



Billericay Choral Society

# "Christmas Oratorio"

by Bob Chilcott

and festive music  
by Mendelsohn,  
Gounod & others



Conductor	Ed Sutton
Organ & Piano	Ashley Thompson
Tenor	John Pierce
Flute	Kerry Bassil

## PROGRAMME

Tuesday 12th December 2023  
Emmanuel Church  
Billericay

£1



## ***WELCOME from our Musical Director***

Welcome to our Christmas concert.

This year we are retelling the nativity through Bob Chilcott's Christmas Oratorio. The Christmas Oratorio is divided into 4 parts, between each we will be singing other Christmas carols.

Part 1 begins the story with the visitation of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary and continues with Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus.

Part 2 describes how the angels tell the shepherds and of the shepherds visit to the newborn Jesus.

After our interval the 3rd part tells us of the journey of the wise men, first to Herod, then on to the holy family.

Part 4 concludes the story with the presentation of the now infant Jesus at the temple, where he meets the old man Simeon, who had been promised he would not see death until he had seen the Christ.

In his oratorio, Chilcott sets his own arrangements of popular carols as well as Christmas texts by Percy Dearmer, Christina Rossetti and Robert Herrick. The piece begins and ends with two different translations of the 15th century German hymn 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen' (usually called 'A spotless rose' in English, literally translated as 'A rose has sprung up'). Written in 2019, the oratorio is a contemporary setting of this well-known story. An 'oratorio' is a musical setting of a story, usually biblical, but unlike an opera or musical, is unstaged and unacted.

We are delighted to welcome John Pierce to sing the Evangelist part, who will be telling the story as we go through. Other parts are sung by members of the choir.

**Thank you** to everyone who has made this concert possible.

To our conductor and accompanist.

To Members of the Choir and Friends who are singing solos.

To Marks Miller & Co Solicitors for printing.

To 'Slipped Discs' Brown Sugar for ticket sales.

To the committee and all the choir.

To John Washington for programme layout.

To Emmanuel Church.

To the Methodist Church for rehearsals.

To our Front of House volunteers

And to you, our audience!

***Please switch your phone to silent and please no photography during the concert.***

***For copyright reasons, video and audio recording is not permitted.***

## Biographies

**Ed Sutton** only joined Billericay Choral Society in 2022. He is thoroughly enjoying his time with the choir and the wide variety of music they sing.

Ed first worked with choirs as Diocesan Organ Scholar for the Diocese of Norwich. He was simultaneously major music scholar at the King's School, Ely. He read music at the University of Edinburgh, and continued his studies at the University of Exeter, where he was Ouseley Senior Organ Scholar, researching the choral music of Giovanni Paolo Cima. Since then, Ed has held various organist and choir director positions.

Ed left the music world many years ago and took a better paid career in financial services. He currently works in underwriting and product development in the city and lives in Chelmsford with his miniature schnauzer. He enjoys quizzes and gin, often in combination.

**Ashley Thompson** is our previous accompanist. He is director of Music for the Maldon and Whitam Choral Societies, and of the Triple H community choir.

Ashley is an ALCM qualified repetiteur and works as accompanist to the Anglia Singers (Chelmsford) and the Gale singers (Dagenham).

In the past he has played for Ingatestone Choral Society, the Canvey Island Community Choir, Essex Police Music Society, Eastwood Chorale, United Singers (Hornchurch) and the Operatic and Dramatic Societies of both Billericay and Southend.

Outside of music he was, until recently, a Borough Councillor for the Liberal Democrats in Leigh on Sea; and is also a steady, rather than spectacular, opening batsman in the lower reaches of the Essex League.

**John Pierce**, local piano and singing teacher living in Billericay, is originally from Holywell, North Wales.

John studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and continued his advanced training at the National Opera Studio in London, supported by the Welsh National Opera. He represented Wales at the Cardiff Singer of the World in 2011. John has performed at many of the UK's leading Opera Houses and concert venues and has won many competitions and scholarships; these include Young Welsh Singer, Welsh Singer of the Year, the Prince of Wales scholarship, the Susan Chilcott Scholarship, the Countess of Munster scholarship, and the prestigious Elizabeth Harwood Memorial Prize.

