



THE PALE ENCHANTED GOLD

TIM TORRY baritone
CHARLES HINE clarinet
ALAN BULLARD piano

3pm, 17 June 2017
Castle Methodist Church, Colchester

Colchester New Music



The Pale Enchanted Gold

Welcome to this concert of new (and slightly older) clarinet music and song settings. **Colchester New Music** (Registered Charity no. 287932) is a co-operative of East Anglian composers and performers, founded in 1984; today's recital is our celebration of the 70th birthday year of two long-standing members: Alan Bullard and Tim Torry.

CNM's members come together to develop professionally and artistically, presenting new music performances and workshops in Colchester and beyond, in collaboration with local partners such as the Moot Hall Organ project, Firstsite and Colchester Institute. Visit colchesternewmusic.com to listen to recordings from previous concerts, and to find out more about our future projects.

Sheet music is available for today's pieces! You are welcome to come and talk to a CNM member, contact the composer directly via details on their website, or just write to CNM at calls@colchesternewmusic.com and we'll put you in touch.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the team at Castle Methodist for permitting us to hold this concert here. All programme text is copyright © the respective contributing composers; thanks to Tim Torry for the notes on Gibbs, Finzi and Holst.

Programme

Three Blues – *Alan Bullard*

The Genealogy of Christ – *Mark Bellis (music) / St Luke (words)*

Scenes from a Train – *Jenni Pinnock*

The Star – *Dylan Christopher (music) / Jane & Ann Taylor (words)*

The Sun Goes Down – *Francis Knights (music) / AJ Blustin (words)*

Silver – *Armstrong Gibbs (music) / Walter de la Mare (words)*

The Bold Princess Royal – *Colin Blundell*

Seeking Stillness – *Philip Joy*

The Pale Enchanted Gold – *Tim Torry (music) / JRR Tolkien (words)*

INTERVAL

Subsequent Darkness – *Julia Usher*

The Sleep – *Ian Wilson (music) / Elizabeth Barrett Browning (words)*

It was a lover and his lass – *G. Finzi (music) / Shakespeare (words)*

Whither now? – *Laurence Glazier*

Dance – *Peter Thorne*

Oft when warring – *Stephen Watkins (music) / Thomas Hardy (words)*

A Swan, a Man – *Alan Bullard (music) / Edmund Blunden (words)*

The Sergeant's Song – *Gustav Holst (music) / Thomas Hardy (words)*

Performers

Alan Bullard's music is performed and broadcast world-wide and appears on many CDs and publishers' lists. He has composed in most genres, for both amateurs and professionals. He has recently edited a new anthem collection for Oxford University Press, and future commissions for new pieces range from Colchester Choral Society to the Childrens' Chorus of Greater Dallas, USA.

After many years of teaching Alan now works as a full-time composer and he is also an examiner for ABRSM. He has lived in Colchester for over forty years and enjoys piano accompanying when the opportunity arises.

Charles Hine is a prize-winning graduate of the Royal Academy of Music. He has achieved distinction as a solo and orchestral clarinettist and undertaken numerous international tours as well as broadcasting regularly for the BBC on radio and television.

Charles is a founder member of the Vega Wind Quintet, the first such group to be invited to appear at the Proms. He has also developed a career as a conductor of Wind Orchestras and other groups such as the British Clarinet Ensemble, appearing in major venues and festivals in Europe, the USA and Japan.

He has taught in a wide range of educational establishments including posts in Rome, the Cairo Conservatoire, the Royal College of Music and Colchester Institute as well as delivering master classes and workshops in conservatoires and colleges at home and abroad.

Born near Chelmsford, **Tim Torry** was educated at Colchester Royal Grammar School (where he later became Head of Music), York University and the R.A.M.. During the 1970 and 80s he was well-known locally as a baritone/bass soloist, and also as a composer-member of C.N.M.. Severe M.E. symptoms cut short his career in 1992, but treatment for mercury amalgam poisoning led to his full recovery and, eventually, a return to solo singing in 2007.

