

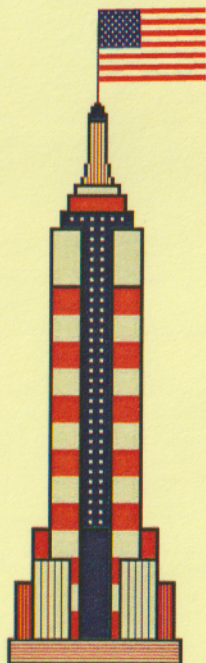


Billericay
Choral Society



Americana

Conductor	Jonathan Schranz
Soprano	Katie Hind
Accompanist	Ashley Thompson



Saturday 21st July 2018 7.30 pm
United Reformed Church
Billericay
Programme £1

Tonight's programme

Samuel Barber 1910-1981

Barber was a composer of orchestral, opera, choral, and piano music, becoming one of the most celebrated of the 20th century.

He was born in Pennsylvania and at 14 he entered the Curtis Music Institute, Philadelphia, studying voice, piano, and composition. While there, he met Gian Carlo Menotti (who wrote *Amahl and the Night Visitors*). Menotti supplied the text for Barber's operas *Vanessa* and *A Hand of Bridge*.

Barber's music, is lyrical, rhythmically complex, and harmonically rich and is built on romantic structures and sensibilities.

Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* was commissioned to open the new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center in 1966.

Barber received numerous awards including the American Prix de Rome, and two Pulitzers - for his opera *Vanessa*, and for his *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.

To Be Sung on the Water is set to words by American poet Louise Bogan (1897-1970). The men's opening phrases represent the sound of oars rippling in the water. The women sing the main text. The men briefly give up their rowing duties to the women, but the piece the men and women never sing anything together. There is a distance between them, which seems to be given voice in the melancholy final chord.

Agnus Dei Barber wrote *Adagio for Strings* and which was promoted by Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini. It made Barber an overnight success. The *Adagio* became seen as a universal expression of grief. Barber added the words of the *Agnus Dei* to the second movement. The result is a meditation which unfolds itself in endless spirals before the bottom drops out and it rises to a deafening climax. Then the supplicating cries waft gently back into the ether.

Sure on this Shining Night uses a complex text by American poet James Agee (1909-1955). It is from the perspective of a man walking outside one summer night. Having seen the darkness of the world in his life, he sees in the stars and darkness kindness of the world. It has also been interpreted as someone reflecting on the end of his life.

Spirituals

We present two collections of spirituals, from different viewpoints and both by English composers. First, Michael Tippett's from *A Child of Our Time* and, in the second half, John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*.

Michael Tippett (1905 - 1998) was an English composer who rose to fame at the time of WW2. In his lifetime he was one of the leading British composers.

A Child of Our Time was composed between 1939 and 1941. It was a protest, expressing anger at Nazi crimes, despair at man's capacity for evil and frustration. It was written following —the Kristallnacht – the Night of Broken Glass in November 1938, which was a violent Nazi backlash to the assassination of a German diplomat, in Paris, by 17 a year old Jewish refugee, who had acted following inhumane treatment of his parents and persecuted Jews.

Traditional spirituals are used to reflect slavery, oppression and violation of personal rights. Tippett recognised that racial tensions so often precipitate the suffering humans visit on one another.

Steal Away is a plea for release from captivity to a place of safety.

Nobody Knows The Trouble I See Lord shows how atrocities are hidden away from most people and only seen by those subject to it.

Go Down Moses reflects that those carrying out atrocities realise the evil being done and beginning to realise it has to stop.

By And By is an upbeat, optimistic recognition that the evil-doers will stop their evil and that peace will reign.

Deep River is the finale to the work expressing the hope of a fresh spring after a long, dark winter

The oratorio was completed before the full horrors of the war were known. Between completion of the work and its first performance, Tippett was imprisoned, for three months in 1943, as a conscientious objector. He returned to work immediately upon release and premiered the oratorio in 1944.

