

# **NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY**



**Richard Suart - baritone**

**Simon Russell - piano**

**John Naylor - conductor**

**St Mary's Church, Nantwich**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018, 7.30 pm**

On behalf of the Nantwich Choral Society I would like to welcome you to our concert. The choir, now in its 45<sup>th</sup> season, began its life as an evening class but rapidly took on a life of its own and has become one of the most accomplished and well-regarded choirs in the North West of England. For the last fourteen years we have been fortunate to have the inspirational John Naylor as our Music Director and we are also blest with a fine accompanist, Simon Russell who will be playing for our concert tonight.

Tonight's concert is, we hope, a treat for a warm summer evening (and let's hope we haven't used up this year's ration of those in our unusually warm spring and early summer). Gilbert and Sullivan's Savoy operas need no introduction from me and are loved throughout the English-speaking world. Tonight we are particularly delighted to welcome that great master of the patter song and world-renowned Savoyard, Richard Suart.

It is always very gratifying for us, as amateurs, to have the opportunity to work with such consummate professionals. The resources required for this are considerable. We wish to acknowledge our gratitude for the legacies, sponsorships, gifts, grants and donations which help us maintain and develop our musical standards. Recently we have received grants from the Arts Council, Cheshire East and Nantwich Town Council, and we are very grateful for ongoing support from the Harding Trust. Without the generosity of these bodies and others it would not be possible for our choral society to put on concerts of a high standard, using professional soloists and orchestral players as required. I hope you, the audience, will enjoy today's concert as much as we will enjoy performing it for you here in St Mary's.

Kay Foster

## PROGRAMME

HMS PINAFORE	Over the bright blue sea Sir Joseph's barge is seen Gaily tripping When I was a lad	Solo with chorus
TRIAL BY JURY	Hark the hour of ten is sounding Judge's Song	Solo with chorus
PATIENCE	In a doleful train Love unrequited - Bunthorne's Song	Solo
RUDDIGORE	Welcome, gentry When the night wind howls	Solo with chorus
UTOPIA	Eagle high in cloudland soaring	
SONG	The Lost Chord	Solo
PIRATES	Hail Poetry Modern Major-General	Solo with chorus
INTERVAL of 15 minutes		
THE MIKADO	If you want to know who we are Behold the Lord High Executioner The List Song and Tit Willow	Solo
IOLANTHE	Tripping hither, tripping thither The Nightmare song	Solo
THE SORCERER	Ring forth ye bells Now to the banquet we press My name is John Wellington Wells	Solo
THE GONDOLIERS	Dance a cachucha Once more gondolieri	

## COMMENTARY

### W S Gilbert

Gilbert was born in London on 18 November 1836. His father, William, was a naval surgeon who later wrote novels and short stories, some of which included illustrations by his son. In 1861, to supplement his income, the younger Gilbert began writing illustrated stories, poems and articles of his own, many of which would later be mined as inspiration for his plays and operas, particularly Gilbert's series of illustrated poems, the *Bab Ballads*.

In the *Bab Ballads* and his early plays, Gilbert developed a unique "topsy-turvy" style in which humour was derived by setting up a ridiculous premise and working out its logical consequences, however absurd.

First, within the framework of the story, he makes bizarre things happen, and turns the world on its head. Thus the Learned Judge marries the Plaintiff, the soldiers metamorphose into aesthetes, and so on, and nearly every opera is resolved by a deft moving of the goalposts. His genius is to fuse opposites with an imperceptible sleight of hand, to blend the surreal with the real, and the caricature with the natural. In other words, to tell a perfectly outrageous story in a completely deadpan way.

At the time Gilbert began writing, theatre in Britain was in disrepute. Gilbert developed innovative theories on the art of stage direction, and helped to reform and elevate the respectability of the theatre, especially beginning with his six short family-friendly comic operas, or "entertainments".

At a rehearsal for one of these entertainments he met the young composer Arthur Sullivan.

### Arthur Sullivan

Arthur Sullivan was born in London on 13 May 1842. His father was a military bandmaster, and by the time Arthur had reached the age of eight, he was proficient with all the instruments in the band. In school he began to compose anthems and songs. In 1856, he was awarded the first Mendelssohn Scholarship and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and then at Leipzig, where he also took up conducting.

He began building a reputation as England's most promising young composer, composing a symphony, a concerto, and several overtures but his early major works were not sufficient to keep Sullivan financially afloat. He worked as a church organist and composed numerous hymns, popular songs, and parlour ballads.

