

## Happy Anniversary, Escafeld!

How would you celebrate your golden wedding anniversary? It's OK, the question is merely rhetorical – but the query might prompt consideration of how best to sum up five decades of (theoretically, at least) happy cohabitation. Something of the same thought process lies behind the decision-making that underpins this concert – or rather, since Escafeld Chorale have been celebrating 50 years as a choir over two concerts in 2019, these Spring and Summer concerts. For many years now, Escafeld have performed three different concert programmes each year: a Christmas concert with short religious choral pieces interspersed with congregational carols; a spring concert, usually a fairly serious affair with at least one weighty work, often a requiem or a mass setting; and a summer concert, lighter in character and often accommodating more popular music, such as extracts from a musical. Well, there will be no Christmas carols tonight (though not long ago Escafeld performed a 'Midsummer Messiah', displacing Handel's masterpiece from its usual place in the seasonal calendar). And it could reasonably be said that the spring 2019 concert catered for the 'weighty' end of the repertoire, with an early Schubert Mass setting, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Finzi's *Lo, the Full, Final Sacrifice*. So, that leaves the lighter end of the spectrum – not all froth, by any means, but music of an essentially celebratory and upbeat character. And brief pieces too: the shortest a 'blink and you'll miss it' bit of Irishry from Stanford, the longest a mere eight-minute filleting of Rogers and Hammerstein.

In fact, it's possible to identify five strands running through tonight's concert. In the choir's very early days its repertoire was rooted largely in madrigals of the Elizabethan era, and over the years such pieces have often filled out summer concerts. Tonight's compositions by Morley, Farmer and Bennet continue that trend, and in a nod to the old ways four pieces on tonight's programme will be performed by smaller groups from within the choir. A second strand consists of the British part-song corpus of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, works written in a period when amateur choral music making in these islands flourished alongside professional work, and composers catered for this rising demand. Tonight you will hear works by Stanford, Elgar and Vaughan Williams that mark that development. Thirdly, Escafeld has always been keen to perform accessible new work by more recent composers, Morton Lauridsen, say, or the ubiquitous John Rutter. Tonight's world premiere performance of Ron Law's piece, alongside Gjeilo's *Ubi Caritas*, picks up on this strand. Fourthly, the choir has always looked for moments to let its hair down (or at least what's left of it, in terms of most of

the tenors and basses), and musical theatre fits that bill: recent years have seen music from *Carousel*, *West Side Story* and *Les Miserables* occupy a place in our summer concerts. Tonight's extracts from *Oklahoma!* tick that box too.

Finally, there is a fifth strand, and one of which the choir is justifiably proud. Since the 2010/11 season Escafeld has provided, in the innovative Associate Soloist scheme set up by our previous Chairman, Roger Watkin, a route via which young singers can gain performance experience, both in solo pieces and larger choral works. One of the pleasures of this 50th anniversary season has been that so many of these excellent performers have returned to sing with us, three in the spring concert and another three tonight, alongside our current Associate Soloist, Sarah Leffler. And so, this evening, there are solo pieces chosen by these present and former Associate Soloists. Last, but not least, the summer concert is often the opportunity for the choir's rehearsal pianist to step out of the shadows and into the spotlight, and tonight Tom Crathorne does that with his choice of solo pieces. Fortunately, the musical choices of these young people chime neatly with the first four strands already mentioned, whether featuring early 20th-century English music or extracts from popular Broadway or West End musicals.

So there you have it: a smörgåsbord of musical delights. Happy Anniversary to us!

\*\*\*

We are grateful to the **Friends of Escafeld Chorale** (Harry Armitage, Peter Bower, John Eckford, Shirley Ellins, Jenny and Nick Etherington Dunn, Eve Fawcett, Carol Fleming, Pam Grayson, Simon Kingsley, Arnold Lawson, Pam and Terry Pople, and two anonymous Friends) for supporting our work this season.

