

Programme Notes for The Sheffield Chorale concert on 16th March 2024 at St Luke's Church, Lodge Moor.

***Exsultate Justi* - Lodovico Grossi da Viadana (c. 1560 – 1627)**

This Renaissance Italian composer was usually referred to as **Lodovico Viadana**, though his family name was Grossi. As well as being a composer, Viadana was also a teacher, and a Franciscan friar. He was the first significant figure to make use of the newly developed technique of figured bass, one of the musical devices which was to define the end of the Renaissance and beginning of the Baroque eras in music.

He was born in Viadana, a town in the province of Mantua (Italy). In 1597 he went to Rome, and in 1602 he became choirmaster at the cathedral of San Luca in Mantua. He held a succession of posts at various cathedrals in Italy, including Concordia (near Venice), and Fano, on the east coast of Italy, where he was maestro di cappella from 1610 to 1612. For three years, from 1614 to 1617, he held a position in his religious order which covered the entire province of Bologna (including Ferrara, Mantua and Piacenza). By 1623 he had moved to Busseto, and later he worked at the convent of Santa Andrea, in Gualtieri, near Parma. He died in Gualtieri.

Exsultate Justi was first published in 1627. A joyful anthem that combines both declamatory singing from the whole choir with characteristic polyphonic textures.

***With a Voice of Singing* - Martin Shaw (1875 – 1958)**

Martin Shaw was an English composer, conductor, and (in his early life) theatre producer. His over 300 published works include songs, hymns, carols, oratorios, several instrumental works, a congregational mass setting (the *Anglican Folk Mass*), and four operas including a ballad opera.

In 1918 he co-founded the League of Arts and the Royal School of Church Music. He was also an early organiser of hymn festivals. He did much editorial and executive work in connection with popularising music, the encouragement of community singing and raising standards of choral singing in small parish churches.

Born in London, Martin Shaw was a composer, educator, arranger and campaigner for the English Revival. In a career which spanned both World Wars, he felt very strongly that the great purpose of music should be to aid the cause of Humanity, and that we should regard it, therefore, as being in its nature at least as much social as artistic.

His published works include songs, cantatas, plays, anthems, pageants and much editorial work which passed on folk song to the next generation. This included the familiar hymn books *The English Hymnal* and *Songs of Praise*, as well as *The Oxford Book of Carols*.

Martin Shaw was born in Camberwell in London in 1875. In the 1880s his family moved to Hampstead, where he lived until 1901. He studied at the Royal College of Music under Stanford and Parry where he formed life-long friendships with Gustav Holst, John Ireland and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

During the 1900s, Shaw lived in Chelsea, and was part of a bohemian set of artists including Edward Gordon Craig, James Pryde, Augustus John and the poet, WB Yeats. In 1906 and 1907 he toured Europe as Music Director for the dancer Isadora Duncan; in 1908 he returned to Hampstead where he lived with his family until 1934.

After some years living in Essex he retired to Suffolk, eventually moving to the Suffolk coastal town of Southwold where he died in 1958.

The conductor's room at St Martin in the Fields is named after him.

Martin Shaw's exciting and celebratory anthem, *With a Voice of Singing*, was first published in 1923 and has been a staple of church anthems for almost 100 years.

***Psalm 100* – Sue Hughes (b. 1957)**

Sue has been a member of The Sheffield Chorale since 2021 and very much enjoys writing music for them to sing. Her musical background has been in teaching, accompanying and choral singing but now retirement from teaching gives her more time to concentrate on composing and arranging. She describes this setting of *Psalm 100* as “a happy accident”, 7/8 being a particularly joyful time signature. The reflective opening section was a late addition to the composition.

Sue studied at The Royal College of Music junior department, then at Reading University, where she studied piano with John Barstow. She worked as London concerts manager for Ibbs & Tillett artists representatives, then embarked upon her teaching career when she and her family lived in The Gambia in the '80s. Until recently she was teaching flute, piano and theory in Essex, and was much in demand as an accompanist.

