'  |

## Part Two – Organ and Choir

- |    |   |          |
|----|---|----------|
| 6  | John Rutter (b.1945)<br><i>Shepherd's Pipe Carol</i>                  | 3'       |
| 7  | Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)<br><i>Ave Maria</i>                 | 3'       |
| 8  | Pietro Yon (1886 – 1943)<br><i>Gesù Bambino</i>                       | 4'       |
| 9  | François Poulenc (1899 – 1963)<br><i>Litanies à la Vierge Noire</i>   | 9'       |
| 10 | David Willcocks (b.1919)<br><i>Sussex Carol</i>                       | 2'       |
| 11 | Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924)<br><i>Ave Maria (Op.67 No.2)</i>          | 2'       |
| 12 | Peter Warlock (1894 – 1930)<br><i>Come to Bethlehem</i>               | 3'       |
| 13 | John Rutter (b.1946)<br><i>Donkey Carol</i><br><i>In Dulci Jubilo</i> | 4'<br>4' |
| 14 | David Willcocks (b.1919)<br><i>Hark! The Herald Angels Sing</i>       | 10'      |

(100 mins, including 20 mins intermission)

# Biography



MARC ROCHESTER, ORGANIST

At the age of 24, Marc became one of the youngest people ever to hold the position of Organist and Master of the Choristers at a British cathedral when he was appointed to Londonderry Cathedral in Northern Ireland. Now, 30 years on, he remains a unique figure on the organ scene, combining an active career as a performer (he has been Resident Organist of Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS in Kuala Lumpur since its inception in 1998) with a parallel one as a writer and broadcaster on music, with a particular slant towards the organ and its repertoire, on which he is widely regarded as a leading authority.

Born in London Marc's early training was as a chorister. He had his first organ lessons from his father and subsequent teachers included Peter Mound (at Aldershot Parish Church where the 14-year-old Marc held his first assistant organist's post), Michael Austin (Wimborne Minster) and Martin Neary (Westminster Abbey). He studied music at the University of Wales in Cardiff where he was organ scholar and worked alongside Robert Joyce at Llandaff Cathedral. As a solo recitalist, he has performed throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

It was during his time at Cardiff researching for a PhD that Marc began to work in journalism, first as Arts Correspondent with the daily *Western Mail* newspaper and subsequently with the BBC where, for several years, he wrote and presented an afternoon arts programme broadcast live five afternoons a week. He has long been associated with *Gramophone* magazine as a critic and is one of the co-authors of the annual *Good CD Guide*, and in recent years has written for most of the leading musical magazines and contributed to leading dictionaries and encyclopaedias on music. He is also a prolific writer of concert programme notes (notably for the Malaysian Philharmonic, Singapore Symphony and Hong Kong Philharmonic orchestras as well as for the BBC Proms) and CD liner notes (particular for BIS, EMI, Hyperion and Guild) and is currently writing a book, *Putting Music Into Words* prompted by his work as a music examiner for the both the ABRSM and Trinity-Guildhall.



JENNIFER THAM, CONDUCTOR

Jennifer is best known for her work with the Singapore Youth Choir (now the SYC Ensemble Singers), which she has directed since 1986. Her training as a composer at the Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, Canada) has led her to explore and re-define the choral idiom, earning a reputation for being provocative and forward-looking. She is also Artistic Director of the Young Musicians' Society, a musical arts company and choral consultancy that organises clinics for choirs and their conductors. She serves on various advisory panels for the National Arts Council and the Ministry of Education, Singapore.

Jennifer was Artistic Director of the Asia South Pacific Symposium on Choral Music and has served on international artistic committees for the International Federation for Choral Music. She has been on competition juries in Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, China and Indonesia; and has given workshops and short courses to conductors at home, in Japan and Indonesia. She also represents Singapore on the Choir Olympic Council.

Jennifer is an inaugural recipient of Young Artist (Music) Award, given by the National Arts Council.



