

The Cherwell Singers

present

Hark! what joyous sounds!

Folksongs and songs of life and love

James Brown

conductor

Steven Grahl

piano

Sunday, 3rd July 2011

The Grove Auditorium
Magdalen College, Oxford

Programme

From the Bavarian Highlands Edward Elgar

The Dance; False Love; Lullaby; Aspiration

Early one morning *arr.* Edward Higginbottom

Blow the wind southerly *arr.* John Cameron

Piano solo:

Mock Morris Percy Grainger

The Kerry Dance James Molloy, *arr.* Alec Rowley

Londonderry Air *arr.* Bob Chilcott

Interval

during which wine will be available in the foyer.

The Minstrel Boy *traditional*

Piano Solo:

25 Norwegian Folksongs and Dances Edvard Grieg

Spring Dance; The Swain; Wedding Tune; Halling

Shenandoah *arr.* James Erb

Old American Songs *arr.* Aaron Copland

The Boatmen's Dance; Simple Gifts; Ching-A-Ring Chaw

Smoke gets in your eyes Jerome Kern, *arr.* Malcolm Archer

Just the way you look tonight

Miss Otis Regrets Cole Porter, *arr.* David Terry

Begin the Beguine .

Home is a special kind of feeling John Rutter

Double bass – Ghislaine McMullin

Drums – Oli Baxendale

This concert is a celebration of folksongs and other songs that have grown out of that tradition. Folksong speaks of the joys and sorrows of life with its universal themes of landscape, nature, nostalgia and, of course, love. These shared values speak to everyone, making folksong perhaps more universal than any other musical form, and the original popular music. In a nod to the development that song was later to take in this direction we also include in our programme some arrangements of favourite popular songs from the mid twentieth century.

Folksong successfully survived the transition into the modern mechanised world largely thanks to the efforts of musicians such as Elgar and Vaughan-Williams who collected and catalogued it from the oral tradition. The transition from the countryside to the concert hall has given the originally simple and instantly attractive melodies of folksong a new lease of life as the starting point for new and artful arrangements by living composers. Thus our programme includes both composed songs that grow out of the folk tradition and modern arrangements of favourite popular songs such as *Early one morning*, *Londonderry Air*, and *Shenandoah*.

We hope that the pastoral setting of the Grove Auditorium backing on to the gardens and deer park of Magdalen College provides a suitable setting for the programme on this summer evening.

James Brown

Shortly after their marriage in 1889, **Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) and his wife Alice took to holidaying with friends in Bavaria. Alice became enchanted by some local Bavarian folk poetry, and was inspired to write some of her own in imitation of it (*not* translations). Elgar set six of Alice's poems for voices and piano as **From the Bavarian Highlands**, later arranging the music for three of them for orchestra. The pieces have the names of some favourite places as subtitles, as a kind of tribute to them. Even allowing for the superiority of the music over the verse, the Elgar's deep love of the area is entirely apparent in these delightful miniatures.

1 - The Dance (Sonnenbichl)

Come and hasten to the dancing,
Merry eyes will soon be glancing,
 Ha! my heart upbounds!
Come and dance a merry measure,
Quaff the bright brown ale my treasure,
 Hark! what joyous sounds!

Sweet-heart come, on let us haste,
On, on, no time let us waste,
With my heart I love thee!
Dance, dance, for rest we disdain,
Turn, twirl, and spin round again,
With my arm I hold thee!

Down the path the lights are gleaming,
Friendly faces gladly beaming
 Welcome us with song.
Dancing makes the heart grow lighter,
Makes the world and life grow brighter
 As we dance along!

2 - False Love (Wamberg)

Now we hear the Spring's sweet voice
Singing gladly through the world;
Bidding all the earth rejoice.

All is merry in the field,
Flowers grow amidst the grass,
Blossoms blue, red, white they yield.

As I seek my maiden true,
Sings the little lark on high
Fain to send her praises due.

As I climb and reach her door,
Ah! I see a rival there,
So farewell! for evermore.

Ever true was I to thee,
Never grieved or vexed thee, love,
False, oh! false, art thou to me.

Now amid the forest green,
Far from cruel eyes that mock
Will I dwell unloved, unseen.

3 – Lullaby (In Hammersbach)

Sleep, my son, oh! slumber softly,
While thy mother watches o'er thee,
Nothing can affright or harm thee.
 Oh! sleep, my son.

