



A Wells Christmas

WELLS CATHEDRAL CHOIR

MATTHEW OWENS

A Wells Christmas

Wells Cathedral Choir
Jonathan Vaughn *organ*
Matthew Owens *conductor*

About Wells Cathedral Choir and Matthew Owens:

'The choir is, in a word, magnificent; singing with impressive self-assurance'
International Record Review

'Glorious, life-affirming and distinctive choral music in superbly polished performances'
Gramophone



Traditional English arr. Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)	Alfred Hollins (1865-1942)	[3:06]
1. Sussex Carol *	11. Christmas Cradle Song	
	Bob Chilcott	
Traditional French arr. Andrew Carter (b. 1939)	12. The Sparrow's Carol *	[2:31]
2. A maiden most gentle	Thomas Hewitt Jones (b. 1984)	
	13. What child is this?	[4:52]
Jefferson McConaughey (b. 1952)		
3. In the bleak midwinter *	John Rutter	
	14. Jesus Child	[3:22]
Traditional Czech arr. Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967)		
4. Zither Carol	Traditional English arr. John Rutter	
	15. I saw three ships	[2:15]
Matthew Owens (b. 1971)		
5. Lullay, my liking *	Traditional French arr. Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)	
	16. O leave your sheep	[4:52]
Traditional Welsh arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)		
6. Deck the hall	James Lord Pierpont (1822-93) arr. David Willcocks	[2:10]
	17. Jingle, bells	
John Rutter (b. 1945)		
7. Donkey Carol	Traditional English arr. Richard Elliot	
	18. I Saw Three Ships	[2:06]
Traditional English arr. David Willcocks		
8. Tomorrow shall be my dancing day	Traditional English arr. Arthur Warrell (1883-1939)	
	19. A Merry Christmas	[1:34]
Traditional English arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)		
9. This is the truth sent from above	Hugh Martin (1914-2011) and Ralph Blane (1914-1995) arr. Peter Gritton (b. 1963)	
	20. Have yourself a merry little Christmas	[3:31]
Cornish Traditional arr. John Rutter		
10. Sans Day Carol	Total playing time	[61:54]
	* world premiere recording	



Photography: Tom Lindsey

A Wells Christmas

Traditional carol tunes have been arranged by composers for centuries, certainly from the time of Michael Praetorius in the early 1600s. In Britain, carols took longer to become established, partly because the seventeenth century was a difficult era for the celebration of Christmas. Carols had often been sung by wassailers (street singers) or included in Christmas mystery plays, and Puritans in England tried to stamp out these tunes, especially given their associations with drinking, with secular origins, or – worst of all – with the Roman Catholic church. It wasn't just carols, but the feast itself that was under threat of extinction. In 1644, Parliament decreed that since 25 December that year was a fast day, it should kept as such, rather than for feasting, or 'by giving liberty to carnal and sensual delights'. A month later, Parliament attempted to abolish the public celebration of Christmas altogether: its new *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, a Puritan alternative to the established Book of Common Prayer, made no reference to Christmas at all. Cancelling Christmas aroused considerable public resentment, and making the celebration of Christmas a punishable offence in 1647 made matters even worse. Riots in London and Kent followed, and John Taylor published his

Vindication of Christmas in 1652, in which he singled out communities in the West of England for continuing to celebrate it. Cromwell became Lord Protector in 1653 and he maintained the ban on public celebrations of Christmas, underlining the point by transacting government business on 25 December. The feast was still celebrated in private, but it wasn't until the Restoration in 1660 that Christmas Day was re-established in the calendar.

For at least another century, Christmas was almost entirely a domestic festival, enjoyed quietly at home for those fortunate enough to have a holiday. Many were not, and working conditions during the early years of the Industrial Revolution led to the virtual extinction of the feast in many parts of the country. There were still outposts of the 'traditional' Christmas. In Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (her last novel, published in 1817), Jane Austen described the celebrations by the Musgroves at Uppercross Hall:

On one side was a table occupied by some chattering girls, cutting up silk and gold paper; and on the other were tressels and trays, bending under the weight of brawn and cold pies, where riotous boys were holding high revel; the whole completed by a roaring Christmas fire, which seemed determined to be heard in spite of all the noise of the others.