THE METHODIST GIRLS' SCHOOL CHOIR

The Methodist Girls' School Choir has been sharing the joy of music and singing through performances and competitions since their formation. One of 30 school choirs on Singapore's Ministry of Education's Choral Excellence Programme, the choir received the Gold award for the 4<sup>th</sup> *Ambassador of the Arts Awards* (2004) and has consistently achieved Gold awards in the biennial *Singapore Youth Festival Choir Competition*. Representing Singapore in international festival-competitions, choir has toured San Francisco (1999), Athens (2004), Bratislava (2007) and Prague (2007) and returned with excellent results.

Apart from serving the community through charitable organisations, at school functions and church services, the choir also hosts an annual collaborative concert *Cantabile* where they perform multiple-choir music with other ensembles. The choir's wide-ranging repertoire embraces the work of living composers, contemporary sacred and art music as well as spiritual and gospel.



PAYA LEBAR METHODIST GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL CHOIR

The Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' Secondary School Choir, known fondly as PL Choir, seeks to inculcate a driving passion for singing in each member for the glory of God. The PL Choir has distinguished itself locally and internationally, participating in the biennial *Singapore Youth Festival Choral Competition* and just received a Gold award at the recent *New York Choral Festival* held in April 2008. The choir also serves the community through public performances such as the *Symphony of Praise* (2006) and *Kaleidoscope* (2007). The PL Choir hosted *Choral Fiesta* in November 2007, where they shared the stage in concert with other excellent school choirs.



CONVENT OF THE HOLY INFANT JESUS (CHIJ) SECONDARY SCHOOL CHOIR

The award-winning CHIJ Secondary Choir is known for its high standards both locally and abroad. In 1999 the CHIJ Choir participated in the Hong Kong combined exchange programme with Catholic High Choir. It received Gold Awards for the *Singapore Youth Festival* in 1997, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and Silver in 2001. The Choir was awarded Gold at the 13<sup>th</sup> *Australian International Music Festival*, Sydney, Australia (2002), and Gold at the 20<sup>th</sup> *Pacific Basin Music Festival in Hawaii*, USA (2005). The choir received the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Rotary Ambassador of the Arts Gold Award* in 2003. In 2006, the choir was awarded Diploma Gold Two and a Silver medal at the prestigious 4<sup>th</sup> *World Games, Choir Olympics*. In 2008, at the 10<sup>th</sup> *Concorso Corale Internazionale* in Riva del Garda, Italy, the Choir won two Gold for the Sacred Music and the Youth Categories.

All three choirs are helmed by choral director, Jennifer Tham.

# Programme Notes

## Louis James Alfred Lefébure-Wély (1817-1870)

### *Marche (Op. 122 No.4)*

Lefébure-Wély studied organ at the Paris Conservatoire with François Benoist and was awarded the *Premier Prix*. He went on to become one of the most celebrated organists of the day holding two of the most prestigious organist's posts in the city; from 1847 to 1858 at the Madeleine (he was succeeded there by Saint-Saëns) and St Sulpice (where he was succeeded in 1869 by Widor). Shortly after his appointment to the Madeleine, the Revolution took place which resulted in the founding of the Second French Republic and Napoleon III's declaration of himself as President and, later, Emperor. As a result, there was a general mood in the city of heroism and celebration which Lefébure-Wély reflected in his compositions. To our ears, accustomed as they are to hearing French organ music which is both weighty and serious, Lefébure-Wély's seems almost blasphemously frivolous, but it was hugely admired by the congregations of the day who liked to hear in church the same kind of jovial tunes and boisterous marches with which the streets of Paris were then resounding. Lefébure-Wély was only too happy to oblige and while the title of his 1858 collection, *Religious Meditations*, might imply something deep and reflective, these 10 movements are mostly religious only in that they were designed to be played in church, and meditative not at all. The fourth of the collection is a boisterous and ebullient march.