Choral singing has always been a large part of Sue's life, and for the last 30 years or so she has spent an increasing amount of time composing vocal works both sacred and secular.

***Gloria RV589* – Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)**

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was an Italian composer, virtuoso violinist and impresario of Baroque music. Along with Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, Vivaldi ranks amongst the greatest Baroque composers and his influence during his lifetime was widespread across Europe, giving origin to many imitators and admirers. He pioneered many developments in orchestration, violin technique and programmatic music. He consolidated the emerging concerto form into a widely accepted and followed idiom.

Vivaldi composed many instrumental concertos, for the violin and a variety of other musical instruments, as well as sacred choral works and more than fifty operas. His best-known work is a series of violin concertos known as *The Four Seasons*. Many of his compositions were written for the all-female music ensemble of the *Ospedale della Pietà*, a home for abandoned children. Vivaldi began studying for the priesthood at the age of 15 and was ordained at 25 but was given dispensation to no longer say public Masses due to a health problem. Vivaldi also had some success with expensive stagings of his operas in Venice, Mantua and Vienna. After meeting the Emperor Charles VI, Vivaldi moved to Vienna, hoping for royal support. However, the Emperor died soon after Vivaldi's arrival, and Vivaldi himself died in poverty less than a year later.

After almost two centuries of decline, Vivaldi's musical reputation underwent a revival in the early 20th century, with much scholarly research devoted to his work. Many of Vivaldi's compositions, once thought lost, have been rediscovered – some as recently as 2015. His music remains widely popular in the present day and is regularly played all over the world.

Vivaldi wrote at least three Gloria compositions, settings of the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, with words probably dating back to the 4th century, and an integral part of the Mass Ordinary. Two of them have survived: RV 588 and RV 589. A third, RV 590, is mentioned only in the Kreuzherren catalogue and presumed lost. The RV 589 Gloria is a familiar and popular piece among sacred works by Vivaldi. It was probably written at about the same time as the RV 588, possibly in 1715.

RV 589 is the better-known setting of the Gloria, simply known as **the Vivaldi Gloria** because of its outstanding popularity. This piece, along with its mother composition RV 588, was composed at the same time during Vivaldi's employment at the *Pietà*.

The Glorias remained relatively unknown until RV 589's revival during "Vivaldi Week" in Siena (1939), along with the composer's setting of the Stabat Mater (RV 621). RV 589 enjoys well-founded popularity and is performed at many sacred events.

As with many other pieces of the Baroque era, RV 589 (and its lesser-known companion RV 588) have been performed in historically informed instrumentation, even with the use of an all-female choir to simulate choral conditions at the *Pietà*.

RV 589 has also been used in a number of films. The first movement featured in the 1996 Scott Hicks film *Shine* about pianist David Helfgott, as well as in the 2011 film *The Hunter*. An adaptation of the second movement was used with profound effect in the final climactic scenes of the 1985 Andrei Konchalovsky film *Runaway Train*.

For tonight's performance we welcome some of the 'non-Chorale' participants in January's very successful *Come and Sing* event to sing with us again.

***** SHORT INTERVAL *****

Cum Decore - Tielman (or Tylman) Susato (c. 1510/15 – after 1570)

Sing with grace, with love, with brightness, with ardour, with vigour, with warmth, with a melodious voice. Magnificent joy in music! A rustic and declamatory opening to the second half of our concert.

Tielman Susato was a Renaissance composer, instrumentalist and publisher of music in Antwerp.

While Susato's exact place of birth is unknown, some scholars believe that because of his name—Susato meaning de Soest, of the town of Soest — he may be either from the town of that name in Westphalia, or the town of Soest in The Netherlands.

Not much is known about his early life, but he begins appearing in various Antwerp archives of around 1530 working as a calligrapher as well as an instrumentalist: trumpet, flute and tenor pipe are listed as instruments that he owned.