In 1819, Washington Irving, on a visit to England from the United States, was enchanted by the traditional Christmas celebrations he experienced at Aston Hall, providing a lightly fictionalized account in his *The Keeping of Christmas at Bracebridge Hall* where he writes about Christmas as a long-established feast in the British countryside:

Nothing in England exercises a more delightful spell over my imagination than the lingerings of the holiday customs and rural games of former times. The English [...] throughout every class of society, have always been fond of these festivals and holidays which agreeably interrupt the stillness of country life [...] Christmas is still a period of delightful excitement in England.

Some of the music that might have accompanied this kind of traditional English Christmas was published in 1822 by the Cornishman, Davies Gilbert (1767–1839). A graduate of Pembroke College, Oxford, and the MP for Helston (1804–6) and Bodmin (1806–32), he was a man of startlingly wide interests in the arts and sciences. He encouraged the young Humphry Davy and selected Brunel's design for the Clifton suspension bridge. His book *Some Ancient Christmas Carols* with the tunes to which they were formerly sung in the West of England was an

important landmark in the revival of English carols. Containing just twenty carols, this was followed in 1833 by a much more ambitious collection, William Sandys's *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*, containing eighty carols. The same author's *Christmas-tide: its History, Festivities and Carols, with their Music* appeared in 1852.

Sandys's 1833 and 1852 collections are an important printed source for some very famous carols, including *I saw three ships* and *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day* complete with what are still their most familiar tunes. However, these carol collections were intended either for the interest of antiquarians or as songbooks for the home. Collections such as *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1867–78), edited by Henry Ramsden Bramley and John Stainer, and *Carols for Use in Church during Christmas and Epiphany* (1875), edited by Richard Robert Chope and Herbert Stephen Irons (organist of Southwell Minster), with a preface by Sabine Baring-Gould, finally provided a repertoire of carols to be sung in church. Stainer was organist at London's St Paul's Cathedral from 1871 to 1888, and during these years he started to include a carol sung by the choir every evening during the Christmas season.

The history of the Carol Service began around

the same time. In the later-nineteenth century, churches around the country began to sing carols at Evensong on Christmas Eve, and a more formal Service was started – appropriately enough – at the cathedral in the Cornish city of Truro. On 20 December 1878, the *Royal Cornish Gazette* announced:

The Choir of the Cathedral will sing a number of carols in the Cathedral on Christmas Eve, the service commencing at 10 p.m. We understand that this is at the wish of many of the leading parishioners and others. A like service has been instituted in other cathedral and large towns, and has been much appreciated. It is the intention of the choir to no longer continue the custom of singing carols at the residences of members of the congregation.

The Bishop of Truro, appointed in 1877, was Edward White Benson (father of the novelist E.F. Benson of *Mapp and Lucia* fame, and of A.C. Benson, the poet of *Land of Hope and Glory* and later Master of Magdalene College and author). In 1880, with the help of his Assistant Precentor, Rev. George Walpole (father of the novelist Hugh Walpole), Benson instituted the first service of *Nine Lessons with Carols: Festal Service for Christmas Eve*. Truro has maintained the tradition ever since, and when Benson became Archbishop of Canterbury, he inaugurated a similar Carol

Service there. The Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, began on Christmas Eve, 1918, devised by Eric Milner-White, Dean of King's, and the Director of Music, Arthur Henry Mann, who held the post at King's from 1876 until his death in 1929. Mann's successor was Boris Ord and he, in turn, was followed by David Willcocks.

The *Oxford Book of Carols*, first published in 1928, was edited by Percy Dearmer, Martin Shaw and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Their choice of carol tunes owes something to the work of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and Cecil Sharp – there are plenty of vigorous melodies well suited to congregational singing, including the *Sussex Carol* – but there are also more recent carols by Holst, Warlock and Vaughan Williams himself, as well as a selection of traditional tunes from mainland Europe. In the Preface, Percy Dearmer wrote that:

Carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular, and modern. They are generally spontaneous and direct in expression, and their simplicity of form causes them sometimes to ramble on like a ballad. Carol literature and music are rich in true folk-poetry and remain fresh and buoyant even when the subject is a grave one. But they vary a good deal:

some are narrative, some dramatic, some personal, a few are secular; and there are some which do not possess all the typical characteristics. Simplicity, for instance, was often lost in the conceits of Jacobean poets, who yet wrote some charming carols.'

