ortishead Shorat ociety

IN TUNE WITH HEAVEN

Portishead Choral Society

Conductor Jonathan Palmer

The Downs Singers

Conductor Katherine Everett

Eloise Routledge (soprano) Edward Goater (tenor)

Accompanist

Richard Lennox

Saturday March 19th 2022 at 7.30pm
Portishead Methodist Church

PROGRAMME



PROGRAMME

Hymn of Praise (Extracts)

Felix Mendelssohn

All ye that cried unto the Lord (Chorus)
I waited for the Lord (Soprano Duet and Chorus)
My song shall be alway thy mercy (soprano/tenor duet)

Mendelssohn was born into a wealthy and cultured family. He was a precociously gifted child, so much so that the finest musicians of the day hailed him as a second Mozart. This comparison was by no means without foundation; by the time he had reached his mid-teens Mendelssohn had composed a large number of mature works, including twelve string symphonies and his first symphony for full orchestra, written when he was only fifteen. He was sixteen when he wrote the String Octet, and the wonderful overture A Midsummer Night's Dream followed a year later. He visited England many times, where he was received with adulation, feted by the press, and became a great favourite of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

These choral movements are extracts from Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise and are actually part of his Symphony No.2 which was written for the 1840 Gutenberg Festival in Leipzig to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the invention of printing. Mendelssohn was a big hit with the British, particularly with the Queen and Prince Albert, and for the Birmingham performance of Hymn of Praise the German text was translated into English and thus it comes with the composer's personal blessing. Moreover it makes sense in other ways. Part of Guttenberg's revolution was not just the printing of the bible, but printing it in German, making it available and, importantly, readable for a much wider group. Eventually this idea, which was frowned upon by Rome, gained traction and translations of the bible in the vernacular became widespread throughout Europe.

Three Folk Song Arrangements

Benjamin Britten

Down by the Sally Gardens, The Plough Boy, O Waly Waly (performed by Eloise Routledge and Edward Goater)

It was while Britten was resident in the United States in the early 1940s that he began to make his first arrangements of traditional folksongs. It was a way in which the then homesick composer could reconnect with his English roots (which would eventually result in his return home in 1942) while also, more pragmatically, providing some 'popular' material for his numerous recitals with Peter Pears. So successful and useful did the first collection prove to be that Britten went on to make a further six volumes of arrangements, including French, Scottish, and Irish as well as English folksongs.

Down by the Sally Gardens is dedicated to Clytie Hine Mundy, Peter Pears's singing teacher in the United States. It is an Irish folksong, with words by W B Yeats. Britten's setting is simple and understated, with the subtlest of harmonic touches conveying the folly of youth with touching pathos. The Plough Boy is an irresistible, charming and rather quirky song. From the sparkling piano introduction Britten wins over his listener, but the vocal line itself is a winner too, with a sense of mischief. O Waly Waly is surely one of the most beautiful songs in Britten's catalogue in particular or English song in general. Many of these folk song arrangements have become better known than any of their 'original' versions, and have assumed the identity of the song in the popular imagination.

Hallelujah Chorus

George Frideric Handel (arr. S Decesare)

(sung by the Downs Singers)

The rousing 'Hallelujah' Chorus is one of the most famous pieces of Baroque choral music, and by far the most widely-known section of Messiah. While audiences usually stand during complete performances - a tradition that allegedly began when King George II stood up during the chorus at the oratorio's debut London performance - you may remain seated this evening.

Blest Pair of Sirens Hubert Parry

Though Hubert Parry is known today for only a handful of works, perhaps most notably *Jerusalem* and *I was glad*, he was a prolific composer, writer and teacher and was hugely influential in the revival of English music at the end of the 19th century. His determination to restore to English music the great traditions of native literature and to revitalise English attitudes towards composition is shown most forcefully in a series of choral works that demonstrated his gifted use of choral sonorities, massive effects and meticulous word-setting.