In 1543, he founded the first music publishing house using movable music type in the Low Countries. Until Susato set up his press in Antwerp, music printing had been done mainly in Italy, France and Germany. Soon afterwards, Susato was joined by Petrus Phalesius the Elder in Leuven and Christopher Plantin, also in Antwerp, and the Low Countries became a regional centre of music publishing. In 1561 his son Jacob Susato, who died in 1564, took over his publishing business. Tielman Susato first moved to Alkmaar, North Holland, and later to Sweden. The last known record of him dates from 1570.

Susato was also an accomplished composer. He wrote (and published) several books of masses and motets which are in the typical imitative polyphonic style of the time. He also wrote two books of chansons which were specifically designed to be sung by young, inexperienced singers.

Susato also was a prolific composer of instrumental music, and much of it is still recorded and performed today.

***The Kindness of Strangers* - Chris Hutchings (b. 1979)**

To quote Chris Hutchings: - “Brian Bilston has very kindly allowed me to set his poem *The Kindness of Strangers* to music. It’s written in memory of the bombings in London and Manchester (and set to music also with the tragedy at Grenfell in mind).“

Chris Hutchings lives in Edinburgh, Scotland, with his wife and two young children. He studied at the universities of Cambridge, Hull and Glasgow, and his choral works have been performed around the world.

Chris has won several awards, including the Murau International Music Festival first prize 2019, Chigwell Choir Young Composers’ Competition, New London Singers Composition Prize, and the Temple Church Composition Prize.

His works have been performed by King’s Voices (Cambridge), Christ Church Cathedral College Choir (Oxford), the National Youth Choir of Scotland, the Edinburgh Singers, Chicago

A Cappella, the New London Singers, Cappella Nova, the University of Glasgow Chapel Choir, and a wide variety of soloists, choirs and chamber groups in the UK, US, Canada and beyond.

Chris is particularly interested in vocal music, and in using singing to bring out new readings or hidden meanings within texts.

***Shoshone Love Song* – Roger Emerson (b. 1950)**

Roger Emerson was born into a musical family. At age 10, he begged his parents for guitar lessons and was fortunate to study with Lou Morrell, a well-respected studio musician and eventually with jazz great, Herb Ellis. In 1965 he joined his first rock band, “The Nervous System” as an electric bass player.

At 19 he moved to Northern California, to a small community college where he decided to major in music. There he ended up with two very talented and supportive teachers: George Mattos and, the then unpublished, Kirby Shaw. In 1973, Roger graduated from Southern Oregon University, in Ashland, Oregon, with a degree in Music Education and it was after this that he decided to try out his songwriting skills on his choirs. In 1977 he published his first pieces and by 1980 he was writing or arranging 20 pieces per year.

Shoshone Love Song is now considered as one of the greatest examples of literary and musical tradition of Native American Culture. For a considerable amount of time, this masterpiece was neglected, yet in the twentieth century the tide turned and this work of art began to attract the attention of many musicians and poets.

There are some very powerful metaphors such as “the white star of twilight”, or “the moon roving to sky’s end”. These passages indicate that Shoshone people always associated beauty with nature. Shoshone Indians always believed that a human being was inseparable from nature, but not superior to other creatures. This philosophy is reflected in this song as the author describes heavenly bodies as something sacred. Being combined with Roger Emerson’s music it produces a deep impression and creates an atmosphere of internal peace.

***Like a Rainbow Shining* – Will Todd (b. 1970)**

The following is written by Will Todd as an introduction to the score: -

“A friend of mine asked recently if I could write a ‘song of hope’. It’s definitely challenging right now in the middle of 2020 not to feel disconnected, anxious and concerned about the future. Taking inspiration from the trend of painting rainbows and putting them in windows as a sign of a hopeful future, *Like A Rainbow Shining* is written for singers, musicians and music directors worldwide during the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond. I’m grateful to singers

from all over the world who helped make the first virtual choir version of this song. There is also access to the backing and learning tracks and I encourage choirs and groups to make their own virtual versions of the song or plan to perform it when you next get the chance. Wishing singers, musicians and music directors world-wide all the best and with hope for the future.”