The innate folkish simplicity of many carol melodies was celebrated in the *Oxford Book of Carols*, but with the growing popularity of carol services in cathedrals, university colleges and parish churches with good choirs, there was a growing need for a volume that provided more elaborate arrangements suitable for choirs with or without congregations, and for new settings. Christopher Morris (1922–2014) was a boy chorister at Hereford Cathedral who sang under Elgar before becoming organist at St George's, Hanover Square and then taking up a position in the Music Department of Oxford University Press. It was Morris who had the idea of *Carols for Choirs*. Morris's aim, when he asked Reginald Jacques (1894–1969) and David Willcocks (1919–2015) to produce the first volume of *Carols for Choirs*, was for a book that would give church choirs interesting arrangements of famous carols in one volume, along with interesting modern carols, by the likes of Benjamin Britten, Zoltan Kodály, William Walton, Arnold Cooke, and Phyllis Tate. It was

published in 1961 and was a tremendous commercial success (to date, well over a million copies have been sold). Four further volumes followed, with the prodigious John Rutter (b. 1945) joining Willcocks as co-editor for *Carols for Choirs* 2–4. Morris died in November 2014 and in a broadcast tribute, Rutter said: 'I don't think it's putting it too strongly to say that Christopher Morris changed the whole sound of Christmas [...] because that volume transformed the kind of music that we all sang.' Morris also encouraged the young Rutter to compose carols, many of which were subsequently included in volumes of *Carols for Choirs*, such as the endearingly lopsided *Donkey Carol*, the delightfully ingenious and easy-going arrangement of the west-country *Sans Day Carol* and the lively *Jesus Child*. David Willcocks's arrangements of traditional carols (as well as his famous descants) have been a central feature of *Carols for Choirs* from the outset, and three of his most engaging and inventive are included here – brilliantly re-imagined versions for skilled choirs that also manage to retain the folk-like spirit of the originals. The momentum created by *Carols for Choirs* extended well beyond the volumes themselves, and other composers quickly took up the challenge of writing Christmas music for choirs, and Andrew Carter (b. 1939) has produced a substantial body of work,

including this distinctive arrangement of *A maiden most gentle*. Other publishers followed the lead of *Carols for Choirs*, and in 1962 Novello published the anthology *Sing Nowell*. This included *O leave your sheep*, an arrangement of an old French carol tune by Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988), who had been composing carols of great individuality since the 1940s.

Carols for Choirs 5 – was issued in 2011 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the first volume, edited by Bob Chilcott (b. 1955) and David Blackwell. Chilcott sang in the choir of King's College, Cambridge, as both a treble (he was the soloist on Willcocks's famous 1967 recording of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*) and as tenor, subsequently joining the King's Singers, of which he was a member for twelve years. His choral music ranges from works for children's choirs to much more elaborate works for chorus and orchestra, including a *Requiem*. Blackwell was Head of Music Publishing at OUP before becoming a freelance composer. *Carols for Choirs* 5 includes carols by the next generation of composers, including *What child is this?* by Thomas Hewitt Jones (winner of the BBC Young Composer Competition in 2003).

In addition to his duties as Organist and

Master of the Choristers at Wells Cathedral, Matthew Owens has composed some particularly successful carols. Among the most recent of these (published in 2016) is *Lullay, my liking*, a setting of a famous fifteenth-century text notable for music of quiet simplicity, continuing the tradition of carol settings and arrangements that are both musically sophisticated and true to the simpler origins of the words (and, where relevant, the tunes). This delicate artistic balancing act for composers was in evidence decades before the first 'green book' of *Carols for Choirs* first appeared – not least in works like Britten's *A Boy was born* and *A Ceremony of Carols* – and the challenge of carol composition and arranging continues to inspire composers to this day.

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Texts

(excluding texts in copyright)

Traditional English

arr. Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)

1. Sussex Carol

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad?
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

Traditional English

Traditional French

arr. Andrew Carter (b. 1939)

2. A maiden most gentle

Text by Andrew Carter

Jefferson McConnaughey (b. 1952)

3. In the bleak midwinter

In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air -
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can, I give Him -
Give my heart.