## Escafeld Chorale 1969–2019

- 1969 Ron Law forms the Fossdale Singers (with his wife and three friends),  
conducting the gradually expanding group for the next 14 years
- 1983–4 Steve Draper steps in as temporary music director
- 1984 Francis Wells appointed as music director
- 1987 Fossdale Singers becomes Escafeld Chorale
- 1994 Escafeld Chorale begins its tradition of performing one Christmas concert  
outside Sheffield at Holy Trinity, Wentworth
- 1996 Joe Varney appointed as music director
- 1997 Francis Wells returns to the post of music director
- 2001 Francis Wells retires and Steve Draper steps in as interim music director  
until Peter Dutton appointed in September
- 2004 Escafeld Chorale achieves charitable status
- 2008 Escafeld Chorale collaborates with Sheffield Philharmonic orchestra for the  
first of three concerts under the baton of Hallé Orchestra's Ewa Strusinska
- 2010 40th anniversary concert includes Ron Law's *Requiem* and smaller group  
items conducted by former music directors Steve Draper and Francis Wells
- 2013 Ian Roberts appointed as Music Director
- 2016 Francis Wells steps back into the role of music director temporarily
- 2017 Nigel Russell-Sewell appointed as Music Director
- 2018 Escafeld Chorale takes part in performance of Bach's *B Minor Mass* with  
English Touring Opera
- 2019 50th anniversary celebrated with two special concerts including favourite  
items from earlier years and guest appearances by former Associate  
Soloists

### Associate Soloists

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2010–11 Matthew Palmer   | 2015–16 Lindsey James  |
| 2011–12 Rosie Williamson | 2016–17 Keren Hadas    |
| 2012–13 Debra Finch      | 2017–18 Timothy Peters |
| 2013–14 Laura Lister     | 2018–19 Sarah Leffler  |
| 2014–15 Jak Laight       |                        |

## PROGRAMME

### **Ron Law: *Cantate Domino* (2019)**

As well as being the music teacher who founded Escafeld Chorale (initially as the Fossdale Singers), Ron Law (b. 1947) has also been associated with the choir as a composer. His *Requiem Mass* was performed in July 2010, as part of the choir's 40th anniversary celebrations, and tonight we are proud to give the world premiere performance of *Cantate Domino*, a short celebratory motet, to open this concert. It is particularly apt that we give this performance here at Holy Trinity, Millhouses, where Ron was organist for many years. The piece sets the first two verses of Psalm 149, which may be loosely translated as 'Sing to the Lord a new song, praise Him in the sanctuary of holiness. Let Israel rejoice in that which He has made, and the children of Zion exult in their ruler.' The work is tonal and melodic, and modulates through a cycle of major thirds, starting in C major and progressing via E major and (briefly) G# major, before ending again in C major.

### **Ola Gjeilo: *Ubi Caritas* (2001)**

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978) is a Norwegian composer and pianist, who studied at both the Royal College of Music in London and the Juilliard School in New York, gaining graduate and postgraduate qualifications in composition. He has lived in the USA for many years. 'Ubi caritas' ('Where charity and love are, God is there') is an anonymous text thought to date from the earliest years of Christianity, and has long been associated with the plainchant antiphon for the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday. Gjeilo's setting clearly has its roots in Gregorian chant, though he himself points to the influence of Maurice Duruflé's famous treatment of the text as his inspiration. Gjeilo mixes unison singing, some sweetly mellow diatonic harmony and the occasional rather 'scrunchy' dissonance (as, for example, just prior to the final iteration of the 'Ubi caritas' melody), before the work ends with an 'Amen' whose resolution is interestingly delayed. The effect of the whole piece is by turns contemplative and impassioned, ending with a tender reflectiveness.

### **Andrew Lloyd-Webber: 'Think of Me' (from *Phantom of the Opera*) (1986)**

#### ***Performed by Sarah Leffler (Associate Soloist 2018–19)***

Andrew Lloyd-Webber (b. 1948) was already several steps along his musical career path (*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita*, *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, amongst others) when *Phantom of the*

*Opera* was premiered in 1986, based on the 1910 novel by Gaston Leroux. Shorn of its plot trappings, it is essentially a 'beauty and the beast' tale of a disfigured central character's longing for love. Our heroine, Christine, performs *Think of Me* near the beginning of the musical when, plucked from chorus girl obscurity at the Paris Opera, she saves the day by singing this number to rescue the opera house's latest production when its previous prima donna quits. The song itself is a sentimental reflection on the inability to let go of a lost love. The fact that Christine is singing in the fictional 'opera' that is being staged at the time allows Lloyd-Webber to introduce a rhetorical flourish at the end of the song in a brief pastiche of 19th-century operatic pyrotechnics.