Career highlights include performing for the late Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh at Buckingham Palace during a reception for Young People in the Performing Arts and performing for HRH Prince Charles to celebrate his 50th year of being the Prince of Wales. In 2018 John was invited to perform at the Water Rats Ball at the Grosvenor Hotel alongside Alfie Boe, Michael Ball, Katherine Jenkins and Rick Wakeman.

**Kerry Bassil** graduated with a first-class honours degree and the Eric Morris Performance Prize for music from the University of Wales, Bangor. Following her degree, Kerry lived in Auckland, New Zealand teaching flute with children and adults of all ages and abilities. On returning to England, she gained an Advanced Certificate in Dalcroze Music & Movement and took up a post as a music teacher for young people with learning difficulties at a local special school. This combined interest in music and education led to the development of a project entitled The Biggest Little Music Show: a live touring production of music for primary and special schools. Kerry and her colleague, Dave L Cooke (piano) toured hundreds of Essex schools over an 18-year period from 2005-2023, offering inspiration to the next generation of junior musicians. Kerry currently works with pianists, harpists and guitarists for weddings, events and recitals alongside running her own private music teaching studio in Chelmsford.

# Part 1

## 1. Hymn: Lo! how a rose e'er blooming

Lo! how a Rose, e'er blooming,  
From tender stem hath sprung,  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
As seers of old have sung;  
It came, a blossom bright,  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The Rose I have in mind;  
With Mary we behold it,  
The Virgin Mother kind:  
To show God's love aright  
She bore to us a Saviour  
When half-spent was the night.

O Flower, whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispel in glorious splendour  
The darkness everywhere;  
True man, yet very God,  
From sin and death now save us  
And share our every load.

## 2. The Angel Gabriel

And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; And the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: For thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, And bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

## 3. Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit  
hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.  
For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his hand-  
maiden.

For behold, from henceforth: all generations  
shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and  
holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him:  
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm: he  
hath scattered the proud in the imagination  
of their hearts.

Magnificat anima mea Dominum. Et exultavit  
spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.  
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes  
generationes.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum  
nomen ejus.

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies;  
timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; dispersit  
superbos mente cordis sui.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham, and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen

#### **4. Hymn: Thou whose almighty word**

Thou whose almighty word  
Chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight;  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel-day  
Sheds not its glorious ray  
Let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,  
Life-giving, holy Dove,  
Speed forth thy flight!  
Move on the waters' face,  
Bearing the lamp of grace,  
And in earth's darkest place  
Let there be light

#### **5. And it came to pass**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

#### **6. A Boy was born**

A Boy was born in Bethlehem;  
Rejoice for that, Jerusalem!  
Alleluia.

Then praise the Word of God who  
came  
To dwell within a human frame:  
Alleluia.

Deposuit potentes de sede; et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros; Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio; et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper; et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Thou who didst come to bring  
On thy redeeming wing  
Healing and sight,  
Health to the sick in mind,  
Sight to the inly blind,  
Ah! now to all mankind  
Let there be light

Blessed and holy Three,  
Glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, Love, Might;  
Boundless as ocean's tide  
Rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world far and wide  
Let there be light

He let himself a servant be,  
That all mankind he might set free:  
Alleluia.