Christina Rosetti (1830-1894)

Traditional Czech
arr. Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967)
4. Zither Carol

Text by Malcolm Sargent

Matthew Owens (b. 1971)
5. Lullay, my liking

Lullay, my liking, my dear son, my sweeting;
Lullay my dear heart, mine own dear darling.

I saw a fair maiden sitten and sing:
She lulled a little child,
A Sweete lording:

Lullay...

That eternal Lord is he
That made alle thing;
Of alle lordes he is Lord,
Of alle kinges King:

Lullay...

There was mickle melody
A that childe's birth:
Although they were in heaven's bliss
They made mickle mirth:

Lullay...

Angels bright they sang that night
And saiden to that child
'Blessed be thou, as so be she
That is both meek and mild:

Lullay...

Pray we now to that child,
And to his mother dear,
God grant them all his blessing
That now maken cheer:

Lullay...

Anonymous fifteenth century

Traditional Welsh
arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)
6. Deck the hall

Deck the hall with boughs of holly,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la,
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.
Fill the mead cup, drain the barrel,
Fa la la la, fa la la la,
Troll the ancient Christmas carol,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.

See the flowing bowl before us,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la,
Strike the harp and join the chorus,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa la la la, fa la la la,
While I sing of beauty's treasure,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la,
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.
Laughing, quaffing, all together,
Fa la la la, fa la la la,

Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la la la, fa la la la.

Traditional Welsh

John Rutter (b. 1945)
7. Donkey Carol

Text by John Rutter

Traditional English
arr. David Willcocks
8. Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance:

Sing O my love, O my love;
This have I done for my true love.

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to my dance:

Sing O my love...

In a manger laid and wrapp'd I was,
So very poor, this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass,
To call my true love to my dance:

Sing O my love...

Traditional English

Traditional English
arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
9. This is the truth sent from above

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love;
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all, both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate,
Is that God did man create
The next thing which to you I'll tell,
Woman was made with man to dwell.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run
That he would redeem us by his Son.

And at that season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear;
He here did live, and here did preach,
And many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

Traditional English

Cornish Traditional
arr. John Rutter
10. Sans Day Carol

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

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

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

And Mary bore...

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

And Mary bore...

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

And Mary bore...

Traditional Cornish

Bob Chilcott
12. The Sparrow's Carol

Text by Charles Bennett (b. 1954)

Thomas Hewitt Jones (b. 1984)
13. What child is this?

What Child is this who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and Angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise a song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-98)



John Rutter
14. Jesus Child

Text by John Rutter

Traditional English
arr. John Rutter
15. I saw three ships

I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Pray wither sailed those ships all three
On Christmas Day in the morning?

O, they sailed into Bethlehem
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And who should be in those three ships
But Joseph and his Lady?

And he did whistle and she did sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And all the angels in heav'n shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Traditional English

Traditional French
arr. Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)
16. O leave your sheep

O leave your sheep,
Your lambs that follow after,
O leave the brook,
The pasture and the crook,
No longer weep,
Turn weeping into laughter,
O shepherds, seek your goal.
Your Lord, who cometh to console.

You'll find him laid
within a simple stable,
A babe new born,
in poverty forlorn,
In love array'd,
A love so deep 'tis able
To search the night for you,
'Tis he! The Shepherd true.

O kings so great,
a light is streaming o'er you,
More radiant far
than diadem or star,
Forego your state,
A baby lies before you
Whose wonder shall be told:
Bring myrrh, bring frankincense and gold.

Traditional French

James Lord Pierpont (1822-93)
arr. David Willcocks
17. Jingle, bells

Dashing thro' the snow
In a one horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way;
Bells on Bobtail ring,
Making spirits bright;
What fun it is to ride, and sing
A sleighing song tonight.

Jingle, bells, jingle, bells, jingle all the way;
Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh!

Now the ground is white;
Go it while you're young,
Take the girls tonight,
And sing this sleighing song.
Just get a bobtailed bay,
Two-forty for his speed;
Then hitch him to an open sleigh
And crack! you'll take the lead.

Jingle, bells...