John Rutter

John Rutter studied music at Clare College, Cambridge and first came to notice as a composer and arranger of Christmas carols and other choral pieces during those early years; today his compositions, including such concert-length works as *Requiem*, *Magnificat*, *Mass of the Children*, are performed in many countries.

Rutter edits the Oxford Choral Classics series, and, with Sir David Willcocks, co-edited four volumes of *Carols for Choirs*. In 1983 he formed his own choir The Cambridge Singers, with whom he has made numerous recordings on the Collegium label, and he appears regularly in several countries as a guest conductor and choral ambassador.

Rutter holds a Lambeth Doctorate in Music, and was awarded a CBE for services to music in 2007.

Feel the Spirit Rutter was inspired by the vocal artistry of Melanie Marshall to build a set of spirituals crafted to her personal style, partnered by a choir. The spirituals chosen are different styles; those that tell of suffering and lack of freedom and those which celebrate Christianity and the love of God. The former are the forerunner of the Blues, while the latter led to Gospel music.

Eric Whitacre

Whitacre (born 1970) is a Grammy-winning American composer and conductor, known for his choral, orchestral and wind ensemble music.

Whitacre began studied music at the University of Nevada. He studied composition with Ukrainian composer Virko Baley and choral conducting with David Weiller. Whitacre went on to earn his master's degree in composition at the Juilliard School, studying with John Corigliano and David Diamond. He met his future wife, soprano Hila Plitman, at Juilliard.

At the age of 23 he completed his first piece for Wind Orchestra, *Ghost Train*, which has now been recorded over 40 times.

Whitacre's first album *Light & Gold* won a Grammy Award in 2012, and became the No. 1 classical album in the US and UK charts release.

His second album, *Water Night*, featured performances from, the London Symphony Orchestra, Julian Lloyd Webber and Hila Plitmann.

Part One

- 1 **To Be Sung On The Water** Choir
 Music: Samuel Barber
 Text: Louise Bogan
- 2 **Agnus Dei** Katie and Choir
 Music: Samuel Barber
 Text: Traditional
- 3 **Sure On This Shining Night** Choir
 Music: Samuel Barber
 Text: James Agee
- 4 **Spirituals from A Child of our Time** Katie and Choir
 Music: Michael Tippett
 Text: Traditional
 - a Steal Away
 - b Nobody Knows The Trouble I See Lord
 - c Go Down Moses
 - d By And By
 - e Deep River
- 5 **A Boy and a Girl** Choir
 Music: Eric Whitacre
 Text: Octavio Paz (translated by Muriel Rukeyser)

Part Two

- 1 **Sleep** Choir
 Music: Eric Whitacre
 Text: Charles Anthony Silvestri

- 2 **Solo** Ashley Thomson

- 3 **O Magnum Mysterium** Choir
 Music: Morten Lauridsen
 Text: Traditional

- 4 **Feel the Spirit** Katie and Choir
 Music: John Rutter
 Text: Traditional
 - a Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho
 - b Steal Away
 - c I Got a Robe
 - d Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child
 - e Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit
 - f Deep River
 - g When the Saints Go Marching In

Katie Hind Soprano

Katie is a soprano living in London, singing everything from opera to jazz and neo-soul. Before graduating in July 2017, Katie studied at the University of Cambridge, where she was a choral scholar at Selwyn College, singing 4 times a week in the choir.

When she wasn't singing in chapel, Katie spent time performing with her neo-soul band at a wide range of venues and college balls, and now sings soprano in a 6 part jazz a cappella group, Copycat, in London.

In 2014, Katie studied opera in Italy with Susanna Rigacci, Ennio Morricone's muse, and during her time singing with New London Children's Choir, Katie performed backing vocals for both Paul McCartney and Andrea Bocelli.

Ashley Thompson Accompanist

Ashley is currently accompanist to Maldon Choral Society, under Dr. Gillian Ward Russell, Anglia Singers, under Professor Chris Green OBE, Gale Singers, under Colin Fowler, and Billericay Choral Society.

He is also Director of Music to The Parish Church of Holy Trinity Rayleigh, The Ordinariate at St John Fisher, Prittlewell; and the Evensong Organist for The Parish Church of St. Alban The Protomartyr, Romford.

