

# Lyme Bay Chorale 2023

## A Celebration of English Choral Music for St George's Day



SAMUEL BRISTOW organ

Directed by ALEX DAVIES

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April at 4pm

Lyme Regis Parish Church

# The company

Musical director    Alex Davies  
Organ                 Samuel Bristow

## LYME BAY CHORALE

**Soprano**             Kate Buchanan, Mary Carpenter, Iris Chapman, Oriel Chapman,  
Janet Clayton, Paula Cornwell, Alison Davies, Julia Eager, Sue Fouracre,  
Susan Irving, Gilly King, Linda Nicholson, Ioana Pupaza, Sudhi Salooja

**Alto**                 Catriona Bevan, Julie-Anne Conway, Tessa Gilks, Kate Gunn,  
Hilary Hight, Kay Luckraft, Sue Milner-Smith, Nicola Moore,  
Caroline Richmond, Maurene West

**Tenor**                Les Baker, Nicholas Brown, Adrian Carpenter, Ian Luckraft

**Bass**                 Malcolm Foster, David Fouracre, Adrian Hatfield, Peter Irving,  
Graham Jones, Joss Kent, Eric Ritchie

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# The programme

## **Te Deum**

Edward Elgar, 1897

## **O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem**

Herbert Howells, 1941

## **Organ solo: Andante Grazioso**

Walter Alcock, 1886

*Samuel Bristow, organ*

## **They That Go Down to the Sea in Ships**

Herbert Sumsion, 1979

## **Benedictus**

Edward Elgar, 1897

## **INTERVAL**

## **Festival Te Deum**

Benjamin Britten, 1944

*Ioana Pupaza, soprano soloist*

## **Excerpts from Five Mystical Songs**

Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1911

Easter · Love Bade Me Welcome · Let All the World

*David Fouracre, baritone soloist*

## **Organ solo: Benedictus**

William Lloyd Webber, 1960

*Samuel Bristow, organ*

## **The Blue Bird**

Charles Villiers Stanford, 1910

*Alison Davies, Iris Chapman and Oriel Chapman, soprano soloists*

## **Great Is the Lord**

Edward Elgar, 1912

*Joss Kent, baritone soloist*

*The cover image shows Saint George on horseback about to kill the dragon with his sword. Colour etching by Stefano Mulinari after Raphael, c.1780. [www.wellcomecollection.org/works/wqtjs89h](http://www.wellcomecollection.org/works/wqtjs89h)*

# About our choir

**L**yme Bay Chorale was established 23 years ago by Ruth Taylor, who rehearsed a small group of friends at her house in Cobb Road and started putting on concerts in the Catholic church in North Chideock. That group developed into the choir you're hearing today.

Our current association with St Michael's Church allows us to rehearse and perform with the magnificent Škrabl organ, for which the choir helped to raise funds at several events before its installation in 2010. We often work with visiting professional conductors, organists and instrumentalists and we are fortunate to have two patrons who support our activities and sing at some of our concerts: soprano Philippa Hyde and countertenor Paul Esswood.

The choir gives several concerts each year and our 2022–23 performances have included: Haydn's Nelson Mass with a professional orchestra and soloists; the Brahms Requiem with two pianos; a singing day led by Richard Tanner and finishing with an informal concert in aid of the RNLI; a performance of the Duruflé

Requiem on Remembrance Day in aid of the Royal British Legion; and a joint concert with Woodroffe School of music ranging from Handel's Zadok the Priest to highlights from Disney's Moana.

We have a bursary scheme to encourage young local singers who would like to join us in singing our glorious choral repertoire. Past beneficiaries have gone on to study at music colleges and become university choral scholars. Bursary students get free membership of the choir and either a series of lessons with a qualified, experienced singing teacher or financial support for their regular music lessons. If you would like to help support this initiative or know a young person who would benefit from the bursary, please let me know.

I hope you can join us all here in St Michael's again at our next concert on Saturday 29 July, when under the direction of Richard Tanner we'll be joining forces with our patrons and friends, plus choristers from Salisbury Cathedral, for an informal evening concert raising funds for the RNLI.

*Alex Davies, Musical Director*



# Samuel Bristow, organist



Ash Mills

**D**ubbed “an artist to watch” in **Organists’ Review**, Samuel Bristow is a versatile young musician based in Salisbury and London.

Enjoying an increasingly busy portfolio career as an organist, choral director and teacher, he currently works as organist at St Matthew’s Westminster. He also acts as choral leader at St Matthew’s Primary School, delivering the choral curriculum on behalf of St Paul’s Cathedral’s OBE Music Outreach. Additionally, he is accompanist to the St John Singers and coordinator for PipeUp Salisbury, overseeing the innovative scholarship scheme enabling organ education across the diocese. He was previously the assistant organist at Salisbury Cathedral, where he frequently accompanied and conducted the cathedral choirs, helped with training choristers and was accompanist to the Salisbury Cathedral junior and youth choirs.

Samuel trained at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, from which he graduated in 2019 with first class honours and was a recipient of the John Campbell Keyboard Prize. His teachers were Daniel Moulton and Henry Fairs.

Until recently Samuel was organ scholar at St Paul’s Cathedral, London. As one of the full-time organists there, he gave recitals on the world-renowned organ and regularly accompanied services, working with the famous cathedral choir in the daily cycle of worship. In 2021, Samuel performed the complete organ works of Felix Mendelssohn at St Paul’s as part of the ‘Organ Giants’ series, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Father Willis rebuild. He has also held organ scholarships at Coventry, Birmingham and Salisbury cathedrals, where he was an integral part of the respective music departments. He has accompanied world premieres of choral works by composers including Francis Jackson and Owain Park.