### **Edward Elgar: *Serenade* (1914)**

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) produced a sudden flurry of part-songs, songs for solo voice and verse anthems in 1914, amongst them the *Two Choral Songs, Op 73*, and whilst these are evidently minor Elgar pieces, they are vivid dramatisations of poems by Russian poets; tonight's Elgar item, *Serenade, Op 73 No 2*, sets a text by Nikolai Minsky, in a translation by Rosa Newmarch. *Serenade* has its inner turbulence, but although the soprano line evokes some rather expressionist horrors about 'real life', the other three parts invoke the transient consolations of a dream life, however fleeting these might be.

### **Thomas Morley: *Sing We and Chant It* (1595)**

Thomas Morley (1557/8–1602/3) was probably the most influential practitioner of the Elizabethan English Madrigal School, which flourished from the late 1580s onwards, under the influence of the then highly fashionable Italian madrigal. *Sing We and Chant It* was first published in 1595 in a collection called *The First Book of Balletts to Five Voices*, and it sets an anonymous text of, for its era, an entirely conventional kind. It is a '*carpe diem*' narrative, warning that since 'not long youth lasteth, and old age hasteth' one ought to make the most of every opportunity – 'now is best leisure to take our pleasure'. The madrigal's chief interest lies in the contrast between the rhythmically regular, essentially chordal verses and the more floridly elaborate 'fa la la' refrains.

### **John Ireland: *Her Song* (1925)**

#### ***Performed by: Debra Finch (Associate Soloist 2012–13)***

The music of John Ireland (1879–1962) features twice on tonight's programme. This first example shows his sensitive understanding of that melancholy strain of English art song founded on the poetry of loss. Although he wrote a piano concerto and several substantial chamber works, Ireland was essentially a miniaturist, and most of his output consists of songs and short piano pieces.

Thomas Hardy's poetry provided fertile inspiration, and *Her Song*, the second of *Three Songs to Poems by Thomas Hardy*, was published in 1925, only three years after Hardy's poem itself. It is a characteristic Hardy text, a reminiscence in ballad form, in this case of a woman reflecting on her life and long-lost love. As so often in Hardy's work, the act of remembering returns to the protagonist a glimpse of bittersweet happiness. Ireland's setting, with its simple vocal line and often very sparse accompaniment, ideally suits this sense of pathos.

### **Charles Villiers Stanford: *The Blue Bird* (1910)**

*(Soloist: Debra Finch)*

Tonight's concert features three part-songs by Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), a major figure in the gradual renaissance of British music in the later 19th century. One of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music whilst still in his 20s, Stanford was undoubtedly a musically conservative figure, and has been somewhat unfairly characterised as teaching his students (core figures in British music in the generation after Elgar, such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bridge, Ireland and Howells) a diet of 'Brahms and water'. He composed not just in large-scale forms (symphonies, concertos, operas) but also vast amounts of Anglican church music and many dozens of shorter secular choral pieces and songs. Of this last group, *The Blue Bird* is by some distance his most renowned and performed piece. First published in *Eight Part Songs for SATB and Soprano Solo, Op 119*, all settings of poetry by Mary Coleridge, a Victorian poet and novelist (and relation of Coleridge the Romantic poet), this song's power resides in the way its apparent simplicity hides its unresolved tensions. The verse itself is slight – it might be summarised as 'I saw a bird' – but with it Stanford conjures a mood at once pastoral and consoling, yet also cold and foreboding. Partly this comes from the high solo soprano E flat reiterating the word 'blue' over the hypnotically 'floating' chords of the chorus. Partly too it's caused by the way the song's harmonies don't fully resolve: the final chord fades away to nothing, but wherever we are, our feet are not safely on the ground. There is no sense that we have arrived anywhere that could be called 'home'.

### **Charles Villiers Stanford: *Shall We Go Dance?* (1897)**

When Lionel Benson formed the Magpie Minstrels in 1886 to perform both 16th-century madrigals and contemporary Victorian part-songs, Stanford was quick to pick up on the fashion for music combining the choral idioms of his age with Elizabethan poetry. The result was three sets of *Six Elizabethan Pastorales*, and *Shall We Go Dance? Op 67 No 3* is an excellent example of Stanford in pastiche mode. The poem, by Nicholas Breton (1545–1626), is in what might be termed the 'then I woke up and it was all a dream' genre. The song's dance-like idiom,

with its skipping 6/8 time and 'fa la la' refrain, suits the pastoral tale of dancing, singing and kissing.