Away from his piano and organ accompaniment portfolio he is the founder and Director of Music to The Triple H Community Choir, covering the three neighbouring South Essex villages of Hockley, Hawkwell and Hullbridge. He also teaches singing, organ, piano and music theory.

Outside of music he is the Chairman of Southend East Liberal Democrats. For more information, please visit www.ashleythompsonmusic.com

Jonathan Schranz Conductor

Joining us just for today's concert is Jonathan Schranz. Jonathan is a freelance conductor based in London. He studied choral conducting at the Royal Academy of Music where he was awarded a Distinction along with numerous prizes.

Prior to this he read music at Churchill College, Cambridge, graduating with first class honours in 2015.

Jonathan enjoys a diverse career ranging from leading choral workshops in high security prisons to performing at private functions with his funk band, The Handlers. He is currently Organist & Musical Director at the Church of St John at Hackney, Conductor of Brentwood Choral Society, Office Choir Leader at Grant Thornton London and a Section Leader and Assistant Conductor for the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain.

He is also the Founder and Director of a number of his own choirs including the professional Gregorian schola Graduale and the chamber choir The Fisher Consort. Jonathan has led choral workshops for the Royal School of Church Music, South West Camerata and Libricini, and is in demand as a guest conductor.

Recent highlights include conducting the National Youth Boys' Choir in Birmingham Town Hall and conducting Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral.

From September 2018 Jonathan will be Choir Director to the University of Greenwich, and from January 2019 Jonathan will be Director of Music at St George's RC Cathedral, Southwark.

New Musical Director

Ellie Parsons, our Musical Director for the past two years, has moved to Derby and is taking on a new job. We wish her all the best and thank her, particularly for her emphasis on consonants! You can follow Ellie's future progress at www.ellieparsons-soprano.co.uk.

From September 2018 our new Musical Director will be Jamie Wright. Jamie's first concert will be a Remembrance concert on 24th November.

A Boy and a Girl

Set to a poem by Octavio Paz (1914-1998) a Mexican poet and diplomat who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990. Whitacre set a number of poems to music. He was often attracted by simple, lyrical poems. *A Boy and a Girl* is such a poem and in Whitacre's words "he looked for the music amongst the words".

Sleep

Whitacre originally composed the music as a setting to Robert Frost's poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. But Whitacre had not got permission to use the poem which is under copyright until 2038

Whitacre asked poet and frequent collaborator Charles Anthony Silvestri to write a new text which would correspond to the expressive details Whitacre had emphasised in the music. Within 24 hours, Silvestri had written the words, taking up the theme of sleep from the last stanza of Frost's poem.

Whitacre said that he prefers Silvestri's words and does not propose to set his music to Robert Frost's words when the copyright expires.

Morten Lauridsen

Lauridsen (born 1943) is a National Medal of Arts recipient (2007), was composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale (1994-2001) and has been a professor of composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music for more than 40 years.

O Magnum Mysterium has been used as a chant on Christmas morning for well over a millennium. It explores the immense contrast of sacred and secular, here between the great mystery of God born as a human being and the fact that He lies in a manger, watched around by animals. This setting by Lauridsen, composed in 1994, has become one of the most performed contemporary settings.

Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* is, fundamentally, a piece of contemporary plainchant. Its melody comprises the very same kind of short and long durations one finds in that style of music.

Billericay Choral Society

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Membership Secretary Scott Gobeille
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Web site: www.essexinfo.net/billericaychoral



And you can follow us on Facebook.

Would you like to join us?

We always welcome new singers. No audition is required.

We practise on Tuesday evenings from 8pm until 10pm
in the Mayflower Hall in Chapel Street.

Phone or e-mail Scott Gobeille for details or
just turn up to a rehearsal.

Our next concert.....

Saturday 24th November a Remembrance concert
More details will be on our web-site and Facebook page.

We would like to thank:

Marks Miller, Solicitors, High Street, Billericay for their help with the
production of this programme, and
Beresfords Estate Agents for their support with advertising.