

...circles that hold the circle of time.



**Sunday
December 8th
7.30pm**

**St Germans
Church**

CANORYON LOWEN

MUSICAL DIRECTOR NICK HART

and the Liskeard Chamber Ensemble

Christmas Suite The Boar's Head Gaudete God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen	<i>arr Hart</i>	The Players	
		1st Violin	Philip Montgomery Smith
		2nd Violin	Jake Loewendahl
		Viola	Chris Prindl
		Cello	Olivia Loewendahl
		Flute	Pam Selby
Community Carol O Come All Ye Faithful			
Nativity Carol The Lamb Agnus Dei (Jazz Mass)	<i>John Rutter John Tavener Bob Chilcott</i>	Piano	Jenny Coombe
Community Carol Ding Dong Merrily On High		Flute Trumpet	Elena Rautio Ed Hart Nick Hart
		Trombone	Colin Mutton
Flute Quartet in D major Allegro Adagio Rondo	<i>Mozart</i>		
Community Carol Now The Holly Bears A Berry		Soloists	
		Soprano	Ele Waters Rosemary Turner
Away In A Manger Bogorodiste Dyevo	<i>Bob Chilcott Rachmaninov</i>	Child soprano	Elowen Waters
Community Carol In The Bleak Midwinter	<i>Rossetti / Holst</i>	Tenor	Colin Arthur Keith Truscott Richard Barber
INTERVAL		Bass	Peter Bawden
Premiere performance The Midwinter Cantata	<i>Hart</i>		
Community Carol Hark The Herald Angels Sing			

The Midwinter Cantata

Let's get this straight. I love Christmas. While there is a mass of the most sublime music which celebrates the ecstasy of the Christian narrative, and a further rapidly expanding body which jingles with sleighbells, Santa and stockings, there is very little music - at least that I know of - which taps into the actual experience of the turning of the year. So I have set about trying to write something which reflects my own personal response to this most special time of the year.

Watch With Me by Christina Rossetti recreates the traditional scene of friends and families gathered to see out the old and bring in the new, each in their own way - sacred, secular and always familial. It opens and closes with the warmth of the cello's embrace.

In George Meredith's **Winter Heavens** the poet is struck by the deep intensity of the living canopy of stars above the frozen death-shroud of the white Earth - *it is the soul's haven to have felt*. I have set this for four part upper voice choir using tightly packed harmonies with the fragility of bright brittle ice.

Coronemus *Let us crown ourselves with roses before they fade* is Thomas Jordan's rollicking 17th century jolly with its timeless reminder that we should eat, drink and frolic and shrug off the cares and stresses of the world. Nothing is certain *post mortem!* Unbelievably, I had to clean this poem up for modern sensibilities.... and change *theorbo* for *bagpipe*. Well, do you? It's a lute.

That we are a less equal society than we were even twenty years ago, and the paradox of greed at a festival born of utter simplicity, are my motives for selecting Ford Madox Ford's **In Tenebris** - *In the Shadows*. The two solo voices represent, for me, the *haves* and the *have nots*, singing always against each other, while the choir pleads for a more enlightened path. I acknowledge my debt to Rachmaninov's **Vespers** in the final bass line. Shameless. It is a B flat.

I think the hip way of describing the text in **Carpe Diem** is a 'mash up'. Using the Roman poet Horace's original phrase - *Seize the Day (Carpe Diem)* - as my starting point, I have borrowed from several other poets lines or verses that develop his idea. With new lyrics inspired by *Invictus* the whole is set as a traditional Male Voice Choir anthem. The tenor trio is led by Colin Arthur, who, after a frightening absence, gives this song its true meaning.

Luly Lulay was written before I became a grandfather in June, and always with the voices of mother and daughter Ele and Elowen Waters in mind. It is a celebration of new life, of the old year reflected in the new year, of the poignant inter-connections between one generation and the next. But it is dedicated to Dalia Hart (who may or may not join in).

This song cycle was inspired by an event exactly a year ago, when Jenny and I were invited to Anthony and Ele Waters' 'Winter Spiral'. The celebration of the coming of new year was imagined by a growing spiral of flickering candles as each participant added their thoughts and their 'light' to the occasion. And across the moor at the Hurlers, our own megalithic clock, people gathered to see the first dawn of the astronomical year. **The Spiral Song of the Hurlers** combines the Winter Spiral with myth and legend - dancers turned to stone, stones measuring the earth's turn, all in a sort of merry-go-round fantasy. The dark, longest night finally gives way to the piercing light and hope of the new year.

The Midwinter Cantata Texts

Watch With Me

Christina Rossetti

Watch with me, men, women, and children dear,
You whom I love, for whom I hope and fear,
Watch with me this last vigil of the year.
Some hug their business, some their pleasure-scheme;
Some seize the vacant hour to sleep or dream;
Heart locked in heart, some kneel and watch apart.
Watch with me, men, women, and children dear,
You whom I love, for whom I hope and fear,
Watch with me this last vigil of the year.