Sullivan's first foray into comic opera was *Cox and Box* (1866), written with librettist F. C. Burnand for an informal gathering of friends. Public performance followed, with W. S.

Gilbert (then writing dramatic criticism for the magazine *Fun*) saying that Sullivan's score "is, in many places, of too high a class for the grotesquely absurd plot to which it is wedded."

Nevertheless, it proved highly successful, and is still regularly performed today.

## **The Partnership**

In 1871, the producer John Hollingshead brought Gilbert and Sullivan together to produce a Christmas entertainment, *Thespis*, at his Gaiety Theatre, a large West End house. The piece was an extravaganza in which the classical Greek gods, grown elderly, are temporarily replaced by a troupe of 19th-century actors and actresses, one of whom is the eponymous Thespis, the Greek father of the drama. Its mixture of political satire and grand opera parody mimicked Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *La belle Hélène*, which (in translation) then dominated the English musical stage.

*Thespis* opened on Boxing Day and ran for 63 performances. It outran five of its nine competitors for the 1871 holiday season, and its run was extended beyond the length of a normal run at the Gaiety. No one at the time anticipated that this was the beginning of a great collaboration. Unlike the later Gilbert and Sullivan works, it was hastily prepared, and its nature was more risqué, like Gilbert's earlier burlesques, with a broader style of comedy that allowed for improvisation by the actors.

However, at this time the audience for theatre was growing because of the rapidly expanding British population. There were improvements in education and in the standard of living, especially of the middle class, including better public transportation and the installation of street lighting which made travel home from the theatre safer. The number of pianos manufactured in England doubled between 1870 and 1890 as more people began to play parlour music at home and more theatres and concert halls opened.

## **Trial by Jury**

In 1874, Gilbert wrote a short libretto on commission from producer-conductor Carl Rosa, whose wife would have played the leading role, but her death in childbirth cancelled the project. Not long afterwards, Richard D'Oyly Carte was managing the Royalty Theatre and needed a short opera to be played as an afterpiece to Offenbach's *La Périchole*. Carte knew about Gilbert's libretto for Rosa and suggested that Sullivan write a score for it. Gilbert read the piece to Sullivan in February 1875, and the composer was delighted with it: *Trial by Jury* was composed and staged in a matter of weeks.

The piece is one of Gilbert's humorous spoofs of the law and the legal profession, based on his short experience as a barrister. It concerns a suit for breach of promise of

marriage. The defendant argues that damages should be slight, since "he is such a very bad lot," while the plaintiff argues that she loves the defendant fervently and seeks "substantial damages." After much argument, the judge resolves the case by marrying the lovely plaintiff himself!

With Sullivan's brother, Fred, as the Learned Judge, the opera was a runaway hit, outlasting the run of *La Périchole*. Provincial tours and productions at other theatres quickly followed and after the success of *Trial by Jury*, Gilbert and Sullivan were suddenly in demand to write more operas together.

## **The Sorcerer**

Richard D'Oyly Carte's real ambition was to develop an English form of light opera that would displace the bawdy burlesques and badly translated French operettas then dominating the London stage. He assembled a syndicate and formed the Comedy Opera Company, with Gilbert and Sullivan commissioned to write a comic opera that would serve as the centrepiece for an evening's entertainment.

Gilbert found a subject in one of his own short stories, "The Elixir of Love," which concerned the complications arising when a love potion is distributed to all the residents of a small village. The leading character was a Cockney businessman who happened to be a sorcerer, a purveyor of blessings (not much called for) and curses (very popular).

Gilbert and Sullivan were tireless taskmasters, seeing to it that *The Sorcerer* (1877) opened as a fully polished production, in marked contrast to the under-rehearsed *Thespis*. While *The Sorcerer* won critical acclaim, it did not duplicate the success of *Trial by Jury*. Nevertheless, Carte and his syndicate were sufficiently encouraged to commission another full-length opera from the team.

## **H.M.S. Pinafore**

Gilbert and Sullivan scored their first international hit with *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), satirizing the rise of unqualified people to positions of authority and poking good-natured fun at the Royal Navy and the English obsession with social status (building on a theme introduced in *The Sorcerer*, love between members of different social classes). As with many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, a surprise twist changes everything dramatically near the end of the story.

