

# *Escafeld Chorale*

Registered charity no. 1110334

***Conductor*** George Parsons

***Organist*** Philip Millward

***Violinists*** Hazel Allbones

David Francis



## **Gloria!**

**Music for Easter from  
Monteverdi to Rutter**

**Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses  
Saturday 29 March 2025**

# PROGRAMME

## *Easter Hymn*

arr. Michael Neaum (b. 1939)

This hymn tune will probably be familiar to the words ‘All creatures of our God and King’. Using the words ‘Lasst uns erfreuen’ (‘Let us rejoice most heartily’), it originated in 1623 and was first published in the Jesuit hymnal *Ausserlesene Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesänge*. It became popular in English hymn books after Ralph Vaughan Williams published a version in *The English Hymnal* in 1906. Neaum’s arrangement begins with a powerful unison statement of the first verse. This is followed by the sopranos and altos singing a beautiful, quiet, imitative second verse, before the sopranos add a two-part descant to the final fortissimo verse.

## ‘Largo ma non tanto’: second movement from *Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor (BWV 1043)* Johann Sebastian Bach (1685– 1750)

Written around 1730, Bach’s Double Concerto is one of his best-known and most frequently performed works. It is characterized by a subtle yet expressive relationship between the two violins, which engage in a musical conversation over the harmonic and rhythmic background of (in this performance) the piano. In terms of musical structure, fugal imitation and counterpoint are key features. This lyrical second movement is among some of the most beautiful music ever created with its slow, noble, soulful melodies in a smoothly flowing, gently rocking 12/8 time signature.

## *Nocturne*

Lili Boulanger (1893–1918)

Composer and pianist Lili Boulanger was born into a family of musicians in Paris. At the age of 19, she was the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome competition. Despite chronic ill-health due to childhood pneumonia, she worked furiously until her untimely death at the age of 24, leaving behind a body of influential and highly regarded work, but it is only recently that her music has begun to be performed again. The *Nocturne* was written in 1911 and shows the influence of earlier French composers.

## *Romance, Op. 26*

Johan S. Svendsen (1840–1911)

Norwegian-born Johann Svendsen was taught the violin and clarinet by his father, a music teacher and bandmaster, and by the age of nine was playing in local dance orchestras. He began composing at the age of 11. He attended Leipzig Conservatory, initially as a violinist, but eventually majoring in composition and achieving success as a conductor. It was while in Paris (1878–80) that he wrote his *Romance, Op. 26*, one of his last compositions before he took up conducting and teaching full time. It is his only work that has stood the test of time. It opens

with a languid and flowing idyll in G major, and has a contrasting middle section in G minor.

### ***Prélude and Carillon from 24 Pièces en style libre***

**Louis Vierne (1870–1937)**

Parisian organist and composer Louis Vierne was the organist of Notre Dame from 1900 until his death. Two interesting facts about him are that he was blind, and that he died whilst giving an organ recital! The *24 Pièces en style libre* are similar to J. S. Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues in that the pieces work methodically through the musical keys – the first piece in C major, the second in C minor, and so on. The *Prélude* is no. 5 (D major) and is a very gentle, lilting piece, which contrasts with the *Carillon* (no. 21 in B flat major). As its name suggests, the piece is based on a peel of bells, apparently from the chapel of the Château de Longpont.

### ***Cantique de Jean Racine***

**Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)**

Saint Saens taught Fauré in the Ecole Niedermeyer de Paris, which he had attended from the age of nine. It was Saint Saens who encouraged him to compose and, aged 19, he wrote the *Cantique de Jean Racine*. It won first prize in the school's composition contest and launched his career as a composer. There are stylistic similarities to his *Requiem*, written much later and performed by Escafeld Chorale last Easter. Fauré sets the text by the dramatist Jean-Baptiste Racine with restrained and respectful charm, using long, sweeping melodies that reflect the Romantic tradition, but atonal note choices in the harmonic structure and melody attest to its contemporary character.