Far-away zithers play,
Dancing gay calls to-day.
Vainly play zithers gay!
Here I stay all the day.
Happily guarding thee,
Peacefully watching thee.

Sleep, my son,
 Oh! sleep, my son.

4 – Aspiration (bei Sankt Anton)

Over the heights the snow lies deep,
Sunk is the land in peaceful sleep;
Here by the house of God we pray,
Lead, Lord, our souls to-day.

 Shielding, like the silent snow,
 Fall His mercies here below.

Calmly then, like the snow-bound land,
Rest we in His protecting hand;
Bowing, we wait His mighty will:
Lead, Lord, and guide us still.

Early One Morning is an English folk song whose lyrics are first found in publications as far back as 1787. Early editions are often referred to as *The Lamenting Maid* or *The Lovesick Maid*. It is curious that scarcely any two copies agree beyond the second line, although the subject is always the same - a damsel's complaint for the loss of her lover.

Early one morning, just as the sun was rising
I heard a maid sing in the valley below:
 “Oh, don’t deceive me, oh, never leave me,
 How could you use a poor maiden so?”

“Remember the vows that you made to your Mary,
Remember the bow’r where you vow’d to be true.
 “Oh, don’t deceive me...”

“Oh gay is the garland and, fresh are the roses
I’ve culled from the garden to bind on thy brow.
 “Oh, don’t deceive me...”

Thus sung the poor maiden her sorrows bewailing,
Thus sung the poor maid in the valley below.
 “Oh don’t deceive me...”

Blow the Wind Southerly was first published in England in 1834, but only a small part of the published poem was used for this traditional song. The melody probably predates the early nineteenth century origins of the text. The authors of both the words and music are anonymous, but the song can be traced to Northumbria.

Blow the wind southerly, southerly, southerly,
Blow the wind south o’er the bonny blue sea;
Blow the wind southerly, southerly, southerly,
Blow bonnie breezes, my lover to me.

They told me last night there were ships in the offing,
And I hurried down to the deep rolling sea;
But my eye could not see it wherever might be it,
The bark that is bearing my lover to me.

Percy Grainger (1882-1961) was a pianist, composer, and folk music collector, and much of his music is either arrangement of, or in the style of, folk music. The Morris dance is a traditional English dance that is buoyant and rhythmic with a “jog-trot” feeling. **Mock Morris**, subtitled in Grainger’s idiosyncratic style *Room-music Tit-bits No.1*, gives the impression of a Morris dance, though without being an exact copy. It was first written for “string six-some or string-band” as a birthday gift to his mother, and then “dished-up” (as he called it) twice for solo piano, in “concert” and “popular” versions.

The Kerry Dance was written by an Irishman, **James Molloy** (1837-1909). During the 19th century dance was deeply ingrained in Irish custom, and therefore forbidden by the English along with all other practice of Irish customs; when they finally let up on it, the clergy started forbidding dance on grounds of indecency. Some of Molloy's contemporaries claimed that the song's opening bars were taken from *The Cuckoo* by an eighteenth century composer, Margaret Casson.

O the days of the Kerry dancing,
O the ring of the piper's tune!
O for one of those hours of gladness,
Gone, alas! like our youth, too soon:

When the boys began to gather
In the glen of a summer night,
And the Kerry piper's tuning
Made us long with wild delight:

O to think if it, O to dream of it,
Fills my heart with tears!

O the days of the Kerry dancing...

Was there ever a sweeter colleen,
In the dance than Eily More!
Or a prouder lad than Thady
As he boldly took the floor.

"Lads and lasses, to your places,
Up the middle and down again,"
Ah! the merry-hearted laughter
Ringing through the happy glen.

O to think of it, O to dream of it,
Fills my heart with tears!

O the days of the Kerry dancing...

Time goes on and the happy years are dead
And one by one the merry hearts are fled;
Silent now is the wild and lonely glen
Where the bright glad laugh will echo ne'er
again.

Only dreaming of days gone by,
In my heart I hear:

Loving voices of old companions,
Stealing out of the past once more,
And the sound of the dear old music
Soft and sweet as in days of yore.

When the boys began to gather...

O the days of the Kerry dancing...

