

Musical Director: Deborah Miles-Johnson
Accompanist: Paul Webster



THE *Imperial* MALE VOICE CHOIR



presents an evening of choral delights with
guest soprano **Leilani Barratt**



Saturday 1st April 2023
at 7:00pm

**St Catherine's Church,
Hatcham SE14 5SG**

Telegraph**Hill**
festival

Welcome to our concert in which we will lead you through a span of over 1000 years of our varied repertoire. Imperial Male Voice Choir takes its name from Imperial College of Science and Technology where its founder members studied (allegedly) in the 1970s. If you would like to know more about us then do see our website: www.imvc.org.uk

Our next concert in the UK will be on October 28th 2023 at Reigate Park Church, Reigate Lane East, Reigate RH2 8BD, where we shall be performing jointly with the Band of the Surrey Yeomanry. We'd be delighted if you joined us!



A Journey Through Music for Male Voices

Should Male Voice Choirs be called Lower Voice Choirs? There are certainly many 'lady tenors' around the country who are important members of Mixed Voice Choirs. This is a debate for the age we are in and it gives us the opportunity to look back at the evolution of 'men singing together' to give us some context.

We don't really know when or where our ancestors started to meet together to sing but we do know that the early Christian Church used **Plainchant** in churches and monasteries as part of their liturgy. These simple monophonic chants were collected and organised from the 6th century onwards and some are still in use today alongside later **Polyphonic Sacred** compositions. For generations only male singers were allowed in church choirs but this has changed in recent years with even cathedrals now enlisting women and girls.

Outside the church, secular singing developed with folk songs being passed down orally in communities and by minstrels. Early composers produced polyphonic part-songs on everyday, often romantic, themes. In the form of **Madrigals** such music was very popular during the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries. Initially these seem to have been sung only by men but increasingly the higher parts were apportioned to women.

Though entertainment has always been a driver of singing together, there have been other environments in which men have found the need to sing. Soldiers, marching together with drums and fifes to keep them in step, would have improvised tunes to sing to alleviate the boredom. These developed into

Marching Songs. Sailors, performing repetitive, rhythmical tasks such as hauling up an anchor sang **Shanties**, with participants contributing improvised topical verses. In the fields and plantations of the New World enslaved labourers sang to keep up their spirits. With the spread of Christianity these songs often adopted religious themes of deliverance and redemption and became known as **Spirituals** and developed into today's **Gospel Songs**.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries industrialisation had brought together large communities looking for a release from the daily grind. **Choral Music** spread from the churches and chapels to be embraced by groups of miners, fishermen, factory-workers, etc. Men who, in most cases, couldn't read music tackled traditional but, increasingly, specially written music which was becoming more sophisticated, fuelled by the growth of competitive festivals. Many of the great composers on the continent, such as Schubert and Brahms, had written works for men's choirs and the baton was taken up in this country by such as Holst, Vaughan Williams and Grainger, who collected folk-songs and arranged them as **Part Songs** for male voices. In addition composers of opera often wrote stirring music for **Male Opera Choruses**. Examples include Beethoven's Prisoners' Chorus, Wagner's Pilgrims' Chorus and Sullivan's Peers' Chorus.

Meanwhile in the USA, a particular form of part song – the **Barbershop Quartet** – was developing and in recent years it has become common to find Barbershop Choruses.

The rapid expansion of Male Voice Choirs in the last century has now turned into a contraction but, on the positive side, there is plenty of good material available for men singing together to enjoy. The traditional favourites are being augmented by arrangements of songs from the **Pop Charts** and **Broadway** hits alongside quirky numbers composed for groups such as **The King's Singers**.

IMPERIAL MALE VOICE CHOIR

1st Tenors	2nd Tenors	1st Basses	2nd Basses
Anthony Garrett	Steve Bodle	Martyn Broyd	Solomon Abraham
Brendan Peilow	Clive Halliday	Brian Fugard	Andrew Harbord
Bernard Tagliavini	Laurie Jackson	Neville Hargreaves	Andy Hoskins
Martin S Taylor	Tim Johnson	Keith McClurey	Richard Jones
Roger Woodward	Edmund Mulligan	Roger Nicholls	Ken Lewis
	Tim Sawers	John Tripp	Michael Tripp
		William White	

TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME

Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Tiger, Tiger</i>	C Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960)
<i>Ut queant laxis</i>	Guido d'Arezzo (fl. 1010-1030)
<i>Miserere Mei</i>	Antonio Lotti (1667-1740)
<i>El Grillo</i>	Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521)

Leilani Barratt

<i>Die Forelle</i>	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
<i>Du bist wie eine Blume</i>	Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Marching Song</i>	Mátyás Seiber (1905-1960)
<i>Plenty Good Room</i>	arr. Moses Hogan (1957-2003)
<i>What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor?</i>	arr. Alice Parker & Robert Shaw