### **Charles Villiers Stanford: *Quick! We Have But a Second* (1922)**

As a Dubliner who lived in Ireland until his late teens, Stanford's Irishness was authentic, and his interest in the poetry of Thomas Moore (Ireland's equivalent to Robert Burns, perhaps) led to a number of arrangements of Moore's poems set to traditional Irish airs, such as this one, which comes from a collection published as *Six Irish Airs for SATB*. It is a celebration of the fleeting pleasures of life, specifically pleasures commemorated in drink. The arrangement is simple and artless. The challenge for a choir is to make that artlessness convincing!

### ***Three piano solos performed by Tom Crathorne***

#### **Frank Bridge: *Three Miniature Pastorales: Set 1 No 3* (1917)**

This short work by Frank Bridge (1879–1941) is the first of three solo piano pieces in tonight's concert. Perhaps more than any other British composer, Bridge's work presents us with a 'before' and an 'after' – in his case the turning point being not so much the first world war itself (which, as an ardent pacifist, Bridge was horrified by) as his emotional and psychological reaction to it. In fact, during and just after the war Bridge's music tended towards a gentle pastoralism (the rupture with tonality came later), and he wrote three sets of *Miniature Pastorales* for piano (Set 1 published in 1917, Sets 2 and 3 in 1921) which are typical of that sense of retreat from the horrors of war. This third piece from Set 1, with its rocking 6/8 rhythm and trilling right hand, is an exercise in conscious naivety.

#### **John Ireland: *The Holy Boy* (1915)**

The second of tonight's pieces by John Ireland is one of his most popular and famous compositions, alongside the hymn tune 'My Song is Love Unknown'. It exists in arrangements for a great variety of forces, though the original version is this one, '*The Holy Boy – a Carol*', published as the third of his *Four Preludes for Piano*. Apparently written on Christmas Day, 1913, it is a piece of expressive simplicity and innocence. Although the title may have come from Harold Munro's poem of the same name, it would appear that the 'holy boy' in question was one of Ireland's choristers at St Luke's, Chelsea, where Ireland was organist at the time.

#### **Giovanni Allevi: *Downtown* (2006)**

And now, as they used to say, for something completely different. Giovanni Allevi (b. 1969) is an Italian pianist and composer whose work occupies the borderland

between the repetitive chord patterns of minimalism and something closer perhaps to the easy-listening style of Ludovico Einaudi. Considerably more famous in his native land, Allevi is probably best known in the UK as provider of music for a Fiat Punto television advertisement. *Downtown* comes from his 2006 album *Joy*. Some critics regard it as a superior form of the sort of music one might hear in the plush surroundings of a country-house gym or health spa, but occasional jazzy harmonic and rhythmic shifts help to provide interest beyond the repeated arpeggiated patterns.

### **Ralph Vaughan-Williams: *Linden Lea* (1901)**

In terms of published music, Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872–1958) was a relatively late starter; *Linden Lea* is the first of Vaughan Williams' works to appear in print. It is a setting of words by the Dorset 'dialect poet' William Barnes, though here in a slightly sanitised Standard English form. The song has become very well known, existing, like Ireland's *The Holy Boy*, in dozens of arrangements – by 1925 Vaughan Williams could write about 'such sins of my youth as *Linden Lea*, which becomes every year more horribly popular'. In an idiom somewhere between an English folk song and a hymn, it evokes the English pastoral idyll, particularly in its contrast, in the last of the three stanzas, with 'dark-room'd towns' where 'other folk [may] make money faster', but where there is no freedom to roam the idealised English landscape, whatever the season.

### **Thomas Morley: *Now is the Month of Maying* (1595)**

The second Morley item in tonight's concert is very well known, and is almost certainly in the repertoire of every amateur choir that tries its hand at Elizabethan madrigals. To be technical, the piece is not a madrigal but a 'ballett', which might be defined as a light part-song with a 'fa la la' chorus. It appeared in the same 1595 publication that is the source for *Sing We and Chant It*. It will probably come as no surprise that many of these pieces are designed with, shall we say, the more adult listener in mind, and they are replete with not necessarily subtle double meanings. So it is here. Although on the surface a song about springtime dancing, the final stanza, where 'merry lads' invite 'dainty nymphs' to 'play barley break', should remind us that these young men have a rather different kind of physical activity in mind.

