

The Cherwell Singers

present

“Hits from Hollywood”

Great songs from the movies

James Brown conductor

Martin Cousin piano

Margaret Carpenter narrator

Sunday, 5th July 2015

Grove Auditorium, Magdalen College, Oxford

Programme

It's a Grand Night for Singing State Fair, 1945
Rodgers (m) & Hammerstein (w), arr. William Stickles

Moon River Breakfast at Tiffany's, 1961
Mercer (w) & Mancini (m), arr. Ed Lojeski

Over the Rainbow The Wizard of Oz, 1939
Harburg (w) & Arlen (m), arr. Russ Robinson

The Way You Look Tonight Swing Time, 1936
Fields (w) & Kern (m), arr. Malcolm Archer

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes Roberta, 1935
Harbach (w) & Kern (m), arr. Malcolm Archer

Begin the Beguine Broadway Melody of 1940
Cole Porter (w & m), arr. David Terry

Georgy Girl Georgy Girl, 1966
The Seekers (w & m), arr. C Letchford & R Marson

Summer Holiday Summer Holiday, 1963
Welch & Bennett (w & m), arr. Terry

Interval

Drinks will be served in the foyer

Clair de lune

piano solo

Claude Debussy

The Way We Were

The Way We Were, 1973
Bergman (w) & Hamlish (m)

Where do I Begin?

Love Story, 1970
Sigman (w) & Lai (m), arr. Adrian Lucas

When She Loved Me

Toy Story 2, 1999
Randy Newman (w & m), arr. Philip Lawson

Tonight

I Feel Pretty

Make of Our Hands One Hand

West Side Story, 1961
Sondheim (w) & Bernstein (m), arr. William Stickles

O what a Beautiful Morning

The Surrey with the Fringe on Top

People Will Say We're in Love

Oklahoma!

Oklahoma!, 1955
Rodgers (m) & Hammerstein (w), arr. Clay Warnick

Martin Cousin

Ben Twyford

James Brown

Piano

Drums

Conductor

Hits from Hollywood

For our summer concert the Cherwell Singers present an evening of famous songs written for, or appearing in, the world of film. Sometimes the songs have outlasted the popularity of the film itself, but in other cases such as “Somewhere over the rainbow” from *The Wizard of Oz* both co-exist at the pinnacle of fame.

As well as featuring songs which appear in films we present a couple of medleys from two of the most famous and beloved examples of the film-musical genre *West Side Story* and *Oklahoma!*. And although our concert is titled *Hits from Hollywood*, which reflects the huge importance of the American movie industry in the twentieth century and beyond, we haven’t completely ignored the contribution of the British film industry, and include the title songs from the films *Georgy Girl* and *Summer Holiday*.

Mostly, however, this concert is a colourful and nostalgic celebration of the marriage of music and movies from the Hollywood glory days, featuring star song writers such as Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Richard Rodgers.

James Brown

Notes

From the very beginning of film it has had a close symbiotic relationship with music. In the early days, when there could be no sound recorded, a musical accompaniment would be provided – atmospheric or dramatic as the film called for it – usually improvised on a piano or a cinema organ, which instrument was invented for the purpose. Sometimes orchestral scores were written by major composers such as Prokofiev or Shostakovich.

After the invention of electrical recording, it became possible to add speech to films, and very quickly music was added as well, both in the form of background music, and often songs. Songs might be restricted to providing entertainment during titles or credits, or could be part of the action, making the film a musical. Many songs from films, whether from musicals, or simply title songs, have remained popular since they were written, and it is to these that we turn our attention tonight.

Some collaborations of lyricist and composer were so enduring that their names are automatically linked in the mind. From the nineteenth century we might think of Gilbert and Sullivan, but in the twentieth century the most notable such pairing is perhaps that of Rodgers and Hammerstein, in whose company we start and end this concert.

Our first song is **It's a Grand Night for Singing** from the 1945 film *State Fair*, which was a musical adaptation of an earlier film. This was the only occasion that Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote music directly for a film rather than for a stage musical which was subsequently adapted for the screen.

Henry Mancini is often cited as one of the greatest of all film composers, after winning 24 major awards in his career, and another posthumously. Perhaps his best known individual works are the *Pink Panther* theme, and the song **Moon River** from the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, which won the Academy award for Best Original Song (both Mancini and Mercer won Grammy awards for this song as well).

Another winner of the Academy award for Best Original Song was **Over the Rainbow** from the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz* (cited as the most-watched motion picture in history). The film was notable for its use of special effects, Technicolor, unusual characters, and fine singing; but it also owes its longevity to the music written by Harold Arlen, above all the song "Over the Rainbow", which was voted the twentieth century's No. 1 song by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Staying in the 1930s, we have yet another another Best Original Song winner: **The Way You Look Tonight**, composed by Jerome Kern for the 1936 film *Swing Time*. This film is considered the artistic peak of the dance partnership of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

Smoke gets in your Eyes was composed by Jerome Kern for the 1933 stage musical *Roberta*, which was filmed in 1935. A new version of the film with the same music was made in 1952 under the title *Lovely to Look at*, but this song has since appeared in over a dozen other movies, such as *American Graffiti* and *Tea with Mussolini*,

Begin the Beguine was written by Cole Porter on a Pacific cruise in 1934, and first appeared in the 1935 stage musical *Jubilee*, for which he wrote the music. Its appearance in film came with *Broadway Melody of 1940*, which featured Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell dancing to the music of Cole Porter.