*H.M.S. Pinafore* ran in London for 571 performances, the second longest run of any musical theatre piece in history up to that time. Hundreds of unauthorized, or "pirated", productions of *Pinafore* appeared in America. During the run of *Pinafore*, Richard D'Oyly Carte split up with his former investors. The disgruntled former partners, who had invested in the production with no return, staged a public fracas, sending a group of

thugs to seize the scenery during a performance. Stagehands successfully managed to ward off their backstage attackers. This event cleared the way for Carte, Gilbert and Sullivan to form the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, which then produced all of their succeeding operas.

The libretto of *H.M.S. Pinafore* relied on stock character types, many of which were familiar from European opera: the heroic protagonist (tenor) and his love-interest (soprano); the older woman with a secret or a sharp tongue (contralto); the baffled lyric baritone—the girl's father; and a classic villain (bass-baritone). Gilbert and Sullivan added the element of the comic patter-singing character.

With the success of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the D'Oyly Carte repertory and production system was cemented, and each opera would make use of these stock character types. Before *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert had constructed his plays around the established stars of whatever theatre he happened to be writing for, as had been the case with *Thespis* and *Trial by Jury*. Building on the team he had assembled for *The Sorcerer*, Gilbert no longer hired stars; he created them. He and Sullivan selected the performers, writing their operas for ensemble casts rather than individual stars.

The repertory system ensured that the comic patter character who performed the role of the sorcerer, John Wellington Wells, would become the ruler of the Queen's navy as Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, then join the army as Major-General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and so on. Similarly, Mrs. Partlet in *The Sorcerer* transformed into Little Buttercup in *Pinafore*, then into Ruth, the piratical maid-of-all-work in *Pirates*. Relatively unknown performers whom Gilbert and Sullivan engaged early in the collaboration would stay with the company for many years, becoming stars of the Victorian stage.

## **The Pirates of Penzance**

*The Pirates of Penzance* (New Year's Eve, 1879) also poked fun at grand opera conventions, sense of duty, family obligation, the "respectability" of civilisation and the peerage, and the relevance of a liberal education. The story also revisits *Pinafore*'s theme of unqualified people in positions of authority, in the person of the "modern Major-General" who has up-to-date knowledge about everything except the military. The Major-General and his many daughters escape from the tender-hearted Pirates of Penzance, who are all orphans, on the false plea that he is an orphan himself.

The pirates learn of the deception and re-capture the Major-General, but when it is revealed that the pirates are all peers, the Major-General bids them: "resume your ranks and legislative duties, and take my daughters, all of whom are beauties!"

The piece premiered in New York rather than London, in an (unsuccessful) attempt to secure the American copyright, and was another big success with both critics and audiences: it then opened in London and became one of the most frequently performed, translated and parodied Gilbert and Sullivan works.

## **Patience**

*Patience* (1881) satirized the aesthetic movement in general and its colourful poets in particular, combining aspects of Swinburne, Rossetti, Wilde, and others in the rival poets Bunthorne and Grosvenor. The work also lampoons male vanity and chauvinism in the military. The story concerns two rival "aesthetic" poets, who attract the attention of the young ladies of the village, who had been engaged to the members of a cavalry regiment. But both poets are in love with Patience, the village milkmaid, who detests one of them and feels that it is her duty to avoid the other despite her love for him.

Richard D'Oyly Carte was the booking manager for Oscar Wilde, a then lesser-known proponent of aestheticism, and dispatched Wilde on an American lecture tour in conjunction with the opera's U.S. run, so that American audiences might better understand what the satire was all about.

During the run of *Patience*, Carte built the large, modern Savoy Theatre, which became the partnership's permanent home. It was the first theatre (indeed the world's first public building) to be lit entirely by electric lighting. *Patience* moved into the Savoy after six months at the Opera Comique and ran for a total of 578 performances, surpassing the run of *H.M.S. Pinafore* and becoming the second longest-running work of musical theatre up to that time in history.

## **Iolanthe**

*Iolanthe* (1882) was the first of the operas to open at the Savoy. The fully electric Savoy made possible numerous special effects, such as sparkling magic wands for the female chorus of fairies. The opera poked fun at English law and the House of Lords and made much of the war between the sexes.

*Iolanthe* is one of a number of Gilbert's works where the introduction of men and "mortal love" into a tranquil world of women wreaks havoc with the status quo. Gilbert had created several "fairy comedies" at the Haymarket Theatre in the early 1870s. These plays, influenced by the fairy work of James Planché, are founded upon the idea of self-revelation by characters under the influence of some magic or some supernatural interference.

