

STOUR MUSIC 2021



Choral Comfort

Elsbeth Piggott *Soprano*
Ana Beard Fernández *Soprano*
Lauren MacLeod *Mezzo-soprano*
Will Russell *Baroque trumpet*
Frances Norbury *Baroque oboe*
Paula Chateauneuf *Theorbo*
Catherine Pierron *Organ*

Stour Festival Choir & Orchestra

Robert Hollingworth *conductor*

*Sponsored by
Jenny Bird, and the late Alice Jones*

Sunday 27th June
2.30pm

BOUGHTON ALUPH CHURCH

Programme

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Capriol Suite

Monteverdi (1567-1643)

Come dolci oggi l'auretta

Con che soavità

Antonio Lotti (1667-1740)

Crucifixus (for eight voices)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Gloria

Performers

Violin 1

Margot Rusmanis
Jane Dawson
Floriane Peycelon
Elizabeth Ovenden

Viola

Toby Deller
Sara Thorpe
Ros Hanson

Cello

Rachel Waltham
Sophie Willis
Anita Stevens

Violin 2

Antony Dennant
Jo Saul
Craig Jarvis
Stelios Chatziiosifidis

Double Bass

Alistair Hume

Stour Choir 2021

'The Twenty'

Sopranos

Margaret Barnett
Kate Brazier
Prue Forbes
Siobhan Gray
Irina Newman

Altos

Virginia Brown
Helen France
Lorraine Andrews
Margery Thomas
Liz Parsons

Tenors

Jerry Fox
Steven Gant
Alex Inkley-Palmer
Ian Williams
Alexander Hume

Basses

Alan Colchester
David Forbes
Ian Balmer
Geoff Parsons
John Tattersfield
Stewart Coltart

Programme Notes

Peter Warlock was the pen name of Philip Arnold Heseltine who was born into a wealthy London family on the 30th October 1894. He was educated at Eton College, and Oxford University where he read for a degree in classics. From an early age he was fascinated by the work of Fredrick Delius whom he met in 1911. The two became close friends, and Delius supported and mentored him throughout his short life. On graduating he resisted family pressure to work in the stock exchange choosing rather to frequent an artistic circle of friends that included the novelist D H Lawrence. His friendship with Lawrence was however fraught and short lived. An unattractive character, Julius Halliday, in Lawrence's "Women in Love" was modelled on Warlock and provoked the composer into threatening legal action. Lawrence recanted and re-wrote the most offensive passages.

Warlock never settled into a conventional career. He had some short lived appointments, one as a music critic for the Daily Mail. He did however engage in serious musical scholarship, editing, transcribing and arranging early music manuscripts, and writing a major study of the music of Delius. His first major compositions, mainly songs, began to appear in 1917, at which time he had moved to Dublin to avoid possible conscription. It was at this time that he adopted the pseudonym Warlock, possibly in parody of his interest in the occult. In 1922 he completed his first widely acknowledged masterpiece the song cycle named the Curlew. His period of creativity continued only for a few years culminating in the composition of his most famous work - the Capriol Suite - in 1925. The original piano duet version of the work was a great success and was quickly followed by the version for string orchestra (1926) and a version for full orchestra (1928).

However, by 1928 things were going badly for Philip Heseltine. He was getting into financial difficulties and his creativity seemed to be evaporating. He did receive help from Thomas Beecham, who engaged him to write articles for the Delius festival held in October 1929. However this only offered a short respite in his decline into depression and inactivity. On the morning of the 17th December 1930 he was found dead from gas poisoning in his Chelsea flat. The coroner returned an open verdict on the case, but suicide seems the most likely explanation.

The Capriol Suite is a set of dances in the renaissance style. It was based on tunes in a manual of Renaissance dances by the French priest Jehan Tabourot (1515-1595). The treatment of the source material is very free and the work can be regarded as an original composition rather than an arrangement. It is made up from of six contrasting movements - Basse Danse, Pavane, Tordion, Bransles, Pieds en l'air, and Mattachins - each a different dance form, the last being a form of sword dance.