Will Todd was born in County Durham and studied music at the University of Bristol. He is a pianist and regularly performs with his trio, and this played a large role in one of his best-known works, his Mass in Blue.

His work *The Blackened Man* won second prize in the International Verdi Opera Competition in 2002 and was later staged at the 2004 Buxton Festival. *The Screams of Kitty Genovese*, a piece of music theatre, has been produced at the Boston Conservatory and New York Musical Theatre Festival.

Will Todd’s music is valued for its melodic intensity and harmonic skill, often incorporating jazz colours, and his choral music is much in demand from amateur as well as professional performers.

***When we can Sing* – Anna Tabbush (b. 1980)**

Anna Tabbush is a composer/arranger, choir conductor, singer and multi-instrumentalist based in West Sussex, UK. She currently runs Guildford Vox Community Choir and Horsell Community Choir. Her compositions and arrangements are popular with community choirs across Britain and the world. She has recently published a number of them with Choir Community.

Growing up in a musical household, Anna started performing professionally at the age of 15 in her parents’ ceilidh band. She performed with several folk bands including The Tabbush Sisters, Meridian, The Climax Ceilidh Band, Oscina, Anna & the Odd Socks and the European Youth Folk Orchestra.

Anna currently sings with professional female a cappella vocal ensemble Corra Sound and vocal quartet Oaken.

Anna started her first community choir at Kingston University while studying for a degree in Music and Technology. Since then, she has set up over 20 community choirs and conducted over 40 across the South-East.

Anna is also Artistic Director of Community Vox CIC, a community arts organisation dedicated to running accessible, participatory music and arts events including SingFest and Spring Sing.

Anna Tabbush wrote *When We Can Sing* during 2021, towards the end of the pandemic. It is an evocative song about how good it would be to be singing together again.

***Rainbow Connection* – Paul Williams (b. 1940) and Kenneth Ascher (b. 1944) arr. Kate Shipway**

Rainbow Connection is a song from the 1979 film *The Muppet Movie*. The song was performed by Jim Henson – as Kermit the Frog – in the film. *Rainbow Connection* reached No. 25 on the Billboard Hot 100 in November 1979, with the song remaining in the Top 40 for seven weeks in total. Williams and Ascher received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song at the 52nd Academy Awards.

In 2020, *Rainbow Connection* was deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" by the Library of Congress and selected for preservation in the National Recording Registry.

Williams and Ascher, who had previously collaborated on several songs for the 1976 film *A Star Is Born*, were tasked with writing the songs for *The Muppet Movie*. For the song that became *Rainbow Connection*, Jim Henson told them that the opening scene should feature Kermit the Frog by himself, singing and playing the banjo. Williams and Ascher used *When You Wish Upon a Star* from *Pinocchio* as inspiration for the song.

Williams has noted that the lyrical phrasing in the song was written weirdly with Kermit's speech patterns in mind.

The arrangement for tonight's performance of *The Rainbow Connection* is by Kate Shipway.

***Over the Rainbow* – Harold Arlen (1905 – 1986) and Yip Harburg (1896 – 1981)**

Over the Rainbow, also known as *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, is a ballad by Harold Arlen with lyrics by Yip Harburg. It was written for the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*, in which it was sung by actress Judy Garland in her starring role as Dorothy Gale. It won the Academy Award for Best Original Song and became Garland's signature song.

Composer Harold Arlen and lyricist Yip Harburg often worked in tandem, Harburg generally suggesting an idea or title for Arlen to set to music, before Harburg contributed the lyrics. For their work together on *The Wizard of Oz*, Harburg claimed his inspiration was "a ballad for a little girl who... was in trouble and... wanted to get away from... Kansas. A dry, arid, colourless place. She had never seen anything colourful in her life except the rainbow". Arlen decided the idea needed "a melody with a long broad line". The rest, as they say, is history.

