

**Stretton Choral Society**

presents

*Noah, Shakespeare,  
and All That Jazz*

Soloist

**Mark Horner, Baritone**

Conductor

**Michael Turner**

**Accompanists**

Sally Oak, Keyboard

Elizabeth Jones, Double Bass

Oliver James, Percussion



**Sunday 12th May 2024**

**7 . 30 pm**

**Silvester Horne Institute**

# PROGRAMME

## Songs and Sonnets

Music by George Shearing, words by William Shakespeare

- 1 Live with me and be my love                      from *Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music*
- 2 When daffodils begin to peer                      *The Winter's Tale*, act 4, scene 2
- 3 It was a lover and his lass                      *As You Like It*, act 5, scene 3
- 4 Spring                      *Love's Labour's Lost*, act 5, scene 2
- 5 Who is Silvia?                      *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 4, scene 2
- 6 Fie on sinful fantasy                      *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, act 5 scene 2
- 7 Hey, ho, the wind and the rain                      *Twelfth Night*, act 5, scene 2

## Fear No More the Heat o'the Sun

Music by Gerald Finzi, words by William Shakespeare

*Cymbeline*, act 4 scene 2

## Three Shakespeare Songs

Music by Colin Baines, words by William Shakespeare

- 1 O mistress mine                      *Twelfth Night*, act 2, scene 3
- 2 Pardon, goddess of the night                      *Much Ado About Nothing*, act 5, scene 3
- 3 Blow, blow, thou winter wind                      *As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7

## INTERVAL

*Please remain seated until the choir and instrumentalists have left the hall.*

*Refreshments will be available for sale at the side of the hall.*

*A bell will be rung at the end of the interval.*

### **The Hippopotamus**

Michael Flanders and Donald Swann

*Chorus:*                   Mud, mud, glorious mud,  
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood.  
So follow me, follow, down to the hollow,  
And there let us wallow in glorious mud.

### **Captain Noah and His Floating Zoo**

Michael Flanders and Joseph Horovitz

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#### **Thanks to:**

Bridgnorth Male Voice Choir for the loan  
of the keyboard.

Colin Baines for giving us free use of his  
music.

Shrewsbury Performing Arts Library for  
the loan of music used in this concert.

Church Stretton Library

Co-op Foodstore

Stretton Focus

PCB Solicitors

Vine & Co

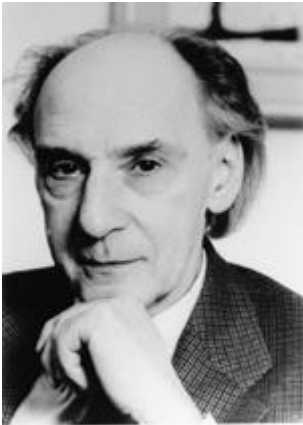
The helpers and choir members who  
donate and assist with refreshments.



## Musical Notes

*Our Music Director, Michael Turner, shares some thoughts about tonight's programme.*

When creating programmes for any concert, I like to think that some sort of logic goes into their creation. Christmas concerts are great as, inevitably, Christmas is the theme that one can work to! Sometimes it is the vocal or instrumental forces used in one piece that drives the decision to include another (the Brahms German Requiem and Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms is a common pairing), or it might be that two composers are intimately associated with each other (for example, Holst and Vaughan Williams were great friends).



*Joseph Horowitz*

So, for this concert, I started with Michael Flanders and Joseph Horowitz's *Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo*. I first came across this piece as an 'O' level set work (all those years ago!), when we performed it alongside Horowitz's other oratorio, *Horrortorio*, written for one of Gerard Hoffnung's extraordinary concerts of the late 1950s. *Captain Noah's* jazz-based style offers a splendid contrast to the more traditional oratorios and similar that form the backbone of the choral repertoire. The piece takes us through the Noah's Ark story, with lots of exchanges between the baritone soloist (who variously plays God and Noah) and the chorus, which comments on the action.

