

FROM THE CLOISTERS

The Choirs of Jesus College Cambridge

April 2015



From the Director of Music

Having returned from a term's leave, during which the Choirs were in the extremely capable hands of our Assistant Organist, Benjamin Morris, and our Organ Scholar, Bertie Baigent, I was delighted to be told by countless colleagues, parents and choir supporters in what fine voice they were, and I was privileged to play a small role (as organist) in a concert held in the College Chapel in March at which the Choirs tackled challenging works by J.S. Bach, John Tavener and Alexander L'Estrange with great skill, under the direction of Ben and Bertie. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ben and to Bertie for all that they have done during the past term, and I can only apologise if standards slip once I return to the helm...

I hope that you enjoy reading about the Choir's activities and that you may take the opportunity to join us in the Chapel or at a concert in the near future. You are always very welcome and the support of friends and members of the public is always greatly appreciated.

Mark Williams



RECENT CONCERTS

On Friday 24th October 2014, the College Choir joined the choirs of St John's, Gonville & Caius and Clare Colleges, the University Chamber Choir and several former choral scholars in a performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem* at the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Andrew Nethsingha. Then, a month later, on Saturday 22nd November, both the boy choristers and the College Choir joined CUMS and Britten Sinfonia for the final concert of the Cambridge Festival in Ely Cathedral, performing Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* under the direction of Stephen Cleobury. Not content with just two requiems, on Saturday 17th January 2015, the College Choir joined several other college choirs and various university orchestras under the direction of the renowned pianist and conductor, Howard Shelley, in a memorable performance of Johannes Brahms's *German Requiem* in King's College Chapel. In addition, on Saturday 15th November, the College Choir came together with the Choir of Clare College and over 100 members of the Berkshire Youth Choirs for an exhilarating outreach concert in King's College Chapel, featuring *Zadok the Priest*, *Blest Pair of Sirens* and Tallis's 40-part masterpiece *Spem in alium*. And on Monday 8th December, the Combined Choirs, directed by Mark Williams, sang to a packed Jesus College Chapel in their 'Christmas Celebration' featuring Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and other seasonal favourites. The Lent Term ended with performances of Bach, Tavener and L'Estrange, directed by Benjamin Morris and Bertie Baigent, and featuring brilliant cellist Vladimir Waltham, in Jesus College Chapel on Thursday 19th March and in St Nicholas Church Great Munden on Saturday 21st March.





SRI LANKA DECEMBER 2014

Following an unusually busy Michaelmas Term, the College Choir were greeted by blazing midday heat on their arrival in Colombo on 11 December. A couple of hours later a whistlestop tour gave us a real sense of the capital, and a delicious dinner at the Colombo Swimming Club proved to be the first in a long line of lavish meals that kept us energised during the tour. Throughout the trip, we were delighted to meet local children in a series of workshops in Galle, Colombo, Kandy and Jaffna, teaching songs to pupils aged from six to 18. We were struck by their enthusiasm, and *Jingle Bells*, *The Holly and the Ivy* and *Blue Moon* proved firm favourites. On the evening of the 13th, we gave our first concert of the tour, alongside performances by a local dance troupe. The tour's busy schedule was broken up by welcome opportunities to swim and drink Ceylon tea. A particular treat was to swim off the sandy white beaches of Galle.

The trip's most challenging concert took place at Ladies' College, Colombo, one of the finest educational establishments on the island; the performance was being recorded for future broadcast. It was very well received ("the singing was a true wonder", a reviewer charmingly wrote in *The Island*), although we weren't yet accustomed to performing in the humid climate. We were honoured by the presence of Sri Lanka's First Lady.

On 16th December we travelled up into the hilly region of Kandy, where we were generously hosted by the boys' school, Trinity College. We gave a concert in collaboration with its choir, including a rendition of the Sinhalese song *Pudamu Geetha Mal* in the school's beautiful outdoor Chapel.

A long but scenic bus ride up to the northern province of Jaffna and St John's College followed on 18 December. At a reception kindly hosted for us by the British Council we performed the public première of Martin Stebbing's *Light of the World* in the presence of the composer. The following afternoon, we sang a joint service at St John's with choirs from various local schools; it was particularly humbling to work with children displaced by the war.

Returning to Colombo over the spectacular Elephant Pass, we prepared for our final concert at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, and sang in front of an audience of more than 1,500.

When not singing, we were treated to the wonderful sights of Sri Lanka. A visit to Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage proved a particular highlight; we fed the elephants milk and fruit, and watched them play in the river. We also made short trips to the ancient city of Anuradhapura and to the magnificent rock palace of Sigiriya, from the top of which the panoramas were quite stunning.

In addition to musical and cultural wonders, we enjoyed abundant hospitality thanks to many sponsors, as well as the British High Commissioner. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to our host and guide Professor Manouri Senanayake and her family, and to Mr Priyan de Livera, whose organisation, fundraising and company throughout the tour made for a truly memorable end to 2014.