Encouragingly, a work of his was accepted onto the S.P.N.M. Shortlist in 2003 and his song cycle *The Face of Grief* received four festival performances in July 2015 from Roderick Williams (baritone) and Susie Allan (piano); the 'Three Choirs' one was broadcast on Radio 3, a broadcast that was repeated in 2016.

Some notes on the composers and pieces

Alan Bullard wrote *Three Blues* when he taught at Colchester Institute, as a tribute to three clarinettist colleagues: Carefree Blues (for Stuart Allen), Meditative Blues (for Charles Hine) and Agile Blues (for Angela Fussell). Though not traditional blues, they explore a range of blues-inspired musical moods.

Mark Bellis studied at Cardiff, Durham and Cambridge Universities with Dr David Wynne, David Lumsdaine & John Casken. In 1985 he was awarded a PhD in Composition from Durham University. He has had performances at the Purcell Room, London, and on Radio 3. He composed a large-scale orchestral work for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and more recently, much choral music. He has also been the conductor of The Colne Singers, a choir which deputises for cathedral choirs over the summer months, for the past seven years. Since 2005, Mark has been Course Leader for the BA Music programme at Colchester Institute, Essex.

The Genealogy of Christ sets words from St Luke's Gospel (chapter 3, verses 23-38) tracing the lineage of Jesus back from Joseph (His 'supposed' father) through many generations, ultimately to Adam and to God. It is in simple, meditative tonal style.

Jenni Pinnock's music focuses on nature, science and the world around us. A myriad of influences including gamelan and church bell ringing can be heard within her music which has received performances around the world. Quirky time signatures and memorable lines entangle to create predominantly tonal musical snapshots of life.

The contrasting scenery along the daily commute from London into Essex countryside inspired the *Scenes from a Train* suite for clarinet. This movement, Andantino con moto, represents London – the hustle and bustle of the streets contrasted by the beautiful architecture, old and new.

Dylan Christopher is a pianist and music educator, based in Colchester, providing piano lessons, workshops and concert performance opportunities to aspirant musicians young and old.

The Star represents a 'dark night of the soul'. Building on the worlds of Jane and Ann Taylor, and the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, this reimagining of the famous poem and French folk-song takes artistic liberty with a Twenty-first Century twist. The illustrative setting imagines the quiet

musings of a traveller after the loss of a loved one. Though they are gone, the traveller can take comfort in the departed watching down on them through the stars.

Francis Knights studied at the universities of London and Oxford, and has worked as a lecturer, editor and performer. He is now a Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, Chairman of the National Early Music Association, and an occasional composer. Website www.francisknights.co.uk

The Sun Goes Down sets an early poem by Alexander Blustin, which is mock-pastoral verse with a dark turn, and this is reflected in the setting, for baritone solo with a clarinet commentary.

Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1819-1960) – Armstrong Gibbs, as he preferred to be known – was born (as was Tim Torry, as it happens) in Great Baddow, near Chelmsford. Although he was particularly known for his songs – including his rightly famous *Five Eyes*, one of his many Walter de la Mare settings – he also composed symphonic and chamber music, wrote for the stage, as well as also conducting and adjudicating. His *Dusk* (available both as a song and a piano piece) became particularly well-loved as a delightfully nostalgic ‘light-orchestral’ piece.

His setting of another de la Mare poem, ***Silver***, shows him at his very best, conjuring up, with the aid of an atmospheric piano part, a lovely picture of a moonlit scene, everything tinged with silver - a miniature masterpiece, even.

Colin Blundell is an entirely self-taught ancient teacher, twenty-six years out of wage slavery, who used to strive to compose like Ralph Vaughan Williams, but now just follows his nose.

The Bold Princess Royal is a free & airy arrangement of a very old folksong about a sailing vessel that meets up with pirates. The middle bit turns nasty but for some reason best known to themselves the pirates skedaddle (φεύγω εν πανικώ in Greek) before engaging with The Bold Princess Royal.