Winter Heavens

George Meredith

Sharp is the night, but stars with frost alive
Leap off the rim of earth across the dome.
It is a night to make the heavens our home
More than the nest whereto apace we strive.
Lengths down our road each fir-tree seems a hive,
In swarms outrushing from the golden comb.
They waken waves of thoughts that burst to foam:
The living throb in me, the dead revive.
Yon mantle clothes us: there, past mortal breath,
Life glistens on the river of the death.
It folds us, flesh and dust; and have we knelt,
Or never knelt, or eyed as kine the springs
Of radiance, the radiance enrings:
And this is the soul's haven to have felt.

Coronemus

Thomas Jordan

Let us drink and be merry, dance, joke, and rejoice,
With claret and sherry, theorbo and voice!
The changeable world to our joy is unjust,
All treasure's uncertain,
Then down with your dust!
In frolics dispose your pounds, shillings, and pence,
For we shall be nothing a hundred years hence.

Your most beautiful bride who with garlands is crown'd
And kills with each glance as she treads on the ground,
Whose lightness and brightness doth shine in such splendour
That none but the stars
Are thought fit to attend her,
Though now she be pleasant and sweet to the sense,
Like us will be mouldy a hundred years hence. (*edited*)

Then why should we turmoil in cares and in fears,
Turn all our tranquill'ty to sighs and to tears?
Let's eat, drink, and play till the worms do corrupt us,
'Tis certain, Post mortem Nulla voluptas. (*There is no pleasure*)
For health, wealth and beauty, wit, learning and sense,
Must all come to nothing a hundred years hence.

In Tenebris

Ford Madox Ford

All within is warm,
Here without it's very cold,
Now the year is grown so old
And the dead leaves swarm.

In your heart is light,
Here without it's very dark,
When shall I hear the lark?
When see aright?

Oh, for a moment's space!
Draw the clinging curtains wide
Whilst I wait and yearn outside
Let the light fall on my face.

Thanks

Among the many people I thank for their help in bringing this work to its first performances, not least the choir members themselves with their trust, openness and joy in singing, are Janet Wright for her superb advice on orchestration, rehearsal and conducting support, and who along with Ele Waters sang all the chorus parts onto disc. Jenny Coombe for sharing her talent with us - so grateful.

My family, as ever, for the space to write and for the unconditionally supportive feedback: the c sharp is just right!

Thanks also to Simon Deacon and the Eliot Lodge, and the community and church of St Germans for enabling this first performance.

Apologies

To my late mother who thought the addition of music to a poem a gross impertinence.

Carpe Diem

adapted from Horace, Henley and Longfellow

Be wise! Drink free! Embrace the running tide!
So seize the day! The next may be denied.

Invictus by Henley

I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

After Invictus, Hart

Standing, my hand upon the gate,
With pounds enough to pay the toll,
Unknown the way, I hesitate
To leave familiars that console.

Now is the time to show resolve,
To run the course, to leap the stream,
Now is the time, let fears dissolve,
To live and love beyond the dream.

Look back but briefly on yesteryear,
Leave longing alone, and duties undone;
Live in the now, live in the here,
Enjoy the race be it lost or won

Carpe Diem, Adapted from Horace

Don't strive, dear friend, to know your end,
Nor what events the fates may send;
Don't try to read the stars at all
Nor try to know what may befall;
Whether we live more winters or our last,
Like limpets to the rock hold fast.
Be wise! Drink free! Embrace the running tide!

So seize the day! The next may be denied.

'What The Young Man Said To The Psalmist' Longfellow

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Luly Lulay

Spiral Song of The Hurlers

Hart

Darkness, night's dead time,
Lightness, dawning day.
Sunday's forbidden, it's sinful to dance,
To dally or gamble or reckon with chance,
Stand like a statue or sit in your pew,
Read the good book and may God bless you.

Sentinel stones turn tomorrow around,
Their shadows in silence lie deaf on the ground,
Spirals of light play their luminous rhyme
In circles that hold the circle of time.

Darkness of night's dead time, lightness of dawning day,
Measure the harvest of life, witness its death and decay.
Spirals of light play their luminous rhyme
In circles that hold the circle of time.

Darkness, night's dead time,
Lightness, dawning day.

O Come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him
Born the King of Israel:
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord

See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord

Sing choirs of Angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of Heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest:
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord

Hark the herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled"
Joyful, all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

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

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Ding dong merrily on high,
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "Io, io, io!"
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:

Chorus: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly!

And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:

Chorus

Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:

Chorus

Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red,
Then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead:

Chorus

Canaryon Lowen

Based in St Neot, Canaryon Lowen draws its singers from across North and East Cornwall and West Devon. Our philosophy is to enjoy as wide a range and style of music as possible - from Tallis to Tavener, Bach to Bebop and much that is unique to the group. We have sung larger works - Carmina Burana, The Armed Man, The Pilgrimage Cantata - and even taken to the stage with sell-out performances of *A Daughter's Tale*, especially written for the choir. We enjoy an extensive repertoire of music both light and serious. Why not book us for a concert or special event?

Future performances this year include:

Thursday 19th December at St Neot Church with Loveny Male Voice Choir

Friday 20th December at Tavistock RC Church as guests of Canticorum (MD Jenny Coombe)

For any information about the choir contact Jenny Hart on 01579 320683 or www.canaryonlowen.com