## Edwin H Lemare (1865-1934)

### *Berceuse*

Born on the Isle of Wight off England's south coast, Edwin Lemare studied organ at the Royal Academy of Music in London and was appointed to a succession of increasingly prestigious church posts culminating in that of organist at All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, one of London's most fashionable churches. At the same time he was earning a reputation throughout the country as a concert organist attracting an ever-increasing following; including a young conductor called Malcolm Sargent who, in 1913, travelled from London to attend one of Lemare's recitals on the Albert Hall in the midlands city of Nottingham and returned full of admiration declaring to his friends; "That man did something I wouldn't have believed possible. He made the organ dance." Unfortunately religious bigotry and personal jealousy reared their ugly heads, and Lemare felt unable to pursue his career in Britain, immigrated in 1915 to the USA. Before leaving the UK, however, Lemare published a number of concert works for the organ including,

in 1901, this charming *Berceuse*. It exemplifies Lemare's wonderful gift for writing a good tune and inventing the perfect accompaniment for it. Like any *Berceuse* this has the nature of a lullaby but the child (or adult) to whom Lemare dedicated it must remain a mystery – the score merely carries a set of initials, "M.D.B."

## Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770-1846)

### *Variations and Finale (Op.90)*

Born in Thuringia in northern Germany, Rinck inherited the noble tradition of organ playing and composing which had been passed down by J S Bach to his pupil Johann Christian Kittel (1732-1809) who, in turn, passed it on to his own pupils. Rinck studied with Kittel between 1786 and 1789 and himself became a great teacher, influencing a whole generation of organists from his work as Kantor and Teacher at the Music School of Grand Duke Ludwig in Darmstadt. As a composer, Rinck maintained many of the genres favoured by Bach, but also composed a number of sets of variations on a wide variety of themes very much in the style of Mozart. Possibly the best known of these are his six Variations on a Theme by Corelli, but among the others are the recently-rediscovered set of nine Variations Rinck wrote in 1828 based on a famous theme which Mozart himself used. Mozart gave it the French title, *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman*, many of us here know it as the nursery song *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, while in Germany it is often known as *Morgen kommt der Weihnachtsmann (Father Christmas comes in the Morning)*.

The opening hints at the famous tune in two ways; first in statuesque pedal octaves and then in brief passage of counterpoint which leads into a simple chorale-like statement of the theme. **Variation 1** dances canonically with the theme set out at the top of the texture. **Variation 2** is a lyrically ornamented version of the theme for solo flute, while **Variation 3** has the theme bounding along in breathless octaves. **Variation 4** sets it in a minor key with plenty of Bach-like counterpoint, and **Variation 5** presents the theme on the Principal chorus with lots of running quavers and trills. The theme tip-toes along in **Variation 6**, it takes on a more pastoral air with **Variation 7** which sets it in 6/8 time, while with **Variation 8** we have something in the manner of Bach Prelude with its running and imitative semiquavers. **Variation 9** begins with a richly harmonized version of the theme before it breaks into a lengthy fugue to bring the work to its proud conclusion.

## Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

### *Die Hirten an der Krippe (S186 No.3)*

Having been one of the great piano virtuosos of his day and a complete showman to boot, Liszt underwent a dramatic transformation in later life, adorning the garb of a priest and turning to a lifestyle in which mediation and seclusion were central. This transition from showman to recluse was prompted by his mistress, Princess Carolyne Sayn Wittgenstein, who may have had an ulterior motive; she knew of Liszt's notorious womanizing and saw this as a way of keeping him to herself. It certainly had a profound effect on his music, something typified by his 12 Christmas pieces written between 1874 and 1876 for his granddaughter Daniela von Bülow. Given the overall title *Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas Tree)*, the pieces were originally written for piano solo, but, in typical Liszt fashion, were later transcribed for the organ. The third of the set is a delicate setting of *In Dulci Jubilo*, the popular carol set out in bell-like figurations above a gently rocking figure. The intention is to recreate some of the magic of Christmas as seen through a child's eyes.

## Marcel Lanquetuit (1894-1985)

### *Toccata in D*

Marcel Lanquetuit was born in Rouen where he began organ lessons with the organist at St Ouen Cathedral, Albert Dupré, and then continued with Albert's son, Marcel. He went to the Paris Conservatoire where he studied organ with Eugène Gigout and won the *Premier Prix* for his organ playing. He then worked as Marcel Dupré's assistant at the famous Parisian church of St Sulpice and in 1938 joined the staff of the Paris Conservatoire as an organ tutor. In 1939, however, he moved back to Rouen where he was appointed organist at the church of St Godard before moving to the cathedral as organist, a post he held until his death. He had a high reputation as an organist, improviser and choir trainer, but his output was small and only one work – the *Toccata in D* for organ – has been published. Dedicated to Albert Dupré, the *Toccata* dates from 1927 and follows a pattern established by French organist-composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries of giving a melody to the feet which thunder it out beneath dazzling manual figurations.