James Lord Pierpont

Traditional English
arr. Arthur Warrell (1883-1939)
19. A Merry Christmas

We wish you a merry Christmas,
We wish you a merry Christmas,
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year.

Now bring us some figgy pudding,
Now bring us some figgy pudding,
Now bring us some figgy pudding
and bring some out here.

Good tidings we bring
To you and your kin;
We wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year.

For we all like figgy pudding,
We all like figgy pudding,
We all like figgy pudding,
So bring some out here.

Good tidings...

And we won't go till we've got some,
We won't go till we've got some,
And we won't go till we've got some,
So bring some out here.

Good tidings...

Traditional English

Hugh Martin (1914-2011) and Ralph Blane (1914-1995)
arr. Peter Gritton (b. 1963)
20. Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Text by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane

The boy and girl choristers of Wells Cathedral, Christmas 2015 (photography: Iain Macleod-Jones)



Wells Cathedral Choir

Wells Cathedral Choir was hailed in 2011 by an international jury from *Gramophone* magazine as the greatest choir with children in the world, and the sixth greatest overall. The choir celebrated its 1100th birthday in 2009: boys first sang at Wells Cathedral in 909 and the full choral tradition dates back over 800 years. In 1994 the choral foundation at Wells was enriched by the addition of girl choristers. Today the choir consists of 18 boy choristers, 18 girl choristers and 12 Vicars Choral (the men of the choir). The boys and girls usually sing separately with the Vicars Choral but occasionally come together for larger events and tours.

The choir is at the heart of the worshipping life of the Cathedral, and sings a wide repertoire of music ranging from the Renaissance period to the present day. It sings throughout the cathedral's festival, launched in June 2008: *new music wells*, giving a number of premieres as well as featuring music from the previous forty years. It has premiered works from some of today's finest composers, including Lord Michael Berkeley CBE, Judith Bingham, Geoffrey Burgon, Bob Chilcott, Jonathan Dove, Gabriel Jackson, John Joubert, Sir James MacMillan CBE, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CH CBE (former Master of the

Queen's Music), Tarik O'Regan, John Rutter, Howard Skempton, and Sir John Tavener.

Wells Cathedral Choir broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and its innovative recordings over the last eleven years for Hyperion Records and Regent Records have won international praise and has had two discs made Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine.

As well as the liturgical musical repertoire the choir performs larger scale choral works in concert, with recent collaborations including the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (*Britten War Requiem*), Jools Holland and his band (*Jools Holland Mass*), Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society (*Britten St Nicolas and War Requiem*), Dame Felicity Lott, Dame Emma Kirkby, James Bowman CBE, and Wells Cathedral School Chamber Orchestra (at a royal gala concerts at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and St James's Palace, London). In September 2014 the choristers sang with the Berlin Radio Choir and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle OM, in a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the BBC Proms.

The choir has toured extensively with recent tours to France, Germany, The Netherlands, Hong Kong and Beijing.

Jonathan Vaughn (organ)

Jonathan Vaughn was born in Croydon in 1981 into a musical British-American family. As a boy he sang in the Addington Palace Choristers under Martin How whose encouragement led to his appointment as Organ Scholar at Croydon Parish Church at the age of thirteen. He attended St Olave's Grammar School in Orpington, where he began his organ studies at the age of eleven with Simon Williams and before reaching seventeen he had gained both diplomas from the Royal College of Organists, winning most of the prizes. On leaving school Jonathan spent a year as Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.

For four years he was Organ Scholar at St John's College, Cambridge under Dr Christopher Robinson and Dr David Hill. At St John's, Jonathan accompanied and assisted in the direction of the world famous choir, toured around the world, and accompanied broadcasts and recordings, including acclaimed performances of the works of Sir Lennox Berkeley and Sir Edward Elgar on the Naxos label. At Cambridge he became increasingly busy as a conductor, including being an Assistant Conductor of Cambridge University Musical Society. During this time he studied with

Dame Gillian Weir.

On leaving St John's he spent three years as Assistant Director of Music at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. While at St Edmundsbury Cathedral he played for services commemorating the completion of the Cathedral Tower, and was Musical Director of the St Edmundsbury Singers and the Phoenix Singers.