The **Londonderry Air** was first published in 1855. It was long a mystery, as only one collector had ever encountered it, and the four-square style is uncharacteristic of Irish folk music. In 1934, it was suggested that the collector misheard the rubato of the performer, and a conjectural version in triple time was made. In 1974, Hugh Shields found a long-forgotten traditional song which was very similar to the conjectured version of the melody; this song, (*Aisling an Óigfhir*, "The young man's dream"), had been transcribed in 1792 from a performance by harper Denis Hempson at the Belfast Harp Festival. The words now commonly sung to the tune (**Danny Boy**) were written by an English lawyer, Frederick Weatherly, in 1910; in spite of some later interpretations, the author wrote that the song had "nothing of the rebel song in it, and no note of bloodshed".

O Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side,
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling,
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
'Tis I'll be there in sunshine or in shadow.
O Danny boy, O Danny boy, I love you so.

And when you come and all the flowers are dying,
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,
Ye'll come and find a place where I am lying
And kneel and say an *Ave* there for me.
And I shall hear though soft your tread above me,
And o'er my grave shall warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.

The Minstrel Boy is an Irish patriotic song written by Thomas Moore (1779–1852) who set it an old Irish air called *The Moreen*. He composed the song in remembrance of friends who had participated in the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and died during it. The song gained widespread popularity and became a favourite of many Irishmen who fought during the United States Civil War.

The Minstrel Boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him;
His father's sword he hath girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him;
"Land of Song!" said the warrior bard,
"Tho' all the world betrays thee,
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

The minstrel fell! but the foeman's chain
Could not bring that proud soul under;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder;
And said "No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They shall never sound in slavery."

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) was a Norwegian composer, conductor and pianist (and also a friend of the young Percy Grainger). He was an ardent nationalist, and did his best to help establish a distinctly Norwegian form of art music, using Norwegian folk songs and dances as the basis of many of his compositions. *Halling* is the name of a Norwegian folk dance, danced as a solo man's dance to display strength and agility; the dancer either kicks his foot high towards the ceiling, or kicks down a hat that is held up high.

The provenance of the song **Shenandoah** is unclear. The lyrics, of which there are many versions, may tell the story of a roving trader in love with the daughter of an Indian chief. Other interpretations tell of a pioneer's nostalgia for the Shenandoah River Valley in Virginia, and a young woman who is his daughter; or of a Union soldier in the American Civil War, dreaming of his country home to the west of the Missouri river. The song is also associated with escaped slaves; they were said to sing the song in gratitude because the river allowed their scent to be lost.

O Shenando', I long to see you,
And hear your rolling river,
O Shenando', I long to see you,
'Way, we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri.

'Tis sev'n long years since last I see you,
And hear your rolling river,
'Tis sev'n long years since last I see you,
'Way, we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri.

I long to see your smiling valley,
And hear your rolling river,
I long to see your smiling valley,
'Way, we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri.

O Shenando', I long to see you,
And hear your rolling river,
O Shenando', I long to see you,
'Way, we're bound away,
Across the wide Missouri.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) wrote his first set of **Old American Songs** for a commission from Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten, and they were so successful that he wrote another set soon after. Originally written for solo voice and piano, they were soon adapted for chorus in various ways. This evening we are performing a suite of three movements taken from both sets. *The Boatman's Dance* is a minstrel show tune written by Daniel Decatur Emmett; the accompaniment mimics a minstrel banjo. *Simple Gifts* is the Shaker melody that Copland also used in his best-known ballet, *Appalachian Spring*, arranged in a straightforward style closer to the original folk version. *Ching-a-Ring Chaw* is another minstrel song, with a catchy melody that repeats in an optimistic, jig-like fashion. The original words called for the "repatriation" of African-Americans to Haiti (!), so Copland wrote a new text himself to describe a more universal vision of "the promised land".

High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.

The boatmen dance, the boatmen sing,
The boatmen up to ev'rything,
And when the boatman gets on shore
He spends his cash and works for more.

Then dance the boatmen dance,
O dance the boatmen dance,
O dance all night 'til broad daylight
And go home with the gals in the mornin'.

High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.

The boatman is a thrifty man,
There's none can do as the boatman can.
I never see a pretty gal in my life
But that she was a boatman's wife.

O dance the boatmen dance,
O dance the boatmen dance,
O dance all night 'til broad daylight
And go home with the gals in the mornin'.

High row the boatmen row,
Floatin' down the river the Ohio.

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where you ought to be;
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed;
To turn, turn will be our delight
'Till by turning, turning we come round right.

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding-a ding kum larkee,
Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding kum larkee,

Brothers gather 'round,
Listen to this story,
'Bout the promised land,
An' the promised glory.

You don' need to fear,
If you have no money,
You don' need none there,
To buy you milk and honey.