From a century earlier than Vivaldi's *Gloria*, two fleeting and lesser-known jewels by **Monteverdi**. The trio for female voices was published posthumously but could well come from one of Monteverdi's many lost stage works: three female voices enjoy an erotic breeze. For a solo voice but different instrumental groups, 'Con che soavita' is an obsessive setting about lips: in kissing, the pleasure of listening to them speak is taken away. One pleasure is portrayed by upper strings while the 'sweet harmony' of line 7 is represented by three low instruments. If only they were able to unite...

Crucifixus is an intense, short work which is taken from a larger work - the *Missa Sancti Christophori*. The section of the Credo text used here is an oasis in a barren desert, and it is easily possible to understand why in the 19th century it became a widely performed stand-alone motet. Antonio Lotti 1667-1740 spent most of his life at St Mark's, Venice, first as an alto singer, then organist and finally as maestro di cappella. Hasse, a leading contemporary composer, described his music as 'the most perfect of its kind' while Burney, writing in 1770 of a performance in St Mark's said, 'it affected me even to tears'. This eight-part setting makes a great emotional impact, luxuriating confidently with its carefully, classically controlled but potent use of dissonance.

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The celebrated **Gloria** was written in 1715 during Vivaldi's employment at the Ospedale della Pietà, a well-patronised home for orphaned and illegitimate girls in Venice. Although originally performed by the female voices of the Pietà choir (including tenor and light bass lines), since its rediscovery in the early twentieth century, the *Gloria* has been popular with mixed-voice choirs for its sunny and memorable melodic writing. The 12 movements range incredibly from emotions of joy and exultation to profound sadness, making the *Gloria* one of Vivaldi's most dramatic choral works, drawing on opera and instrumental styles. The overall structure is cohesive and connects throughout, the initial statement of joy giving way into a meditative 'Et in terra pax hominibus.' The lilting solo soprano, solemn chorales, duets and four-part homophony conveys itself well as a masterpiece of choral writing, with instruments not forgotten in its tender instrumental countermelodies and flowing chamber accompaniment. Like Handel, Vivaldi wasn't averse to a bit of borrowing and the final fugal movement ('Cum sancto spiritu') was in fact written by Giovanni Maria Ruggieri.

Text & Translations

Come dolce hoggi l'auretta

Come dolce hoggi l'auretta
spira lusinga e vien
lascivetta a baciarmi
le guancie'l sen.

*How sweetly the breeze today
blows flatteringly and comes,
wantonly to kiss
my cheeks and breast.*

Gli Amoretti l'aura fanno
quando l'ali spiegian al Ciel
quando vanno della notte
a squarciar il vel.

*It is Cupids which cause the breeze
when, on outspread wings to heaven,
they go
to lift the veil of night.*

Ride il bosco brilla il prato
scherza il fonte festeggia'l mar
quando un fiato d'aura fresca
s'ode spirar.

*The forest smiles, the meadow shines,
the fountain plays, the sea rejoices
at the first faint stirring
of a cool, refreshing breeze.*

Entri pur nel nostro petto
o bel l'aura nel tuo venir
quel diletto che fa l'alme
tanto gioir.

*When you come, o balmy breeze,
may our hearts, too, be filled
with that sweet delight which, in every soul,
you excite so greatly.*

Con che soavit 

Con che soavit , labbra odorate,
e vi bacio e v'ascolto;
ma se godo un piacer, l'altro m'  tolto.
Come i vostri diletti
s'ancidono fra lor, se dolcemente
vive per ambe due l'anima mia?
Che soave armonia
fareste, o cari baci, o dolci detti,
se foste unitamente
d'ambe due le dolcezze ambo capaci,
baciando, i detti, e ragionando, i baci.

*With what sweetness, o fragrant lips,
do I kiss you and listen to you;
but if I enjoy one pleasure, the other is taken from me.
How do these delights
fight with each other when so sweetly
does my soul long for both.
How sweet would be your concord,
dearest kisses, sweetest words,
were you able to unite
both your separate sweetnesses;
were the words to kiss and the kisses to speak.*

Crucifixus

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis;
sub Pontio Pilato passus
et sepultus est.

