

Vivace
Chorus

 EPSOM
CHAMBER
CHOIR

 West Forest
Sinfonia

Elgar

Orchestra: West Forest Sinfonia
Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse

Saturday
20 Nov 2021
at 7.30pm

vivacechorus.org

Registered Charity No. 1026337

Grand Hall,
Dorking Halls

R O K



a rich experience

Handcrafted, planet friendly barista-quality coffee at home.

www.rok.coffee



The Dream of Gerontius

Sir Edward Elgar

1857 - 1934



Gerontius

Rhys Batt *Tenor*

The Priest / Angel of the Agony

Thomas Nießer *Baritone*

The Angel

Rebekah Jones *Mezzo-soprano*



Vivace Chorus

Epsom Chamber Choir

West Forest Sinfonia

Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse

Edward Elgar: *The Dream of Gerontius*



Photo: May Grafton

Elgar's great musical drama *The Dream of Gerontius* was first performed at the Birmingham Triennial Festival of 1900, and just over seven weeks later, on a bright November day, the composer received an honorary Doctorate of Music in the Senate House at Cambridge. His wife Alice lovingly described the scene in a letter to Elgar's eighty-year-old mother, Ann Greening, the daughter of a Herefordshire farm labourer:

"I wish you could have seen E. he looked so perfectly beautiful, really it is the only word, in his robes with a strong light on his face."

Alice's words, with their moving echoes of the atmosphere and even the imagery of some radiant moments in *Gerontius*, are a reminder of the importance to Elgar of his family, with its humble social origins, but also of the extraordinary lifetime journey that he made from his father's music shop and piano supply-and-repair business in Worcester. That journey culminated in his final eminence as Sir Edward Elgar of Broadheath, Baronet, OM, KCVO, with an international reputation and a secure position at home as one of the most popular composers of the age. For Elgar, his down-to-earth provincial roots and his eventual world-wide cultural recognition became the two poles that anchored his creative life.

The Birmingham Festival was much more than a 'provincial' affair: performers, critics and composers came from Europe

Three Hundred Years of Composer Instruments

THE COBBE COLLECTION

The heart of the Cobbe Collection at Hatchlands is formed of instruments that were chosen by composers themselves. Owned or played by Purcell, Johann Christian Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Cramer, Chopin, Liszt, Mahler and Elgar, these relics form the largest group of such instruments assembled anywhere and connect us with the musical minds of the past.

The Cobbe Collection has also masterpieces by makers that were both patronised and highly regarded by great composers. The instruments, maintained in playing order, make it possible to appreciate the sounds that inspired musicians for centuries.

We seek support to maintain and preserve this precious collection. Please get in touch if you wish to make a donation, adopt an instrument or sponsor a recital.

Grand piano by Conrad Graf, Vienna, c.1819-20
A very rare model with quadruple-stringing, like the Graf owned
by Beethoven that survives in the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn

The Cobbe Collection Trust (No. 10613338)
Hatchlands Park
East Clandon, near Guildford
GU4 7RT
www.cobbecollection.co.uk
@CobbeCollection

treatment of the death and journey into eternity of a 'dearly ransomed Soul', Elgar was determined to animate the story in music securely grounded in the world of everyday reality:

"I imagined Gerontius to be a man like us and not a Priest or a Saint but a sinner, no end of a worldly man in his life, & now brought to book. Therefore I've not filled his part with Church tunes & rubbish but good, full-blooded romantic, remembered worldliness."

It is Elgar's own 'worldliness', that of a touchy, great-hearted, passionate, subtle and complex man, that gives *Gerontius* its extraordinary directness and power.



Elgar's inscriptions on the sounding-board of his piano.

Elgar was fascinated by gadgets, experiments and new technologies – he is said to have made more recordings than any other composer of his time. He delighted in the materials and the tools of craftsmanship, whether constructing a mighty musical score or tackling a domestic task that needed skill, precision and patience. In August 1901, perhaps after completing the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1 and 2* on

the Hatchlands Broadwood, he repaired it with the help of his eleven-year-old daughter Carice, as carefully as his father's firm had once repaired it for Mrs Skelton in 1867. Father and daughter left an inscription written on the sounding-board, in its way even more touching than the list of his works composed on that piano that Elgar wrote there. It reads

Carice and Edward Elgar pianoforte repairers & Co, Augt. 1901

An affectionate joke? Maybe, but surely also a sign of this great man's steady commitment to skill and authenticity, and his readiness to be judged on his work. As he wrote of *Gerontius*, "I've seen in thought the soul go up & have written my own heart's blood into the score"; and again, even more famously, quoting John Ruskin at the end of the manuscript score:

"This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was as the vapour and is not; but this I saw and knew; this if anything of mine, is worth your memory."

"An act of courage"

Setting the text of Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius* was for the Roman Catholic Elgar "an act of courage," Diana McVeagh argues in her book *Elgar the Music Maker*; "almost defiance: a personal identification." The poem's account of the emotional and spiritual struggles endured by a dying man, then of his journey under the care of his Guardian Angel into God's Court of Judgement, ending with his gentle consignment to Purgatory, is specifically Catholic at every point, from the pleas for Jesus and Mary to intercede for his soul, the essential role of the Priest at the deathbed, the prayers of the Universal (Catholic) Church, the invocation of St. Francis of Assisi and his stigmata, to the doctrine of purification in Purgatory, a necessary prelude to his acceptance in Heaven. Doctrinal issues hampered the work's acceptance – at Gloucester

Cathedral its performance was forbidden by the Dean at three consecutive Three Choirs Festivals. Elgar's comment in a letter to August Jaeger reveals pain as well as anger: "... them as don't like it can be damned in their own way"; but when his creative energies were once engaged, nothing so trivial as a fear of clerical disapproval would deter this dedicated craftsman from the work he had undertaken.

