

**Year: 2011**

**November 5th**

Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610

in St. Chad's, Shrewsbury

See the review of this popular but challenging work - Vespers Review.

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**Year: 2009**

**May 30th**

for The Hay Book Festival

St Mary's, Hay-on-Wye with Wrekin Brass

The programme included the larger, concerted works from the December programme plus folk-songs.

**April 26th**

St John's, Bishop's Castle

MUSIC & POETRY (in aid of an African charity)

A semi-chorus from the choir with The Shrewsbury Consort of Recorders, Shrewsbury Handbells, Severn Guitars and Harpscape

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**Year: 2008**

**December 20th**

St Mary's, Shrewsbury

Carolling for All - a charity concert

with The Shrewsbury Consort of Recorders and Shrewsbury Handbells

# the Phoenix singers

## **December 6th**

St Chad's, Shrewsbury:

**WELCOME, YULE !**

a programme for Christmas, with Wrekin Brass

Gabrieli In Ecclesiis, Plainsong: Veni Redemptor Gentium,  
Palestrina Hodie Christus Natus Est, Gibbons Hosanna to the Son of David,  
Zielenski Magnificat for three choirs,  
Brahms O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf,  
Arthur Wills Welcome, Yule !, Byrd This day,  
Bernard Naylor Christmas Day, Holst Terly, terlow,  
Trish Clowes Winter time (for voices & brass, written for this concert),  
Vaughan Williams O clap your hands, Plus folk-carols and music for brass ensemble.

## **October 11th**

Westbury, Shropshire

A programme similar to that for the concert at Hay-on-Wye in July.

## **July 12th**

A programme similar to that of April 26th but with organ and without the concerto

WAS given in St Mary's, Hay-on-Wye, on Saturday, July 12th, also at 7.30

- At the end of July, the choir VISITED France in order to sing in the Bauges festival

## ***The Phoenix Singers and Orchestra***

In St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

Saturday, April 26th 2008 at 7.30

***"There is Sweet Music....."***

Music from Europe  
including

# the Phoenix singers

Buxtehude Magnificat, Schubert Mass in G,  
Albinoni Oboe concerto in D mi (Solo: Melanie Cross),  
Elgar There is sweet music here and O wild west wind,  
Messiaen O sacrum convivium ,Janequin La Bataille de Marignan,  
Folk-songs British and French, Blow God spake sometime in visions

Organist: Timothy Mills

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## **ISLAND OF SONG:**

### ELGAR TO TODAY

The Phoenix Singers of Shrewsbury

Conductor: Richard White

Saturday 28th April, 2007

St. Mary's Church Shrewsbury, 7.30 pm

The Phoenix Singers of Shrewsbury are to perform a unique collection of music, which aptly emanates from the one island of England, Scotland and Wales - (no disrespect to Ireland: they are in the tradition, if not the geography). Elgar is being duly celebrated for his 150th birthday. On this occasion there will be no pomp and circumstance. There will be performances of some of his more private works: "There is sweet music", "O wild west wind", "My love dwelt in a northern land" and "Owls" (for which, interestingly, he wrote the lyrics himself).

Too much Elgar might induce a musical surfeit, so the programme leavens his richness with a wide-ranging overview of small-scale 20th century choral music. 'Today' is represented by Sally Beamish's "Bird Year" - vivid settings of four of her own poems, commissioned by Phoenix in 2006, and now to be performed for the second time. (It chimes in well with Elgar's "Owls".) Paul Patterson wrote his 'Kyrie' for the International Choral Festival in New York in 1972. Its innovative tablature, requiring as well as unusual vocal sounds, both a pianist and an 'inside-the-piano-pianist', using all manner of implements, is testing the choir's experimental powers, and is giving them much fun.

Richard Lloyd, who composed the beautiful setting of W.R.Rodgers' "Deep in the fading leaves of night" (again commissioned by Phoenix) has specifically requested that he shouldn't be classed in the 'Contemporary' category. He was formerly organist of Hereford and Durham cathedrals, and feels more in tune with Howells, and perhaps William Harris, whose motet for double choir "Faire is the heaven" (1925) provides a prime example of the English cathedral music tradition.