Blest Pair of Sirens (1887) is the second of these. Its rather quaint (to 21st Century ears) and unprepossessing title, the opening words of John Milton's 'At a Solemn Musick', belie the quality of both its powerful verse and its magnificent music. Far from being an obscure Victorian curiosity, its noble, masculine treatment of Milton's poetry stands out as a landmark in the development of the English choral tradition. Perhaps because of this, the piece was brought to a much wider audience through being incorporated into the wedding service of HRH Prince William, and Kate Middleton in April 2011. Parry's anthem I was Glad was also used, as has been traditional at coronations of British monarchs since 1902. Despite Parry's roots in the English church tradition, this music reveals his characteristic openness to the modern influences of his day and especially to the genius and techniques of Brahms.

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'n's joy, Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,

Wed your divine sounds, and mixed pow'r employ,

Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;

And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure content,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee,
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row

Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious
palms,

Hymns devout and holy psalms

Singing everlastingly:

That we on earth with undiscording voice May rightly answer that melodious noise; As once we did, till disproportioned sin

Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh

din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made

To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed

In perfect diapason, whilst they stood In first obedience, and their state of good.

O may we soon again renew that song, And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere long

To His celestial concert us unite,

To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light

John Milton (1608 – 1674)

INTERVAL

O Be Joyful in the Lord (The Hundredth Psalm)

Ralph Vaughan Williams

When Vaughan Williams was asked to write a short motet for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, he hesitated; remembering the elaborate and pompous ceremony in 1937 when the 11 year old Princess Elizabeth watched the Coronation of her father King George VI, and when his *Te Deum* was performed. "If you can persuade the Archbishop to have a hymn in the Coronation service", he quipped to the organist of Westminster Abbey, "I'll make a mess-up of 'Old Hundredth.'" It has since become an all-time classic in church literature: "O, be joyful in the Lord all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song". It was also performed at his funeral in Westminster Abbey in 1958. Since Vaughan Williams' arrangement included the congregation, you are invited to join in the final section with the choir:



She Walks in Beauty (Extracts)

Jonathan Palmer

To The Queenes most Excellent Majestie (Chorus, Soloists)

There is a Garden in her Face (Chorus)

The Merry Wife of Windsor (Children's Choir)

A Birthday (soprano solo: Katherine Everett)

A Musical Dialogue: Madam Britannia and Monsieur Europa (Chorus, Soloists)

She Walks in Beauty was composed between April and August 2001 in response to a commission by members of Clifton High School Old Girls Society for a work to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2002. There are seven movements each of which represent various perspectives on the unifying theme of the work: In Praise of Woman – childhood, adolescence, adulthood to full maturity. While some of the texts will be familiar, there are others that are either obscure or have been written especially by Martin Dimery. This evening we are performing five of the movements.

The text of the opening movement 'To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie' is by Aemilia Lanyer, a 17th century English poet. The words form a small part of a larger poem which is concerned with paying homage to the Queen. The powerful fanfares at the beginning and the end contrast strongly with the inner sections featuring the soloists. 'There is a Garden in her Face' with words by Thomas Campion is more gentle and expressive and relies on an arch-like musical phrase that is presented by each section of the Chorus.

'The Merry Wife of Windsor' was always going to be a light-hearted, humorous scherzo, featuring a separate choir of younger singers. In providing an original text, Martin Dimery deliberately used the Royal theme to mark the change in the nature of monarchy from the first Queen Elizabeth to our

current Queen. The former wishes to be entertained by the play The Merry Wives of Windsor, and the latter is sympathetically imagined as longing to escape from the demands of duty simply to be a merry wife of Windsor. 'A Birthday' has the feel of chamber music, and the gentle, intimate text is used as a moment of respite before the Finale. The Finale: 'Dialogue between Madam Britannia and Monsieur Europa' was taken from an earlier work: Cantata Europa, another celebratory work that was commissioned by Wincanton Choral Society in 1992, a time of the Maastricht Treaty, the Ruby Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, and an 'Annus Horribilis' for the Royal Family. The rivalry from each side of the English Channel (that is still active today) is ideal subject matter for a Finale, and the music is both entertaining and dramatic. Alongside certain disguised famous tunes there is more than a trace of Gilbert and Sullivan!