A powerful stimulus to Elgar's radical imagination was the **form** of Newman's text. Dora Penny, Elgar's friend and the 'Dorabella' of the Enigma Variations, pointed out that Elgar was careful not to call *Gerontius* an oratorio:

"The principal characteristic of oratorios is that they are episodic, and normally have words taken from Holy Scripture. Gerontius has continuous dramatic unity, and this places it, as Elgar was well aware, in a different category."

The drama is acted out with thrilling immediacy by four characters, all built on an epic scale yet able to modulate into passages of touching intimacy, and a chorus who take a wide variety of dynamic and contrasting roles. This **dramatic** rather than **narrative** structure gives *Gerontius* an emotional impact and drive that can be overwhelming, and has been compared to the effect of Wagner's great music dramas, all of which Elgar and Alice had seen performed in Bayreuth, Leipzig and Munich, and which affected him profoundly.

Part I

The extended **prelude** explores Gerontius's state of mind as he slumbers fitfully on his deathbed. By turns solemn, turbulent, confident and yearning, the melodic motifs reveal his fear of God's judgement, his longing for forgiveness in the great **Miserere** (*Have mercy*) theme, his unquiet sleep and the 'beat of time' as he nears death. The texture clarifies as he awakes, and the tenor's first solo begins, operatic in scale and in its subtle

psychological drama.

Jesu, Maria – I am near to death: Gerontius's vocal line veers between confidence and fear, the orchestra not just 'accompanying' but developing his feelings of abandonment and passionate longing for rest. When he senses that Death, represented as a terrifyingly real figure with its 'dire summons', is coming for him, the music becomes agitated and desperate, and the semi-chorus begins a tender, dignified **Kyrie eleison** (*Lord, have mercy*) which is developed with fugal entries of the full chorus, who play the parts of Gerontius's friends, the world-wide company of Christian believers and the Communion of Saints, all of them **Assistants** or 'witnesses' to his struggle. Their prayers support him as he wills himself to a ringing statement of his faith, **Firmly I believe and truly**, followed by the heart-rending moment when his strength fails at **I can no more**. The score fills with terror and the chorus intensify their efforts, first begging desperately for help, then chanting an ancient litany of supplication before the **novissima hora**, Gerontius's final hour, comes in a moment of eloquent silence.

The **Priest's Proficiscere** (*Go forth*) is a dramatic coup, theatrical and thrilling. His broad phrases follow in a long operatic tradition of bass-voice priests, speaking here with Verdian power and the compelling authority of the Church. He launches a superb Elgarian march, with a kind of sacred swagger, as Gerontius's soul sets out on its journey to the ultimate land of hope and glory. Part I ends, however, in a new, gentler sound-world, marked by heavenly harps and massed human voices consigning him to the **Holy Mount of Sion**, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Programme notes © Jon Long 2021

Flash photography, audio and video recording are not permitted without the prior written consent of the Vivace Chorus. Please also kindly switch off all mobile phones and alarms on digital watches. Thank you.

The Dream of Gerontius

Text by John Henry Newman

Part I

Gerontius

Jesu, Maria – I am near to death,
And Thou art calling me; I know it now,
Not by the token of this faltering breath,
This chill at heart, this dampness on my brow –
(Jesu, have mercy! Mary, pray for me)
'Tis this new feeling, never felt before,
(Be with me, Lord, in my extremity!)
That I am going, that I am no more.
'Tis this strange innermost abandonment,
(Lover of souls! great God! I look to Thee.)
This emptying out of each constituent
And natural force, by which I come to be.
Pray for me, O my friends: a visitant
is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt
Has never, never come to me before;
So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.

Assistants

Kyrie eleison.

Holy Mary, pray for him.

All holy Angels, pray for him.

Choirs of the righteous, pray for him.

All Apostles, all Evangelists, pray for him,

All holy Disciples of the Lord, pray for him.

All holy Innocents, pray for him.

All holy Martyrs, all holy Confessors,

All holy Hermits, all holy virgins,

All ye Saints of God, pray for him.

Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;
and through such waning span
Of life and thought as still has to be trod,
Prepare to meet thy God.
And while the storm of that bewilderment
Is for a season spent
And, ere afresh the ruin on me fall,
Use well the interval.

Assistants

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord,
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.
From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God or relying
On self, at the Last;
From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.
By Thy birth, and by Thy Cross
Rescue him from endless loss;
By Thy death and burial,
Save him from a final fall;
By Thy rising from the tomb,
By Thy mounting up above,
By the Spirit's gracious love
Save him in the day of doom.

Gerontius

Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.

Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three, and God is One;
And I next acknowledge duly
Manhood taken by the Son.
And I trust and hope most fully
In that Manhood crucified;
And each thought and deed unruly
Do to death, as He has died.
Simply to His Grace and wholly
Light and life and strength belong.

And I love, supremely, solely,
Him the holy, Him the strong.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,
De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Parce mihi, Domine.

And I hold in veneration,
For the love of Him alone,
Holy Church, as His creation,
And her teachings, as His own.
And I take with joy whatever
Now besets me, pain or fear,
And with a strong will I sever
All the ties which bind me here.

Adoration aye be given,
With and through the angelic host,
To the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus,

De profundis oro te,
Miserere, Judex meus,
Mortis in discrimine.

I can no more; for now it comes again,
That sense of ruin, which is worse than pain,
That masterful negation and collapse
Of all that makes me man.

And, crueller still,
A fierce and restless fright begins to fill
The mansion of my soul. And, worse and worse,
Some bodily form of ill
Floats on the wind, with many a loathsome curse
Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs, and flaps
its hideous wings,

And makes me wild with horror and dismay.

O Jesu, help! pray for me, Mary, pray!
Some Angel, Jesu! such as came to Thee
In Thine own agony ...

Mary, pray for me. Joseph, pray for me.
Mary, pray for me.