In 1882, Gilbert had a telephone installed in his home and at the prompt desk at the Savoy Theatre so that he could monitor performances and rehearsals from his home.



study. Gilbert had referred to the new technology in *Pinafore* in 1878, only two years after the device was invented and before London even had a telephone service. Sullivan had one installed as well, and on 13 May 1883, at a party to celebrate the composer's 41st birthday, the guests, including the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), heard a direct relay of parts of *Iolanthe* from the Savoy. This was probably the first live "broadcast" of an opera.

During the run of *Iolanthe*, in 1883, Sullivan was knighted by Queen Victoria. Although it was the operas with Gilbert that had earned him the broadest fame, the honour was conferred for his services to serious music. The musical establishment, and many critics, believed that this should put an end to his career as a composer of comic opera—that a musical knight should not stoop below oratorio or grand opera.

Sullivan, despite the financial security of writing for the Savoy, increasingly viewed his work with Gilbert as unimportant, beneath his skills, and repetitious. Furthermore, he was unhappy that he had to simplify his music to ensure that Gilbert's words could be heard. But paradoxically, in February 1883, just after *Iolanthe* opened, Sullivan had signed a five-year agreement with Gilbert and Carte requiring him to produce a new comic opera on six months' notice.

## **The Mikado**

The most successful of the Savoy Operas was *The Mikado* (1885), which made fun of English bureaucracy, thinly disguised by a Japanese setting.

The story focuses on a "cheap tailor," Ko-Ko, who is promoted to the position of Lord High Executioner of the town of Titipu. Ko-Ko loves his ward, Yum-Yum, but she loves a musician, who is really the son of the emperor of Japan (the Mikado), and who is in disguise to escape the attentions of the elderly and amorous Katisha. The Mikado has decreed that executions must resume without delay in Titipu. When news arrives that the Mikado will be visiting the town, Ko-Ko assumes that he is coming to ascertain whether Ko-Ko has carried out the executions. Too timid to execute anyone, Ko-Ko cooks up a conspiracy to misdirect the Mikado, which goes awry. Eventually, Ko-Ko must persuade Katisha to marry him, in order to save his own life and the lives of the other conspirators.

With the opening of trade between England and Japan, Japanese imports, art and styles became fashionable in London, making the time ripe for an opera set in Japan. Gilbert said, "I cannot give you a good reason for our... piece being laid in Japan. It... afforded scope for picturesque treatment, scenery and costume, and I think that the idea of a chief magistrate, who is... judge and actual executioner in one, and yet would not hurt a worm, may perhaps please the public." Setting the opera in Japan, an exotic locale far

away from Britain, allowed Gilbert and Sullivan to satirise British politics and institutions more freely by clothing them in superficial Japanese trappings.

*The Mikado* became the partnership's longest-running hit, enjoying 672 performances at the Savoy Theatre, which was the second longest run for any work of musical theatre (surpassing the 571 performances of *Pinafore* and 576 of *Patience*) and one of the longest runs of any theatre piece up to that time. *The Mikado* remains the most frequently performed Savoy Opera. It has been translated into numerous languages and is one of the most frequently played musical theatre pieces in history.

## **Ruddigore**

*Ruddigore* (1887), a topsy-turvy take on Victorian melodrama, was less successful than most of the earlier collaborations with a run of (only) 288 performances. The original title, *Ruddygore*, together with some of the plot devices, including the revivification of ghosts, drew negative comments from critics. Although Gilbert and Sullivan re-spelled the title and made a number of changes and cuts, it never achieved great success.

## **The Yeomen of the Guard**

*The Yeomen of the Guard* (1888), their only joint work with a serious ending, concerns a pair of strolling players - a jester and a singing girl - who are caught up in a risky intrigue at the Tower of London during the 16th century. The dialogue, though in prose, is quasi-early modern English in style, and there is no satire of British institutions. For some of the plot elements, Gilbert had reached back to his 1875 tragedy, *Broken Hearts*. *The Times* praised the libretto: "It should... be acknowledged that Mr. Gilbert has earnestly endeavoured to leave familiar grooves and rise to higher things." Although not a grand opera, the new libretto provided Sullivan with the opportunity to write his most ambitious score to date.

