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## The Cheltenham Bach Choir

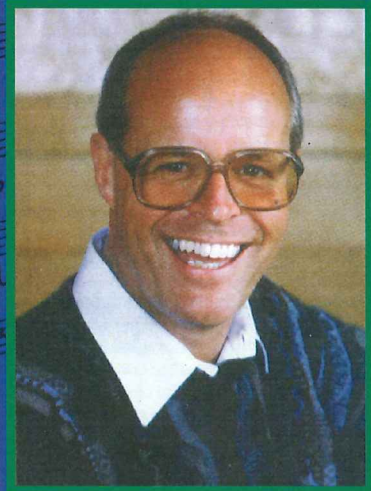


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*Conducted by*  
**BRIAN KAY**



## Music to Hear – The Cheltenham Bach Choir

The **Cheltenham Bach Choir** was founded in 1946 to perform the works of its eponymous composer **J S Bach**. Quite what the founder-members would have made of the selection of music on this disc is anyone's guess! But they would surely have accepted that the musical world was likely to change, and that the repertoire of the choir would develop with it. **Music to Hear** finds the choir of the mid-90s in light-hearted mood, celebrating the 50 years behind it, relishing the rather buoyant here and now, and looking forward eagerly to what may lie ahead.

The selection owes much to the choir's traditional midsummer concerts, when the great and mighty oratorios are laid aside and the choir relaxes with programmes which – though equally demanding musically – allow the members to let their hair down and entertain the audience. Part-songs by **Vaughan Williams**, **E J Moeran**, **Pearsall**, **Sullivan** and **Barnby** represent one of the golden ages in the great British choral tradition, and are standard repertoire for many mixed-voice choirs. The three sequences need a little introduction, as they are receiving their first recorded performances here (although **George Shearing's Shakespeare** settings, **Music to Hear**, have been recorded previously in America).

George Shearing generously agreed to share the platform of Cheltenham Town Hall with the Bach Choir in June 1995, and naturally enough, his Shakespeare settings for voice, jazz piano and bass were included in the programme. Mr Shearing's love of all things English (including meat-and-two-veg, cricket, and Delius!) is evident in the choral writing, which combines with his own inimitable style of jazz in a way that makes them seem made for each other. One good thing leads to another, and as soon as it was known that the legendary pianist would be appearing in concert with the choir, **John Rutter** graciously agreed to write a set of **Birthday Madrigals** in celebration of George Shearing's 75th (which occurred that year), and these were included in the same concert, with the composer conducting. It was a tremendous thrill for the choir to have music written for it by one of the best-known and most successful choral composers in the world today. The third sequence – **Cycle Round Britain**

by **Goff Richards** – was written for an earlier summer concert, which the choir shared with the wind quintet **Harmoniemusik**. The idea of a folk song cycle representing England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales seemed ideal for a choir that includes singers who originally hail from all parts of a country that's so rich in traditional music.

The Cheltenham Bach Choir has taken great pleasure in performing and recording this repertoire. In a word, Enjoy!

Brian Kay

## Brian Kay

Brian Kay divides his working life between the broadcasting studio and the concert platform. He presents over 100 radio programmes each year, including **Brian Kay's Sunday Morning** on BBC Radio 3, and **Classics with Kay** every Saturday evening on Radio 4. His BBC World Service music programme reached an audience of millions all over the world. He has also presented special features on such musical luminaries as **Dame Janet Baker**, **Kathleen Ferrier**, **Sir John Barbirolli**, **James Bowman** and **The King's Singers**. In 1996 he won the **Sony Radio Award** as *Music Presenter of the Year*.

On the concert platform, he presents and narrates concerts with many of the leading orchestras, and was one of the first to appear in the new Symphony Hall in Birmingham, presenting a Royal Gala Concert in the opening week. His narrations with orchestra include *Peter and the Wolf*, *Paddington Bear's First Concert*, *Tubby the Tuba*, *Babar the Elephant*, *The Snowman*, *The Musicians of Bremen*, *Walton's Façade*, *Honegger's King David* and *Bliss's Morning Heroes*.

Brian Kay is Conductor of the **Cheltenham Bach Choir**, and **Vaughan Williams's Leith Hill Music Festival**. He was for ten years Chorus Master of the **Huddersfield Choral Society**, and frequently guest-conducts choirs and orchestras in many parts of the country. He has also conducted the **Orpheus Choir** in Wellington, New Zealand, and the **Berkshire Choral Festival** from Sheffield, Massachusetts. He is Vice President of the **ABCD** (Association of British Choral Directors).