Assistants

Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour,
As of old so many by Thy gracious power: –
Noe from the waters in a saving home; (Amen).
Job from all his multiform and fell distress; (Amen).
Moses from the land of bondage and despair; (Amen).
David from Golia and the wrath of Saul; (Amen).
... So, to show Thy power,
Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

Gerontius

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep,
The pain has wearied me... Into Thy hands,
O Lord, Into Thy hands.

Priest and Assistants

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!

Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!

Go from this world! Go, in the Name of God,

The Omnipotent Father, Who created thee!

Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Son of the living God, Who bled for thee!

Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, who

Hath been poured out on thee! Go in the name

Of Angels and Archangels; in the name

Of Thrones and Dominations; in the name

Of Princedoms and of Powers; and in the name

Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go forth!

Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets;

And of Apostles and Evangelists;

Of Martyrs and Confessors; in the name

Of holy Monks and Hermits; in the name

Of holy Virgins; and all Saints of God,

Both men and women, go! Go on thy course;

And may thy place today be found in peace,

And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount

Of Sion: through the Same, through Christ

Our Lord.

Interval

(20 minutes)

JON DIBBEN

JEWELLERY



Meadow ring in 18ct Fairtrade red gold with plum tourmaline
and copper coloured diamonds

Shop & Workshop, 40a Smithbrook Kilns, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 8JJ
01483 278170 info@jondibben.co.uk www.jondibben.co.uk

Part II

Part II begins with what 'Dorabella' called "that strangely aloof, ethereal music", which tenderly evokes the eternal world in which Gerontius (now called 'Soul' because he has left behind his physical life) continues his journey. The lightly dancing $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm of the strings gives a sense of freedom that combines the circling of eternity with a sense of buoyant movement onward. He is actually being carried along by his **Guardian Angel** (sung by a mezzo-soprano but referred to as "my Lord" in this unrestricted, ungendered dimension), who protected him in his mortal life and is now his Dantean guide to Paradise.

The Angel's beautiful **Alleluia** phrase is hinted at in the orchestra, then quoted in full just before he/she begins to sing, though not yet with its glorious leap from A to high E, heard later. It is as if the two eternal float together on the music itself. Their dialogue "has a touch of courtesy that resolves eventually into a duet" (Diana McVeagh), moving delightedly between recitative and arioso until they sing together. This purposefully lyrical episode helps Elgar through some slightly knotty theological doctrines that Newman included and that the composer decided to keep in after discussions with authorities at the Birmingham Oratory.

In another dramatic coup, the sudden entrance of the **Demons** who fly around outside God's Court of Judgement, hoping for a last chance to seize lost souls and carry them off to Hell, is both threatening and ridiculous, the music here a brilliant passage of grotesque, chaotic energy, yet paradoxically created in a highly ordered structure, an elaborate double fugue. Dramatically they make an exciting contrast with the sweetness and light of the holy dialogue, and Elgar achieves an almost cinematic effect as the Soul and the Angel fly on, leaving the Demons to fade into the distance, still

lamenting that they were "chuck'd down" from Heaven when they rebelled against God, and their thrones given to the loyal Angels and appropriately qualified **psalm droners** and **canting groaners** – better known to God as redeemed Christian souls. Elgar responds wittily to the mischievous vitality of Newman's text.

After a grave passage in which the Angel explains that the sight of God will be agonising as well as joyful (illustrating this with the story of St. Francis receiving the stigmata of Christ), come the first steps towards the **great Blaze**, as Elgar called it: his complex setting of *Praise to the Holiest in the Height*. He was especially irritated by the many "asses" who asked him if he was going to use the familiar 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' tune by John Bacchus Dykes, a question which brought out a briskly 'demonic' aspect of his own character and is surely blown away by this magnificent episode. The vast ensemble is initiated by the semi-chorus, now singing as **Angelicals**, essentially child-angels. As the full chorus joins them the vocal lines of Gerontius and the Angel are heard as if passing through the throngs of immortals, again a sensationally dramatic, even cinematic effect as the score builds to the great triple forte-plus repeat of the first line and the superb fugue **O loving wisdom of our God**.

The final movement of the great work is also shaped by contrasts: the mighty **Blaze** is followed by a return to the sombre mood of the prelude, and the **Angel of the Agony's** stark phrases, weighted by brass and woodwind, create an extraordinary effect of painful interiority combined with urgent declamation. Sung by the bass, they seem to counterbalance the human confidence of the Priest earlier with the awe-struck veneration and humility of one who has seen God directly. The **vision of God** that follows, after a climactic series of triple forte chords, is communicated to the listener, Elgar insisted, not

directly, but in the tenor's harrowing vocal line at **Take me away**. This moment of stupendous emotional power then moves on into a wonderfully consoling final section: Gerontius sinks willingly into a new sleep; the Angel, with gloriously rich and eloquent phrases in the mezzo-soprano's lower register, says a loving **Farewell** to Gerontius, promising to wake him "on the morrow" from the cleansing waters; and the chorus, now singing as Souls in Purgatory as well as Angels, look forward with touching confidence to the fulfilment of God's loving purposes for mankind.

Programme notes © Jon Long 2021

Part II

Soul of Gerontius

I went to sleep; and now I am refreshed.

A strange refreshment: for I feel in me

An inexpressive lightness, and a sense

Of freedom, as I were at length myself,

And ne'er had been before. How still it is!

I hear no more the busy beat of time,

No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;

Nor does one moment differ from the next.

This silence pours a solitariness

Into the very essence of my soul;

And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,

Hath something too of sternness and of pain.

Another marvel: Someone has me fast

Within his ample palm; ...

... A uniform

And gentle pressure tells me I am not

Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.

And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth

I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear or touch or taste the tones.
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

Angel

My work is done, My task is o'er,
And so I come, Taking it home,
For the crown is won,
Alleluia, For evermore.
My Father gave In charge to me
This child of earth E'en from its birth,
To serve and save, Alleluia,
And saved is he.
This child of clay To me was given,
To rear and train By sorrow and pain
In the narrow way,
Alleluia, From earth to heaven.

