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# UNIVERSITY CHOIR & CHAMBER CHOIR

With guest artists Sharp Little Bones & Lorna James, soprano  
Rachel Parkes, conductor

Saturday 22 March, 7.30pm  
Great Hall, Trent Building, University Park Campus

## PROGRAMME

Voice on the Wind	Sarah Quartel
Trois Chansons	Maurice Ravel
Through the Trees	Sharp Little Bones
Vinea Mea Electa	Francis Poulenc
Sweet/Bitter Crush	Sharp Little Bones
Media Vita	Kerensa Briggs
Somewhere over the Rainbow	Harold Arlen
Music, when soft voices die	Frank Bridge
Blue Skies	Irving Berlin
'In Brussels'	John Dowland
<b>Interval</b>	
Mass in Blue	Will Todd

Please ensure all mobile phones are switched off. Photographs and videos of the performance are not permitted.

## PROGRAMME NOTES

Good evening and welcome to this celebration of choral jazz inspired music. If you cast your mind back to March 2020, the University choirs were busy preparing Will Todd's lively and challenging *Mass in Blue* for their Spring concert when the unthinkable happened – a global pandemic - and the UK immediately went into lockdown. As a result, the concert of course could not go ahead, and so, five years on we are thrilled to be able to perform this work for you.

Our first half concert will see nods towards the jazz idiom, with works that include rhythmic dynamism, dance and syncopation, with sumptuous and surprising chordal progressions that delve into the more contemporary or 'blue' areas of choral repertoire. Together we will experience the progressive and transgressive whirlwind of Ravel's *Trois Chansons* (fiendish songs peppered with character, soul and humour), immerse ourselves in the lush chromatic language of Poulenc, Bridge and Briggs's expansive motets, dance with Dowland and bop with Berlin.

We are honoured to be joined tonight by the acclaimed Nottingham jazz trio *Sharp Little Bones*, who will bring the true flavour of the sultry and sparkling jazz clubs, accompanying us on our journey through the programme with original compositions and improvisation devised by composer and bassist with the group Simon Patterson. Sit back, relax and enjoy!

Rachel Parkes, conductor

### Voice on the Wind

**Sarah Quartel (b.1982)**

Canadian composer Sarah Quartel is particularly interested in creating pieces that reflect the transformative nature of musical experiences. This interest is translated in 'Voice on the Wind', which was inspired by the empowering nature of singing. It features lively rhythmic riffs blended between voice and drum, building in momentum and culminating in some thrilling homophonic singing.

### Trois Chansons

**Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

1. *Nicolette*
2. *Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis*
3. *Ronde*

*Trois Chansons* was composed between 1914 and 1915, in response to World War I, as Ravel waited to be enlisted. The three songs were composed in the style of 16th-century French chansons, but with Ravel's trademark harmonic flair. It features texts which share the common theme of loss, but with humour and irony. First we hear of "Nicolette", a young girl who goes picking flowers in a meadow and escapes the advances of a wolf and a young man, but eventually agrees to lose her innocence to an older gentleman offering riches. In "Trois beaux oiseaux du Paradis" (Three beautiful birds of Paradise), a girl whose beloved is in the war understands from the gifts of blue, white and red birds (the national colours of France) that he died. In "Ronde", young people lose respect for the warnings of the older men and women.

#### 1. Nicolette

Nicolette went down to the meadows in the evening to pick daisies, jonquils and lilies of the valley, skipping merrily and looking this way and that.

She met a growling old wolf, bristly and glittering-eyed

'Hey there, Nicolette, do you want to come and visit Grandma?'

Nicolette ran away, breathless, leaving behind her cap and white clogs.

She met a handsome page,

Dressed in grey doublet and blue hose: 'Hey there, Nicolette, do you fancy a nice friend?'  
Poor Nicolette wisely turned away, very slowly, her heart aching.  
She met a white-haired lord, wrinkled, ugly, smelly, fat:  
'Hey there, Nicolette, how would you like all these gold coins?'  
The good Nicolette flew into his arms and never went down to the meadows again.

## **2. Three lovely birds of paradise**

Three lovely birds of paradise (my love has gone to the wars!), three lovely birds of paradise passed this way. The first was bluer than the sky, the second was white as snow, the third vermilion red.

'Lovely birds of paradise, what do you bring?' 'I bring a fond look of azure blue, 'And I must bestow on your snowy-white brow a kiss that is purer yet.'

'Red bird of paradise, what do you bring?' 'A true heart of crimson red...'

'Ah! a chill grips my heart... I yield it to you.'