Philip Joy is largely self-taught, having been educated at Merton College, Oxford where he had lessons from Robert Sherlaw-Johnson and Bernard Rose and at the Royal Academy of Music where his composition teacher was Paul Patterson. He also studied postgraduate cello at the RAM before being trained in Secondary Music and he was Director of Music at

Twyford School from 1991-96 before entering the Baptist Ministry. Since 2003 he has been retired from ministry due to M.E. and has devoted his time to composition.

Seeking Stillness is a transcription from a cello piece Joy wrote for himself. It imagines the calming effect of an old country church on an anxious mind.

The Pale Enchanted Gold – A Dramatic Ballad

Tim Torry writes: *“This was written in 2004 for youngsters to sing as part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Witham Templars Junior School, where I had been a pupil for two years in the late 1950s. It was dedicated, with profound gratitude, to the memory of the school’s founding headmaster (the inspiring and much-loved Yorkshireman, Sidney Hinchliffe) and my splendid class teacher (Denis Fenn, also famously once the Mayor of Maldon!).*

Unfortunately, circumstances conspired to prevent its performance then, but it was later given its ‘World premiere’ (as it was grandly billed!) at the Annual Speech Day of the Prep School of Gresham’s, Holt in 2009, conducted by Nathan Waring. Based on the original version with piano accompaniment, this version included the last-minute addition of an extra ten orchestral players, who contributed considerably to the atmosphere!

Later, at West Mersea, I performed it as a solo with John Wolton (piano) but, for this occasion, I have added a part for clarinet/bass clarinet, also with atmospheric intentions in mind!

The setting is of a poem in J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit, a poem which recounts the ancient tale of the theft of the dwarves’ ‘enchanted’ gold by a rampaging dragon which, in the process leaves devastation in its wake. The overall shape of the piece is ternary (ABA), the ‘A’ section mainly containing atmospheric introduction/interlude music, as well as verses using the ‘mysterious’ main tune (which is sometimes presented ‘in canon’ with the clarinet), in which the singer sets the scene and expresses the enthusiasm of the dwarves, both for the long lost golden artefacts made by their ancestors and for their plans for reclaiming them from the dragon’s lair.

Containing several passages of varying tempo, the central (B) section dramatically – amid alarm bells – recounts the drama of the dragon’s fiery

and destructive arrival long ago and the devastation which it wreaked, as the dwarves were forced to flee their subterranean hall.

A numbed silence precedes the return of the opening (A) music, which begins more slowly than before, but gradually increases in tempo, reflecting the dwarves' growing optimism at the prospect of their impending departure on their long and hazardous journey to retrieve the gold.

Finally, the vision mistily fades away in the atmospheric manner of the opening."

Julia Usher is a Colchester composer, working with CNM members to devise new projects and musical opportunities.

Subsequent Darkness is a term used in Chess analysis, where the complications of a position make the outcome obscure. The first performance of this piece was in the House of Composers in Moscow, in an exchange concert given by the Composers Guild of Great Britain.

Ian Wilson is a graduate of Durham University, where he studied composition under Robert Casken. He has held the post of music director for the Huntingdonshire Philharmonic Society and Chelmsford's St Cecilia Choral Society. The Dunblane Chamber Orchestra performed his 'Three Songs from A Shropshire Lad' in May 2012.

The Sleep by Elizabeth Barrett Browning is a meditation on the phrase, 'He giveth his beloved sleep' from Psalm 127, which acts as a refrain throughout the poem and can be found on many of the graves in the Étapes War Cemetery. The 'dreary noises' of the earth are contrasted, both textually and musically, with the 'happy slumber' that God bestows on his people.

Although of Jewish descent, **Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)** comes across as an archetypical Englishman of his generation, both in his appearance, his choice of poetry and his own characteristic musical style (somewhat akin to that of Vaughan Williams), as well as in other ways such as his enormous interest in saving varieties of English apple trees, of which he collected a substantial number!