Soul

It is a member of that family
Of wondrous beings, who, ere the world were made,
Millions of ages back, have stood around
The throne of God.
I will address him. Mighty One, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

Angel

All hail, my child!
My child and brother, hail! what wouldest thou?

Soul

I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion; though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

Angel

You cannot now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

Soul

Then I will speak. I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, forthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its God,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets me now from going to my Lord?

Angel

Thou art not let but with extremest speed
Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge.

Soul

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear of meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgement was to me most terrible.

Angel

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.
Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is past.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgement is begun.
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.

Soul

Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;
And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.
But hark! upon my sense
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear,
Could I be frightened.

Angel

We are now arrived
Close on the judgement-court; that sullen howl
Is from the demons who assemble there.
Hungry and wild to claim their property,
And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry!

Soul

How sour and how uncouth a dissonance!

Demons

Low-born clods
Of brute earth, They aspire
To become gods,
By a new birth,
And an extra grace,
And a score of merits.
As if aught
Could stand in place
Of the high thought,
And the glance of fire
Of the great spirits,
The powers blest,
The lords by right,
The primal owners,
Of the proud dwelling

And realm of light, –
Dispossessed,
Aside thrust,
Chuck'd down,
By the sheer might
Of a despot's will,
Of a tyrant's frown,
Who after expelling
Their hosts, gave,
Triumphant still,
And still unjust,
Each forfeit crown
To psalm-droners,
And canting groaners,
To every slave,
And pious cheat,
And crawling knave,
Who licked the dust
Under his feet.

Angel

It is the restless panting of their being;
Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,
In a deep hideous purring have their life,
And an incessant pacing to and fro.

Demons

The mind bold
And independent,
The purpose free,
So we are told,
Must not think
To have the ascendant.
What's a saint?
One whose breath

Doth the air taint
Before his death;
Ha! Ha!
A bundle of bones,
Which fools adore,
When life is o'er,
Ha! Ha!
Virtue and vice,
A knave's pretence.
'Tis all the same;
Ha! ha!
Dread of hell-fire,
Of the venomous flame,
A coward's plea.
Ha! Ha!
Give him his price,
Saint though he be,
Ha! ha!
From shrewd good sense
He'll slave for hire;
Ha! Ha!
And does but aspire
To the heaven above
With sordid aim,
And not from love.
Ha! ha!
(Dispossessed, Aside thrust.)

Soul

I see not those false spirits; shall I see
My dearest Master, when I reach His throne?

Angel

Yes, – for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.
One moment; but thou knowest not, my child,

What thou dost ask: that sight of the Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

Soul

Thou speakest darkly, Angel! and an awe
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

Angel

There was a mortal, who is now above
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified, –
Such, that the Master's very wounds were stamped
Upon his flesh; and, from the agony
Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love
Doth burn ere it transform ...

Choir of Angelicals

... Praise to the Holiest in the height And in the depth be praise:

Angel

... Hark to those sounds!
They come of tender beings angelical,
Least and most childlike of the sons of God.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!
To us His elder race He gave
To battle and to win,
Without the chastisement of pain,
Without the soil of sin.
The younger son He willed to be
A marvel in His birth:

Spirit and flesh His parents were;
His home was heaven and earth.
The Eternal blessed His child, and armed,
And sent Him hence afar,
To serve as champion in the field
Of elemental war.
To be His Viceroy in the world
Of matter, and of sense;
Upon the frontier, towards the foe,
A resolute defence.

Angel

We now have pass'd the gate, and are within
The House of Judgement ...

Soul

The sound is like the rushing of the wind –
The summer wind among the lofty pines.

Choir of Angelicals

Glory to Him, Who evermore
By truth and justice reigns;
Who tears the soul from out its case,
And burns away its stains!

Angel

They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of.

Soul

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear.
But hark! a grand mysterious harmony:
It floods me, like the deep and solemn sound
Of many waters.

Angel

And now the threshold, as we traverse it,
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe,
Should strive and should prevail;

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self,
And Essence all divine.

O gen'rous love! that He who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise,
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

Angel

Thy judgement now is near, for we are come
Into the veiled presence of our God.

Soul

I hear the voices that I left on earth.

Angel

It is the voice of friends around thy bed,
Who say the "Subvenite" with the priest.
Hither the echoes come, before the Throne
Stands the great Angel of the Agony,
The same who strengthened Him, what time He knelt
Lone in the garden shade, bedewed with blood.
That Angel best can plead with Him for all
Tormented souls, the dying and the dead.

Angel of the Agony

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrill'd in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee,
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee,
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee.
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on Thee.

Soul

I go before my Judge ...

Voices on earth

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.
Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.

Angel

... Praise to His Name!

O happy, suff'ring soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God.
Alleluia!! Praise to His Name!

Soul

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain,
Lone, not forlorn, –
There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn.
There will I sing and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest
Of its Sole Peace.
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:
Take me away,
That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

Souls in Purgatory

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in ev'ry generation,
Before the hills were born, and the world was:
from age to age Thou art God.

Angel

Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost thro' the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

Souls in Purgatory

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge: in ev'ry generation,
Come back, O Lord! how long: and be entreated for
Thy servants.

Angel

Angels, to whom the willing task is giv'n,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;
And Masses on the earth, and pray'rs in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise.

Angel


Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.
Farewell.

Souls in Purgatory

Bring us not Lord, very low; for Thou hast said,
Come back again, ye sons of Adam.
Come back, O Lord! how long: and be entreated for
Thy servants.

Choir of Angelicals

Praise to the Holiest in the height.
Amen.