### **John Farmer: *Fair Phyllis* (1599)**

*Fair Phyllis* is a pastoral narrative of similarly earthy fulfilment, in another tale of rural life, in which the shepherdess Phyllis is pursued by her lover Amyntas. It is the work of the minor Elizabethan composer John Farmer (1565?–1605?).



Records of Farmer are so scarce that his birth has been suggested as occurring at any time between 1564 and 1570, and his death between 1601 and 1605. What is known is that his only published madrigals come from a collection that appeared in 1599. There is some good-humoured word painting in the piece: just the sopranos sing of Phyllis 'sitting all alone', before the rest of the choir join in on 'feeding her flock'. Later there is much repetitive imitation of 'up and down he wandered' from all four parts, to exaggerate the thoroughness of Amyntas's search. The gentle humour of this piece comes from the fact that on finding her, 'they fell a kissing' ... but then the section is repeated so the second time round his 'up and down' wandering is over parts of Phyllis's anatomy.

### **Leonard Bernstein: 'Something's Coming' (from *West Side Story*) (1957) *Performed by Timothy Peters (Associate Soloist 2017–18)***

Nowadays, *West Side Story*, Leonard Bernstein's collaboration with lyricist Stephen Sondheim on the reworking of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, is such an established fixture on the musical scene that it is hard to imagine the initial shock-waves of its 1950s premiere, featuring Bernstein's eclectic mix of musical styles. The song *Something's Coming* is sung early in the show by Tony, before his meeting with Maria but whilst he is still uncertain about gangland life. Bernstein himself wrote: 'We wrote a new song for Tony, that's a killer ... It's really going to save his character – a driving 2/4 in the great tradition – but it gives to Tony – so that he doesn't emerge as just a euphoric dreamer.' It's a song of anticipation rather than fulfilment, making Bernstein's characteristic use in this score of a tritone (C to F#) and jagged contrasts of 3/4 and 2/4 time signatures to suggest Tony's rather febrile state of mind.

### **John Farmer: *Fair Nymphs, I Heard One Telling* (1601)**

It might be thought, from the Elizabethan madrigals heard so far this evening, that they had a single-minded preoccupation with singing, dancing and alfresco copulation. There is some truth in this, but a counterweight to this view might be provided by madrigals such as Farmer's *Fair Nymphs, I Heard One Telling*. This was published as part of a collection put together by Thomas Morley in 1601 and entitled *The Triumphs of Oriana*. Conventional wisdom has it that Oriana here was Elizabeth I, and that the collection was made in her honour (and presumably to curry her favour). The volume is a compilation of 25 madrigals by 23 different Elizabethan composers, and each madrigal concludes with the words 'Then sang the shepherds and the nymphs of Diana: long live fair Oriana'. Farmer's entry is startlingly different in mood and intensity to *Fair Phyllis* from earlier in the evening. It sets an anonymous text which evokes a pastoral idyll of classical times, populated by nymphs and pipe-playing shepherds, which is invaded by the

goddess Diana and her train, attended by sundry Muses and Graces. The piece, in six parts (SSATBB), weaves a sonorous tapestry of interlocking voices, joined at the end in celebration of the 'fair Oriana'.

### **John Bennet: *All Creatures Now are Merry* (1601)**

*(Soloists: Debra Finch, Sarah Leffler, Timothy Peters, Nigel Russell-Sewell and Rosie Williamson)*

This next madrigal, performed here by a quintet of solo voices, is also taken from *The Triumphs of Oriana*, and it ends with the same lines as Farmer's madrigal that we have just heard. John Bennet (or sometimes Bennett) (1575?–1614?) was another little-known Elizabethan composer – it is impossible not just to identify when he was born and died, but where he was from or (for almost all his life) what he did. What is possible, on the basis of this madrigal, is to say that he was a fluent and accomplished composer, well versed in the techniques of word painting and imitation that the Elizabethan madrigal relied on – see, for example, the bugle fanfares or hovering birds of this piece. The closing bars, a florid exchange across all five parts of 'Long live fair Oriana', are particularly elaborate.