Samuel has broadcasted for BBC One’s Songs of Praise, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio WM and BBC Radio Coventry and Warwickshire.  
[www.samuelbristoworganist.com](http://www.samuelbristoworganist.com)

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# About our programme

**F**ollowing the death of Henry Purcell in 1695, English music went into a long period of decline until the late 19th century and the emergence of Edward Elgar, quickly followed by a host of other younger composers including Vaughan Williams, Howells and Britten. It is this new golden era of English choral music that we celebrate today, appropriately enough on the feast day of St George, the patron saint of England.

The first half of the concert is framed by Elgar's Te Deum and Benedictus in F. The Hereford Cathedral organist George Robertson Sinclair commissioned the canticles for the Three Choirs Festival of 1897, and they were performed at the opening service. This important annual music festival continues today, rotating between the three cathedrals of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford.

The Te Deum begins with a typical Elgarian *Allegro maestoso* on the organ followed by a dramatic declaration from the choir, "We praise thee, O Lord." Various changes of mood and key lead to the return of the familiar motif of the choral opening followed by a great climax. The canticle ends with a hushed plea for mercy and a gentle prayer-like section with a quiet

organ postlude. In contrast, the Benedictus begins quietly but ends triumphantly with the return of the Te Deum's *Allegro maestoso*, providing an important thematic link between the two canticles.

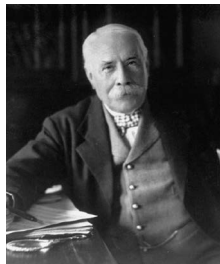
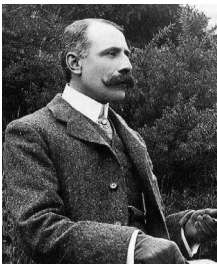
O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, which takes its text from Psalm 122 verses 6–7, is the first of a set of four anthems that Herbert Howells wrote over a period of four days in January 1941 while snowbound in a cottage in Gloucestershire. This anthem has an unusually simple musical texture for Howells, with long expressive unison phrases. Apart from a brief central climax at the words "plenteousness within thy palaces", it is both restrained and contemplative.

Walter Alcock was a distinguished organist, having the unique distinction of playing at the coronation of three kings – Edward VII, George V and George VI. His *Andante Grazioso* is a beautiful example of the many lyrical organ pieces written during the early 20th century for use during cathedral services.

Herbert Sumsion's anthem *They That Go Down to the Sea in Ships* was written in 1979 and uses text from Psalm 107, verses 23–30. Sumsion was a chorister and later organist at Gloucester Cathedral, and through the Three Choirs Festival had links with Elgar, Howells and Vaughan Williams. His anthem begins with a rippling, listless organ part, followed by rising and falling choral writing. He makes use of imitative ideas over long pedal notes on the organ and frequent changes of tempo. You will also notice his excellent use of word painting, particularly at "and stagger like a drunken man"!

Benjamin Britten's *Festival Te Deum* was written for the centenary festival of

**Pictured: Sir Edward Elgar around 1905 (left) and in 1931**



St Mark's Swindon in 1944. At the start, unison voices sing in apparently free time against regular organ chords decorated with pseudo-Baroque ornaments. It abruptly changes character at the words "Thou art the King of Glory", rhythmically driving to a dramatic climax before quickly subsiding into the dreamy atmosphere of the opening. It ends with a stark treble solo against a hushed chorus.

In 1911 Ralph Vaughan Williams completed his Five Mystical Songs, which were first performed at that year's Three Choirs Festival in Worcester. The texts use poems by George Herbert (1593–1633) and today we hear the first, third and fifth movements. The styles of each vary quite significantly. The first, with its rising fourth for the baritone's entry "Rise heart", is a moving celebration of the risen Christ, while the second is a quiet, personal meditation in which the soloist takes a key role. The final movement, Antiphon, is very different – a triumphant hymn of praise for chorus alone, the organ accompaniment at the start suggesting pealing bells.

William Lloyd Webber, a student of Vaughan Williams, wrote Benedictus as part of a set called The Colours of the Organ. This improvisatory and rhapsodic piece, written for various diapasons of the organ, uses a familiar arch structure building to a grand climax on full organ, before calm is restored and the piece ends quietly.

The Blue Bird, by Charles Villiers Stanford, is an exquisite part-song composed in 1910 and set to the words of a poem by Mary Elizabeth Coleridge. Stanford was one of the main figures of the late 19th century British musical renaissance, teaching two generations of



**Clockwise from above: Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1910, Herbert Sumsion, and Benjamin Britten in 1968**



British composers including Vaughan Williams, Howells and Holst. The Blue Bird is strophic in form, with two stanzas, each having similar harmonic treatment. The first four bars are repeated at the end as a short coda. The music depicts a bluebird in flight over a lake on a still, hot day; the soprano's final "blue" is suspended, this lack of resolution creating a beautiful image of the bird flying off into the distance.

The grandiose Great is the Lord by Elgar is a choral anthem suitable for the foundation or commemoration of a church and was first performed at Westminster Abbey in 1912. It falls into a number of sections, each using new material. It starts with altos, tenors and basses in unison, later using voices in two parts and passages of block harmony. A bass solo is used for the central text "We have thought on Thy loving-kindness", and the anthem closes with a rich choral section.

*Programme notes by Susan Irving*

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