



# *The Bedworth Singers*

*Musical Director: Hilary Griffiths*

*Accompanist: Barbara Watson*

*with*

## *Warwickshire Baroque*

*Musical Director: Eddie Jones*

*Leader: Michael Williamson*

*Soloist: Clive Letchford*

### *Spring Concert*

*Saturday 10th May 2014*

*7.30pm*

*St. Nicolas Church*

*Nuneaton*

*PROGRAMME*

*Zadok the Priest* *Handel*

*Overture No.3 in D Major* *Bach*  
*Overture - Air - Gavotte - Bourrée - Gigue*

*Excerpts from "Messiah"* *Handel*  
*Comfort Ye - Ev'ry Valley - And the Glory - Hallelujah*  
*Soloist: Clive Letchford*

~ INTERVAL ~

*Sonata No.1 in D Major Armonico Tributo* *Muffat*  
*Grave-Allegro-Allemande-Grave-Gavotta-Grave-Menuet*

*Lead Me Lord* *Wesley*

*God So Loved the World* *Stainer*

*My Heart is Inditing* *Handel*  
*Soloists: Rachel Saunders; Vicky Woodward; Jenny Marshall;*  
*Jeff Carvell; Brian Liggins*

*Rule Britannia* *Arne*  
*Soloist: Clive Letchford*

*Georg Muffat (1653 – 1704)*  
*Sonata No.1 in D Major Armonico Tributo*

*Of French/Scottish decent, Georg Muffat was born in France in 1653. He studied under the great French composer Lully, and was almost single handedly responsible for introducing the French style of playing and music into Germany during his lifetime. Germany was where he settled and produced the “Armonico Tributo” series of 5 sonatas in 1682, and his “Florilegia” sets in 1695. The latter came with detailed instructions for the Germans in how to play the French style. These essays have been invaluable to present day scholars in enabling us to understand how this music was played in the past. The sonata follows the Italian style of the day in its many short movements, and written in Muffat’s words as “for the express refreshment of the ear”*

*J.S. Bach (1685-1750)*  
*Overture No.3 in D Major*

*Born into a large, musical family, Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the greatest of all composers. Along with his compatriot Georg Frideric Handel he was born towards the end of what we now know as the Baroque era in music. Together they took the established musical forms of the day and raised them to new musical heights. “The Overture”, or “Suite No. 3”, is part of a set of four. The latter two were written around 1730 and use a much bigger orchestra than the earlier two. Using the French style (courtesy of M. Muffat!) Bach imbues this with a certain German thoroughness and logic. There is less of the frippery and dance, and much more of counterpoint and musical invention. The intricate musical lines that Bach weaves throughout this piece are a joy, particularly in the*

opening overture. The “Air” from the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, often called “Air on the G String” (due to its ability to be played on the G string of the violin, suitably transposed) had a burst of popularity as the theme for a famous series of Hamlet ads in the 60s and 70s.

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**

**Coronation Anthems – Zadok the Priest; My Heart is Inditing**

In 1727, King George I, in one of his last acts, signed the act of Naturalisation for Handel. After spending many years in London the great composer was now able to settle down and spend the rest of his life in this country. On the 11<sup>th</sup> October that year, the coronation took place of King George II and Queen Caroline for which Handel was commissioned to write the music. The words to “Zadok the Priest” have been used at every coronation since King Edgar’s in 973, and Handel’s setting has been used at every coronation since 1727. In three main sections, it is justly famous for its long introduction before the full choir and orchestra enter.

“My Heart Is Inditing” was sung much later in the original service for the coronation of Queen Caroline. This time the anthem is in four main sections and is quite different in character. The music has a more graceful and refined air, and it is only towards the very end that Handel allows the ceremonial pomp to return, ending in a blaze of glory.