Brian Kay has twice appeared at the Royal Variety Show (as a member of the **King's Singers** in 1978 and conducting the **Huddersfield Choral Society** in 1987), and sang the voice of Papageno in the Hollywood movie of **Amadeus** (his wife, the soprano Gillian Fisher sang Papagena). He has been the lowest frog on a Paul McCartney single and a member of the backing group for Pink Floyd!

## 1 The Sailor and Young Nancy

E J Moeran (OUP)

It was happy and delightful one midsummer's  
morn,  
When the fields and the meadows they were  
covered in corn,  
And the blackbirds and thrushes sang on every  
green tree,  
And the larks they sang melodious at the dawn of  
the day.

Said the sailor to his true love, I am bound far  
away,  
I am bound for the East Indies, I no longer can stay,  
I am bound for the East Indies where the loud  
cannons roar,  
I am going to leave my Nancy, she's the girl I  
adore.

A ring from his finger he then instantly drew,  
Saying, Take this, dearest Nancy, and my heart  
shall go too,  
And while he embraced her tears from her eyes  
fell,  
Saying May I go along with you? Oh no my love,  
fare you well.

Said the sailor to his true love, I no longer can stay,  
For our topsails are hoisted and our anchor is  
weighed,  
Our ship she lays awaiting for the next flowing tide,  
And if ever I return again I will make you my bride.

anon

## 2 O Mistress Mine

R Vaughan Williams (Stainer & Bell)

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low:  
Trip no farther, pretty sweeting;  
Journeys end in lovers meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter;  
What's to come is still unsure:  
In delay there lies no plenty;  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

W Shakespeare

## 3 Love is a Sickness

R Vaughan Williams (Stainer & Bell)

Love is a sickness full of woes,  
All remedies refusing;  
A plant that with most cutting grows,  
Most barren with best using.

Why so?  
More we enjoy it, more it dies;  
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries Hey-ho!

S Daniel



## Birthday Madrigals

John Rutter (OUP)

### 4 *It was a Lover and his Lass*

It was a lover and his lass,  
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonny no,  
That o'er the green cornfields did pass  
In springtime, in springtime,  
The only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing Hey ding-a-ding ding,  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,  
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonny no,  
These pretty country folks would lie  
In springtime, in springtime,  
The only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing Hey ding-a-ding ding,  
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,  
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonny no,  
For love is crowned with the prime  
In springtime, in springtime,  
The only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing Hey ding-a-ding ding,  
Sweet lovers love the spring,  
'Cos the sun shines.

W Shakespeare

### 5 *Draw On, Sweet Night*

Draw on, sweet night, draw on, sweet night,  
Best friend unto those cares  
That do arise from painful melancholy.

Draw on, sweet night, draw on, sweet night,  
My life so ill from want of comfort fares  
That unto thee I consecrate it wholly.  
Sweet night, draw on, sweet night, draw on,

My griefs when they be told  
To shades and darkness, find some ease from  
paining.  
And while thou all in silence dost enfold,  
I then shall have best time for my complaining.  
Draw on, sweet night, draw on.

J Wilbye

### 6 *Come Live With Me*

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, and hills and fields,  
Woods or steepy mountains yields.  
If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in ev'ry shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

And we will sit upon the rocks  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.  
Time drives the flocks from field to fold,  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complains of cares to come.

And I will make thee beds of roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle:  
The flow'rs do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reek'ning yields:  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring but sorrow's fall.

A gown made of the finest wool,  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;  
Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies  
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.  
If youth could last, and love still breed,  
Had joys no date, nor age no need,  
Then these delights my mind might move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

Marlow / Attrib. Raleigh

### 7 *My True Love hath my Heart*

My true Love hath my heart, and I have his,  
By just exchange one for the other given:  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;  
There never was a better bargain driven.

His heart in me keeps me and him in one,  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;  
I cherish his because in me it bides.

His heart his wound received from my sight,  
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;  
For as from me, on him his hurt did light,  
So still methought in me his hurt did smart.

Both, equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss:  
My true Love hath my heart, and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney

### 8 *When Daisies Pied*

When daisies pied, and violets blue,  
And lady-smocks all silver-white,  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
Do paint the meadows with delight,  
The cuckoo then, on ev'ry tree,  
Mocks married men, for thus sings he:  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, O word of fear,  
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,  
And merry larks are ploughman's clocks,  
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,  
And maidens bleach their summer smocks;  
The cuckoo then, on ev'ry tree,  
Mocks married men, for thus sings he:  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, O word of fear,  
Unpleasing to a married ear!