Vivace
Chorus
Come
AND
Sing

Elgar

Coronation Ode

Parry

Blest Pair of Sirens

Saturday
29 January 2022
at 2pm

Guildford Baptist Church,
Millmead.

vivacechorus.org

Registered Charity No. 1026337

Rhys Batt - Tenor

Welsh tenor Rhys Batt is currently a soloist with Den Norske Opera (Norwegian National Opera).

He is a graduate of Cardiff University and the Royal College of Music and currently studies with John Evans, having previously studied with David Montague Rendall.

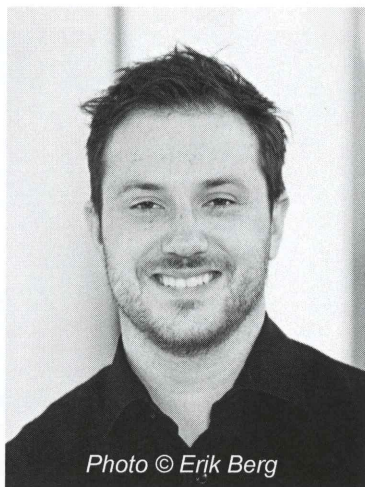


Photo © Eriq Berg

Although Rhys' operatic career focuses predominantly on 19th-century repertoire, he has performed in a wide variety of music on the concert stage, ranging from the British premiere of Biber's *Vespers* in St David's Cathedral and the world premiere of Lully's previously undiscovered final composition - *Il faut mourir, pêcheur* - for Radio 3, to the world premiere of Paul Mealor's *Celtic Prayers* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, also for Radio 3.

Rhys is also a prize-winning interpreter of art song. Prior to his post at Den Norske Opera, he was engaged by Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Recent and upcoming concert and operatic engagements include Verdi's *Requiem* with Harrow School, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* for the Sherborne Festival, J S Bach's *Johannes-Passion* for the Cheltenham Festival and the roles of *Le Remendado* (Bizet's *Carmen*), *Jaquino* (Beethoven's *Fidelio*) and *Il Duca di Mantova* (Verdi's *Rigoletto*), all for Den Norske Opera.

Thomas Nießer - Tenor



Photo © Ben Tomlin

Welsh-German baritone Thomas Nießer was educated at the University of Bristol and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he studied under Professor Janice Chapman.

As part of his undergraduate degree, he spent a year in Heidelberg where he studied under Ashley Prewitt at the Staatsoper Stuttgart.

Recent opera roles include *Dr Falke* in Johann Strauss's opera *Die Fledermaus* (Schlossfestspiele Ettlingen), *Don Giovanni* in Mozart's opera of the same name (Berlin Opera Academy), *Guglielmo* in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (Love Opera) and *Alfio* in Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (North Wales Opera).

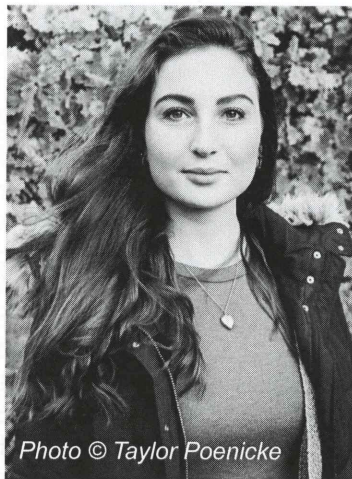
He is also in demand on the concert stage, his roles including Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*, Bach *Weihnachtsoratorium* (*Christmas Oratorio*), Handel *Messiah* and the *Requiems* of Mozart, Brahms, Duruflé and Fauré.

A proud Welsh speaker, Thomas has a passion for Welsh song and enjoys bringing this lesser-known repertoire to a wider audience.

Rebekah Jones - *Mezzo soprano*

Mezzo soprano Rebekah Jones read music at King's College London and completed her Master's at the Royal College of Music (RCM) under the tutelage of Tim Evans-Jones.

Solo career highlights have included the roles of *Mrs Lovett* in *Sweeney Todd* and *Waitress* in *Greek* (RCM Opera Scenes 2020 and 2019 respectively), *Alisa* in *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Fulham Opera (reprised at Grimeborn 2018), oratorio



performances at the St Endellion Music Festival and with the Vasari Singers (both 2017), Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at Chichester Cathedral, masterclasses with Michael Chance and Sir Thomas Allen (RCM, Summer 2019) and performing as part of the Winter 2016-17 season at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Rebekah sings with the Monteverdi choir and Siglo de Oro, as well as working for the BBC Singers, the Gabrieli Consort and the choir of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, amongst others.

She made her solo debut at the Haus für Mozart in Salzburg with the Monteverdi Choir this summer. Rebekah has performed internationally as *Solomon* in Paris (2017) and at music festivals across Europe, including Switzerland, the Netherlands, Malta, Germany and Belgium.

She was selected to sing as a soloist in the Bach Cantata and Chamber music festivals at the RCM for two years running, and in June 2019 made her debut in the RCM International Opera School as *The Grand Duchess* in *A Dinner Engagement*.

Rebekah's future plans include tours to Zurich and Barcelona.

Epsom Chamber Choir



Epsom Chamber Choir performs three or four concerts each year, mostly in St Martin's Parish Church, Epsom.

Under the direction of their conductor Mark Biggins, currently the chorus director of the Olivier-Award winning ensemble at the English National Opera, the choir aims for the highest standards and performs an extensive repertoire, ranging from the 16th century to the 21st and embracing a wide variety of styles.

The choir performs mostly unaccompanied or with small orchestras, bands or instrumentalists but welcomes the opportunity to join with other choirs to sing larger works.

The choir is delighted to have been invited to join with the Vivace Chorus for this evening's performance of Elgar's choral masterpiece.