Critics considered the score to *Yeomen* to be Sullivan's finest. *Yeomen* was a hit, running for over a year, with strong New York and touring productions.

## **The Gondoliers**

*The Gondoliers* (1889) takes place partly in Venice and partly in a kingdom ruled by a pair of gondoliers who attempt to remodel the monarchy in a spirit of "republican equality".

Gilbert recapitulates a number of his earlier themes, including the satire of class distinctions figuring in many of his earlier librettos. The libretto also reflects Gilbert's fascination with the "Stock Company Act", highlighting the absurd convergence of natural persons and legal entities, which plays an even larger part in the next opera, *Utopia Limited*. Press accounts were almost entirely favourable.

The opera enjoyed a run longer than any of their other joint works except for *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Patience* and *The Mikado*. There was a command performance of *The Gondoliers* for Queen Victoria and the royal family at Windsor Castle in 1891, the first Gilbert and Sullivan opera to be so honoured.

*The Gondoliers* was Gilbert and Sullivan's last great success.

## The Quarrel

Gilbert and Sullivan sometimes had a strained working relationship, partly caused by the fact that each man saw himself as allowing his work to be subjugated to the other's, and partly caused by the opposing personalities of the two—Gilbert was often confrontational and notoriously thin-skinned (though prone to acts of extraordinary kindness), while Sullivan avoided conflict. In addition, Gilbert imbued his libretti with "topsy-turvy" situations in which the social order was turned upside down. After a time, these subjects were often at odds with Sullivan's desire for realism and emotional content. Also, Gilbert's political satire often poked fun at the wealthy and powerful whom Sullivan sought out for friendship and patronage.

Gilbert and Sullivan disagreed several times over the choice of a subject. After both *Princess Ida* and *Ruddigore*, which were less successful than the seven other operas from *H.M.S. Pinafore* to *The Gondoliers*, Sullivan asked to leave the partnership, saying that he found Gilbert's plots repetitive and that the operas were not artistically satisfying to him.

In April 1890, however, during the run of *The Gondoliers*, Gilbert challenged Carte over the expenses of the production. Among other items to which Gilbert objected, Carte had charged the cost of a new carpet for the Savoy Theatre lobby to the partnership. Gilbert believed that this was a maintenance expense that should be charged to Carte alone. Gilbert confronted Carte, who refused to reconsider the accounts. Gilbert stormed out and wrote to Sullivan that "I left him with the remark that it was a mistake to kick down the ladder by which he had risen".

The carpet was only one of a number of disputed items, and the real issue lay not in the mere money value of these things, but in whether Carte could be trusted with the financial affairs of Gilbert and Sullivan. Gilbert contended that Carte had at best made a series of serious blunders in the accounts, and at worst deliberately attempted to swindle the others and it does seem fairly clear that there was something very wrong with the accounts at this time. Gilbert wrote to Sullivan on 28 May 1891, a year after the end of the "Quarrel", that Carte had admitted "an unintentional overcharge" of nearly £1,000 in the electric lighting accounts alone.

Things soon degraded, a legal hearing was held, and Sullivan supported Carte by making an affidavit erroneously stating that there were only minor legal expenses outstanding.

Sullivan felt that Gilbert was questioning his good faith, and in any event, Sullivan had other reasons to stay in Carte's good graces: Carte was building a new theatre, the Royal English Opera House, to produce Sullivan's only grand opera, *Ivanhoe*. Gilbert sued, and after *The Gondoliers* closed in 1891, he withdrew the performance rights to his libretti, vowing to write no more operas for the Savoy.

Gilbert eventually won the lawsuit, but his actions and statements had been hurtful to his partners. Nevertheless, the partnership had been so profitable that, after the financial failure of the Royal English Opera House, Carte and his wife sought to reunite the author and composer. In late 1891, after many failed attempts at reconciliation, Gilbert and Sullivan's music publisher, Tom Chappell, stepped in to mediate between two of his most profitable artists, and within two weeks he had succeeded, eventually leading to two further collaborations between Gilbert and Sullivan.

*Utopia, Limited* (1893), their penultimate opera, was a modest success, but their last, *The Grand Duke* (1896), was an outright failure: after this the partners saw no reason to work together again.