To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie

Aemilia Lanyer (1569 – 1645)

Renowned Empresse, and great Britaines Queene, Most gratious Mother of succeeding Kings; Vouchsafe to view that which is seldome seene, A Woman's writing of divinest things: Read it faire Queene, though it defective be, Your Excellence can grace both It and Mee.

For you have rifled Nature of her store, And all the Goddesses have dispossest Of those rich gifts which they enjoy'd before, But now great Queene, in you they all doe rest. If now they strived for the golden Ball, Paris would give it you before them all.

From Iuno you have State and Dignities, From warlike Pallas, Wisdome, Fortitude; And from faire Venus all her Excellencies, With their best parts your Highness is indu'd: How much are we to honour those that springs From such rare beauty, in the blood of Kings?

The Muses doe attend upon your Throne, With all the Artists at your becke and call; The Sylvane Gods, and Satyres every one, Before your faire triumphant Chariot fall: And shining Cynthia with her nymphs attend To honour you, whose Honour hath no end.

There is a garden in her face

Thomas Campion (1567 – 1620)

There is a garden in her face Where roses and white lilies do grow; A heavenly paradise is that place, Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow. There cherries grow which none can buy Till 'cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow.
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy,
Till 'cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still; Her brows like bended bows do stand, Threatening with piercing frowns to kill All that attempt with eye or hand Those sacred cherries to come nigh, Till 'cherry-ripe' themselves do cry.

The Merry Wife of Windsor

Martin Dimery (1956 -)

In a time long since past Was a Queen who at last Had respect of a king When she craved anything.

And her courtiers, though thick Were exceedingly quick To concede to her need And perform ev'ry deed.

So she wished for a play And they sent straightaway For a scene to be played By the Queen's own Brigade.

When the stage it was set And the players had yet To put on their masks The Queen promptly asks: "Would you do a request?
It's the play I love best,
Please lift my spirits today"
So the costumes were changed,
The set rearranged
And the Queen sat down for the play:
"Please rehearse this timely verse:
The Merry Wives of Windsor.
Give me more, I adore
The Merry Wives of Windsor.
Mistress Quickly, Mistress Page
Always make me grin, Sir,
Bardolph, Nym, bring them in,
And Falstaff makes me laugh!"

As we move through an age
A new Queen takes the stage,
And she reigns much the same
With the former Queen's name.
And she can't make a move
If the press don't approve,
Or go out for a night
Without being impolite.

As she watches the cast At a 'Night of the Stars' Thinking "how long to go Of this terrible show?"

She is moved to conclude That without being rude She must use all her tact To interrupt the act.

"Would you do a request?
It's the song I do best,
To you it's the song that I bring."
To the horror and the shocks,
She stood up in the box
And breathed in and started to sing:

I, quite simply, long to be
The merry wife of Windsor
I'd adore to be another
Merry wife of Windsor.
Shopping, washing, making tea,
When can I begin, Sir?
If all that was left to me,
A merry wife I'd be!

A Birthday

Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

My heart is like a singing bird Whose nest is in a watered shoot; My heart is like an apple-tree Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit; My heart is like a rainbow shell That paddles in a halcyon sea; My heart is gladder that all of these Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down; Hang it with vair and purple dyes; Carve it in doves, and pomegranates, And peacocks with a hundred eyes; Work it in gold and siver grapes, In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys; Because the birthday of my life Is come, my love is come to me

A Musical Dialogue: Madam Britannia and Monsieur Europa

Martin Dimery (1956-)

Britannia

We have built a Royal Empire
On which the sun shall not go down.
We have lain a garden
To round our noble brow
With a glorious garland crown.

Europa

You desecrate your garden Like beggars at a feast. The sun is in her twilight But rises in the east. Your time has come to settle, Relinquish heavy reins. There's nothing left For you my dear, No kingdom to maintain. You can't ignore The neighbours off your shore, And never, never, never, and Never shall, and never shall, and Never, never, never, never, Never, never, never, never, Never shall again!