**John Rutter (b.1945)****Shepherd's Pipe Carol**

During the 1970 and 1980s John Rutter was director of the choir of Clare College, Cambridge. Unlike the more famous Cambridge college choirs of King's and St John's, the Clare college choir consists of highly-trained men and women singers and, as a result, makes a very different sort of sound. To cater for them, Rutter started making his own arrangements of popular Christmas carols, usually with an orchestral (rather than an organ) accompaniment designed to be played by the advanced music students at the college. These light-hearted, colourful and invariably captivating arrangements have become an almost essential part of any musical celebration at Christmas. Rutter has also composed several original carols of his own, one of the most famous being the *Shepherd's Pipe Carol* which dates from 1967. Originally written for mixed voices and orchestra, Rutter made this arrangement for four-part children's chorus and organ in 1980.

*Going through the hills on a night all starry;  
On the way to Bethlehem,  
Far away I heard a shepherd boy piping  
On the way to Bethlehem.  
Angels in the sky brought this message nigh;  
"Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King  
Is come to bring us peace on earth,  
And he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem".*

*"Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily  
On the way to Bethlehem,  
Who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely  
On the way to Bethlehem?"  
Angels in the sky...*

*"None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely  
On the way to Bethlehem;  
But a King will hear me play sweet lullabies  
When I get to Bethlehem."  
Angels in the sky came down from on high,  
Hovered o'er the manger where the babe was lying  
Cradled in the arms of his mother Mary,  
Sleeping now at Bethlehem.*

*"Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping merrily,  
Is he there at Bethlehem?"  
"I will find him soon by the star shining brightly  
In the skies o'er Bethlehem."  
Angels in the sky brought this message...*

*"May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily,  
Come with you to Bethlehem?  
Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle,  
Is it far to Bethlehem?"  
Angels in the sky brought this message nigh;  
"Dance and sing for joy that Christ the infant King  
is born this night in lowly stable yonder,  
Born for you at Bethlehem."*

**Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)****Ave Maria**

Probably everyone who knows anything about music knows that Mozart was an amazing child prodigy, but set beside Saint-Saëns' juvenile achievements Mozart seems positively backward. His first lessons on the piano were given when he was just two-and-a-half years old and within six months he had composed his first music. At the age of seven he was already a familiar figure in Parisian music circles well-known for his intuitive and accomplished performances of the music of Bach and Mozart. His first professional appearance on the concert platform came shortly after his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, when he played piano concertos by Beethoven and Mozart and as an encore offered to play any of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas from memory. However after a hugely successful period at the Paris Conservatoire Saint-Saëns decided to pursue a career as an organist and was appointed in 1857 to the Madeleine Church, a post he held for almost 20 years. It was during his tenure at the Madeleine that Saint-Saëns composed the bulk of his sacred music including his short setting of the famous prayer *Ave Maria* for organ and voices which was written in 1860.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum,  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostræ. Amen.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

**Pietro Yon (1886-1943)****Gesù Bambino**

Born in Italy Pietro Yon studied organ and piano at the Conservatories in Milan and Turin before being appointed organist at the Basilica of St Peter in the Vatican. He remained there for almost 20 years but in 1926 was invited to take up the organist's post in St Patrick's Cathedral, New York, and it was in America that he lived for the rest of his life becoming, in the words of *Groves Dictionary*, "the most important figure in American Catholic church music for many years". He wrote numerous pieces of organ music, including three large-scale sonatas, and a large body of church music, but undoubtedly his most popular and frequently performed composition is the Christmas song *Gesù Bambino* which dates from 1917 and is based on the ancient Latin hymn *Adeste fidelis*. It has long been a favourite of Italian tenors – Luciano Pavarotti recorded it more often than any other single piece of music – but in this version by Roy Ringwald, the words (by Frederick Martens) are sung by a children's chorus.