**“Let the florid music praise!”**

So starts the wonderful Britten song cycle “On this island”. The soloist is Shrewsbury-born Ian Yemm, a longstanding favourite tenor soloist with Phoenix audiences, currently with Welsh National Opera. He is accompanied on the piano by the versatile and sensitive choir member, Pam Pickford. In lighter vein, the men sing Britten’s intriguing and mischievous “Ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard”, in which Pam Pickford’s piano plays cat and mouse with the three-part male narrative. (Composed in 1943 ‘for Richard Wood and the musicians of Oflag VIIb - Germany’).

On a more serious note, Bill Smallman plays the organ to accompany the choir in William Mathias’ thoughtful setting of the fourteenth century hymn “Ave verum corpus”, composed for the Pembrokeshire Youth Choir. Also he plays an arrangement of one of Elgar’s “Dream children” piano pieces.

The rest of the programme is a marvellous tableau of little gems - Stanford’s, “The Blue Bird”; Vaughan Williams’ energetic arrangement of Goerge Herbert’s “Let all the world”, accompanied by four hands on the piano (Pam Pickford’s and Sue Hindson’s); Holst’s rumbustious arrangement of the folk-song “Song of the Blacksmith”; Frederick Delius’ unique and unexpected unaccompanied wordless pair of partsongs “To be sung of a summer night on the water”, the second with tenor solo.

The words and buoyant music of Gerald Finzi’s setting of Robert Bridges’ “My spirit sang all day” encapsulate the tenor of this evening’s highly original concoction of some of our island’s choral masterpieces. The programme incorporates the less well-known, and certainly less frequently performed, with old favourites: this is ‘a land of pure delight’.

Jointly with the Marches Community Choir and the Ludlow Orchestra, a performance of Mendelssohn’s Elijah in St John’s Bishop’s Castle.

**Music of the British Isles**

At Clungunford, Shrewsbury and Dolgellau: three performances of a programme, Music of the British Isles motets and part-songs by Byrd, Finzi, Holst, Mathias, Bernard Naylor, Parry, Peerson and Tippett, A Verse Anthem by Gibbons, with strings, Vaughan Williams Mass in G Minor for double choir and solo quartet, Arrangements of folk-songs from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

**Family Christmas Concert** with recorders, handbells and carols around the tree.

The choir and orchestra celebrated St Cecilia’s Day a little early in order to keep clear of other events, with one of Purcell’s St Cecilia Odes, Welcome to all the pleasures, Bernstein’s Choruses from the Lark and Britten’s St Nicolas.

# the Phoenix singers

## **Music of the Americas**

With the South American folk group Caliche and including Ramirez's Misa Criolla.

## **Music of the Two Elizabeths** A jubilee Christmas Concert

Including Britten's Choral dances from *gloriana*, and Christmas music from Weelkes, Byrd, Bennet, Finzi, Warlock and Mathias.

## **Music of the past ten centuries**

From plainsong to *Puer Natus*, a work commissioned from Robert Sherlaw Johnson via much other music including:

<b>Tallis</b>	40 part motet <i>Spem in alium</i>
<b>J.S.Bach</b>	motet for double choir <i>Singet dem Herrn</i>
<b>Britten</b>	Hymn to St Cecilia
<b>Bruckner</b>	motets with trombones
<b>Purcell</b>	Funeral Music for Queen Mary

## **Messiaen, Vaughan Williams** and others

participation in - The Adopt-a-Composer Scheme of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, The Performing Right Society and Making Music (NFMS). The choir worked with Nicholas Brown and performed his specially written *Two Pieces Concerning Time*.

## **Year: 2007**

### **A Cappella**

From early music to Copland's *In the Beginning*, music by Paul Patterson, commissioned works by Richard Lloyd and Robert Sherlaw Johnson, his last vocal work and now (2006) by Sally Beamish

### **With Orchestra**

All the major works of J.S.Bach, some several times, and a number of cantatas. Britten including *Cantata Misericordium*, Bruckner, Charpentier, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Purcell, Rawsthorne, Stravinsky, Vaughan Williams and others.

### **With Incantation and with Caliche**

South American music, including Ramirez: *Misa Criolla* and *Navidad Nuestra*