Having decided on *Captain Noah*, the jazzy influence led me to George Shearing's *Songs and Sonnets*, settings of texts by William Shakespeare. Shearing, most noted as a jazz pianist, sets seven texts. While his jazz background is obvious in a number of the songs, Shearing's settings of *When Daffodils Begin to Peer* and *Who is Sylvia?* seem to be influenced as much by the style of the Victorian parlour song.



*George Shearing*

*Captain Noah* and the *Songs and Sonnets* do not add up to a complete concert. However, I now had three themes to follow – Shakespeare, animals, and jazz – to help me build the rest of the programme.



*Colin Baines*

Thinking about Shakespeare and jazz, I turned to the numerous Shakespeare settings of my friend, and composer, Colin Baines. Among a multitude of musical posts, for over 50 years, Colin has been Music Director of a youth drama festival, held in St David's each summer, and he must have composed over one hundred and fifty Shakespeare settings. Luckily for me, some are in a jazz style, so I chose two, with a third in a more sombre mood, to provide some contrast.

Wanting to showcase the voice of our Baritone soloist, I've chosen two contrasting pieces that still tie into our themes and complete our programme. English composer Gerald Finzi's set of six Shakespeare songs, *Let Us Garlands Bring*, includes a dark and exquisite setting of *Fear No More the Heat of the Sun* from *Cymbeline*, a perfect foil to "all that jazz".



*Gerald Finzi*



*Michael Flanders and Donald Swann*

Lastly, acknowledging Michael Flanders' provision of the lyrics for *Captain Noah*, our animal theme drew me to Flanders' writing partnership with Donald Swann and the final choice of piece to complete our programme, *The Hippopotamus*.

I hope that you enjoy our programme for this evening.



## **MUSIC DIRECTOR: Michael Turner**

From Birmingham, Michael Turner studied violin and viola, before settling on percussion as his main instrumental study. As a singer, he has been a member of the CBSO Chorus, along with a number of other choirs across the Midlands.

Michael has attended conducting courses with John Carewe and George Hurst and studied under Hilary Davan Wetton, with whom he settled on adopting the conducting technique favoured by Sir Adrian Boult.

A music graduate of Leicester University, Michael has conducted several amateur and professional ensembles and choirs including the Birmingham Singers, Proteus Chamber Orchestra, the More Singers, the Telford Orchestra, the Marches Choir and the Phoenix Singers. He made his professional debut with the Milton Keynes City Orchestra and has also worked with the Manchester Camerata. Michael has been Music Director of the Bloomsbury Chamber Orchestra since 1996, was Music Director of the Oswestry Sinfonia from 2014 - 2020 and became Music Director of the Stretton Choral Society in September 2021. He has been an ensemble conductor for Shropshire Music Service since 2016.

Michael has composed extensively, with works including a Horn Concerto, several orchestral and choral works, instrumental music and pieces for percussion and wind ensemble. He lives in South Shropshire with his wife. They have three sons, with one boy a former Cathedral chorister.

### **From George Shearing's introduction to *Songs and Sonnets*:**

“Some fifteen years ago, William Shakespeare and I brought forth a series of pieces for choir, jazz piano and bass entitled *Music to Hear*. Because the efforts of the Shakespeare/Shearing team seemed to be received with enthusiasm, and because we enjoyed working together so much, we thought we'd give it another go. Mr Shakespeare dug around in his trunk and came up with seven more songs and sonnets that we hadn't used yet...”

Our Christmas concert 2024  
**Sunday 15th December**

*Choruses from Handel's Messiah*  
*and other Christmas items*  
*With audience carols*

Do you like the idea of singing in a choir? Perhaps you are put off because you've never had any formal choir training, or because you think all the music will be unfamiliar? Choruses from Messiah - several of which will probably already be familiar - could be the ideal opportunity to give it a try.

Although we aim for high standards when we perform, we are a very welcoming group - open to anyone, of any level of ability and experience, and definitely no auditions.

We will rehearse every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church, High Street, Church Stretton, starting with our first rehearsal on Thursday 12 September.

New members are always very welcome. Just arrive at about 7.20 pm and introduce yourself - we will provide the score, introduce you to others singing the same vocal part and help you to learn the music. Do come and join us!



**Website: [strettonchoral.org.uk](http://strettonchoral.org.uk)**

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