A last unpleasant misunderstanding occurred in 1898. At the premiere of Sullivan's opera *The Beauty Stone* on 28 May, Gilbert arrived at the Savoy Theatre with friends, assuming that Sullivan had reserved some seats for him. Instead, he was informed that Sullivan objected to his presence. The composer later denied that this was true. The last time they met was at the Savoy Theatre on 17 November 1898 at the celebration of the 21st anniversary of the first performance of *The Sorcerer*. They did not speak to each other.

Sullivan, by this time in exceedingly poor health, died in 1900, although to the end he continued to write new comic operas for the Savoy with other librettists. By the time of Sullivan's death in 1900, Gilbert wrote that any memory of their rift had been "completely bridged over," and "the most cordial relations existed between us". He stated that "Sullivan ... because he was a composer of the rarest genius, was as modest and as unassuming as a neophyte should be, but seldom is...I remember all that he has done for me in allowing his genius to shed some of its lustre upon my humble name."

Gilbert retired with his wife Lucy and their ward, Nancy McIntosh to a country estate, Grim's Dyke. He was knighted in 1907. He died of a heart attack at the age of 74 in 1911 while attempting to rescue a young woman to whom he was giving a swimming lesson in the lake at his home.

Rupert D'Oyly Carte took over the opera company upon his step-mother's death in 1913. His daughter, Bridget, inherited the company upon his death in 1948. The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company toured nearly year-round, except for its many London seasons and foreign tours, performing exclusively the Gilbert and Sullivan operas until it closed in 1982. During the 20th century, the company gave well over 35,000 performances. From

the beginning, the Savoy operas were produced extensively in North America and Australasia, and soon afterwards in Germany, Russia, and elsewhere in Europe and around the world.

In 1922, Sir Henry Wood explained the enduring success of the collaboration as follows:

“Sullivan has never had an equal for brightness and drollery, for humour without coarseness and without vulgarity, and for charm and grace. His orchestration is delightful: he wrote with full understanding of every orchestral voice. Above all, his music is perfectly appropriate to the words of which it is the setting.... He found the right, the only cadences to fit Gilbert's happy and original rhythms, and to match Gilbert's fun or to throw Gilbert's frequent irony, pointed although not savage, into relief.

Sullivan's music is much more than the accompaniment of Gilbert's libretti, just as Gilbert's libretti are far more than words to Sullivan's music. We have two masters who are playing a concerto. Neither is subordinate to the other; each gives what is original, but the two, while neither predominates, are in perfect correspondence. This rare harmony of words and music is what makes these operas entirely unique. They are the work not of a musician and his librettist nor of a poet and one who sets his words to music, but of two geniuses.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

**Honorary Members:** Joy Roberts, Andrew Mildinhall, Jean Atkin, Eileen Robertson

**Music Director:** John Naylor

**Accompanist:** Simon Russell

### **Soprano**

Anne Barnard  
Jan Brown  
Jenny Brown  
Tracey Coleman  
Glenda Colemere  
Gail Corfield  
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Ann Ferguson  
Marlene Flannery  
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Margaret Harvey  
Rosemary Jones  
Bronwyn Kelly  
Helen Kerr  
Sheila Luke  
Maire Pedder  
Rachel Pentecost  
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Barbara Waters  
Jane Whiteman  
Claire Woosnam-Savage

Helen Bevan  
Sue Bridge  
Sue Briscoe  
Christine English  
Helen Farrington  
Joyce Foster  
Janet Geeson  
Cynthia Gorton  
Janet Halligan  
Grace Johnston  
Elizabeth McCrone  
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Wendy Wren

### **Alto**

Susan Cooke  
Alison Davies  
Frances Durkin  
Linda Evans  
Penny Evans  
Lizzy Goodger  
Gillian Handford  
Susie Heap  
Lena Hogben

Elizabeth Lea  
Geraldine Leighton  
Anne Nicol  
Barbara Schultz  
Sarah-Jayne Steer  
Gillian Tucker  
Ros Wells  
Diane Wheatley  
Sarah Worth

Alice Blackburn  
Judy Bryant  
Enid Colyer  
Judith Dooley  
Jean French  
Mary Goodman  
Mary Hands  
Ester Harries  
Val Kennett  
Brenda Midgley  
Janet Miller  
Gwyneth Rollins  
Joan Shaddick  
Elizabeth Tilston  
Fanny Weiss  
Margaret Whitehurst  
Linda Wyatt

### **Tenor**

Susanne Brierley  
Martyn Colley  
Graham Harbage  
Patrick Hay  
Wal Kaye  
Richard Percival  
Philip Trinder  
Bill Vallance  
John Whittingham

### **Bass**

Roger Boulton  
Paul Durant  
Christopher Findlay  
David Foster  
Glyn Griffiths  
Douglas Hollinshead  
Samuel Jamison  
David Johnston  
David Jones  
Martin Jones  
Adrian Percy  
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## BIOGRAPHIES

### Richard Suart - baritone

Opera singer and actor, Richard has specialised in the comic roles of Gilbert and Sullivan operas and in operetta, as well as in *avant-garde* modern operas. He is probably best known for his numerous portrayals of Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*.