*He was crucified also for us,
under Pontius Pilate he suffered
and was buried.*

Biographies

Ana Beard Fernández is a Spanish–Mancunian soprano and composer based in London. She graduated with Distinction in her Master of Performance from the Royal College of Music in September 2020, and in November of that year was semi-finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier Award Competition.

This summer she will perform with Hampstead Garden Opera and East Anglia Opera, respectively as Venere/Fedra in *L'Egisto* (Cavalli) and The Witch/Dew Fairy in *Hansel und Gretel* (Humperdinck), and is looking forward to giving a recital of Lili Boulanger's *Clairières dans le Ciel*, in Kew, in late August. She has performed recitals of Barbara Strozzi cantatas at the Royal Academy of Arts, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* at the Tower of London, and Semele (Handel) at the Shanghai International Arts Festival. During lockdown, in conjunction with HERA and Aukoko, she has been composing the score for *Gracie*, a cabaret opera. Ana completed her undergraduate studies at the University of York in 2014, where she was recipient of the Ed Burrell Award for Excellence in Performance. That summer she went on to create the lead role in *Traffick*, by Emma-Ruth Richards at the Royal Opera House, and since then she has performed new works including Ondřej Adámek's *Karakuri: Poupée Mécanique*, Unsuk Chin's *Akrostichon-Wortspiel*, and songs by Rose Hall and Stef Conner at the Southbank Centre, York Spring Festival and the V&A, London.

Elsbeth Piggott

Elsbeth studied music at the University of York as an undergraduate student, where the early music scene is vivid, and caught a passion for it. Taking courses in Renaissance Italian Madrigals, Purcell's Mad Songs and performing both as a vocalist and bassoonist with the university's Baroque Ensemble, she found her thirst far from quenched. So, upon graduating, undertook her first professional engagement understudying i Fagiolini's devastating immersive-theatre project *Betrayal* inspired by the infamous life of Carlo Gesualdo. Since then she has continued to follow i Fag, as well as Polyphony, The Marian Consort and Musica Secreta, into all sorts of mischief across Italy, Spain, England, Scotland and Wales. Rounding out her musical experience, she has also sung with The Sixteen, Eric Whitacre Singers, the Britten Sinfonia Voices and The Philharmonia Voices, and has performed as a soloist in some of the country's top concert venues including the Barbican, Snape Malting's Concert Hall and St John's Smith Square. Elsbeth is currently studying with Jane Irwin at the Royal Northern College of Music, and pursuing her love of opera. In scenes, she has sung the roles of Zerbinetta in Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Vixen in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Marie in Donizetti's *La Fille du Regiment*, and Clorinda in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. As full operas, she has performed Susanna in Mozart's

The Marriage of Figaro, Miss Wordsworth in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Eurydice in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and Cupid in the 2020 production of *La Dafne* by Marco da Gagliano at the Brighton Early Music Festival (BREMf). This coming summer, she will be at BREMF again singing the role of Sirena in Francesca Caccini's opera *La liberazione di Ruggiero*, and is covering the role of Charlie in a new opera by Anna Appleby to be performed in 2022 with the BBC Philharmonic.

Lauren Macleod

Lauren was born on the Isle of Lewis, and brought up on folk music. A fluent Gaelic speaker, she began competing in the Mòd at an early age, and went on to win awards at the National Mòd, making numerous TV and radio appearances. Although she arrived at the University of St Andrews in 2013 to study Physics, she spent the majority of her time involved in musical activities, notably with Byre Opera, St Salvator's Chapel Choir and the University of St Andrews Opera Society. With these groups she performed the roles of Miss Jessel (*The Turn of the Screw*), Athamas (*Semele*) and Chocholka (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), among others.

After graduating, she undertook an MA in Solo Voice Ensemble Singing at the University of York, under the supervision of Robert Hollingworth. After this she moved to London, where she has lived and worked since 2018. In this time, she has been in demand in venues across the United Kingdom and Europe, and has performed under the batons of Dominic Ellis-Peckham, Andrew Parrott, and John Eliot Gardiner, among others.

Lauren is now studying at the Royal Academy of Music, under the tutelage of Alex Ashworth. She also performs (when Covid restrictions allow!) professionally in both operatic and consort settings. She is particularly proud of her work with her vocal quintet 'CatchingVoices'.