### **Cole Porter: 'So in Love' (from *Kiss Me, Kate*) (1948)**

***Performed by Rosie Williamson (Associate Soloist 2011–12)***

Cole Porter (1891–1964) provided both music and lyrics to the witty and ingenious musical *Kiss Me, Kate*, which was by some distance his most successful stage work, not only during his lifetime (more than 1000 consecutive performances on Broadway) but after his death, with regular revivals from Sadler's Wells Opera, the RSC and Opera North amongst others. The song *So in Love* comes from early in Act 1, and is sung by the character Lili Vanessi, who, in the play-within-the-play, is taking the role of Kate in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. In it, she sings of her enduring love for her ex-husband Fred Graham (playing Petruchio in the Shakespeare production). The mood of trapped infatuation – 'So in love with you am I' – is touchingly captured in the yearning harmonies of the song.

### **Richard Rodgers (arr Leavitt): *Oklahoma!* (Medley) (1943; 1993)**

*(Soloists: Sarah Leffler and Timothy Peters)*

As is well known, *Oklahoma!* was the first musical written by Richard Rodgers (1902–79) with his new librettist Oscar Hammerstein II, and it was undoubtedly an overnight success, the first Broadway production running for over 2000 performances. Dozens of revivals later, including the Oscar-winning 1955 film version, and the work is firmly rooted in the history of 20th-century American musical theatre. It was at the forefront of a new style of theatre, the musical play

with integrated songs and dances, staking a claim to be seen as serious drama rather than simply a string of (usually) comic songs. Its cohesion was helped by Rodgers' decision to unify the score with various musical motifs – this may not be Wagner, perhaps, but it gives the musical a weight that was, for its age, quite new. In 1993, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its first performance, the American composer and prolific arranger John Leavitt produced an eight-minute medley of some of the musical's key numbers, and it is this arrangement that will be performed tonight.

*Oklahoma!* was based on the 1931 play *Green Grow the Lilacs* by the American playwright and poet Lynn Riggs. Both the play and subsequent musical tell the tale of downhome country folk, settlers in the 'Indian Territory' (geographically pretty much identical to the state boundaries that Oklahoma was to have at its foundation). It is set in 1906, the year before Oklahoma became a state. This quasi-'frontier-spirit' quality marked it out from the typical social milieu of musicals in America at the time. Ethan Mordden, the respected historian of American theatre, wrote of *Oklahoma!* that it 'was the first American musical with an ethnic sound, words and music entirely in the folk idiom'.

The songs brought together in Leavitt's medley are:

- Oh, what a Beautiful Morning
- Oklahoma!
- The Surrey with the Fringe on the Top
- Kansas City
- I Cain't Say No
- Many a New Day
- People Will Say We're in Love
- Oklahoma! (reprise).

We begin, over tremolando piano chords, with just a glimpse of *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning*. In the musical it forms the first song after the Overture and as here it sets a scene of wide-screen optimism. Surging piano chords take us into the title song, *Oklahoma!* Interestingly, this song was a late addition to the musical in its pre-Broadway form, but its celebratory spirit (it appears in the musical just before the climax, where the characters are marking not just the marriage of the two romantic leads but also Oklahoma's impending statehood) is synonymous with the musical's values. In fact, the words, taken cold, don't seem all that enticing, describing a place where 'the wind comes sweeping down the plain', and, in case we haven't got the point, where 'the wind comes right behind

the rain.’ Nevertheless, the energetic and buoyant music sweeps all before it in a spirit of ‘can do’ optimism.

This is followed by the rather cheesy arrangement (all finger- and tongue-clicking) of *The Surrey with the Fringe on the Top*. In the musical this takes us back to very near the beginning of the show, and it details the attempt by Curly, our hero, to impress Laurey, the young lady he has his eyes on, by describing the expensively new-fangled carriage he will use to take her to the evening social.

The next item, *Kansas City*, is perhaps as far as the musical goes in poking fun at the simple ways of country folks. It’s narrated by Will, a cowboy just back from witnessing the modern delights of the big city. It begins as a tenor solo, subsequently supported by the tenors and basses of the chorus. There’s a touch of the hoe-down in the piano passage that links this to the next number, in which the sopranos and altos of the chorus get to loosen their stays (metaphorically speaking) in *I Cain’t Say No*. It is, in its comic depiction of the character Ado Annie Carnes’ inability to choose between the then two loves of her life, a song of sexual awakening, though described in somewhat coy terms.

