

## The Abbeydale Singers

1986 ... Picture a Christingle service in a small church in Sheffield. The church is barely lit by the candles of the young angels from the Sunday School. Somewhere in the gloom, a group of singing friends is making its first foray into public performance.

Most likely, those who were there that day have clearer memories of the angels than of the fledgling choir. What did they sing? Not really sure. Did they even have a name? No, that would come later. Even so, it can't have been as bad as all that. That same choir was back in the same church - Christ Church, Gleadless - the following summer, to offer a programme of semi-serious music to a sizeable and appreciative audience.

Over the 21 years since, the Abbeydale Singers (as we came to be known) have grown in many ways. The founder members are certainly a lot less svelte, for one. Membership peaked at 22, though it did sink as low as ten for several months; and there have never ever been enough tenors.

The repertoire the choir can call upon has burgeoned, including the slightest of part-songs, and the weightiest of Masses, all performed with equal skill and vigour. With this breadth of musical offering, we've been allowed an enormous variety of concerts - weddings, memorials, Christmas festivals, after-dinner entertainment, summer frivolities, charity fundraisers, art-house and Music Society recitals - in all manner of places - cathedrals in Dublin, village halls in Norfolk, festival halls in Belfast, vaulted temples in Budapest, and of course most of the notable singing venues in South Yorkshire.

Sometimes we don't even need a venue. Just give us a hotel lobby, an urban underpass, or a vacant corridor in the bowels of the City Hall, and we'll burst into song - usually to the delight of passing listeners.

Due largely to our Director's warmth and infectious enthusiasm, the Abbeydale Singers have evolved into a strong corporate unit, comprising not only choir members, but also their partners and families - the "baggage". We like to think that our camaraderie is reflected in the closeness and intimacy of our singing. (Peter King)

## Tonight's programme

Everyone suddenly burst out singing	C S Lang
O quam gloriosum	Thomás Luis de Victoria
Sing joyfully	William Byrd
Tu es Petrus	Giovanni da Palestrina
Hear my prayer, O Lord	Henry Purcell
Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden	Felix Mendelssohn

Sonata No.4 in F Major	G F Handel
for treble recorder and continuo	
(Larghetto, Allegro, Alla Siciliana, Allegro)	

Ave Maria	Anton Bruckner
Ubi caritas	Maurice Duruflé
Coelos ascendit hodie	Charles Stanford
Let all mortal flesh keep silence	Edward C Bairstow
God be in my head	John Rutter

i thank You God for most this amazing day	Eric Whitacre
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### - Interval and refreshments -

My spirit sang all day	Gerald Finzi
The cloud-capp'd towers	R Vaughan Williams
Lay a garland	R L De Pearsall
The silver swan	Orlando Gibbons
Though Amaryllis dance in green	William Byrd
Weep, O mine eyes	John Bennet

Trio for flute, cello and piano	Bohuslav Martinu
(1 <sup>st</sup> movement - Poco Allegretto)	

I will give my love an apple	Trad arr Michael Mullinar
Shenandoah	Trad arr James Erb
Blue Moon	Richard Rodgers, arr David Blackwell
It was a lover and his lass	Ward Swingle
Pastime with good company	Henry VIII, arr Ward Swingle

Go ye now in peace	Joyce Elaine Eilers
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## **Tonight's choir**

We're delighted to welcome former members of the choir back this weekend. As with all occasional family reunions, it will have been an emotional and slightly daunting couple of days; but we'll try not to let this show in our performance tonight.

### **Musical Director: Kevin Haighton**

**Sopranos:** Sally Burlington, Ann Gyte, Claire Hardisty, Michelle Hayward, Sarah Lord, Elizabeth Mummery, Hilary Pye, Sarah Rooper, Anna Rutherford, Anne Taylor, Pat Turner, Jackie Wood

**Contraltos:** Helen Beach, Jan Birch, Helen Clark, Helen Cowen, Jessie Greaves, Sue Haighton, Rachel Kitt, Ruth Siggs, Linda Wareham

**Tenors:** Peter King, Mark Leadbeater, Chris Nicholson, Rob Sawdy

**Basses:** Nigel Boucher, Michael Hannon, Steve Holden, Tony Jones, Matthew Lovell, Robert Wareham

**Instrumentalists:** Gemma Wareham (cello), Katie Wareham (flute and recorder) and Linda Wareham (spinet\* and piano).

Katie and Gemma have been our guest soloists in the past and we are thrilled to welcome them back to perform with us again.

\***The spinet** in tonight's concert was recently completed by Michael Hannon, 1st bass in the choir. Designed by John Barnes, it is a virtual replica of an original instrument made in London ca.1715 by Stephen Keene and Charles Brackley.

The casework is American walnut lined with cedar, the soundboard is spruce and the wrest plank which holds the tuning pins is beech. The short keyboard has 58 notes, compared to around 88 on a modern piano; the naturals are lime topped with black ebony slips, the accidentals a modern composite imitating ivory. The cartouche on the name board is 'fiddle back' sycamore. The perforated brass 'strap' hinges were cast directly from the originals by the lost wax process. Spinets were, in effect, early harpsichords, with one string per note plucked by a tiny plectrum. Because of their shape, they were often called 'bentside', 'wing' or 'mutton chop' spinets.

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