He was born in Blackpool, Lancashire, educated at Sedbergh School and later studied at St John's College, Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He is chiefly known as a stage performer, but his concert work has included baritone leads in Benjamin Britten's *Saint Nicolas*, and Monteverdi's *Vespers*, and song recitals of works by Ravel, Ibert and Mussorgsky as well as concert performances of his operatic roles. In 2004 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music.

Richard has sung Ko-Ko in *The Mikado* for English National Opera since 1988 in Jonathan Miller's celebrated production - he has also performed it in New York and Venice. For ENO he has sung King Gama and Major-General Stanley and, for Welsh National Opera, Jack Point in a production which performed at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden under Sir Charles Mackerras.

Richard has been a member of the D'Oyly Carte since 1988 with whom he has sung not only many of the Savoy Operas, but also *La Vie Parisienne* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*. His involvement with the works of Gilbert and Sullivan led him to create *As a Matter of Patter* which he has performed in many venues throughout the UK, as well as Capetown and the Middle East. He has appeared as The Duke of Plaza-Toro, The Lord Chancellor and Sir Joseph Porter at the BBC Proms, and has made many other appearances at Gala Concerts in the UK, North America and Canada.

As a result of having to re-write his Little List so often, he recently published his first book entitled '*They'd none of 'em be missed*', a study of one song in 200 pages, and described in The Sunday Telegraph as "also an amusing review of recent political scandal and sleaze."

Recent engagements have included *The Merry Widow* (Michigan Opera), Martin/Pangloss *Candide* (Opera di Firenze), *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Mikado* (Scottish Opera), Judge Turpin *Sweeney Todd* (Reisopera), Narrator/Pangloss *Candide* (Vancouver Symphony, Boston Symphony and Los Angeles Symphony Orchestras), Harrison Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy* at the Staatsoper in Berlin, *Trial by Jury* (ENO) and Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* for Charles Court Opera at the Iford Festival.

Future plans include *Candide* for The Grange Festival in July, *The Merry Widow* for Vancouver Opera in October and *The Mikado* for ENO in 2019.

## **Simon Russell - piano**

Simon was born in Liverpool. He studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and then at Cambridge as Organ Scholar at St. Catharines's College, where he continued studies with Gillian Weir and the late Peter Le Huray. After Cambridge he was appointed Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain fortune from computer keyboards.

He was firstly accompanist and then Music Director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich where he is Organist at St Mary's Parish Church. He is an annual recitalist at Chester Cathedral and is on the 'reserve' organist list covering holiday periods and other absences. He is also in demand as an organ tutor and has many Associated Board and other pupil distinctions and diploma successes to his credit.



Simon is currently the Northern Region Coordinator for the RSCM and enjoys a flourishing freelance programme as an organ recitalist in great demand.

Simon was appointed accompanist to Nantwich Choral Society in 2010.

## **John Naylor - conductor**

As conductor, singer and organist, John combines extensive performance experience in world-class choirs with a lifelong passionate interest in choral music and its performance.

Following a successful business career he now devotes most of his activities to conducting, choir development and church administration. His original training was as a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge with the great Dr George Guest after keyboard studies with Conrad Eden at Durham Cathedral where he was a chorister (1957 – 61), a music scholarship at Rossall School (where his organ teacher was George Suart, Richard's father) and singing studies with Wilfrid Brown and Lyndon van der Pump from The Royal College of Music.

He subsequently became a professional member of the Chapel Royal Choir of St Peter ad Vincula at H.M. Tower of London and The Monteverdi Choir and Louis Halsey Singers, appearing at The Proms, The South Bank, and The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings. He has sung in the cathedral choirs of Carlisle, Christ Church Oxford and Chester where until recently he could still be occasionally spotted on the back row!