The mood quietens a little for the next section, a mash-up (if that isn’t too modern a term) of *Many a New Day* and *People Will Say We’re in Love*. A soprano solo, in the musical the former song is the attempt of Laurey, our heroine, to show she doesn’t care that Curly might take a different partner to the dance. This runs straight into the duet for Laurey and Curly (beginning here with a tenor solo, before being taken up by the whole chorus) in which – oh, the irony – they each warn the other not to behave as though they were in love. Though fragments of *Many a New Day* return insistently, in the end the swelling romance of *People Will Say We’re in Love* asserts itself.

Finally, we’re back on the windswept, wheat-waving, hawk-circling plains of *Oklahoma!* for a reprise of the show’s title song, as the medley ends by spelling out in celebratory terms the new state we’re in. ‘Yeow!’, as they say.

*Programme notes by Phil Parker – June 2019*

You are warmly invited you to join us in the church hall for a celebratory drink and light refreshments, and the ceremonial cutting of the 50th anniversary cake. A selection of posters and programmes from previous concerts will also be on display.

## TONIGHT'S SOLOISTS



**Tom Crathorne** is a collaborative pianist, composer and musical director. He completed his music degree in 2018 at the University of Sheffield, where he was awarded the Dr Mo Sacoor Music Scholarship, and is now studying their Composition MA course, for which is a recipient of the John Roach Postgraduate Scholarship. Tom approaches composition from an aesthetically focused standpoint and often tries to incorporate properties of and concepts relating to the physical world around us in his works. Additionally, he also has a deep interest in phonetics and language and enjoys composing with subtle shades of

timbres and non-12EDO tuning systems to evoke different physical and aural sensations within the listener. He recently collaborated with poet Kathleen Swann for a commission by Leeds Lieder Festival 2019, where he performed his work *The Bevin Boy* alongside baritone and close friend William Kyle.

In addition to working with Escafeld Chorale, Tom works as a collaborative pianist in a variety of settings. He accompanies concerts and recitals, most recently supporting undergraduate performances at Firth Hall, and was the répétiteur for the English Touring Opera's Sheffield performance of Bach's *Mass in B minor*. He has also acted as audition pianist for Leeds Playhouse's 2019 production of *The Wizard of Oz* and the Crucible's *Guys and Dolls* auditions in Sheffield.

Tom has extensive experience in theatre as a musical director and pit orchestra player. Theatrical engagements include roles at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre (*Songs From the Seven Hills* – Assistant Musical Director & Keys 2; *What We Wished For* – Keys 2), Sheffield University Drama Studio (*Spring Awakening* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* – Musical Director and Keys) and the Pleasance Theatre in London (*Departures: A Song Cycle* – Assistant Musical Director and Keys 2). Tom also recently assisted Dan Gillespie-Sells as Keyboard Programmer for Sheffield Theatres' 2018 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



**Debra Finch** studied Music at the University of Sheffield and went on to study for an MA in Film Studies. She has been an active member of the musical community in Sheffield over the years, whether singing as a soloist with various choirs or musical theatre groups, or as a performer for weddings and events. Debra currently plays piano and sings with alternative-pop trio Before Breakfast (see

<https://www.facebook.com/beforebreakfastmusic/>), who have toured as a support act with Tokio Myers, C Duncan and The Dunwells. They will be performing on the Library Stage as part of Tramlines this summer. Debra has also regularly performed with The University of Sheffield's Broadway Orchestra over the last few years, and had the opportunity to perform as a soloist on BBC Radio 3 through her work with them. The rest of the time, Debra teaches singing and piano and organises concerts and events for AS Music School. Debra is delighted to have the opportunity to sing with Escafeld Chorale again this year as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations.



**Timothy Peters** BMus (Hons) read music at the University of Sheffield and now pursues a freelance career as a tenor, choral conductor and composer. Before university, Timothy was the tenor 1 section leader for the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain and sang with the National Youth Chamber Choir. Currently he is a lay clerk at Sheffield Cathedral, with whom he has toured internationally, as well as performing for the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh and on both live radio (BBC Radio 3) and television (BBC One) broadcasts.