**Georg Frideric Handel**  
**Excerpts from “Messiah”**

The most performed choral work ever written began life a few miles from Nuneaton where the librettist Charles Jennens lived. At Gopsall Hall near Shackerstone, Jennens adapted words from the

bible to create a three part religious opera without scenery or acting, known as an Oratorio. It came at a low point in Handel's life when his Italian operas were growing out of favour with the London public. He was losing money and confidence in his ability and verging on a nervous breakdown. A change of direction to oratorio in English in the 1730s revived his flagging career. In 1741 Jennens sent Handel his new libretto, writing to a friend, "I hope Handel will lay out his whole genius and skill upon it." The work was performed with great success in Dublin in 1742, but proved less popular in London. However it was to be a "slow burner"! Gradually though its fame spread, and with the introduction of the charity performances in London for the Foundlings Hospital in 1650, the great and good of London became involved. These annual performances, along with Messiah being taken up by amateur choral societies, sealed its fate and it has continued to be performed with great success ever since.

*Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810 –1876)*  
*Lead me, Lord*

*Samuel Sebastian Wesley was an English organist and composer and younger brother of Methodist founder John Wesley.*

*Samuel Wesley's middle name derived from his father's lifelong admiration for the music of Bach. Famous in his lifetime as one of his country's leading organists and choirmasters, he composed almost exclusively for the Church of England, which continues to cherish his memory. The popular short anthem "Lead me, Lord" is an extract from the anthem "Praise the Lord, O my soul".*

*Sir John Stainer (1840 – 1901)*

*God so Loved the World*

*Sir John Stainer was an English composer and organist whose music, though not generally much performed today (with the exception of “The Crucifixion”) was very popular during his lifetime. His work as a choir trainer and organist set standards for Anglican church music that are still influential. He was also active as an academic, becoming professor of music at Oxford.*

*Stainer was born in Southwark, London in 1840, the son of a cabinet maker. He became a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral when aged ten and was appointed to the position of organist at St Michael's College, Tenbury at the age of sixteen. He later became organist at Magdalen College, Oxford, and subsequently organist at St Paul's Cathedral. When he retired, due to his poor eyesight and deteriorating health, he returned to Oxford to become Professor of Music at the university. He died unexpectedly while on holiday in Italy in 1901.*

*“God so Loved the World” lies at the heart of John Stainer's Victorian Passion meditation, “The Crucifixion” (1887). The words, chosen by the Revd W.J. Sparrow-Simpson from John's Gospel, render succinctly and pithily the significance of the Passion story, while Stainer's simple, homophonic setting allows the text to speak with clarity, direction and force. Although the music is essentially tranquil, there is disturbance here too: ‘whoso believeth in him should not perish’, we are told, but we cannot ignore the dying fall with which Stainer sets the word ‘perish’, straining against the hope contained in the message of eternal life. Such optimism relies, tragically, on the pain and suffering of the Passion.*

*Thomas Arne (1710-1778)*  
*Rule Britannia*

*Thomas Arne in his day was as well known as Handel. Indeed his sister, Susannah Cibber sang in many Handel performances of "Messiah" as soprano soloist. Arne's main work was for the theatre and he contributed music to around 90 stage works. "Rule Britannia" is the finale of one of these – "Alfred". Soon, however, it developed a life of its own as a patriotic air. Various musicians have tinkered with it over the years, including Sir Malcolm Sargeant and Sir Henry Wood. These tended to be arrangements for massed orchestra and choir suitable for the Proms. Tonight's version is as close as we can get to Arne's, but missing out a few of the many verses!*

Warwickshire Baroque  
Director - Eddie Jones

Violins

Michael Williamson  
(Leader)

John Walton

Sue Mock

Clive Letchford

Monika Walton

Tim Bugg

Jean Howard

Cynthia Lawrance

Dorothy Wardropper

Bob Philip

Violas

Margaret Worsley

Peter Rose

Cellos

Ruth Elkan

Jacqui Robertson-

Wade

Bass

Nic Hyde

Harpsichord

Sheila Koch

Oboes

Sue Cannan

Judith Parker

Trumpets

Jennie Boase

James Potter

Timpani

Antony Corbett



The Bedworth Singers  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July  
Bulkington Village Centre

7:30

*A celebratory concert marking the choir's 40th Anniversary.*