Chorus

You can't ignore The neighbours off your shore, And never, never, never, and

. . .

Never shall again!

Britannia

We are a diamond shining Set firm amidst an emerald sea No tarnished ring can hold us, We shall unblemished be And in isolation ever free!

Europa

What need have I for you ma'am? What dowry can you give? Your dress is torn and tattered Your serfs too poor to live. You need to board with us ma'am, Your pleasure to sustain, So there's nothing left For you except An empty barren reign. You can't ignore The neighbours off your shore, And never, never, never, and Never shall, and never shall, and Never, never, never, never, Never, never, never, never, Never shall again!

Chorus

You can't ignore
The neighbours off your shore,
And never, never, never, and
Never shall, and never shall, and
Never, never, never,
Never, never, never,
Never shall again!

Britannia and Europa

B: We won't resign our culture.

E: You haven't got a lot!

B: The land of Keats and Shakespeare?

E: They soon will be forgot!

B: We won't abandon sterling.

E: For the Euro or the Franc!

B: The Rocket or the Titanic?

E: I thought the latter sank!

Chorus (Ladies and Men)

L: The mighty works of Dickens,

M: The plays of Molière.

L: At Ascot in the summer,

M: It matters what they wear.

M: The hearty Scottish Highlands,

L: With monsters in the loch!

M: Why do you scorn our beauty?

L: It's easier to mock!

Britannia and Europa

B: King William the Conqueror!

E: Wasn't he from Normandy?

B: The glorious Channel Islands,

E: And Southend by the sea!

B: The sea surrounding Dover,

E: Where tunnels have been set.

B: Then why should we come over?

E: So we can talk it over.

B: I'll have to think it over.

B/E: I wish we'd never met!!

Europa

I can no more implore you
To come and marry, ma'am, with me.
So let us part in friendship
And honourable dignity,
Then separate our destiny.

Britannia

How nice of you to offer such hospitality!
I wonder should we recognise
This new fraternity?
You seem to be quite wealthy
According to reports
I cannot deny your offer's good
I'm having second thoughts!

Britannia and Europa

Let us refrain
We shall no more disdain
And never, never, never, and

...

Never shall again!

Britannia, Europa and Chorus

You can't ignore The neighbours off your shore, And never, never, and

• •

Never shall again!

SOLOISTS

Eloise Routledge (soprano)

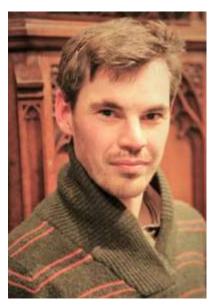


Having begun music at an early age playing piano and flute, Eloise took up singing at the age of 21, studying at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Dutch National Opera Academy in Amsterdam. This has led to performances in the UK and abroad in venues from Birmingham Symphony Hall to Sydney Opera House and working with companies such as Garsington Opera, Buxton Festival, Welsh National Opera and Holland Opera. Opera roles include Mimì in Puccini's La Bohème and Pamina in Mozart's The Magic Flute (Somerset Opera), Maria Bertram in the world premiere of Jonathan Dove and Alisdair Middleton's Mansfield Park (Heritage Opera), Emmeline in Purcell's King Arthur (Holland Opera), Gianetta in Gilbert & Sullivan's The Gondoliers (Surrey Opera), Susanna in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro (DNOA), Mum/Waitress/Sphinx in Turnage's Greek (DNOA) and the title role in Janacek's The Cunning Little Vixen (RWCMD).

Concert engagements include Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, Handel's Messiah, Mozart's Requiem, Haydn's The Creation, Brahms' Requiem, Gounod's St. Cecilia Mass, Verdi's Requiem, Poulenc's Gloria, Brahms' Liebeslieder and Ginastera's Cantata para America Magica, as well as soloist for Classical Connections, Opera Novella, London Festival Opera and Treorchy Male Voice Choir. Now based in Somerset, Eloise is delighted to have performed in more local venues such as Wells Cathedral and Bristol Beacon.