As a tenor soloist, Timothy has been featured on BBC Radio 4 and regularly performs with choirs and orchestras in the north of England (most recently with: Sheffield Bach Choir, Sheffield Teachers Choir, The Abbeydale Singers, Bingham Choral Society, Escafeld Chorale, Sheffield Oratorio Chorus, Wigan Choral Society, Stamford Choral Society, Hallam Choral Society and Hallam Sinfonia, Bakewell Choral Society and South Yorkshire Symphony Orchestra, the Chester Festival Chorus and Ensemble Deva, Kantos Chamber and the Northern Ballet Sinfonia

Orchestra), in addition to numerous performances as a recitalist. He recently returned to Sheffield in November after joining Gary Numan as a backing singer for the UK stint of his world tour. Timothy was awarded a choral scholarship at Sheffield Cathedral in 2014, the University of Sheffield's Julian Payne Recital Prize, and the associate soloist scholarship for Escafeld Chorale.

Timothy is also a keen conductor, composer and arranger. This summer sees him moving to Surrey to take up the role of Musician in Residence at City of London Freeman's School, and to pursue his passion for solo singing. To follow his journey, follow him on all social media platforms and on his website [www.timothypetersmusic.com](http://www.timothypetersmusic.com)

**Rosie Williamson** graduated from the University of Sheffield in 2009 with a BMus, first-class honours. She gained an MA in Music (Solo Voice Ensemble Singing) from the University of York in 2014, where she studied with Robert Hollingworth (director of *Fagiolini*). She trained in Musical Theatre at Associated Studios in 2015.



In 2016, Rosie founded her blog and cabaret series, *What Would Julie Do?*, which combines self-help and show tunes, taking inspiration from Dame Julie Andrews and other favourite things. She has written and hosted seven sell-out critically acclaimed cabarets with emerging musical theatre performers and West End stars at one of London's top cabaret venues, The Pheasantry. Her latest show was previewed as part of the inaugural Accalia Arts Festival. Rosie's spin-off solo show *Eliza von Poppins presents...A Practically Perfect Guide to Living*, was selected for development as part of the John Thaw Initiative Mental Health Season at the Tristan Bates Theatre last year. The full production debuted at Brighton Fringe in May 2019. Future performances include The Phoenix Artist Club Cabaret Awards and Mountview's Catalyst Festival.

Rosie made her West End debut in the London Musical Theatre Orchestra's concert version of Lerner & Loewe's *Camelot* at the London Palladium last year. Alongside her performing work; she is in demand as a vocal coach and teaches at Arts Ed, The Sing Space and privately. She is delighted to be returning to sing with Escafeld Chorale for this very special anniversary concert.

@SingingRosieLee / @whatwouldjulie [www.whatwouldjuliedo.co.uk](http://www.whatwouldjuliedo.co.uk)

## Escafeld Chorale 2018–19

### **Sopranos**

Alison Allen-Booth  
Christine Armitage  
Ann Barker  
Barbara Bush  
Sheila Care  
Maureen Cave  
Jo Couldry  
Helen Cramp  
Anna ( Crewe  
Marjorie Crompton  
Stephanie Dixon  
Sylvia Dunkley  
Elizabeth Edwards  
Stella Harrison  
Camilla Jordan  
Brenda Long  
Alison Moss  
Kath Naylor  
Rosalie Nicholson  
Hilary Robinson  
Alison Russell  
Mary Wheeler

### **Altos**

Sue Beavers  
Maggie Bower  
Anne Brew  
Doreen Driver  
Jackie Dunn  
Helen Dutton  
Elizabeth Potter  
Sylvia Graves  
Ann Kingdom  
Mel Kingsley  
Madeline Lawson  
Jane Mason  
Kath Mowforth  
Maureen Parker  
Glenys Parry  
Helen Pennington  
Kathryn Rangeley  
Joanne Simmie  
Ruth Watkin  
Kathryn Wells  
Rachel White  
Gaby Wilkinson  
Ros Witten  
Jo Wright

### **Tenors**

Chris Barker  
Roger Dunn  
Pete Dutton  
John Kingdom  
Anthony Meijer  
Brian Parker  
Carla Rohde  
John Schofield  
Roger Watkin

### **Basses**

Steve Draper  
Colin Farmer  
Peter Fawcett  
Steve Joseph  
Peter Machan  
Phil Parker  
Phil Read  
Roy Smalley  
Fran Wells