

Viva la Musica
Chamber Choir

Birthday Madrigals

A musical celebration of Shakespeare's birthday



Peter Williams ~ Piano

Beth Williams ~ Musical Director

Saturday 25th April 2015, 6pm

St John the Baptist,

Tideswell

2015 marks 399 years since the death of William Shakespeare, but we couldn't wait another year for a nice round number, so in this evening's concert, we're celebrating his birthday, which is taken to be tomorrow, the 26th April - in fact, the day of his baptism. The title of the concert is borrowed from a set of songs by John Rutter (b.1945), which uses texts from the 'Madrigal era' (the late 1500s) and of which we are performing two. *Birthday Madrigals* was in turn written to celebrate the birthday of the late, great jazz pianist, George Shearing (1919-2011), whose *Songs and Sonnets* – settings of Shakespearean texts for choir and jazz piano – begins and ends tonight's first half.

Unsurprisingly, Shakespeare has been an important influence for many composers, in England and abroad, and in genres ranging from opera to chamber music. The solo song is a particularly expressive vehicle, and we have included five from the vast 20th century repertory, by Roger Quilter (1877-1953), Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and Martin Shaw (1875-1958).

Alongside these 20th century settings of words by Shakespeare, you will hear music that he himself would have been familiar with: three groups of madrigals (poetry, usually on themes of love or nature, set to music for unaccompanied voices) and some popular contemporary tunes played by recorder consort.

Songs and Sonnets No. 1-3

George Shearing

Live with me and be my love

(from *Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music*)

When daffodils begin to peer (*The Winter's Tale*)

It was a lover and his lass (*As You Like It*)

Excerpt from *Twelfth Night* (Act 1, Scene 1)

Read by Martin Cooke

Three Elizabethan pieces:

John come kiss me now

William Byrd

Since first I saw your face

Thomas Ford

Phyllis was a fair maid

Anon.

Sue Cooke, Jeni Beasley & Jo Milner, recorders

Weep you no more

Roger Quilter

(*Seven Elizabethan Lyrics*, No. 1. Text anon.)

Lis Muller, Contralto

April is in my mistress' face

Thomas Morley

Fyer, fyer!

Excerpt from *Henry VIII* (Act 3, Scene 1)

Let us garlands bring No. 1 and 4 Gerald Finzi
Come away, come away, death
O mistress mine (Twelfth Night)

John Thawley, baritone

Songs and Sonnets No. 5-7 George Shearing
Who is Silvia? (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*)
Fie on sinful fantasy (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)
Hey, ho, the wind and the rain (*Twelfth Night*)

INTERVAL

Blow, blow thou winter wind John Rutter
(*As You Like It*)

Draw on, sweet night ~ *Birthday Madrigals*, no. 2
(Words possibly by John Wilbye, 1609)

Dirge for Fidele Ralph Vaughan Williams
(*Cymbeline*)

Jenny Kemp and Joanna Milner

Excerpt from *The Merchant of Venice* (Act 5, Scene 1)

Three Elizabethan pieces:

Go to bed, Sweet Muse

Robert Jones

When Laura Smiles

Philip Rosseter

Now is the month of Maying

Thomas Morley

The Willow Song (Othello)

Traditional

Jeni Beasley, soprano

Adieu Sweet Amaryllis

John Wilbye

Too much I once lamented

Thomas Tomkins

Excerpt from *The Tempest* (Act 3, Scene 2)

I know a bank

Martin Shaw

(A Midsummer Night's Dream)

Lis Muller, contralto

Sweet Suffolk owl

Thomas Vautor

Fair Phyllis I saw

John Farmer

When daisies pied ~ *Birthday Madrigals*, No. 5

John Rutter

(Love's Labour's Lost, verse 3 by George Peele, 1556-1596)

The Choir

Viva la Musica is a Loughborough-based chamber choir. It was formed in 2002 as a group of singers who enjoy singing together and welcome the challenge that singing in a small ensemble brings. They sing a wide range of music from early to modern, sacred to secular; and largely in the *a cappella* style. Beth Williams was appointed as Musical Director in May 2012.

Soprano: Jeni Beasley, Sue Cooke, Jenny Kemp,
Gail Stiven

Alto: Joanna Milner, Lis Muller, Clare Ward-
Campbell

Tenor: Mike Bailey, Peter Finch, Richard Thomas

Bass: Colin Butler, Martin Cooke, Kevin Norman,
John Thawley

Beth Williams - Musical Director

Originally from Devon, Beth has been singing for as long as she can remember: at first in local church and school choirs, and later more seriously at Birmingham University, where she read Music.

Since 2009, she has been the Head of Music at Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College, a sixth form college in Leicester, although she is currently enjoying maternity leave with her son, George, who was born in July 2014.

She remains a keen singer: she is a member of Leicestershire Chorale, with whom she enjoys exploring a broad repertoire, particularly in the contemporary field. She lives in Leicester with George and her husband, Tom.

Peter Williams - Accompanist

Peter is an organist and piano accompanist having given many recitals both here and abroad. He began his career at St. George's Chapel, Windsor then moved to York Minster where he was assistant organist to Dr. Francis Jackson. After a long career in education his final teaching post was at Repton School where he was also Chapel Organist. He has played the organ in concerts and recitals in Britain, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia and Finland and is now busy as a freelance organist and piano accompanist.

*With warmest thanks to all at St John the Baptist,
Tideswell for inviting us sing in this wonderful
church!*

