



New Cambridge Singers Registered Charity Number 1042801

Website www.newcambridgesingers.org.uk

Contents:

- **His Name Is Time – a new choir commission**
- **A view from the choir – Gillian Perkins**
- **Big Sing 2012**

His Name Is Time



The choir is very much looking forward to giving the premiere of its latest commission, a work for choir and solo cello by Scottish composer Rory Boyle entitled *His Name Is Time*, which has been sponsored by generous donations to the choir's New Music Fund and by the New Cambridge Songs scheme. Rory writes of his new work:

"I was delighted to be commissioned to write a piece for the New Cambridge Singers. My friend and fellow composer Chris Brown first mooted the idea three or four years ago, and I'm very pleased that it has now come to fruition. My background is in choral music, as I was a boy chorister at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and was for twelve years the Musical Director of the Malvern Festival Chorus, so I do have some experience in the genre. Each commission brings interesting challenges, and in this case it was writing for SATB choir and solo cello. This particular combination raises all sorts of questions regarding balance, colour and texture, and I decided to use the cello as an extra voice rather than simply as an accompanying instrument. It struck me that perhaps some subtle amplification might be advisable for the cello, but this will depend largely on the acoustic for the performance – so over to you, Chris!

As always when writing a piece involving words, I spent a lot of time looking for suitable texts once I'd decided that the piece would be secular. Choosing words is a highly personal thing, as they have to speak to you and provide structural possibilities, but when writing a whole set of songs you also have to think about a unified theme that will bind them together into a satisfactory whole. I was initially drawn to the Scottish poet William Soutar (whose poetry I've set before) and was going to choose four of his poems, but then kept changing my mind (another term for procrastination, I fear!). It was only when I read Louis MacNiece's poem 'Riding in cars' that I finally decided on a set of songs about time, and it was a line from this poem that provided me with the title *His Name Is Time*. Poems by Walter de la Mare, William Soutar and Rabindranath Tagore complete the set.

I hope I've managed to produce something that will be rewarding to sing, as well as presenting a few challenges. When writing choral music I try to prepare the vocal entries with some care, but I'm aware that secure intonation and rhythmic accuracy will be the main focus in preparing these songs. I thoroughly enjoyed working on this commission (the hours and days when nothing seems to go right are always forgotten when the final double bar line goes in), and very much look forward to coming down to Cambridge for the premiere in November."

NCS will be performing Rory's work with cellist Tom Wraith, together with Bach's much-loved *Singet dem Herrn* and motets by Parry, in Jesus College Chapel on Saturday 12 November at 8 pm. Tickets may be purchased on the door (£12, students £5), or reserved in advance by phoning 01223 844513.



A view from the choir – Gillian Perkins (soprano)

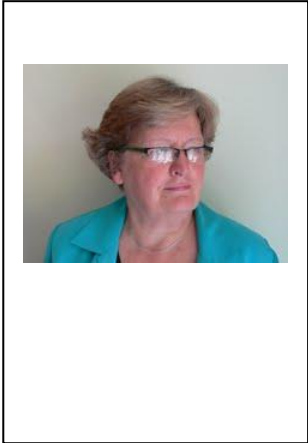
Some eighteen months after retirement from the Cambridge Music Festival, I'm only just able to put a stop to the habits of a lifetime. I'm not the only Festival Director for whom it was (is?) an inescapable, automatic response, at any concert, anywhere, to start thinking, "How much is this house worth? / Is the audience enjoying this? / Where have they come from? / How did they hear about it? / What *are* those stewards doing?"

It was the Festival that brought me into NCS. I first heard and saw the choir at the 2000 Festival, and found that it was full of friends of mine. For that Festival we celebrated music and architecture, taking concerts to over 45 different venues in three weeks. Quite a feat looking back – one of those apparently bright ideas I had which turned out to be one that gave me nightmares for months. I persuaded NCS to take part in a Church Crawl to four different city churches. I started singing for the choir soon afterwards, albeit with a term off each time the next Festival came around; the choir took part in a number of Church Crawl events. I should give NCS a big thank-you for being so tolerant of my triennial absences.

One of the delights of "retirement" is having time, in theory at least, to sing in all the NCS concerts throughout the year. But what retirement? I'm a trustee of three musical charities – the London Mozart

Players and the Ouseley Trust, as well as, nearer to home, the newly formed King's Junior Voices. They keep me busy, and I've been persuaded to manage various projects and concerts too – Alfred Brendel's residency with the Cambridge University Faculty of Music, St John's Choir's big 500th anniversary concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra in Ely (Mahler's *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, with Dame Ann Murray, and Walton's *Belsazzar's Feast* on 18 November – a date for your diary!), a charity carol concert at West Road (5 December), and now the NCS Big Sing at Great St Mary's in January (see below).

All of this doesn't quite match up to Festival life, and of course I miss it. Running successful festivals has its own special magnetic draw. Someone once said that putting the music programme together was like a child visiting an enormous sweet shop. Inevitably my purse was never large enough! I certainly don't miss the resulting rollercoaster road of raising the £250,000 we needed to fund each Festival. Who would? But once those mountains had been climbed up and down, it was a real privilege to be at the hub of a group of staff who gave so much enthusiasm and effort to make each Festival the thrill it was. I miss the excitement of putting 70 events into three weeks and of all the musician friends who came to Cambridge to perform for us, and the pleasure they and we gave to the thousands and thousands who came to listen.



Big Sing 2012

Encouraged by the success of our 2010 Big Sing, through which we raised over £4,000 for the Alzheimer's Society, we've planned another for **Saturday 14 January 2012**, to be held again at Great St Mary's, this time in aid of EACH, the children's hospice in Milton. We'll be performing a selection of festive works to launch the Diamond Jubilee year, including Parry's *I Was Glad*, *Blest Pair of Sirens* and *Jerusalem*, and Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. If you'd like to take part as a singer, or come to hear the performance, please keep an eye on the choir website for further details.