Singers:

Caroline Bailey
Stella Baylis
Becky Beresford
Mary Draffin
Karan Humphries
Lynfa Landauer
Rachel Le Prevost
Alicia Newell
Clare Stenner
Susan Waton

Nic Ash
Dick Bacon
Malcolm Field
Jack Foster
Nick Landauer
Dominic Morris
Stephen Ridge
Neil Thomas

West Forest Sinfonia



The West Forest Sinfonia has been giving regular concerts in the Reading/Wokingham area for over 30 years.

Under its principal conductor Philip Ellis, the orchestra has performed an eclectic selection of music, from Haydn symphonies to (most recently) Stravinsky's Rite of Spring.

The orchestra draws its membership from the extraordinary pool of talent that exists in Berkshire. In addition to the series of concerts in Reading, the orchestra is regularly hired to accompany local Choral Societies.

Recent appearances include performances with High Wycombe, Wokingham and Fleet Choral Societies, and Aliquando.

Violin

Giles Wade (leader)
Vanessa Kershaw
Adrian Charlesworth
Mandy Sadler
Ivanka Shama
Harold Kershaw
Kim Austen
Kitty Beales
David Amos
Angela Jessopp
Sonja Nagle
Susan Knight
Fiona Richards

Nicholas Round
Claire Larkin
Karen Burgess

Viola

Rachel Marsh
Meidi Chalal
Laura Williams
Jenny Hopper

Cello

Lorraine Deacon
Alison Wagland
Molly Parsons-Gurr
Hilary Plaskett

Bass

Adrian Warrick
Leo Bowsher

Harp

Jenny Broome

Flute

Simon Salisbury
Tess Hawken

Oboe

Hazel Todd
Nicola Fairbairn

Piccolo

Mary Thornaloe

Cor Anglais

Helen Turnbull

ClarinetKaren Ayton
Barbara Salisbury**Bass Clarinet**

Emily Goodman

BassoonMike Johnstone
Erica Tugwell**Contra Bassoon**

John Athersuch

HornPamela Wise
Lucy Head
Ian Stott
Ben Colyer**Trumpet**Kevin Ransom
Andy Smets
Andy Holman**Organ**

Brian Moles

TromboneNick Kershaw
Diana Prince
Richard Stubbings**Tuba**

James Doherty

Timpani

Andrew Spiceley

PercussionNeil Marshall
Andrew Cumine
Michael Creech

**Join Vivace Chorus for our much-loved Come & Sing!
Saturday 29th January 2022 2pm**

It's a fantastic opportunity to get acquainted with Elgar's wonderful *Coronation Ode* and Parry's *Blest Pair of Sirens* – both fantastic pieces to learn and sing under the baton of our Music Director Jeremy Backhouse and accompanist Francis Pott.

This year, we'll be at our regular rehearsal venue, Guildford Baptist Church, next to the River Wey in Central Guildford. It's a large, well-ventilated space with plenty of room for safe singing and open spaces for tea and cake!

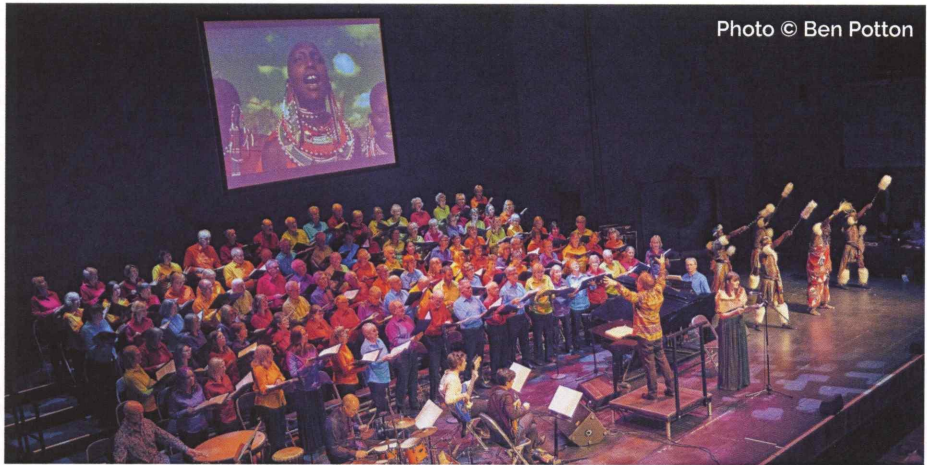
Tickets are just £19, plus a small booking fee, and this includes all music hire and drinks and cake during the breaks. We are really looking forward to welcoming you back to this popular event.

Tickets are available at www.vivacechorus.org and numbers are limited, so book early!

About Vivace Chorus

Jeremy Backhouse
Francis Pott
Peter Norman

Music Director
Accompanist
Chairman

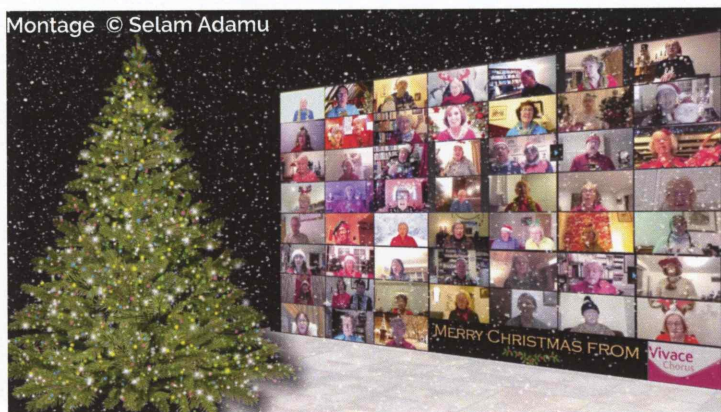


Vivace Chorus is a flourishing, ambitious and adventurous choir based in Guildford, Surrey. We enjoy singing traditional choral classics alongside the challenge of contemporary and newly-commissioned music – there's something for everyone at Vivace!

