

Dunsford Singers:

Dunsford Singers was formed over a quarter of a century ago, out of a WI initiative. Over the years the choir became an established part of life in the village of Dunsford, with various enthusiastic local conductors who worked hard to develop our skills. Since Tim Pithers became our MD in January 2017, our membership has expanded to around fifty keen singers from villages throughout the Teign Valley and beyond. We are a true community choir: non-auditioning and aiming to encourage singing excellence within the spirit of friendship and tolerance. We try to create community concerts of high repute, offering a wide and varied repertoire. Where possible we like to offer our own talented singers the chance to perform a solo or two. It comes as no surprise that singing is now officially recognised as an important health benefit! It improves your heart rate, helps your lung capacity and releases feel-good endorphins. It makes you think about posture; helps to build confidence and self esteem, and even helps you sleep more soundly!

Looking Ahead:

In June 2020 we will be presenting concerts entitled *A Night at the Opera*, featuring some famous operatic choruses, a dash of Gilbert and Sullivan operetta; a splash of *Phantom of the Opera* and a sprinkling of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. We would be delighted to welcome new singers in all parts. It comes as no surprise that singing is now officially recognised as an important health benefit. It improves your heart rate, helps your lung capacity and releases 'feel-good' endorphins. It makes you think about posture, helps to build confidence and self esteem, and even helps you sleep more soundly! If you would like to join in, please contact Jan Middleton on 01647 252368. The ability to read music is helpful but not essential.



Christmas

Concert 2019



Presented by
**Dunsford
Singers**

Schubert's Mass in G
with Christmas music & readings

Conductor - Tim Pithers
Accompanist - Jonathan Watts / Harry George

Sunday 1st December 2019

Dunsford Village Hall

Saturday 14th December 2019

Teign Valley Community Hall

MD: Tim Pithers

Tim began conducting in his teens and went on to read Music and French at the University of Exeter. He studied violin with Mary Eade, composition with Joe Duddell and specialised in Musical Direction with Ian Mitchell. Subsequent to his graduation with a double first-class degree, he has conducted a wide variety of vocal and instrumental ensembles and has recently participated in the internationally recognised George Hurst Conductor's Course at Sherborne Summer School of Music, studying with Rodolfo Saglimbeni, Denise Ham and Dominic Grier. Tim particularly enjoys working with ensembles of varying degrees of experience and is a firm believer that classical music should be made as accessible as possible to both performers and the wider audience. In addition to the Dunsford Singers, Tim is Musical Director of the Exeter University Symphony Orchestra, the Dartmouth Orchestra, Chagford Singers, orchestra+ (the South West's first LGBT symphony orchestra) and the EX4 Chamber Orchestra, which he founded in August 2015.

Recent podium highlights have included Beethoven's 2nd, 5th and 6th symphonies; Sibelius' 2nd and 5th symphonies and concertante works by Krommer, Rachmaninoff, Weber, Chopin and Bruch. Recent choral conducting highlights have included performances of Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Haydn's *Missa in Agustiis* and Rutter's *Requiem*.

Tim is delighted to have been the Dunsford Singers' Musical director for very nearly three years. During this time the choir has tackled a diverse programme of classical and modern works. Last summer saw us singing a selection of famous European sacred music alongside Abba and *The Greatest Showman* (not to mention our percussive efforts to create rain in Toto's *Africa*!)

Accompanist:

Sincere thanks to our accompanists **Jonathan Watts (Dunsford Concert)** and **Harry George (Christow Concert)** who have both stepped in at the last moment.

Jonathan is a distinguished pianist, organist and harpsichord performer. He has worked in a variety of orchestral and choral roles in Devon, notably at Dartington Hall Summer School, Devon Opera, Devon Baroque and with the Buckfast choir 'Voces'.

We are delighted to welcome back **Harry**, a graduate of Exeter University and currently pursuing an MA in Film Music Composition at Bristol University. At Exeter he was principal pianist with the university Jazz Orchestra, has performed in venues ranging from the Northcott Theatre to Ronnie Scott's and was hired by the Royal Opera House as an accompanist. Harry teaches piano, offering training in a wide variety of genres including classical, jazz, funk and pop. He has also played with the jazz/soul band Orlata. He always combines youthful energy and fun with consummate expertise and professionalism.

About Acorn Community Support

Acorn Community Support is a small registered charity, founded in 1989, which works closely with the Cheriton Bishop & Teign Valley GP Practice.

We have an office in the Christow surgery, employ two part-time staff and work with a team of dedicated volunteers to provide a range of services which complement and expand on the services provided by the Practice.

We are also able to help people living in our area who use other GP surgeries. Funding is provided by DCC Adult & Community Services and via donations and legacies received mainly from the local community.

Our charitable purpose is the advancement of health and well being with elderly, frail and disabled people in our community who, with additional help, can continue to live independently with privacy and dignity in their own homes.

We also help all our adult community with a range of social support activities.