## **3. Roundelay: Don't go down to the woods of Ormonde**

The old women: Don't go down to Ormonde woods, girls, don't go down to the woods they're full of satyrs, centaurs, wicked wizards, hobgoblins, incubuses, ogres, leprechauns, fauns, sprites, lamias, devils, imps, goat-footed creatures, gnomes, demons, werewolves, elves, myrmidons, magicians, magi, vampires, sylphs, wild monks, cyclops, djinns, goblins, korrigans, necromancers, kobolds... don't go down to Ormonde Woods.

The old men: Don't go down to Ormonde woods, boys, don't go down to the woods: they're full of female fauns, Bacchantes, wicked fairies, satyresses, ogresses, baba-yagas, centaureses, she-devils, witches at their sabbath, she-goblins and demons, spectres, nymphs, myrmidons, hamadryads, dryads, naiads, thyads, will o' the wisps, lemures, gnomes, succubuses, gorgons, she-goblins... don't go down to Ormonde Woods.

The young girls: We'll go no more to Ormonde woods, Alas! We'll never go to the woods again. There are no more satyrs, no more nymphs or wicked fairies, no more hobgoblins or incubuses, ogres, leprechauns, fauns, sprites, devils, imps, goat-footed creatures, gnomes, demons, werewolves, elves, myrmidons, no more magicians, magi, vampires, sylphs, wild monks, cyclops, djinns, little devils, afreets, ægypans, sylvans, goblins, korrigans, necromancers, kobolds... don't go down to Ormonde woods, the foolish old men and women have frightened them all away.

## **Vinea Mea Electra**

**Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)**

French composer and pianist Francis Poulenc is well loved in the choral world for his expansive use of chromatic and luscious harmony and is said to speak 'clearly, directly and humanely to every generation'. Throughout his life, Poulenc traversed the realm of both sacred and profane in his compositions, known for music of both intense reverence, and bawdy humour. This Lenten motet sits in the former category, exploring in exquisite detail the heartbreaking feelings of grief as Jesus was crucified by those who, only a week before, had proclaimed to celebrate and follow him. The sweetness and bitterness meld and mingle as the harmony shifts sinuously from each section of text.

## **O my Chosen Vineyard**

O my chosen vineyard, I planted thee:

How art thou turned into bitterness,  
that thou wouldst crucify me, and release Barabbas?

I walled thee in, and I picked the stones out of thee, and I built a tower.

How art thou turned into bitterness,  
that thou wouldst crucify me, and release Barabbas?

### **Media Vita**

**Kerensa Briggs (b.1991)**

British composer Kerensa Briggs was commissioned to write *Media Vita* in 2015 by the vocal ensemble Siglo de Oro and conductor Patrick Allies to commemorate the 500-year anniversary of the birth of John Sheppard, an English composer from the Renaissance period. The text of *Media Vita* is thought to have originated from the early medieval monk Benedictine monk Notker from the Abbey of Saint Gall in Switzerland. The piece reflects both the intensity and flow found within Sheppard's work and Notker's text. Briggs uses to great effect the shifting dissonance, suspensions and resolutions we associate with renaissance polyphony, but in a modern 21st century style full of blue notes and shimmering texture.

### **In the Midst of Life**

In the midst of life we are in death  
Whom can we seek as our helper but you, O Lord,  
who for our sins are justly angry?

Holy God  
Holy and strong.  
Holy and merciful Saviour;  
deliver us not to the bitter pains of death.

### **Somewhere over the Rainbow**

**Harold Arlen (1905-86)**

**arr. Brymer**

*Somewhere over the Rainbow* is probably the best-known song from the Broadway and film hit musical *The Wizard of Oz*. This particular arrangement by Mark Brymer (b.1957) is for choir, featuring lush harmonies and a particularly jazzy piano accompaniment.

### **Music, when soft voices die**

**Frank Bridge (1879-1941)**

*Music, when soft voices die* was composed between 1906 and 1907 by English composer and violinist Frank Bridge and published in his collection 'Three Songs for Voice, Viola and Piano'. The text is a setting/is derived from the 1821 poem by Percy Shelley of the same name. This piece starts its life as a traditional English Part-song, but as it progresses, becomes increasingly drawn out with suspensions and jazzy chords to reflect the drowsy feeling evoked in the text 'love will slumber on'. A perfect pre-cursor and influence to the close harmony vocal movement which captured our choral imaginations in the late 20th century with groups such as the Kings Singers, Swingles and Voces8.

### **Blue Skies**

**Irving Berlin (1888-1989)**

**arr. Emerson**

Irving Berlin composed *Blue Skies* for the 1926 musical *Betsy*. The song was hugely popular in the musical, with its contrast of its minor notes and optimistic lyrics giving the piece an ironic feel. Like so many numbers from the 1920s-1950s musical genre, this has become a classic Jazz standard with famous iterations by Ella Fitzgerald, Willie Nelson, Norah Jones and many more.