***How can I Keep from Singing* – Sarah Quartel (b. 1982)**

Canadian composer and educator Sarah Quartel is known for her fresh and exciting approach to choral music. Deeply inspired by the life-changing relationships that can occur while making choral music, Sarah writes in a way that connects singer to singer, ensemble to conductor, and performer to audience. Her works are performed by choirs across the world, and she has been commissioned by groups including the American Choral Directors

Association, the National Children's Chorus of the United States of America, and New Dublin Voices. Since 2018 she has been exclusively published by Oxford University Press, and she continues to work as a clinician and conductor at music education and choral events at home and abroad.

How can I keep from Singing was published in 2018. This lively reimagining of the traditional hymn is a thrilling a cappella arrangement which pairs the soaring legato melody with a rhythmic vocal accompaniment. Together, these elements capture both the gentle hope and the profound joy contained in the text. The piece comes to a rousing close with an energy that engages singers and audience alike.

Programme note courtesy of OUP

***Simple Gifts* – Joseph Brackett Jr (1797–1882) arr. Kate Shipway**

Simple Gifts is a Shaker song written and composed in 1848, generally attributed to Elder Joseph Brackett from Alfred Shaker Village. Tonight's arrangement is by Kate Shipway.

The tune and lyrics were written by Elder Joseph Brackett the Alfred, Maine Shaker community. Elder Joseph resided with the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village in New Gloucester, Maine community before he was called to serve in the Ministry in 1848. For the next decade, he served the Community in Alfred, later returning to New Gloucester. However, the Alfred community's history makes no reference to *Simple Gifts*, although there are several mentions of Elder Joseph.

The first known reference to *Simple Gifts* is an advertisement for a concert in October 1848 by the Shaker Family from the Society of Shakers of New Gloucester, Maine.

The song was largely unknown outside Shaker communities until Aaron Copland used its melody for the score of Martha Graham's ballet, *Appalachian Spring*, first performed in 1944. (Shakers once worshipped on Holy Mount, in the Massachusetts portion of the Appalachians). Copland used *Simple Gifts* a second time in 1950 in his first set of *Old American Songs* for voice and piano, which was later orchestrated.

***The Simple Things* – Fiona Lander (b. 1971)**

Fiona Lander composes and arranges music across a variety of genres. She has over 20 years of teaching experience having worked in secondary education as a classroom music teacher and as Head of Department. Since returning to her native North East, she worked for Music Partnership North as a peripatetic woodwind teacher for 10 years and now works freelance as a teacher, composer, performer and choir leader.

Fiona studied composition with Alan Bullard at Colchester Institute and gained a high honours degree. Whilst there, she won the annual Carol Writing Competition with her contemporary version of *We Three Kings* and was highly commended by Ursula Vaughan Williams for her Chamber Choir setting of *Who Killed Cock Robin*. Several of her

arrangements for Saxophone Choir have been performed by the Clarinet and Saxophone Society whilst '*Saxophone Jig*' (for soprano sax and guitar) was a finalist in the UK Song Writing Competition in 2007.

In 2017, Fiona and five other North East composers were commissioned to compose brand new carols by Voices of Hope (National Choir of the Year) for inclusion on their 2018 Christmas CD titled *A New Christmas*. Other local commissions followed soon after.

Fiona says about *The Simple Things*: "During Lockdown I made a virtual performance of this song to help keep me busy - an uplifting gospel-style song which celebrates the simple things in life."

Also during Lockdown, Fiona wrote an unaccompanied piece for 8-part chamber choir titled *Transmission*, which gained international recognition in the AERCO Choral Competition and was selected to be performed by the Moscow Conservatoire of Music Chamber Choir in January 2021.

In addition to all her creative work, Fiona directs a 10-piece ladies choir Dark Sky Voices and also teaches instrumental lessons at Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, where she runs the Choir and leads the Jazz Band.