*When blossoms flower'd amid the snows  
Upon a winter night  
Was born the Child, the Christmas Rose,  
The King of Love and Light.  
The angels sang, the shepherds sang,  
The grateful earth rejoiced;  
And at His blessed birth the stars  
Their exultation voiced.*

*O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*Again the heart with rapture glows  
To greet the holy night  
That gave the world its Christmas Rose,  
Its King of Love and Light.  
Let ev'ry voice acclaim His name,  
The grateful chorus swell;  
From Paradise to earth He came  
That we with Him might dwell.*

*O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.*

# Programme Notes

## François Poulenc (1899-1963)

### *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*

In a typically tongue-in-cheek letter Poulenc once commented that he had grown into "a stoutish monk, somewhat dissolute, tended by an excellent cook". A friend concurred, describing him as "part monk, part hooligan". The hooligan element derived from Poulenc's carefree days as a young salon pianist in the Paris of the 1920s. Following in his mother's footsteps he became a popular pianist and relished the hedonistic lifestyle which characterised Parisian society between the two World Wars. The monk bit came rather later and was the direct result of an horrific car accident in 1935 in which one of his fun-loving friends had been decapitated. Shocked to the core, Poulenc sought solace in the rural area of central France where his father had spent his childhood and in particular at the shrine of the Black Virgin at Rocamadour "of which I had often heard my father speak". Poulenc's father had died whilst Poulenc was still a student and his dying wish had been for his son to start taking life seriously. The death of his friend and the pilgrimage to the shrine of the Black Virgin rekindled in François the Catholic faith he had so studiously ignored for over a decade, and all his music from the mid-1930s onwards combined a curiously successful merging of the profoundly religious with the rudely comic.

Poulenc recalled his visit to Rocamadour and the effect it had on him; "Clinging in full sunlight to a vertiginous craggy rock, Rocamadour is a place of extraordinary peace. With a courtyard in front, pink with oleanders in tubs, a very simple chapel, half hollowed into the rock, shelters a miraculous figure of the Virgin, carved, according to tradition, in black wood by Saint Amadour, the little Zacchaeus of the gospel who had to climb a tree to see the Christ. The evening of the same visit to Rocamadour, I began *my Litanies à la Vierge Noire*, for women's voices and organ. In this work I have tried to express the feeling of 'peasant devotion' which had so strongly impressed me in that lovely place."

*Seigneur, ayez pitié de nous,  
Jésus Christ, ayez pitié de nous.  
Jésus Christ, écoutez-nous.  
Jésus Christ, exaucez-nous.  
Dieu le Père, créateur, ayez pitié de nous.  
Dieu le Fils, rédempteur, ayez pitié de nous.  
Dieu le Saint-Esprit, sanctificateur,  
ayez pitié de nous.  
Trinité Sainte, qui êtes un seul Dieu,  
ayez pitié de nous.  
Sainte Vierge Marie, priez pour nous,  
Vierge, reine et patronne, priez pour nous.  
Vierge qui Zachée, le publicain  
nous à fait connaître et aimer,  
Vierge à qui Zachée ou Saint Amadour  
eleva ce sanctuaire, priez pour nous.  
Reine du sanctuaire,  
que consacra Saint Martial  
et où il célébra ses saints mystères,  
Reine, près de laquelle s'agenouilla Saint Louis  
Vous demandant le bonheur de la France,  
priez pour nous.  
Reine, à qui Roland consacra son épée,  
priez pour nous.  
Reine, dont la bannière gagna les batailles,  
priez pour nous.  
Reine, dont la main délivrait les captifs,  
for priez pour nous.  
Notre Dame, dont le pèlerinage  
est enrichi de faveurs spéciales.  
Notre Dame,  
que l'impiété et la haine ont voulu souvent détruire.  
Notre Dame,  
que les peuples visitent comme autrefois,  
priez pour nous.  
Agneau de Dieu,  
qui effacez les péchés du monde,  
pardonnez-nous  
Agneau de Dieu,  
qui effacez les péchés du monde,  
exaucez-nous,  
Agneau de Dieu,  
qui effacez les péchés du monde,  
ayez pitié de nous.  
Notre Dame, priez pour nous,  
afin que nous soyons dignes  
de Jésus Christ.*

*Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Jesus Christ, hear us.  
Jesus Christ, hear our prayer,  
God the Father, creator, have mercy upon us.  
God the Son, redeemer, have mercy upon us.  
God the Holy Spirit, sanctifier,  
have mercy upon us.  
Holy Trinity, which is one God,  
have mercy upon us.  
Holy Mary, pray for us.  
Virgin, queen and patron, pray for us.  
Virgin, whom Zacchaeus the publican  
made us know and love;  
Virgin, to whom Zacchaeus or Saint Amadour  
constructed this shrine, pray for us.  
Queen of this shrine,  
which Saint Martial consecrated  
and at which he celebrated his holy mysteries;  
Queen, before whom Saint Louis knelt  
to pray for the good fortune of France,  
Pray for us.  
Queen, to whom Roland consecrated his sword,  
Pray for us.  
Queen, whose banner won battles,  
Pray for us.  
Queen, whose hand delivered the captives,  
Pray for us.  
Our Lady, whose pilgrimage  
is blessed with special favours,  
Our Lady,  
whose impiety and hatred have often sought to destroy,  
Our Lady,  
whom the people visit as in former times,  
Pray for us.  
Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world,  
forgive us.  
Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world,  
hear our prayer. Lamb of God,  
Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Our Lady, pray for us,  
that we may be worthy  
of Jesus Christ.*

## David Willcocks (b.1919)

### *Sussex Carol*

Many of the most popular carols at Christmas originate from songs sung by the earliest carol singers (known as "Waites") who travelled throughout England singing songs unique to each particular region. Thus it is that there are numerous carols named after areas of the British Isles; the *Sussex Carol* clearly was sung by the Sussex Waites whose territory was that gorgeous coastal county due south of London. It was originally collected by Vaughan Williams in 1919, the words believed to have been the work of a Bishop Luke Wadding while the music was passed on to Vaughan Williams by a Mrs Verall who lived near Brighton. It has appeared in many versions, possibly that by David Willcocks, with its dancing organ accompaniment, composed for the Choir of King's College Cambridge in 1959 (two years after his appointment as the choir's Director of Music) being the most famous.

*On Christmas night all Christians sing,  
To hear the news the angels bring.  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King's birth.*

*Then why should men on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad?  
When from our sin he set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty?*

*When sin departs before His grace,  
Then life and health come in its place.  
Angels and men with joy may sing  
All for to see the new-born King.*

*All out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night.  
"Glory to God and peace to men,  
Now and for evermore, Amen!"*

## Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

### *Ave Maria (Op.67 No.2)*

Saint-Saëns was succeeded as Organist at the Madeleine by Gabriel Fauré. Like Saint-Saëns, it was during his time there that Fauré composed the bulk of his sacred music, including the famous *Requiem* and his own short setting of the *Ave Maria* which dates from 1894. He revised it several times and when he submitted it for publication in 1906 wrote to his publisher that "it is by nature destined more for the chapel or salon than for a large church. I see its future lying especially in the choral classes for young ladies."

**Peter Warlock (1894-1930)*****Come to Bethlehem***

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several English composers clustered round the somewhat strange figure of Bernard van Dieren, a Dutch-born English naturalised composer, who encouraged his acolytes to explore the ancient music and arts of Britain. Rumours had it that van Dieren dabbled in the occult and the fact that some of his followers died in mysterious circumstances following their denouncement of him only adds fuel to that fire. Perhaps the most obvious indication that these young musicians had, at the very least, a fascination with the occult comes in the pseudonym taken by Philip Heseltine, one of the wealthier and more educated of van Dieren's followers. Heseltine wrote books and published musical criticism under his own name, but when it came to composing he took on the pseudonym of Peter Warlock. Among his best-known works is the *Capriol Suite*, a series of six dances for string orchestra composed in 1926. Five of the dances are based on themes from the famous treatise on dancing by the 16<sup>th</sup> century French composer Thoinot Arbeau, but one – *Pieds-en-l'air* – appears to be an entirely original composition and is, without doubt, the most hauntingly beautiful movement of the Suite. In 1952 Dom Gregory Murray wrote some words to go with it, and in this version, it stands as a particularly lovely Christmas song.