**'In Brussels'**

**John Dowland (1563-1626)**

**arr. University of Nottingham Chamber Choir**

The final number of our first half features one of the original geniuses of rhythm and blues, John Dowland, who was instigating and innovating all the way back in the 16th Century. Being such a master of words and music, we pay tribute to him tonight by pairing the text of an untitled poem by Quincy Troupe (which conjures up perfectly the blend of sacred and profane), with one of Dowland's most famous tunes which many of you will no doubt recognise.

[Untitled] by Quincy Troupe (b.1939)

in brussels, eye sat in the grand place cafe & heard duke's place, played after salsa  
between the old majestic architecture, jazz bouncing off  
all that gilded gold history snoring complacently there  
flowers all over the ground, up inside the sound  
the old white band jammin the music  
tight & heavy, like some food  
pushin pedal to the metal  
gettin all the way down  
under the scaffolding surrounding  
l'hotel de ville, chattanooga choochoo  
choo choing all the way home, upside walls, under gold eagles  
& a gold vaulting girl, naked on a rooftop holding a flag over  
her head, like skip rope, surrounded by all manner  
of saints & gold madmen, riding emblazoned stallions  
snorting like crazed demons at their nostrils  
the music swirling like a dancing bear  
a beautiful girl, flowers in her hair

the air woven with lilting voices in this grand place of parepets  
& crowns, jewels & golden torches streaming  
like a horse's mane, antiquity riding through in a wheel carriage  
here, through gargoyles & gothic towers rocketing swordfish lanced crosses  
pointing up at a God threatening rain  
& it is stunning at this moment when raised beer steins cheer  
the music on, hot & heavy, still humming & cooking  
basic african-american rhythms alive here  
in this ancient grand place of europe  
this confluence point of nations & cultures  
jumping off place for beer & cuisines  
fused with music, poetry & stone  
here in this blinding, beautiful square  
sunlit now as the golden eye of God shoots through  
flowers all over the cobbled ground, up in the music  
the air brightly cool as light after jeweled rain  
still, there are these hats slicing foreheads off in the middle  
of crowds that need explaining, the calligraphy of this penumbra  
slanting ace-deuce, cocked, carrying the perforated legacy of bebop  
these bold, peccadillo, pirouetting pellagras  
razor-sharp clean, they cut into our rip-tiding dreams carrying  
their whirlpooling imaginations, their rivers of schemes  
assaulted by pellets of raindrops  
these broken mirrors catching fragments  
of sonorous words, entrapping us between parentheses  
two bat wings curved, imprisoning the world

## **Mass in Blue**

**Will Todd (b. 1970)**

Composer's own note:

*Mass in Blue* came into being as the result of a commission from David Temple and Hertfordshire Chorus in 2003. Musically, it represents a conscious collision of two musical genres which have been a central part of my artistic life for many years: sacred choral music and jazz. It was somewhat daunting to set the Latin mass, so familiar to me from having sung the great settings by Byrd, Haydn, and others, and it took me a while to find my way into the piece and work out what I wanted to say: in the end, plainsong and the 12-bar blues showed me the way forward. I also incorporated several features of Gospel singing: improvisatory solos, choral textures that veer between unison and much richer harmonies, and call-and-response patterns. Since its first performance in 2003 I have been thrilled and gratified to see it take flight and be performed all over the UK and, increasingly, further afield. Its dissemination has certainly been aided by the economic option of the version for jazz trio which was pioneered in Cambridge by my colleague Ralph Woodward and the Fairhaven Singers. I have experienced the piece in a wide variety of guises and venues, sung by choirs of many different types, and I must admit that it still excites me every time. I hope you enjoy it too.

### **1. Lord**

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

### **2. Glory to God in the highest**

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee.

We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

Glory to God in the highest.

Together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God, the Father. Amen.

### **3. I believe in one God**

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; with the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church;

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins;

I look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### **4. Holy**

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

#### **5. Blessed**

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Osanna in excelsis.  
Hosanna in the highest.

#### **6. Lamb of God**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.  
Grant us peace.



## RACHEL PARKES, CONDUCTOR

Rachel Parkes is an accomplished musical director, choir trainer and singer based in Nottingham. Following her studies in Music at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Royal College of Music, she began her career as a founder member of the Grammy-nominated a cappella ensemble Voces8, with whom she toured the UK, Europe and North America, appearing in broadcasts on the BBC and ClassicFM and in several acclaimed recordings.

Known for her versatility across styles and practices, Rachel's professional work has included oratorio solo (Orchestra of Opera North, Aldeburgh Festival Chorus, Southwell Choral Society), backing vocals (Goldfrapp, Florence and the Machine, Annie Lennox), classical crossover/folk (Howard Goodall's Enchanted Voices, Richard Leigh's Gathering Sound), film soundtracks and opera choruses for London Voices (Hunger Games, Interstellar, The Hobbit; premieres of Stockhausen, Zimmer, and Zappa), professional choral and a cappella (Voces8, Tenebrae, Eric Whitacre Singers, Armonico Consort, Hannover Band), and MD work including the Royal Shakespeare Company's recent production of Romeo and Juliet (Theatre Royal Nottingham, 2023).