John has been Director of The Lydian Singers since founding the choir in 1980. They are now one of the leading chamber choirs in the North West and have performed extensively in the North West, Spain, France, Italy and in most of the cathedrals in Great Britain, often returning several times by invitation. He also conducts The Open University Chapel Choir.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of works in the mainstream choral repertoire.

Recent performances have included Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Rutter's *Magnificat* and *Sprig of Thyme*, Verdi *Requiem* and Dvorak *Stabat Mater* with NCS, Durham, Peterborough and Southwell cathedrals and Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* at The Lymm Festival with The Lydian Singers, and Blackburn, Liverpool, Oxford and Winchester cathedrals with OUCC.

In addition to his musical activities, John has been Chairman of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance since 2012. He is also a member of the General Synod of the Church of England.



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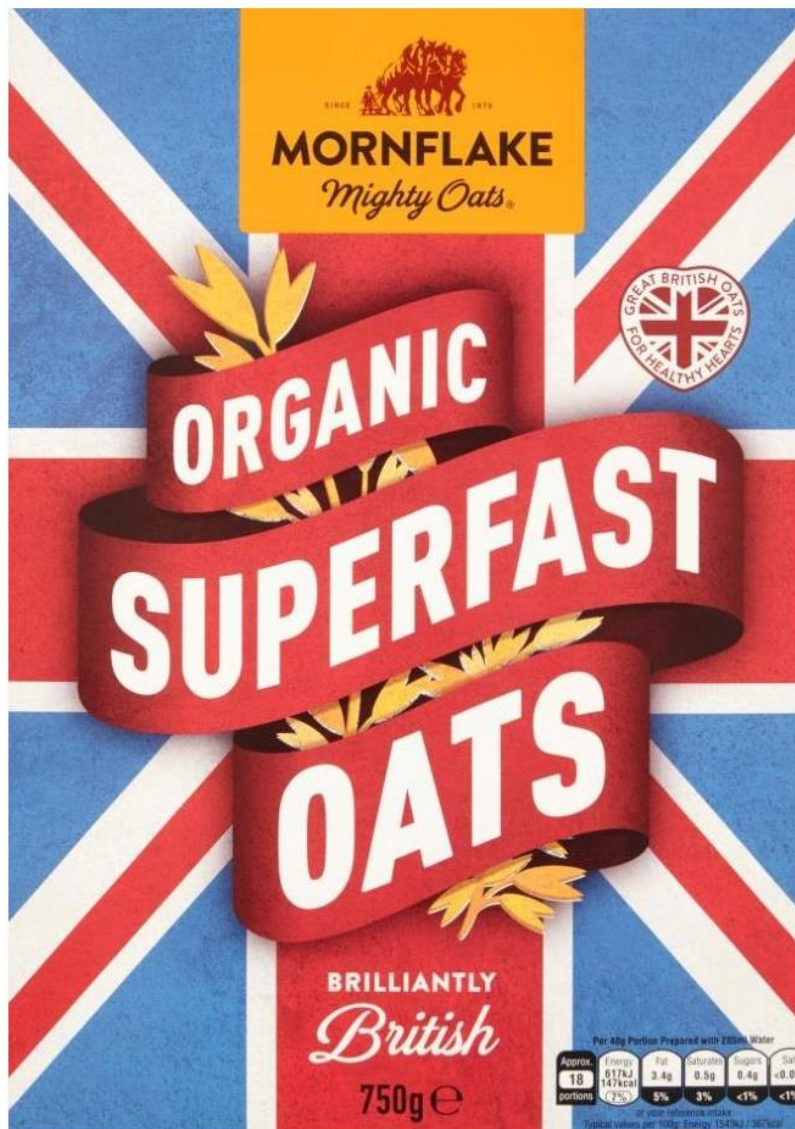
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# Programme of events 2018/2019

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018

St Boniface Church, Bunbury

**Singing Day**

**European Choral Music**

Saturday 10 November 2018, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

**The Armed Man – Karl Jenkins**

**For the Fallen – C B Rootham**

**Greater Love – John Ireland**

with

The Northern Concordia Ensemble

Saturday 15 December 2018, 6.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

**Family Carol Concert**

with

Nantwich Young Voices

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019

St Mary's Church Nantwich

**Come and Sing**

**Messiah**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

**Elgar**

**The Music Makers**

**The Banner of St George**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 7.30 pm

St Mary's Church Nantwich

**The Rio Grande – Constant Lambert**

**Liebeslieder Walzer - Brahms**