As well as writing some splendid choral works (including the delightful Christmas cantata *In Terra Pax*) and a rightly popular *Clarinet Concerto*, he is especially highly thought-of as a song composer, having set texts,

either singly or in cycles, by the likes of Christina Rossetti, Edmund Blunden and Thomas Traherne, whose words Finzi memorably set in his masterpiece for tenor and strings, *Dies Natalis*.

His *Let us Garlands Bring* – a wonderful collection of five Shakespeare settings for baritone and piano (or orchestra) – was written for Vaughan Williams and finishes with ***It was a lover and his lass***, a poem set by many British composers. There is even a rather good, characteristically jazzy setting by John Dankworth! However, Finzi's delightful setting speaks for itself.

After private lessons in composition from Chris Sansom, **Laurence Glazier** studied Harmony and Counterpoint at the City Lit in London, where one lecturer was Colchester composer Alan Parsons with whom he later undertook many years of private study.

In ***Whither Now?*** Glazier says the most he can in the fewest notes and least time, literally a miniture.

Peter Thorne has been composing music since the age of about 12. He read music at Oxford and the UEA, where he took a master's degree. Over the years he has written in many different styles and genres but most recently he has been writing for wind instruments and piano. Peter's music often features influences from various kinds of jazz and pop and is often colourful and rhythmic.

Dance for clarinet and piano uses simple ideas such as triads and broken chords and places them in slightly unusual contexts. The piece is typical of Thorne's music in that it uses a lot of syncopation suggestive of jazz.

Stephen Watkins is a graduate of the Guildhall School where he studied trombone, piano and recorder as main instruments. He also won a scholarship for singing but in spite of thoroughly enjoying performing he came to realise that his real passion was composition. Later in life he also took up the cello and this wide range of instrumental experience has allowed him to play and write fluently in many styles. He recently retired after being the director of a music school in Germany and divides his time between playing music, composing – he has publishers in Germany, Holland, Austria and the USA – and his other enthusiasm, sailing.

Although Watkins is a fairly prolific composer, and an ardent admirer of Thomas Hardy's poetry and settings of it, particularly those of Finzi, it is rare that he ventures into the world of art song. On reading through his

complete Hardy, Stephen, as a pacifist sympathiser, was struck by the elegance with which Hardy, in the text of ***Off when warring***, presents one fundamental act of human kindness as a way of rejecting a whole philosophy.

In ***A Swan, A Man***, Alan Bullard sets a poem by Edmund Blunden. The song was commissioned for a concert at St James' Piccadilly, sponsored by the War Poets Association. The poem was written in 1964 when Blunden was living in Long Melford: in the poem, the mill-pond in the village vividly reminds him of events fifty years before.

Gustav Holst (1874-1934) was of largely British descent on his mother's side, but of Swedish, German and Latvian descent on his father's side, on which the profession of musician stretches back to his great-grandfather. He learnt the violin and piano as a child, but neuritis in his right arm prevented him from becoming a pianist. However, he later gained much valuable experience orchestrally as a professional trombonist, an instrument which he learnt from the age of twelve; at the time, it was thought that this might help his asthma.

His compositional style, originally largely influenced by the likes of Wagner, eventually became strongly influenced by English folk music, which he, his great friend Vaughan Williams and others avidly collected. After his time at the Royal College of Music, he earned a living first by taking church organ posts and playing the trombone in theatre orchestras, later taking up various music-teaching jobs, notably at St. Paul's School for Girls in Hammersmith.

His 'break-through' was, of course, his orchestral suite *The Planets*, the first 'sight-read' performance of which was given to Holst as a present by his rich friend and benefactor Balfour Gardiner, who hired the Queen's Hall and its Orchestra for this. Other fine works include *The Hymn of Jesus*, the *St. Paul's Suite* for strings, *A Somerset Rhapsody* and the tone poem *Egdon Heath*, inspired by Hardy's novels set in Dorset.

The Sergeant's Song happens itself to be a Hardy setting of a poem which pokes fun (in a 'little list' manner) at various types – lawyers, parsons, husbands and wives etc. – saying that when they do actually act as they should, 'then little Boney he'll pounce down and march his men on London Town'.