Following formative early experiences with the Northamptonshire County Performing Arts Service and the Royal School of Church Music, Rachel is committed above all to empowering people and communities to sing. In addition to her work training the University of Nottingham's choirs, she is a conductor of the auditioned Nottingham Chamber Singers and chorus master of the Nottingham Festival Chorus. As Assistant Artistic Director of the charity Music for Everyone, founded by Angela Kay MBE, she runs several weekly choirs in the Nottingham area, weekend music courses for adults and children, Come-and-Sing concerts and community events, music groups in public libraries for Inspire, and singing initiatives for health and wellbeing.

## LORNA JAMES, SOPRANO

Lorna James graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010, and subsequently studied with Stuart MacIntyre and Jane Irwin. During 2015/16, as part of a successful and varied freelance career working with companies such as Opera North, Heritage Opera and Diva Opera, she collaborated with director Emma Black and conductor/pianist Chris Pelly on a new production of Poulenc's *La voix humaine*, which they performed a number of times across the UK. In 2016, Lorna joined the full time chorus of Opera North, and in May 2021, she embarked on a new adventure, retraining as a therapeutic counsellor. During her time at Opera North, she covered/performed a range of roles including Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), First Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) and Carrie (*Carousel*). Lorna's move away from full-time opera means a welcome return to performing a wider variety of musical styles, and in her spare time she sings with the Northern Collective Big Band, based in Sheffield. Lorna has sung Mass in Blue on a number of occasions, including with The Will Todd Trio, and she is delighted to have the chance to sing this amazing piece once more.

## SHARP LITTLE BONES

Simon Paterson - electric and upright basses

Matt Ratcliffe - piano

Andrew Wood - drums

Sharp Little Bones was formed by members of the house band of Peggy's Skylight, a multi-award-winning jazz venue, and is led by bassist and composer Simon Paterson. Their debut double album, 'Volumes I & II', released in 2023 by Ubuntu Music, featured MOBO-nominated, multi-BBC Jazz and Parliamentary Jazz Awards winner Tony Kofi and received widespread critical acclaim. The album included multiple tracks played across BBC Radio and Jazz FM and was supported by a sold-out UK tour culminating in a headline show at the London Jazz Festival.



## CHAMBER CHOIR

University Chamber Choir is an auditioned choir comprising of current University Students. It performs concerts on its own as well as collaborating with University Choir and professionals.

### Soprano

Anna Searle  
Einav Diamond Limor  
Holly Martin  
Olivia Mason  
Lizzie McShane  
Constanza Keiffer  
Catherine Power  
Arabella Moore-Smith

### Alto

Lucy Maynard  
Annelise Vigneron  
Charlotte Surrey  
Kalilah Pampam

### Tenor

Benjamin Canning  
Oscar Singfield  
Samuel Tomlins

### Bass

Adeoluwa Anifowose  
Rhys Duffty  
George Herrick

## UNIVERSITY CHOIR

### Soprano

Tsz Yau Chan  
Helena Durham  
Liliana de Lillo  
Einav Diamond Limor  
Madeleine Fletcher  
Jiayu Geng  
Gaia Howell  
Tianran Jin  
Constanza Keiffer  
Abby Li  
Holly Martin  
Lucy Maynard  
Niamh Mee  
Arabella Moore-Smith  
Bethany Moss  
Talia Nicholls  
Catherine Power  
Lauran Schwake  
Martha Shaw  
Elisa Todarello  
Annelise Vigneron  
Amy Wood  
Katie Wright  
Kira Yaghnem

### Alto

Katy Birch  
Rosemary Carpenter  
Sandra Challinor  
Lauren Clayton  
Rebecca Duff  
Aimée Efemey  
Inês Fonseca  
Kate Griffin  
Aabha Khetarpal  
Rachel Maloney  
Kalilah Pampam  
Katie Pollard  
Lily Roslof  
Anne Sempik  
Charlotte Surrey  
Claire Thompson

### Tenor

Benjamin Canning  
Owen Ebanks  
Max Reuvers  
Luis Salazar-Licea  
Oscar Singfield  
Sam Tomlins

### Bass

Ade Anifowose  
Andrew Bacon  
Amos Blyth  
James Connolly  
Rhys Duffty  
Alex Foster  
James Gray  
George Herrick  
Elliot Jarratt  
Robin McKenzie  
Theo McKinnon  
Lawrence Reynolds  
Charles Watkins  
Lee Wills