*Verbe égal au Très-Haut, notre unique  
espérance,*

Word of the Highest, our only hope,

*Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux,  
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le  
silence:*

Eternal day of earth and the heavens,  
We break the silence of the peaceful  
night;

*Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux.  
Répands sur nous le feu de Ta grâce  
puissante;*

Saviour Divine, cast your eyes upon us.  
Pour on us the fire of your powerful  
grace,

*Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de Ta voix;*

That all hell may flee at the sound of  
your voice;

*Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme  
languissante*

Banish the slumber of a weary soul,

*Qui la conduit à l'oubli de Tes lois!  
Ô Christ! sois favorable à ce peuple  
fidèle,*

That brings forgetfulness of your laws!  
O Christ, look with favour upon your  
faithful people,

*Pour Te bénir maintenant rassemblé;*

Now gathered here to praise you;

*Reçois les chants qu'il offre à Ta gloire  
immortelle,  
Et de Tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.*

Receive their hymns offered to your  
immortal glory;  
May they go forth filled with your gifts.

### **Beatus Vir**

### **Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)**

‘Without doubt, Monteverdi was the greatest of the Italian Renaissance composers’, according to a well-known website. Certainly, he led the way from the Renaissance to the Baroque periods in music. He was Master of Music in St Mark’s, Venice, from 1613 until his death, but he was probably even more famous for his operas and madrigals. His style, particularly his dramatic changes in tempo, mood and instrumentation were widely imitated across Europe.

*Beatus Vir* was published in a collection called *Selve Morale e Spirituale*. ‘*Selve*’ means ‘woods’ in Italian. What? Moral and spiritual woods? A strange title for a collection of sacred music. It has been suggested that it reflects the composer’s ambivalent attitude to the genre, since we know from letters that he preferred writing operas and madrigals. Certainly, the musical style in *Beatus Vir* contains the secular elements that made his music so popular. Changes in key, mood, instrumentation and time signature all combine to make this an enjoyable piece both to sing and to listen to. The opening phrase in 4/4, to the words ‘*Beatus vir*’, keeps recurring through the first section. Then there is a slightly more sedate section in 3/4 which livens up on the words ‘*exaltabitur in gloria*’. A brief return of the ‘*Beatus vir*’ theme precedes the magnificent final build up on the doxology: ‘*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*’

*Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum:  
In mandatis eius rolet nimis.  
Potens in terra erit semen eius;  
Generatio rectorum benedicetur.*

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord:  
He delights greatly in His commandments.  
His seed will be mighty on earth;  
The generation of the upright will be  
blessed.

*Gloria et divitiae in domo eius;  
Et iustitia eius manet in saeculum  
saeculi.  
Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis.*

Wealth and riches are in his house;  
And his righteousness endures for ever  
and ever.  
Unto the upright there arises light in the  
darkness:

*Misericors, et miserator et justus.*

He is gracious, full of compassion, and  
righteous.

*Jucundus homo qui miseretur et  
commodat.  
Disponet sermones suos in iudicio:  
Quia in aeternum non commovebitur.  
In memoria aeterna erit justus.*

Good is the man who has compassion and  
lends.  
He will guide his affairs with discretion:  
Because he will not be moved for ever.  
The righteous will be in everlasting

*Ab auditione mala non timebit.*  
*Paratum cor eius sperare in Domino;*  
*Confirmatum est, cor eius:*  
*Non commovebitur,*  
*Donec despiciat inimicos suos.*  
*Dispersit, dedit pauperibus:*  
*Iustitia eius manet in saeculum*  
*saeculi,*  
*Cornu eius exaltabitur in gloria.*  
*Peccator videbit, et irascetur;*  
*Dentibus suis fremet et tabescet.*  
*Desiderium peccatorum peribit.*

remembrance.  
 He will not be afraid of evil tidings.  
 His heart is fixed, trusting in the lord;  
 His heart is established:  
 He will not be moved,  
 Until he gazes at his enemies.  
 He has dispersed, he has given to the poor:  
 His righteousness endures for ever and  
 ever,  
 His soul will be exalted with honour.  
 The sinner will see it, and will be grieved;  
 He will gnash with his teeth,  
 And melt away.