Although Hollywood leads the world in the movie industry, we have included two songs from British movies as a nod to our own film industry. The first is the eponymous title song of the 1961 film *Georgy Girl*, by the Australian group, The Seekers. The song comes at both the start and end of the film with markedly different lyrics. This song, **Georgy Girl**, was nominated for an Academy award for Best Original Song, and was a number 1 hit in Australia, and number 3 in the UK.

Again in Britain, the 1963 film *Summer Holiday* starred Cliff Richard and his band The Shadows. The title song, **Summer Holiday**, was one of four songs from the film that reached number 1 in the charts, where it spent three weeks. Although the film was the second most popular in Britain that year (catching the contemporary mood for cheap

continental holidays), it flopped in the USA because it was released days after the assassination of President Kennedy.

Debussy's piano piece **Clair de lune** comes from his *Suite Bergamasque*, and is one of his best-known pieces. It is extremely atmospheric, and this has led to its appearance in at least 113 films and TV series which is why it has earned a place in tonight's entertainment. This single piece accounts for more than half of all the credits given to Debussy's music in films.

The Way We Were is the title song of the movie of the same name starring Barbra Streisand. It won Academy and Golden Globe awards for the Best Original Song in 1973, as well as a Grammy for Song of the Year. The following year it became Streisand's first number 1 hit in the USA. In 1998 the song was also inducted into the Grammy "Hall of Fame".

Unlike the other songs in this concert, **Where Do I Begin?** was never a song in a film. The tune was written as the title theme of the 1970 film *Love Story*, and when it became popular words were added to make the song, which was first recorded by Andy Williams in 1971. The film went on to become one of the forty highest-grossing films in American history.

When She Loved Me from the 1999 film *Toy Story 2* won a Grammy award for best song. It was also nominated for an Oscar, but did not win. *Toy Story 2* is considered to be one of the few cases in which a sequel outshines its

original. It is the only animated film featured tonight, and was a showcase for the development of computer-aided animation techniques.

West Side Story started life as a stage musical in 1957, and was filmed in 1961. The film won the greatest number of Oscars (ten) that have ever been won by a musical film (the three films that have won eleven Oscars were not musicals). Elvis Presley was approached to play Tony in the film, but his manager decided he should not take a part associated with gang warfare. Of all the composers represented in this concert, Leonard Bernstein was the most versatile – stage and film music was but a part of his musical activity. The medley we sing tonight focuses on the romance in the story, as befits a work based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

With our medley of songs from **Oklahoma!**, we return to our opening partnership of Rodgers and Hammerstein. This time, the film was made in 1955 following the success of the 1943 stage version, and it required less adaptation than any of their other such transfers. This film set the style for very large musicals on the screen, with tickets and reserved seats in the cinema, as was already usual in theatres. It also won an Academy award for Best Music.

Biographies

Martin Cousin piano

Martin is regarded as one of the most exceptional pianists of his generation, having been awarded 1st Prize at the 2005 Ettore Pozzoli International Piano Competition (Seregno, Italy) and Gold Medal at the 2003 Royal Overseas League Music Competition (London).

He has appeared regularly in the major British musical venues since graduating from the Royal College of Music, making his London solo debut at the Purcell Room in 1998. He has performed as concerto soloist with the London Philharmonic, Halle, Royal Philharmonic, Philharmonia and BBC Concert Orchestras. Performances further afield have included tours of New Zealand, the US, Italy, and concerts in Stockholm, Brussels, Toronto, Tokyo, Berne and The Hague.

2006 saw the release of his debut CD with SOMM Recordings, and his second CD for them, featuring Glazunov's piano sonatas, was released in 2010 to great acclaim, with International Piano remarking "this new disc showcases playing that is both seemingly effortless in its technique and yet utterly natural and sympathetic in its musical narrative and characterisation."

Highlights of recent seasons have included Rachmaninov's 2nd Concerto, Grieg's Concerto, Mozart's Concerto K488, and a solo recital at Wigmore Hall.

Alongside his solo schedule, chamber music has taken him to Prague, Tokyo, Indonesia and Thailand, Zimbabwe and Barbados and he is a founder member of the Aquinas Piano Trio.

Martin's hands are also featured on the big screen in the Oscar-winning film "Shine", for the scenes involving Rachmaninov's 3rd Concerto.

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 as well as participating in broadcasts and recordings. James is also a pianist for the cruise lines Swan Hellenic and Fred Olsen, and future cruises for 2015 include the Mediterranean, the Norwegian fjords, and the Azores.

Next month James gives a recital of eighteenth century organ music at the Haringe festival in Belgium.

James teaches organ at Abingdon School and New College School and performs regularly with various choirs and choral societies.

James has conducted the Cherwell Singers since 2007.

The Cherwell Singers

Soprano

Janet Johnson
Clare Scott-Dempster
Rhiannon Stubbs
Stephanie Sumner-Jones
Judith Ward
Lucy Watson

Alto

Virginia Allport
Jenny Ayres
Rachel Bryans
Julia Middleton
Lizzie Newton
Anna Orlovska
Joanna Poulton

Tenor

Jeremy Bryans
Simon Fisher
Guy Peskett
David Read
David Sutton

Bass

Paul Hodges
Simon Jones
Jack Lovell
Thomas Lowen
Jonathan Mapley

The Cherwell Singers is looking to recruit voice members in all parts.

If you are interested in joining us please contact James Brown at:

director@cherwellsingers.org

Next Concert – November 2015

Lauridsen – Lux Aeterna

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