<https://www.acorncommunitysupport.co.uk/>

Reading: *I am Joseph* by Una Fanthorpe Francis Leversedge

For Unto Us A Child is Born (from Handel's *Messiah*)

The oratorio *Messiah* was first performed in Dublin in 1741. The libretto was drawn from the King James Bible (Isaiah 9:6) telling the glad news of Christmas. The music is a beautiful combination of shimmering runs and dancing rhythms. The dynamics range from hushed *piano* to full blown *fortississimo*. It is certainly an energetic vocal workout!

Reading: *The Christmas Dog* by Shel Silverstein
***The Four Stages of Life* Anon** Ray Mallett

Winter Wonderland arr Daphne West

A schmaltzy Christmas song written in 1934 that always conjures up iconic images of a snowy New England landscape as two lovers build a snowman (that looks remarkably like Parson Brown!). It's been sung by just about everyone, including Doris Day, Bing Crosby, Dean Martin, Dolly Parton, Johnny Mathis, Frank Sinatra, Michael Buble ... and tonight the Dunsford Singers.

*We hope you enjoyed your evening and wish you
 a safe journey home and a very happy Christmas*

Many thanks to our generous sponsors

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC AND READINGS

Welcome and a word about our chosen charity:
Acorn Community Support

Reading: *Love Came Down at Christmas* by Christina Rossetti
 Jan Middleton

Schubert Mass in G

At a time when the rest of Europe was caught up in Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, Franz Peter Schubert was quietly writing dozens of compositions. Astonishingly, this beautiful piece was composed in less than a week, in March 1815, when he was just eighteen years old. It has been described as 'the gentlest of masses, permeated with a kind of sweetness rare in mass settings' (Craig Smith). Schubert's life was short (he died aged thirty one) and his fame largely arrived posthumously. He lived in relative obscurity, supported and encouraged by a close circle of family, friends and admirers. This particular Mass was not to be published until decades after his death. It was intended for performance in his parish church in Liechtenthal, a suburb of Vienna. It is an unpretentious composition but with passages of soaring lyricism, particularly in the *Kyrie* and *Benedictus*. The weighty opening of the *Sanctus* is followed by a lively, vigorous fugue. The *Gloria* offers a lyrical central section framed by music of great fire. The *Credo* opens and closes quietly with the *Crucifixus* section providing more force. The *Agnus Dei*, with its choral pleas interspersing the soloists' phrases, brings the work to a peaceful conclusion.

We have chosen to sing the Mass using the Germanic Latin pronunciation familiar to Schubert and his audiences.

Kyrie Soloists: Sarah Maybin/Jo Jenkin

Gloria Soloists: Sarah Maybin/Jo Jenkin John Sawyer

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus Soloists: Hazel Linney/Julie Cooney
 Tim Steiner/Giles Frampton John Sawyer

Agnus Dei Soloists: Jan Middleton John Sawyer

Audience Participation Carol: *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
O tidings ...

The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding
In tempest, storm and wind,

And went to Bethlehem
straightway,
This blessed Babe to find:
O tidings ...

But when to Bethlehem they
came,
Whereat this Infant lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling,
Unto the Lord did pray:
O tidings ...

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and
brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth deface:
O tidings ...

INTERVAL: Refreshments will be brought to you

Audience Participation Carol: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born king*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
*Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the newborn King*

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of
Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings;

Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
*Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born king*

Gaudete arr Daphne West

This spirited carol first appeared in *Pia Cantiones*, a collection of Scandinavian songs, in 1581. The tune is probably medieval in origin. The words urge us: *Rejoice! Rejoice, for Christ is born of Mary. A time of Grace is upon us, so let us sing joyfully! God has become man; the world is renewed; light is upon us; salvation has been found! Let us sing in brightness, blessing our Lord and greeting our King!*

Reading: *Winter* by John Clare

Helen Harding

Northern Lights: Ola Gjelo

In this ravishing, unaccompanied choral piece the Norwegian composer sets the scene for Winter. Looking out from an attic window, at Christmas 2007, over a wintery lake under the stars, Gjelo was struck by how 'a terrible beauty' is reflected in the Northern Lights - how its powerful, electrical power must have both mesmerised and terrified people of the past. He uses the Latin text from *The Song of Solomon*: *Thou art beautiful, my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army set in array. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have made me flee away.*

O Holy Night: Adolphe Adam/ Placide Cappeau

Voted Classic FM's most popular Christmas song we just had to include this! It dates from 1847, using lyrics from a French poem. It has been recorded by singers ranging from Nat King Cole to Mariah Carey and even the operatic tenor, Andrea Bocelli. With its sweeping melody and powerful, heart-piercing chorus we hope it makes your spine tingle. Our soloists are Jo Jenkin and Hazel Linney.

Reading: *Extract from A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas
Liz Robin and Jo Macdonald

I Wonder as I Wander: Carl Rutti

In 1933 the American folklorist John Jacob Miles heard a little girl singing in the Appalachian Mountains. He collected the lyrical and melodic fragments and extended them into a three verse song. In this new melody, the Swedish composer Carl Rutti conjures up an atmospheric sense of the great outdoors and the drama of the Nativity. He combines English choral traditions with a jazzy, bluesy feel, to stunning effect.