## INTERVAL – Refreshments will be served at the back of the church

### *Gloria*

**John Rutter (b. 1945)**

There cannot be experienced members of any choir who are not familiar with the work of John Rutter, and the same could probably be said for their audiences. Those who have only heard his Christmas carols, however, might be in for a surprise. The *Gloria* is a fairly early work, written in 1974 to a commission from a choral conductor well known in the US, Mel Olson. Importantly, the commission also introduced the young composer to America. Although setting a liturgical text – the ‘*Gloria in excelsis Deo*’ section of the traditional Latin mass – it was conceived as a concert piece. Rutter acknowledged Olson’s influence on the scale and instrumentation of the work, and also his debt to Poulenc, Stravinsky and Walton. The influence of Walton’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* is particularly strong. There are also elements of Gregorian chant.

Originally written for choir, brass, percussion and organ, it is in three movements, beginning with a vigorous allegro in triple time, with lively off-beat rhythms. This alternates with calmer passages to the words ‘*et in terra pax*’ before the opening theme returns in a fugal ending.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax*  
*hominibus bonae voluntatis.*  
*Laudamus te, benedicimus te,*  
*adoramus te, glorificamus te,*  
*Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam*  
*gloriam tuam.*

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
 peace to people of good will.  
 We praise you, we bless you,  
 We adore you, we glorify you,  
 We give you thanks for your great glory.

The more reflective second movement is appropriately calm, building to a climax at ‘*Deus Pater omnipotens*’, before a *molto legato* plea on ‘*miserere nobis*’, with a short solo section for the upper voices.

*Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili Unigenite, Jesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius  
Patris,  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere  
nobis;  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe  
deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.*

Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of The  
Father,

You take away the sins of the world, have  
mercy on us;  
You take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
You are seated at the right hand of the  
Father, have mercy on us.

*Semi-chorus:* Susan Austin, Maureen Cave, Helen Cramp, Helen Ety, Rebecca  
Hampshire, Sarah Hindmarsh

Following on without a break, in the third movement we return to lively, ambiguous, off-beat rhythms and dynamic contrasts. Among most audiences Rutter may not be known for the complexity of his music, but here there is a magnificent, full-scale fugue, which is then combined with the opening theme of the movement before a long, crescendoing ‘Amen’.

*Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus,  
Jesu Christe,  
cum Sancto Spiritu:  
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen*

For you alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
You alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
With the Holy Spirit,  
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.

*Programme notes by Steve Draper*

We are grateful to the **Friends of Escafeld Chorale** (Harry Armitage, Olivia Cooke, Harry Driver, Jenny & Nick Etherington-Dunn, Colin Farmer, Eve Fawcett, Simon Kingsley, Arnold Lawson, Brenda & Philip Long, Brian Parker, Gaby Wilkinson and one anonymous Friend) for supporting our work this season.

**George Parsons** has been the Musical Director of Escafeld Chorale since September 2022. He began his musical life as a boy chorister at King’s College, Cambridge, where he also began organ lessons. As a sixth-former he was Junior Organ Scholar at Wells Cathedral and, after further study with Jacques van Oortmerssen at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, George read music at The Queen’s College, Oxford, where he was also an organ scholar. Since graduating in 2003, George has worked in music ministry for churches in London, Sheffield, and Wakefield, and in 2016 completed a PhD in Musicology. Currently, George works as the Music Minister at All Saints Ecclesall in Sheffield. He is also active as an academic and peripatetic instrumental teacher and has published writing on

the music of J.S. Bach and Sir James MacMillan. Based in Chesterfield, George also serves as the accompanist for both the local Rose Choir and Co-operative Choral Society. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