The choir began in 1946 as the Guildford Philharmonic Choir and was rebranded as Vivace Chorus in 2005. We have an enviable reputation for performing first-class concerts across a wide range of musical repertoire. Particular successes include a sell-out performance in May 2011 of Mahler's Symphony No. 8, the 'Symphony of a Thousand', at the Royal Albert Hall, a highly acclaimed performance in November 2012 of Britten's War Requiem and another Royal Albert Hall success in May 2014 when we performed the Verdi Requiem. In 2017 we celebrated our 70th birthday with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall and 2018 saw a sell-out performance in G Live Guildford for our 'Concert for Peace'.

Vivace thrives under the exceptional leadership of this evening's

conductor, Jeremy Backhouse. Jeremy's passion for choral music and his sheer enthusiasm for music-making are evident at every rehearsal and performance. He is supported by Francis Pott, who is an academic and composer of international repute and an accomplished concert pianist – who better to accompany our rehearsals?



During the pandemic, we made considerable efforts to keep singing. Jeremy ran weekly Zoom sessions, Francis shared his encyclopaedic knowledge of composers, and we put together two online films and a virtual Christmas Concert, raising money for the Mayor of Guildford's chosen charity.

We're very much looking forward to getting back to touring – we are hoping to add Spain to the list of our tours, which have so far included France, Italy, Germany, Austria and the Baltic States.

We are always happy to welcome new members, so if you would like to try us out, do come along to any of our regular rehearsals on Monday evenings at 7.15 in the Guildford Baptist Church, Millmead, Guildford.

Just contact our membership secretary Becky Kerby at membership@vivacechorus.org or pay a visit to our website, vivacechorus.org. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter - [@VivaceChorus](https://www.facebook.com/VivaceChorus).

Vivace Chorus Singers

FIRST SOPRANO	Christine Wilks	Liz Hampshire	FIRST BASS
Sel Adamu*	Fiona Wimblett	Christine Lavender	Paul Barnes
Jane Barnes	Fran Worpe	Penny Macfarlane	Phil Beastall
Mary Broughton*		Lois McCabe	Richard Broughton
Victoria Cross ⁺	FIRST ALTO	Catherine Middleton	Brian John
Becky Kerby*	Jackie Bearman	Kay McManus*	Jeremy Johnson
Elizabeth Limb ⁺	Marion Blair	Mary Moon	Jon Long
Fran MacKay	Jane Brooks*	Sheila Rowell	Malcolm Munt
Suzie Maine	Amanda Burn	Prue Smith	Chris Newbery*
Michelle Mumford	Jean Leston	Rosey Storey*	Peter Pearce
Heather Newbery	Lis Martin	Pamela Usher	Chris Peters*
Sue Norton	Penny McLaren	Susie Walker	Robin Privett
Robin Onslow	Rosalind Milton	June Windle	David Ross
Gillian Rix	Lilly Nicholson		Philip Stanford
Sarah Smithies	Jackie Payne	FIRST TENOR	Rob Walker
Joan Thomas	Linda Ross	Bob Bromham*	
Hilary Vaill	Catherine Shacklady	Bob Cowell*	SECOND BASS
	Marjory Stewart	Owen Gibbons	Peter Andrews
SECOND SOPRANO	Sue Thomas	Nick Manning	Norman Carpenter
Anna Arthur	Hilary Trigg*	Barbara McDonald	Geoffrey Forster
Suzanne Cahalane	Maggie Woolcock*	John Trigg	James Garrow*
Isobel Humphreys*			Stuart Gooch
Mo Kfourri	SECOND ALTO	SECOND TENOR	Nick Gough*
Isabel Mealar	Valerie Adam	Ewan Bramhall	Keith Long ⁺
Alex Nash	Geraldine Allen	Peter Butterworth	Neil Martin
Alison Palmer	Barbara Barklem*	Simon Dillon	Roger Penny
Gill Perkins*	Evelyn Beastall	Geoff Johns	
Kate Peters*	Mary Clayton	Stephen Linton*	
Jess Stansfield ⁺	Liz Curry-Hyde	Charles Martin ⁺	
Valerie Thompson	Andrea Dombrowe	Peter Norman	* = Semi-chorus
	Margaret Grisewood	Jon Scott*	⁺ = Guest singer

SING WITH THE BEST

It's official: singing

- ♪ Makes you feel happier
- ♪ Reduces stress
- ♪ Improves memory
- ♪ Strengthens the lungs and immune system



Photo © Carol Sheppard

Singing can also release endorphins, reducing our perception of pain and acting in a similar way to morphine — but without the danger of addiction.

So it's not just meeting friends, the music or the mid-rehearsal cakes that tempt you out on a cold Monday night, but the chance to be pain free!

Most of all, it's just great fun!



Photo © Ben Potton

Apart from singing in local venues, we also tour abroad and have a full calendar of social events, including walks and parties.

If you're tempted to join us, just drop an email to our membership secretary, Becky Kerby:

membership@vivacechorus.org

Advertising in our concert programmes is an effective and economical way of reaching a discerning local audience. If you're interested in finding out more, just drop an email to 'programmes@vivacechorus.org'

Vivace Chorus Patrons

The Vivace Chorus is extremely grateful to all patrons for their support.

Honorary Life Patrons

John Britten
James Garrow

John Trigg MBE

Life Patrons

Joy Hunter MBE

John and Jean Leston

Platinum Patrons

Peter & Clare Bevan
Robin & Jill Broadley
Roger & Sharon Brockway
Richard & Mary Broughton
Amanda Burn
Humphrey Cadoux-Hudson CBE
Norman Carpenter
Tony & Sylvia Chantler
Andrea & Gunter Dombrowe
Rosemary & Michael Dudley
Susan & Cecil Hinton
Stephen Linton
John McLean OBE & Janet McLean
Ron & Christine Medlow

Lionel & Mary Moon
Peter Norman
John Parry
Robin & Penny Privett
Geoffrey Johns & Sheila Rowell
Jonathan Scott
Catherine & Brian Shacklady
Prue & Derek Smith
Dennis & Marjory Stewart
Idris & Joan Thomas
Pam Usher
Rob and Susie Walker
Anthony J T Williams
Bill & June Windle

BECOME A VIVACE PATRON

If you have enjoyed this concert, why not become one of our patrons? We have a loyal band of followers whose regular presence at our concerts is greatly appreciated. With the valued help of our patrons, we are able to perform a wide range of exciting music, with world-class, professional musicians in venues such as G Live, Dorking Halls, the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. For an annual donation, patrons can have unlimited tickets at a 10% discount. If you are interested, please contact Mary Moon on 01372 468431 or email: patrons@vivacechorus.org.