In 2007 he moved to his present position of Assistant Organist of Wells Cathedral. His principal duty is to the Cathedral's daily round of services and the nurturing of its choristers' talents and extra-liturgically he has played the organ for several recordings of contemporary composers and toured internationally with the Cathedral Choir. In 2009 he played the organ and directed the choir for the funeral of Harry Patch, the Last Fighting Tommy.

Jonathan regularly performs recitals around the UK, and has also played in The Netherlands and Poland. In 2014 he made his United States debut with a five recital tour. He is also Musical Director of the Somerset Singers, a ninety strong choir whose performances have included Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Verdi's *Requiem*, and teaches the organ at Wells Cathedral School.

Matthew Owens (conductor)

Matthew Owens became Organist and Master of the Choristers of Wells Cathedral in January 2005, having previously been Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh, and Sub Organist of Manchester Cathedral. In addition to being responsible for the 1100 year old tradition of daily sung worship at Wells Cathedral, Matthew has toured, broadcast, and recorded extensively with Wells Cathedral Choir. Matthew is the Founder Artistic Director of three initiatives at Wells: *Cathedral Commissions*, a scheme which commissions new works from pre-eminent British composers; the cathedral's innovative festival, *new music wells*; and its counterpart, *Early Music Wells*.

Matthew was educated at Chetham's School of Music; The Queen's College, Oxford; the Royal Northern College of Music; and the Sweelinck Conservatorium, Amsterdam. His major organ studies were with Gordon Stewart, Margaret Phillips, and Jacques van Oortmerssen. From 1994-99, he was Tutor in Organ Studies at the RNCM and Chetham's, and worked for BBC Religious Broadcasting; he was Conductor of The Exon Singers from 1997-2011, and President of the Cathedral Organists' Association from 2010-13.

He is Musical Director of the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society, a chorus of over 150 singers with which he has performed many major works by J.S. Bach, Bernstein, Brahms, Britten, Elgar, Fauré, Finzi, Handel, Purcell, Rutter, Vaughan Williams, Verdi and Vivaldi, with some of the south of England's leading professional orchestras. Matthew has directed choral workshops and summer schools throughout the UK and abroad – including recent visits to Australia, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the USA – and has made over thirty recordings as a conductor with major labels including Hyperion, Signum, and Resonus Classics.

As an organist, Matthew has given recitals in Australia, France, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, New Zealand, the USA, and throughout the UK, including many festival appearances, and at venues such as St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral, and St John's Smith Square, and is currently performing the complete works of Bach at Wells Cathedral over a series of thirty-six recitals. He has championed new music, particularly of British composers, conducting over 180 world premieres, including works by leading composers ranging from Jools Holland to Sir James MacMillan, and John Rutter to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. As a composer himself, he is published by Oxford University Press and Novello.

Wells Cathedral Choir

Boy Choristers

Tom Bates
George Blundell
Dylan Cox
Henry Dukes
Hugo Fisher
James Gooding ††
Xavier Hobday-Padamadan
Alexei James-Cudworth
Robert King
Hugh Latta †
Ozzie Latta
James MacGeoch
Bailey Roberts
Taylor Thompson

Girl Choristers

Rosa Bonnin
Harriet Carlill
Carla Coombs
Erin Davies
Niamh Davies
Orla Donoghue
Eliza Green
Molly Johnson
Frederica Lindsey-Coombs
Beth Mitton
Jessica Morell
Sophie Morrell
Harriet Perring
Madeleine Perring *
Astrid Rose-Edwards

Altos

Simon Clulow
Stephen Harvey
Damien Macedo
Tim Wilson

Tenors

Edward Goater
Iain MacLeod-Jones
Matthew Minter
Ben Tambling
Jack Wilde

Basses

Craig Bissex
William Drakett †
Andrew Kidd
Christopher Sheldrake

* Soloist, track 5

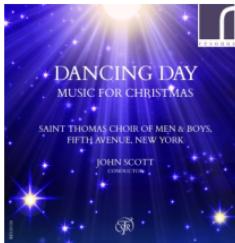
† Soloist, track 9

†† Soloist, tracks 8 & 13

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Stuart and Kathryn Beer*

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REONUS LIMITED – UK

info@resonusclassics.com
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