This season's concerts include Fauré's Requiem and Mozart's Vesperae Solennes de Confessore with Taunton Choral Society and Vivaldi's Gloria with South Petherton Combined Arts Society Choir.

Edward Goater (tenor)



Edward took a degree in Ecology before turning full time to singing. His solo work has seen him perform in all major venues across the UK and Europe, in addition to much radio and TV work. He is also an established teacher and conductor, and for many years was a member of the acclaimed BBC Singers.

As a soloist, Edward has performed with Bryn Terfel at The Last Night of the Proms, and is regularly heard on BBC broadcast concerts; he has recorded to critical acclaim for many labels including Signum, Naxos and Deutsche Grammophon, and is a soloist on the Grammy-winning disc 'The Excursions of Mr Broucek. The composer David Briggs wrote the song-cycle Dreamworld for Edward, which is recorded for Chestnut Records, and Paul Drayton also has written the cycle One Night for

Edward. His oratorio repertoire is highly extensive. Such highlights include Bach's Mass in B minor, Britten's St. Nicholas, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Elgar's The Kingdom, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, Puccini's Missa di Gloria and many more! Edward has worked with some of the world's leading musicians including Pierre Boulez, Sir Simon Rattle, Judith Weir, Bob Chilcott and Daniel Barenboim. Equally at home on stage as the concert platform, Edward's opera work includes Rodolpho (La Boheme), Tallon (The Wreckers), Spoletta (Tosca), The Middle Son (The Vanishing Bridegroom), Marco (Zaza), Basnik (The Excursions of Mr Broucek), Beppe (I Pagliacci), Frederick (Pirates of Penzance), Antonio (The Duenna), Acis and Damon (Acis and Galatea).

A consummate recitalist, Edward has performed all over the country, and is a keen exponent of Ivor Gurney's music. In academia, Edward is a teacher in Wells Cathedral School, as well as a conductor of many choirs and choral societies. His expertise in music, performing art and musicianship make him a popular adjudicator for any competitions.

Katherine Everett (soprano)



Katherine Everett MMus achieved her Bachelor of Music at the University of Huddersfield and went on to gain her Postgraduate Diploma and Masters of Music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, specialising in concert singing. After graduating she started building her career in opera and concert singing. Notable companies she has sung with are Opera Holland Park, Grange Park Opera, Pimlico Opera, Buxton G&S Opera Company, Surrey Opera and Lakeland Opera. Now based in Portishead, Katherine enjoys singing in the 4os trio, The Cat's Pyjamas, and with Portishead Choral Society, as both a chorister and soloist. She has given solo recitals and sung leading roles with local operatic societies.

Katherine is an enthusiastic choir leader and singing teacher, teaching both from home and in local schools. She is the musical director of the

community group Posset Opera, and is looking forward to launching her new ensemble later this year, the Portishead Youth Chamber Choir.

The Downs Singers

The Downs Singers are drawn from the most enthusiastic and able singers in years 5 - 8 from The Downs Preparatory School in Wraxall. All children at The Downs School get to sing in year group choirs, but this group of singers have voluntarily auditioned for this opportunity to take their choral training to a higher level. The opportunities the children have through singing in this choir are an integral part of their musical education; they will help them grow in confidence as individuals, as team players and as our future musicians.

Conductor – Jonathan Palmer



After a distinguished teaching career in a variety of schools, Jonathan decided to retire in 2007 in order to concentrate on his composition, and for eight years was a part-time research student at the University of Bristol. In August 2010 he was awarded the Raymond Warren Prize for Composition. Having studied under Professor Geoff Poole and Professor John Pickard, he completed his PhD in Composition in January 2015, and became a Fellow of Trinity College, London, in Composition.

Over the years he has conducted numerous choral societies and orchestras. His choice of repertoire is varied, from Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Schubert to Vaughan Williams, Bernstein, Gershwin, and Rutter. In 1984, he directed performances of Olivier Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies* at Sherborne Abbey and Clifton Cathedral, and in 2007,

conducted a large-scale performance of Orff's Carmina Burana with massed choirs at the Colston Hall, Bristol.