When as the rye reach to the chin,  
And chop-cherry, chop-cherry ripe within,  
And strawberries swimming in the cream,  
And schoolboys playing in the stream;  
Then oh, then oh, my true love said,  
Then oh, then oh, my true love said,



*The Cheltenham Bach Choir 1996*

Until that time should come again,  
 She could not, could not live a maid.  
 Cuckoo, cuckoo, O word of fear,  
 Unpleasing to a married ear!  
 Cuckoo, cuckoo, loud sing cuckoo!

*W Shakespeare (vv1-2) Peele (v3)*

## 9 Who Shall Have My Lady Fair?

Robert Pearsall (PD)

Who shall have my lady fair, when the leaves are  
 green?  
 Who but I, who but I, who but I should win my lady  
 fair,  
 When the leaves are green?  
 Who shall win my lady, when the leaves are green?  
 Say who, not you. Why so? No, no,  
 The bravest man that best love can  
 Shall win my lady fair.

Dandirly, dandirly, dandirly dan,  
 He shall marry her, he's the man;  
 Dandirly, dandirly, dandirly dan,  
 When the leaves are green;  
 He shall marry my lady when the leaves are green.

Will you bury my lady fair, when the leaves are  
 green?  
 No not I, no not I; I won't bury my lady fair,  
 When the leaves are green.  
 Will you bury my lady when the leaves are green?  
 Say who, will you? No, no. Why so?  
 I'd rather marry my lady fair, e'en though the trees  
 were bare.

Dandirly, dandirly, dandirly dan,  
 She shall marry a proper man;  
 Dandirly, dandirly, dandirly dan,  
 When the leaves are green,  
 He shall marry my lady when the leaves are green.

*anon*

## 10 Sweet and Low

Sir Joseph Barnby (PD)

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon and blow.  
 Blow him again to me,  
 While my little one,  
 While my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;

Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon!  
 Sleep, my little one,  
 Sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

## 11 Just as the Tide was Flowing

arr. R Vaughan Williams (Stainer & Bell)

One morning in the month of May, down by some  
 rolling river,  
 A jolly sailor, I did stray, when I beheld my lover.  
 She carelessly along did stray, a-picking of the  
 daisies gay;  
 And sweetly sang her roundelay, just as the tide  
 was flowing.

O! her dress it was so white as milk, and jewels did  
 adorn her.  
 Her shoes were made of the crimson silk, just like  
 some lady of honour.  
 Her cheeks were red, her eyes were brown, her  
 hair in ringlets hanging down;  
 She'd a lovely brow without a frown, just as the tide  
 was flowing.

I made a bow and said, 'Fair maid, how came you  
 here so early;  
 My heart by you it is betray'd, for I do love you  
 dearly.  
 I am a sailor come from sea. If you will accept of  
 my company  
 To walk and view the fishes play', just as the tide  
 was flowing.

No more we said, but on our way we gang'd along  
 together;  
 The small birds sang and the lambs did play; and  
 pleasant was the weather.  
 When we were weary we did sit down, beneath a  
 tree with branches round;  
 For my true love at last I'd found, just as the tide  
 was flowing.

*anon*

## Music to Hear

George Shearing (Hindon Pubs)

*Words by William Shakespeare*

## 12 Music to Hear

Music to hear, why hearest thou music sadly?  
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:  
 Why lovest thou that which thou receivest not gladly,  
 Or else receivest with pleasure thine annoy?

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,  
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;  
 Resembling sire and child and happy mother,  
 Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:

Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,  
 Sings this to thee: "Thou single wilt prove none".

## 13 Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date.



Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And ev'ry fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.

So long as man can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

#### 14 *Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye*

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye  
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?  
Ah! If thou issueless shalt hap to die,  
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife.

The world will be thy widow, and still weep  
That thou no form of thee hast left behind.  
When ev'ry private widow well may keep  
By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.

Look, what an unthrif in the world doth spend  
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;  
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,  
And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.

No love toward others in that bosom sits  
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

#### 15 *Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more*

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever;  
One foot in sea, and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.

Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more  
Of dumps so dull and heavy;  
The fraud of men was ever so,  
Since summer first was leavy.

Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into Hey nonny, nonny no.

#### 16 *Blow, blow, thou winter wind*

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude.

Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho, sing heigh ho, unto the green holly!  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then heigh ho, the holly, this life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
That dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot.

Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remember'd not

Heigh ho, sing heigh ho, unto the green holly!  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then heigh ho, the holly, this life is most jolly.