Vivace Chorus dates for your diary

The Mayor of Guildford's Carol Concert

Sunday 12th December 2021 7:00 pm Holy Trinity Church, Guildford

One of the highlights of the Christmas season in Guildford is the Mayor of Guildford's annual Carol Concert, in support of the Mayor's selected charity. In the beautiful setting of a candlelit Holy Trinity Church, Vivace Chorus's imaginative mix of favourite carols and beautiful Christmas music will definitely help to put you in the Christmas spirit.

Best of Broadway

Saturday 26th March 2022 7:30pm **G Live, Guildford**

One of the most moving moments in our sell-out Concert for Peace in 2018 was an arrangement of *You'll Never Walk Alone* for choir and brass band. In 2022, we are delighted to be performing again with the Friary Brass Band – Guildford's local brass band that ranks in the top 25 bands in the world! We'll be singing and playing some all-time favourites from Broadway, including music from Bernstein, Lloyd Webber and Rodgers and Hammerstein. A delightful programme of music for a spring evening.

Majesty

Saturday 28th May 2022 7:30pm **G Live, Guildford**

This celebration of royal music starts Guildford's celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and is promoted with the support of Guildford Borough Council. Featuring music from the Queen's coronation, including Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, Walton's *Crown Imperial* and Parry's *I was glad*, this will be a rousing evening featuring some of Britain's most popular composers.

Further details at vivacechorus.org

Printed by IMPRINT COLOUR LTD

Pegasus Court, North Lane, Aldershot GU12 4QP. Tel: 01252 330683

Vivace Chorus is a Registered Charity No. 1026337

Vivace
Chorus



**THE BEST OF
BROADWAY**

**Rodgers and Hammerstein,
Bernstein, Sondheim,
Lloyd Webber and more**

**Saturday
26 March 2022
at 7.30pm**

Tickets £18 £15 U18: £10,
plus an additional £3 per ticket GLive booking fee.
Book online GLive.co.uk or phone 01483 369350

vivacechorus.org

Registered Charity No. 1026337



Guildford's state-of-the-art
entertainment venue

FUTURE CONCERTS

The Rotary Club of Guildford
and the Vivace Chorus present



**THE MAYOR OF GUILDFORD'S
CHRISTMAS
CONCERT**

Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse

*in aid of the
The Mayor's Local
Support Fund*

Vivace
Chorus

**Sunday
12 Dec 2021**

7pm
Holy Trinity Church
Guildford

Making Music
GUILDFORD
RODOUCH

England
Derbyshire
SULISTONE

Vivace
Chorus



**Come
AND
Sing**

Elgar
Coronation Ode

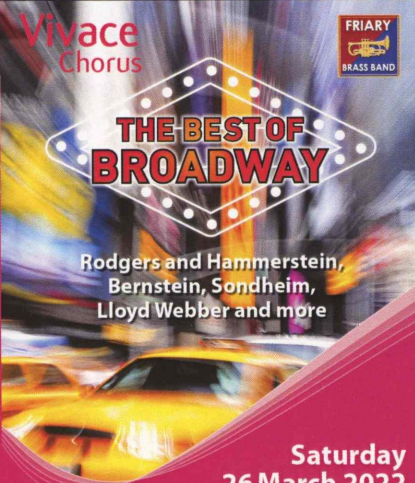
Parry
Blest Pair of Sirens

**Saturday
29 January 2022
at 2pm**

Guildford Baptist Church,
Millmead.

vivacechorus.org
Registered Charity No. 1128317

Vivace
Chorus



**THE BEST OF
BROADWAY**


Rodgers and Hammerstein,
Bernstein, Sondheim,
Lloyd Webber and more

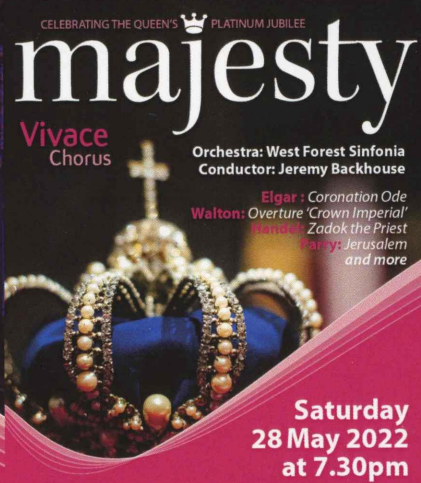
**Saturday
26 March 2022
at 7.30pm**

FRIARY
BRASS BAND

vivacechorus.org
Registered Charity No. 1128317

GLive
GUILDFORD'S CHOICE OF LOCAL
ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

CELEBRATING THE QUEEN'S  PLATINUM JUBILEE



majesty

Vivace
Chorus

Orchestra: West Forest Sinfonia
Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse

Elgar: Coronation Ode
Walton: Overture 'Crown Imperial'
Parry: Zadok the Priest
Parry: Jerusalem
and more

**Saturday
28 May 2022
at 7.30pm**

vivacechorus.org
Registered Charity No. 1128317

Sponsored by
GUILDFORD
RODOUCH

GLive
GUILDFORD'S CHOICE OF LOCAL
ENTERTAINMENT VENUE