Jonathan was appointed Musical Director of Portishead Choral Society in September 2013. During the 2013-14 season, he directed the choir in Handel's *Messiah*, Gounod's *Messe Solennelle* de Sainte-Cécile and Edward German's *Merrie England*. In the spring of 2014, he composed a special new cantata for the choir to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. *Awake the Voice*, a thirty minute work in six movements for chorus, soloists, audience and orchestra, received its first performance in Gordano School, Portishead in December 2014. It was subsequently performed again in December 2018 in Clifton Cathedral in a collaborative Christmas-themed concert with Nailsea Choral Society and Chew Valley Choral Society. He enjoys the challenge of devising imaginative programmes for the concerts, and always tries to combine sacred and secular, familiar and the less-known, old and new, while seizing any opportunity for the audience to participate! In June 2019, the finale of the concert 'From Russia with Love' even required the audience to sing in Russian!

In 2009, he was appointed as a Choral Director for 'Choirs at Sea', and for a time, enjoyed numerous voyages on cruise ships forming choirs from the passengers. However, with the pandemic, he has withdrawn from that activity, and is delighted to be directing the choral society once again. He plays the cello and particularly enjoys playing chamber music. In his spare time he enjoys maintaining his classic cars, instrument restoration, cooking and travelling.

Accompanist - Richard Lennox



Richard Lennox became our accompanist in September 2016. He is a highly versatile musician, happy to play everything from Bach to the Beatles, Musical Theatre to Rock and Roll and just about everything else in between. He enjoys the challenge of bridging the gap between different genres of music, whether it is a rousing pop song or traditional classical arrangements, or whether he is playing piano, organ, or keyboards. So, the diverse choice of music in this evening's programme that juxtaposes Early Baroque with light modern arrangements suits him well.

Primarily a self-taught musician, Richard has worked in most genres of the music industry, from accompanying choirs, singers and instrumentalists to composing and arranging. Working extensively in Theatre, Cabaret and major concert venues across the UK and Europe

(including the world famous Royal Albert Hall) he is no stranger to guest spots in the UK's Cathedrals.

Richard has also had various radio airplay guest spots including Saturday Surgery with TV's Doctor Phil Hammond and Live wire Radio, as well as being invited as guest artist to the Charity event held in memory of the late Sir Norman Wisdom at De Montfort Hall, Leicester. Recently he performed a 'Double Concerto' at the Royal Albert Hall, playing Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue and Léon Boëllmann's Organ Toccata all in the same evening!

Portishead Choral Society

President: Pamela Rudge, GRSM(Hons), ARCM Registered Charity No: 1039773

Trustees

Chair: Alex Cottrell
Treasurer: Alison Lee
Membership Secretary: vacant
Concert Secretary: Monical Ovel
Soprano Representative: Mich Williams
Alto Representative: Sarah Stevens
Tenor Representative: David Yates
Bass Representative: Roger Philips

Patrons

Portishead Choral Society is most grateful for the continued support of our patrons:

Mary Bailey

Mr and Mrs T Kilvington

Mark Howson

If you would like to become a patron, please contact the our Chair, Alex Cottrell. Contact details can be found on our website.

Future Concerts

Saturday 11 June 2022
The programme will be advised in due course on our website.

New members are always welcome. Rehearsals are at Portishead Methodist Church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.

Members of the choir are available to sing at weddings, funerals, and other events.

Please contact a committee member or see our website for further details.

Clevedon Choral Society

Please see website: www.clevedonchoralsociety.org.uk

Nailsea Choral Society

Stainer's Crucifixion Nailsea Methodist Church Saturday 26th March 7.30pm

Acknowledgements

The society is affiliated to Making Music, the charity that represents and support amateur choirs, orchestras, and music promoters throughout the United Kingdom.

<u>www.portisheadchoral.co.uk</u> www.facebook.com/PortisheadChoral