Blogs on the tour can be found at:

<http://diaryofachoralscholar.wordpress.com>

Anna Nicholl (Jesus 2013, Geography),
Sapphire Armitage (Jesus 2014, Music),
Thomas Rothwell (Jesus 2011, MML)





LILLE JULY 2015

On Saturday 4th July, the Combined Choirs will perform in Lille Cathedral as part of an event taking place across France called *La Nuit des Eglises*. The following morning they will sing mass at the church of Sainte-Catherine de Lille before returning to Cambridge. More information about the trip can be found at www.jesuscollegechoir.com

IN MEMORIAM JOHN HUGHES



The loss of the Reverend Dr John Hughes, Dean of Chapel, continues to be felt by the Chapel and College community and many further afield, and we continue to seek ways to preserve his memory and legacy. In January, the College held its first John Hughes Arts Festival with a number of events taking place over a long weekend, and on Saturday 24th January, the John Hughes Chorister Medal was presented for the first time at Evensong in the presence of Dr Hughes's parents. At Evensong on Saturday 27th June, the Combined Choirs will give the first performance of 'The Quest' by John Rutter, commissioned by the College in memory of John Hughes, and proceeds from the Choirs' Handel & Haydn concert in July will go towards the newly-established John Hughes Choir Fund which seeks to promote the activities of the Combined Choirs.

CHART SUCCESS

Following on from the success of the Choirs' third album with Signum Classics *My Beloved's Voice* which entered the classical charts in the top ten in July 2014, the Choir's fourth disc, *Out of Darkness*, which features music for the Church's year from Lent to Trinity and which acts as a companion to *Journey into Light*, entered the Official Classical Charts at number 1 in February 2015.



Praise for *My Beloved's Voice* and *Out of Darkness*:

- “Sung with exquisite blend and shape” *The Sunday Times*
- “My choral disc of the year for 2014” *Classical.net*
- “...a disc whose love songs are as fresh and lovely as their texts” *Gramophone*
- “Simple, consoling and uplifting, this disc is a therapy session in sound” *Sinfini Music*

CDs may be bought online at Amazon and iTunes, from the Choir's website at www.jesuscollegechoir.com, from major retailers or from the Porters' Lodge.

COLLABORATIONS

On Sunday 3rd May, the College Choir will be joined by former choral scholars from the last 60 years in a Choir Reunion Evensong, followed by dinner in the College Hall (prior booking necessary!). On Saturday 9th May, the Chapel Choir will be joined at Evensong by the Choir of St Mary's Collegiate Church, Warwick. Thomas Corns (*Jesus*, 1998) is the Director of Music there, and current choral scholar, Toby Miller (*Jesus*, 2011) sang as a member of the choir there for many years. On Saturday 16th May, the Choristers will be joined by boys from the local area for an afternoon of rehearsals and Evensong as part of the 'Be a Chorister for a Day' event. On Tuesday 19th May, the College Choir will be joined in Evensong by the University of Virginia Chamber Singers, bringing to mind fond memories of the Choirs' visit to Old Cabell Hall at the University of Virginia in December 2010. And on Tuesday 2nd June at 6.15pm, the College Choir will sing Evensong jointly with the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge in Trinity College Chapel.





UPCOMING EVENTS

On Monday 20th April 2015, the Combined Choirs will sing Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral at 5pm. On Sunday 17th May, Assistant Organist, Benjamin Morris, will play Olivier Messiaen's masterpiece *L'Ascension* at 5.30pm before Evensong. On Saturday 21st June 2015, the College Choir will be joined by talented student instrumentalists in a concert of popular sacred and secular music at St Mary's Church, Froyle, in Hampshire, followed by a reception at the home of Mr James Hudleston, St Radegund Fellow of Jesus College and long-time supporter of the Chapel and Choir. Between 29th June and 3rd July, the Combined Choirs will record their fifth disc for Signum Classics. On Tuesday 7th July, the College Choir will once again join the Choir of Merton College, Oxford in a concert of 'Choral Classics' to raise money for the Muze Trust, which supports musical education in Zambia, and on Friday 10th July, the Combined Choirs will join together with the Saraband Consort and a distinguished line-up of Jesuan soloists in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass*. Further details of all upcoming events, including information on how to book tickets and current music lists, can be found on the Choir website at www.jesuscollegechoir.com



VALETE & SALVETE

Following the retirement of Harry Shapiro in Summer 2014, Thomas Hadden took up the mantle of Head Chorister, but he too now passes that title on to Edmund Goodman (previously Deputy Head Chorister) in May 2015. The new Deputy Head Choristers are James Patterson and Jamie Wilkinson. The last year has also seen farewells to Senior Choristers, Aidan Bennett, Toby Gardner and Samuel Stark, whose contribution to the life of the College and Choir over the past few years has been highly valued. In the past year we have welcomed Louis Baird, Arthur Beresford-Jones, David Low, Oliver Norfolk and William Summers as new Junior Probationers. 2014 also saw us say goodbye to choral scholars Matthew Anisfeld, Jessica Ballance, Natasha Brice, Declan Corr, Louisa Dawes, Tom Hillman, Alexandra Schwinn and Elliot Thompson, whilst we welcomed Sapphire Armitage (Music), Harry Bradford (Music), Gary Rushton (Music) and Hannah Woodhouse (Education) as new members of the Choir, and were glad to see the return of Elizabeth Edwards (MML), Eleanor Holroyd (MML), Thomas Rothwell (MML), and Andrew Stratton (Engineering) after their years abroad. During the academic year 2014-15 we were also pleased to welcome the Reverend Margaret Widdess as Acting Dean of Chapel, and the Reverend Nicholas Widdows as Acting Chaplain.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Organ Scholar, Bertie Baigent, on the award of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists, following an examination in January 2015. Bertie also won a number of prizes, and joins Benjamin Morris in the only Cambridge college organ loft to be home to two (three including the Director of Music) FRCOs!