**Philip Millward** was born in Lincoln, where he was a chorister at the Cathedral. After this, he followed a similar path to George Parsons, spending time as a student and organ scholar at Wells Cathedral School, and then at Oxford University, studying music and taking up an organ scholarship at Christ Church. From 1997, Philip worked at Trent College in Long Eaton, where he ran the Chapel Choir, and was also director of music and boarding housemaster for parts of that time. In 2012 he moved to Croydon, taking up the post of Director of Music at Royal Russell School, and he returned to the Midlands in November 2020 for the different role of Lay Chaplain to the Leicester Grammar Schools Trust. He still enjoys playing the organ on a freelance basis, and is delighted to be playing for Escafeld Chorale today. Philip is married with two children, and lives in a blissfully quiet village outside Market Harborough. He is a member of a local church, and in his free time he enjoys walking the dogs, solving cryptic crosswords, reading murder mysteries, and following the ups and (mostly) downs of Lincoln City Football Club.

**Hazel Allbones** (née Parkes) grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon where she began playing the violin at the age of 11 after having learned the piano from the age of six. After studying at what is now Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, with the violin as her main instrument, she joined the BBC Midland Radio Orchestra. Sadly, this was disbanded but she explored other local freelance opportunities and was a founder member of the English String/Symphony Orchestra. Relocating to Sheffield, she became a regular member of Sinfonia Viva in Derby, and with her string quartet 'Bow Belles' she regularly plays for weddings. Other work includes playing violin and viola in orchestras accompanying choral societies and for musical theatre shows. Listeners to Radio 4's 'The Archers' will hear her as part of the orchestra which re-recorded the theme tune in the 1990s. Hazel took up the tuba in 2019 and enjoys playing in Porter Valley Concert Band, Hathersage Brass Band and Dronfield Daytime Brass.

**David Francis** was born to musician parents, receiving his first violin lessons at the age of five from his father, and continuing his musical education in the choir of Kings College, Cambridge. He initially read mathematics at university, but, unable to resist the call of the violin, went on to study at the Royal Academy. His principal teacher was the late Lydia Mordkovitch, and for two years he studied baroque violin with Simon Standage, beginning his career as a period player with Florilegium and other London-based groups. In the early 2000s he moved to Derbyshire to become Head of Strings at Repton School, but is now enjoying life teaching the violin, mathematics and Aikido in central Derbyshire.

## ABOUT ESCAFELD C HORALE

**Escafeld Chorale** began life in 1969 as the Fossdale Singers, a small group of friends led by Ron Law. Under a series of conductors (Francis Wells, Peter Dutton, Ian Roberts, Nigel Russell-Sewell and George Parsons), the choir has grown to around 60 members and gradually expanded its repertoire. In addition to large-scale works, we also enjoy singing madrigals and part songs, and our Christmas concerts are firm favourites with choir and audience. We often perform with local singers and instrumentalists, and are keen to encourage young performers.

We have occasional **vacancies** in all parts and although we don't have scary auditions, we do expect a certain level of musical ability and there's a short probationary period. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Anna Crewe (tel: 0114 327 5530), or use the 'contact us' button on the website.

You can also support the choir by becoming a **Friend**. You will receive two free tickets for each of our concerts and will also be welcome at any social events. To become a Friend, please fill in a gift form (or download it from our website) or contact any member of the choir.

If your choir is looking for a particular piece of **music**, visit our website for a list of music available for hire.

### ~ ~ ~ FORTHCOMING CONCERTS ~ ~ ~

#### **A Northern Requiem**

A special fundraising performance of Jonathan Francis's new work, featuring the Rose Choir, Escafeld Chorale and Harlequin Brass. Written to commemorate the 1984/85 miners' strike, this celebrates an industry that shaped our landscape.

**Saturday 5 April at 7 pm: Victoria Hall, Sheffield**

**More information and tickets at: [rhac.art](http://rhac.art)**

#### **Summer concert**

Featuring George Shearing's *Songs and Sonnets* and music by a number of other composers, including Schubert.

**Saturday 5 July at 7.30 pm: Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses**

**Further details on our website: [www.escafeldchorale.org.uk](http://www.escafeldchorale.org.uk)**