#### 17 *Lay a Garland on her Hearse*

Robert Pearsall (PD)

Lay a garland on her hearse, of dismal yew;  
Maidens, willow branches wear; say, she died true,  
Her love was false, but she was firm.  
Upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

*from Beaumont and Fletcher*

#### 18 *The long day closes*

Sir Arthur Sullivan (PD)

No star is o'er the lake, its pale watch keeping;  
The moon is half awake, through grey mist creeping;  
The last red leaves fall round the porch of roses;  
The clock hath ceased to sound, the long day closes.

Sit by the silent hearth in calm endeavour  
To count the sounds of mirth, now dumb forever.  
Heed not how hope believes and fate disposes;  
Shadow is round the eaves, the long day closes.

The lighted windows dim are fading slowly;  
The fire that was so trim now quivers lowly.  
Go to the dreamless bed where grief reposes;  
Thy book of toil is read, the long day closes.

*Henry Chorley*

#### *Cycle Round Britain*

Goff Richards (Max Music)

#### 19 *Strawberry Fair*

As I was going to Strawberry Fair,  
Singing, singing, buttercups and daisies,  
I met a maiden taking her ware, fol-de-dee!  
Her eyes were blue and golden her hair,  
As she went on to Strawberry Fair.  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-li-do,  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-dee.

Kind sir, pray pick of my basket, she said,  
Singing, singing, buttercups and daisies,  
My cherries ripe, or my roses red, fol-de-dee!  
My strawberries sweet I can of them spare,  
As I go on to Strawberry Fair.  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-li-do,  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-dee.

Your cherries soon will be wasted away,  
Singing, singing, buttercups and daisies,  
Your roses wither and never stay, fol-de-dee!  
'Tis not to seek such perishing ware  
That I am tramping to Strawberry Fair.  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-li-do,  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-dee.

I want to purchase a generous heart,  
Singing, singing, buttercups and daisies,  
A tongue that's neither nimble nor tart, fol-de-dee!  
An honest mind – but such trifles are rare,  
I doubt if they're found at Strawberry Fair.  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-li-do,  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-dee.

The price I offer, my sweet maid,  
Singing, singing, buttercups and daisies,  
A ring of gold on your finger displayed, fol-de-dee!  
So come make over to me your ware,  
In church today at Strawberry Fair!  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-li-do,  
Ri-fol, ri-fol, tol-de-riddle-dee!

## 20 *The Ash Grove*

The ash grove, how graceful, how plainly 'tis speaking;  
The wind through it playing has language for me.  
When over its branches the sunlight is breaking,  
A host of kind faces is gazing on me.

The friends of my childhood again are before me;  
Fond memories waken as freely I roam;  
With soft whispers laden its leaves rustle o'er me,  
The ash grove, the ash grove that sheltered my home.

My laughter is over, my step loses lightness,  
The songs of my childhood steal soft on mine ear;  
I only remember the past and its brightness,  
The dear ones I mourn for again gather here.

From out of the shadows their loving looks greet me,  
And wistfully searching the leafy green dome  
I find other faces fond bending to greet me;  
The ash grove, the ash grove alone is my home.

The friends of my childhood again are before me;  
Fond memories waken as freely I roam;  
With soft whispers laden its leaves rustle o'er me,  
The ash grove, the ash grove that sheltered my home.

## 21 *The Raith Rover*

*Instrumental*

## 22 *Londonderry Air*

Oh Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling  
From glen to glen and down the mountainside;  
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling;  
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.

But come ye back when summer's in the meadow,  
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow.  
'Tis I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow,  
Oh Danny boy, oh Danny boy I love you so.

But when ye come, and all the flowers are dying,  
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,  
You'll come and find the place where I am lying,  
And kneel and say an Ave there for me.

And I shall hear, though soft, your tread above me,  
And all my grave will warmer, sweeter be;  
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,  
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.

## 23 *Dashing away with the smoothing iron*

'Twas on a Monday morning when I beheld my darling,  
She looked so neat and charming in ev'ry high degree;  
She looked so neat and nimble-O, a-washing of her linen-O,  
Dashing away with the smoothing iron,  
Dashing away with the smoothing iron, she stole my heart away.

'Twas on a Tuesday morning etc.  
She looked so neat and nimble-O, a-hanging out her linen-O,  
etc.

Wednesday – a-starching

Thursday – a-ironing

Friday – a-folding

Saturday – a-airing

Sunday – a-wearing

*All anon*

Photo of Brian Kay © BBC

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