## Holy Night

Tenor, Choir

## Christmas Oratorio

### Oratorio Part 1

#### 1. Hymn: Lo! how a rose e'er blooming

Choir

#### 2. The Angel Gabriel

Evangelist, Gabriel, Mary

#### 3. Magnificat

Mary, Choir

#### 4. Hymn: Thou whose almighty word

Choir

#### 5. And it came to pass

Evangelist

#### 6. A Boy was born

Choir

## Sure on this Shining Night

Choir

### Oratorio Part 2

#### 7. And there were in the same country

##### Shepherds

Evangelist, Angel, Choir

#### 8. Hymn: Shepherds, in the field abiding

Choir

#### 9. And they came with haste

Evangelist

#### 10. Love came down at Christmas

Mezzo-soprano, Choir

## PROGRAMME

Music Adolphe Adam, arr. West

Words, Placide Chapeau, trans Dwight

## Music by Bob Chilcott

Tune "Partington" Chilcott

Words 16th-cent. (vv.1&2) and 19th (v 3) German

vv 1&2 trans. Theodore Baker (1851-1934);

v 3 trans. Harriet R. K. Spaeth (1845-1925)

Luke 1: 26-35

Luke 1: 46-55

Tune "Bowen" Chilcott.

Words: John Marriott (1780-1825)

Luke 2: 1-7

Music Chilcott

Words German chorale 'Ein Kind geboren zu Bethlehem',

trans. Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)

Music Morten Lauridsen, Words James Agee

Luke 2: 8-15

Tune "Laura" Chilcott;

Words: George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)

Luke 2: 16-19

Words Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

# INTERVAL FOR FESTIVE REFRESHMENTS

## Nazareth

Baritone and Choir

*Music Charles Gounod, words Henry Chorley*

### Oratorio Part 3

#### 11. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem

Evangelist, Choir, Herod

*Matthew 2: 1-11*

#### 12. A Carol to the King

Choir

*Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

#### 13. Hymn: As with gladness men of Old

Choir

*Tune "Paterson" Chilcott;*

*Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-98)*

## There shall a Star from Jacob come Forth

(from Christus, op 97)

Soprano, Three Wise Men, Choir

*Music Felix Mendelssohn,*

*Matthew 2:1-2, Numbers 24:17, Psalm 2:9*

### Oratorio Part 4

#### 14. And when eight days were accomplished

Evangelist

*Luke 2: 21, 25-8*

#### 15. Nunc dimittis

Bass, Choir

*Luke 2: 29-32*

#### 16. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things

Evangelist, Simeon

*Luke 2: 33-4, 39*

#### 17. Hymn: A great and mighty wonder

Choir

*Music: Bob Chilcott; Words: St Germanus  
(634-c.734), trans. J.M. Neale (1818-66)*

#### Solo parts performed by:

#### Christmas Oratorio

Evangelist - John Pierce

Gabriel - John Pierce

Mary - Katherine Johnson

Angel - Debbie Sweet

Mezzo soprano - Katherine Johnson

Herod - Alastair Merry

Simeon - Alastair Merry

#### There shall a Star from Jacob come Forth

Soprano - Rachel O'Hara

Three wise men - Ed Sutton, Ashley Thompson &  
Alastair Merry

**Flute** (parts 1,2&4) Kerry Bassil

## Part 2

### 7. And there were in the same country Shepherds

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were going away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

### 8. Shepherds, in the field abiding

Shepherds, in the field abiding,  
Tell us, when the seraph bright  
Greeted you with wondrous tiding,  
What you saw and heard that night.  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo. [repeat]

Choristers on high were singing  
Jesus and his virgin-birth;  
Heav'nly bells the while a-ringing  
'Peace, goodwill to men on earth.'  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo. [repeat]

We beheld (it is no fable)  
God incarnate, King of bliss,  
Swathed and cradled in a stable,  
And the angel strain was this:  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo. [repeat]

Thanks, good herdmen, true your  
story; Have with you to Bethlehem:  
Angels hymn the King of Glory;  
Carol we with you and them.  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo. [repeat]

### 9. And they came with haste

And they came with haste, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

### 10. Love came down at Christmas

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and angels gave the sign.

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus:  
But wherewith for sacred sign?



## Part 3

### 11. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

### 12. A Carol to the King

Tell us, thou clear and heavenly tongue,  
Where is the babe but lately sprung?  
Lies he the lily-banks among ?

Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek  
Him in the morning's blushing cheek,  
Or search the beds of spices through,  
To find him out?

Or say, if this new birth of ours  
Sleeps, laid within some ark of flowers,  
Spangled with dew-light; thou canst clear  
All doubts, and manifest the where.

(*Star:*) No, this ye need not do;  
But only come, and see him rest,  
A princely babe, in's mother's breast.

### 13. Hymn: As with gladness men of old

As with gladness men of old  
Did the guiding star behold,  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright,  
So, most gracious God, may we  
Evermore be led to thee. (repeat)

As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger-bed,  
There to bend the knee before  
Him whom heav'n and earth adore,  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek thy mercy-seat. (repeat)

As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee our heav'nly King. (repeat)

Holy Jesu, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And, when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds thy glory hide. (repeat)

In the heav'nly country bright  
Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
Thou its sun which goes not down:  
There for ever may we sing  
Alleluias to our King. (repeat)

## Part 4

### 14. And when eight days were accomplished

And when eight days were accomplished, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

### 15. Nunc dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

### 16. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things

And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. And when they had performed all things according unto the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

### 17. Hymn: A great and mighty wonder

A great and mighty wonder,  
A full and holy cure!  
The Virgin bears the Infant  
With virgin-honour pure.  
*Repeat, repeat the hymn again,  
the hymn again:*  
*'To God on high be glory  
And peace on earth to men!'*

The Word becomes incarnate  
And yet remains on high!  
And cherubim sing anthems  
To shepherds from the sky.  
*Repeat, repeat the hymn again,  
the hymn again:*  
*'To God on high be glory,  
And peace on earth to men!'*

Since all he comes to ransom,  
By all he is adored,  
The Infant born in Bethlehem,  
The Saviour and the Lord.  
*Repeat, repeat the hymn again,  
the hymn again:*  
*'To God on high be glory,  
And peace on earth to men!'*



## WHY NOT JOIN US?

Do you like singing?

If you would enjoy being part of our next concert, we always welcome new singers in all voice parts.

Members are drawn from all ranges of backgrounds and experience. If you are a lapsed singer or just starting out, then we would love to see you. There is no audition, just come with plenty of enthusiasm and a willingness to come to rehearsals regularly and well-prepared!

We provide learning tracks for our members which makes it easy to practise the music at home.

The choir rehearses every Tuesday during term-time in the Billericay Methodist Church in Western Road from 7:30pm to 9.30pm.

Our new term starts on 9<sup>th</sup> January.

For further information on the choir and joining us, please contact our membership secretary, Lorraine Douglas:

[Lorraine\\_douglas@sky.com](mailto:Lorraine_douglas@sky.com)  
07702 862266



## KEEP IN TOUCH

We have a choice of ways to keep up to date with news of the choir!

### Join our new mailing list.

Be the first to hear about our concerts and events. We are setting up a new online mailing list. Please email the address below for further information\*

[publicitybillericaychoral@gmail.com](mailto:publicitybillericaychoral@gmail.com)

### Follow us on Facebook.

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### Visit our website.

[www.billericaychoral.co.uk](http://www.billericaychoral.co.uk)

*\* By contacting us in this way, you consent to your email address being held on a database for this purpose only. (Promotions and information about concerts, the choir, and related events for Billericay Choral Society only)*

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For full privacy policy please see our website*





# SAVE THESE DATES

## Future Concerts

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March

Requiem by Gabriel Faure

Gloria by John Rutter

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June

Summer Concert

Programme tbc

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November

Chelmsford Cathedral

Lunchtime Concert



MERRY CHRISTMAS



*Registered charity No 271059 "Billericay Choral Society aims to advance the education of the public in choral works by the presentation of public performances and to foster the public knowledge and appreciation of such music".*

[www.billericaychoral.co.uk](http://www.billericaychoral.co.uk)