There you'll ride in style,
Coach with four white horses,
There the evenin' meal,
Has one two three four courses.

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding-a ding kum larkee,
Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching,
Ho-a ding kum larkee,

Nights we all will dance,
To the harp and fiddle,
Waltz and jig and prance,
"Cast off down the middle."

When the mornin' come,
All in grand and splendour,
Stand out in the sun,
And hear the holy thunder!

Brothers hear me out,
The promised land's a-comin'
Dance and sing and shout,
I hear them harps a strummin'.

Ching-a-ring-a ching ching
Ring ching ching ching CHAW!

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes is a show tune written by **Jerome Kern** (1885-1945) for the 1933 operetta *Roberta*. It has been recorded by a remarkable number of artists, including, for example, Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra, Nat “King” Cole, Bryan Ferry, and Eartha Kitt.

The Way You Look Tonight, also by Kern, originally featured in the film *Swing Time*, and won the Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1936. The lyricist, Dorothy Fields, later remarked: “The first time Jerry played that melody for me I went out and started to cry. The release absolutely killed me. I couldn’t stop, it was so beautiful.”

Miss Otis Regrets was written by **Cole Porter** (1891–1964) in 1934, and was first performed on stage in *Hi Diddle Diddle* at the Savoy Theatre, London. The song is in the blues style, and is Porter’s wry take on the tale of a woman who comes to a bad end after an encounter with a man. Porter’s peculiar twist is that Miss Otis is a polite society lady, and the story of her last evening is told by her servant after Miss Otis has met her demise.

Porter composed **Begin the Beguine** at the piano in the bar of the Ritz Hotel in Paris in 1935, and it became part of the Broadway musical *Jubilee* at the Imperial Theatre in New York City. The beguine, a slow, close couples’ dance, comes from the Caribbean, where in the local Creole language the name means “White lady”. It is a combination of French ballroom dance and Latin folk dance, which became popular in Paris and spread further abroad in the 1940s, largely due to the influence of the Porter song.

John Rutter (1945-) wrote his entertainment based on Kenneth Grahame’s enchanting book *The Wind in the Willows* to be performed at a family concert by the King’s Singers and the City of London Sinfonia. **Home is a special kind of feeling** is the finale of the entertainment, and fittingly rounds off our concert of music with a pastoral theme.

Steven Grahl piano

Steven enjoys a varied career as both organist and conductor. He combines the post of Assistant Organist at New College, Oxford with that of Organist & Director of Music at St Marylebone Parish Church, London, and he was acting Director of the New College Choir during Trinity Term 2010. He is a member of the Oxford University Faculty of Music. Since 2006 he has held the Principal Conductorship of the Guildford Chamber Choir.

During 2010, Steven gave performances in America, (in New York, Washington and St Louis), France, Germany and Italy. In London he performed at Westminster Cathedral and St John's Smith Square.

A prize-winning graduate of Magdalen College, Oxford (where he was Organ Scholar) and the Royal Academy of Music, Steven gained the Limpus (highest mark) and Dixon (improvisation) prizes in his FRCO examination, and he is also a holder of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Medallion.

James Brown conductor

James was Organ Scholar of Girton College, Cambridge and upon graduating studied organ at the Conservatoire de Musique, Geneva with Lionel Rogg. After two years working as an organist in Texas James returned to England where he is currently Organist of the University Church, Oxford and a lay clerk in New College Choir, with whom he tours regularly. James currently studies the organ with Stephen Farr.

James has conducted the Cherwell Singers since 2007.

The Cherwell Singers

Soprano

Claire Appleton
Julia Craig-McFeely
Lizzy Hardingham
Clare Moorhouse *
Sreya Rao
Clare Scott-Dempster
Rachel Smith †
Lucy Watson

Tenor

Christopher Hand
Guy Peskett
Matthias Range
David Sutton

Alto

Virginia Allport
Jenny Ayres
Rachel Bryans
Gillian Hargreaves
Clare Jarvis
Lizzie Newton
Sally Prime

Bass

Dominic Hargreaves
Paul Hodges
Simon Jones
Iain McLean
Tim Wainwright

* Soloist in *Shenandoah* and *Miss Otis Regrets*

† Soloist in *Early one morning*

Please visit our web site to learn more about the choir, and listen to some of our recordings online. Use the web form to register yourself on our email list, to ensure you receive notification and full details of future concerts.

www.cherwellsingers.org