*Come to Bethlehem and see the new-born king;  
Come and lay your heart before him while you sing.  
Lo, the God of earth and heaven, Lord of all,  
Lies within the manger of an ox's stall.*

*Born of God the Father in the bliss above,  
Born a baby in a stable for our love.  
Lord of all creation ere our race began  
Loves to be and call himself "The Son of Man".*

*Holy Mary, Virgin Mother, gave him birth;  
See her meekly kneel before him on the earth,  
Let us kneel with her and lovingly adore  
Christ her Son, our God and King for evermore.*

**John Rutter (b.1946)*****Donkey Carol*  
*In Dulci Jubilo***

The figure of the donkey at Christmas has long been celebrated in carols and songs. Donkeys were believed to be among the animals in the stable the night Christ was born. The commonest mode of transport in 1<sup>st</sup> century Bethlehem, those who made their way to see the new-born infant would likely have used donkeys and there is the poignant Christian symbolism of the adult Christ entering Jerusalem in glory a week before his crucifixion. Rutter's *Donkey Carol*, for which he wrote both the words and the music, recreates the journey of the pregnant Mary accompanied by Joseph as they made their way to Bethlehem for the census. Rutter cleverly mimics the rhythm of the donkey's awkward gait as it traverses the rough paths in the carols' accompaniment. It was written in 1975 for Simon Lindley and the choir of St Alban's School north of London.

*Donkey riding over the bumpy road,  
Carry Mary, all with her heavy load;  
Follow Joseph, leading you on your way  
Until you find a stable,  
Somewhere to rest and stay.*

*Donkey watching over the Jesus child,  
See the baby, all with his mother mild;  
Hear the angels singing their song on high:  
"Nowell, nowell, nowell",  
Their carolling fills the sky.*

*Donkey resting all in a manger stall,  
With the oxen worship the Lord of all.  
Hush, he lies a-sleeping on his bed of hay  
While Mary sings so sweetly  
"Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullay".*

*Donkey waking all at the break of day,  
See, a new light shining with brightest ray.  
Long the weary journey you soon must start,  
But you will travel gladly;  
God will make brave your heart.*

*Donkey skip for joy as you go your way;  
Alleluia, Jesus is born today.  
Hark, the bells ring out with their message clear:  
Rejoice and sing that  
Christ our Saviour divine is here.*

We heard Liszt's version of it in the first half of the concert, now we hear a version of *In Dulci Jubilo* made by John Rutter in 1980. It is an old German carol which is thought to have been composed in 1328 by Heinrich Seuse, but in English-speaking countries it is best known through the words, mixing Latin and English, written for the tune by Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795-1856) in 1834.

*In dulci jubilo,  
Let us our homage shew!  
Our heart's joy reclineth  
In praesepio;  
And like a bright star shineth  
Matris in gremio.  
Alpha es et O!*

*O Jesu parvule!  
I yearn for thee alway!  
Hear me, I beseech thee,  
O Puer optime!  
My prayer let it reach thee,  
O Princeps gloriae!  
Trahe me post te!*

*O Patris caritas,  
O Nati lenitas!  
Deeply were we stained  
Per nostra crimina;  
But thou hast for us gained  
Coelorum gaudia.  
O that we were there!*

**David Willcocks (b.1919)*****Hark! The Herald Angels Sing***

David Willcocks served as Director of Music at King's College Cambridge from 1957 until 1973. During that time he effectively put the choir on the international map, making it probably the finest choir of its type anywhere in the world. Much of its fame rested on the annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols in which Willcocks not only trained the choir to hitherto unheard-of levels of excellence, but produced a steady stream of memorable arrangements of famous carols which have since become hugely popular amongst choirs of all shapes, sizes, ages and nationalities.

Among Willcocks' most famous arrangements was his harmonisation and last verse descant to the famous tune by Mendelssohn traditionally used for the words by Charles Wesley of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing".

*Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King,  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic host proclaim,  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King.*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of a Virgin's womb!  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see:  
Hail, th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King.*

*Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King.*

And, as a rousing postlude, Willcocks also composed, in 1995 his spectacular solo for organ *Postlude on 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!'* which should send us all out fully infused with the Magic of Christmas!

**Programme notes by Marc Rochester**

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