Leilani Barratt

<i>Silent Noon</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
<i>Love went a-riding</i>	Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Brigg Fair (solo: Tim Johnson)</i>	Percy Grainger (1882-1961) arr. DMJ
<i>Sailing at Dawn (solo: Neville Hargreaves)</i>	Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)
<i>The Lost Chord</i>	Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900) arr. Doris Arnold

INTERVAL

Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Lux Aurumque</i>	Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
<i>The Boatmen's Dance (solo: Ken Lewis)</i>	Adapted by Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
<i>My Evaline</i>	arr. Arthur E Hall (1901-1978)

Leilani Barratt & Imperial Male Voice Choir

Two songs from La Fille du Régiment:	Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)
<i>Rataplan</i>	
<i>Chacun le sait</i>	

Leilani Barratt

<i>Endless Pleasure (Semele)</i>	George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
<i>O Mio Babbino Caro (Gianni Schicchi)</i>	Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>The Longest Time (solo: Bernard Tagliavini, Tim Sawers & William White)</i>	
	Billy Joel (b. 1949) arr. Roger Emerson
<i>Embraceable You</i>	George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Leilani Barratt

<i>Miss Otis Regrets</i>	Cole Porter (1891-1964)
<i>Bewitched</i>	Richard Rodgers (1902-1979)

Leilani Barratt & Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Summertime</i>	George Gershwin (1898-1937) arr. Jeremy White
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Imperial Male Voice Choir

<i>Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat (solo: Bernard Tagliavini)</i>	
	Frank Loesser (1910-1969)
<i>Send in the Clowns</i>	Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021) arr. Michael Martin

Tiger, Tiger is one of many poems set to music by Cecil Armstrong Gibbs. In this 1931 composition the words are from Blake's 1794 poem *The Tyger* from his *Songs of Experience*. Gibbs' father ran a soap and toothpaste business and tried unsuccessfully to encourage his son to follow suit. Armstrong, as he was usually known, went on to study at the Royal College of Music.

Ut Queant Laxis is an early plainchant hymn in honour of St John the Baptist, with words attributed to Paul the Deacon, who lived in the 8th century. Guido d'Arezzo used the first syllables of the words in each line to name the notes 'Ut, re, mi, fa, so, ...'. (*Ut* became *Do* in the 18th Century.)

Miserere Mei is a sacred motet written by the Venetian Baroque composer Antonio Lotti in 1730. It uses text from the Book of Psalms entreating God to forgive transgressions.

El Grillo (The Cricket) is a *frotolla*, a secular Italian comic song and predecessor of the madrigal. It is thought to have been written c. 1490 by the Flanders-born Renaissance composer Josquin Des Prez. On the face of it the text favourably

compares the singing and stamina of the cricket with the more flamboyant birds. It may also contain a hinted suggestion that Josquin's patrician employer should take the composer's output more seriously.

Mátyás Seiber grew up in Budapest but eventually made his home in Caterham. He taught at Morley College in Lambeth and was tragically killed in a car accident in South Africa. **Marching Song** is based on an old Hungarian folk-song and captures the feeling of futility as soldiers march off to war.

Plenty Good Room is an African-American spiritual arranged in 2001 by the celebrated and prolific American arranger Moses Hogan.

The traditional sea shanty **Drunken Sailor** dates back at least to 1830. The onboard tasks that it would have accompanied are not clear but its popularity spread into music halls and beyond. This arrangement seeks to mimic the rising and falling of the ship and even induce sea-sickness in the listener and choir!

The Australian-born pianist and composer Percy Grainger was one of a number of prominent collectors and arrangers of folk-songs early in the last century.

Brigg Fair was collected one April day in 1905 in Lincolnshire.

Sailing at Dawn is the first of a cycle of five songs entitled *Songs of the Fleet* which Stanford composed in 1910 using poems by Sir Henry Newbolt. Stanford was born in Dublin but became a long-serving professor at the Royal College of Music, next door to Imperial College, where he taught the likes of Holst and Vaughan Williams.

The Lost Chord is a song composed by Arthur Sullivan in 1877 at the bedside of his brother Fred during the latter's terminal illness. The song was immediately successful and became particularly associated with Sullivan's close friend and mistress, Fanny Ronalds, amongst others. Sullivan was proud of the song and later noted: 'I have composed much music since then, but have never written a second Lost Chord.' This arrangement is by Doris Arnold for her a cappella group The Kentucky Minstrels who were very popular on BBC Radio in the 1940s.

Lux Aurumque, by the contemporary American composer Eric Whitacre, uses a Latin text which derives from a poem by Edward Esch: 'Light, warm and heavy as pure gold and the angels sing softly to the new-born babe.' A notable performance of this sacred 2004 piece was given in 2010 by a 'virtual choir' of 185 voices

The Boatmen's Dance is a 1950 arrangement by the American Composer Aaron Copland of a minstrel song dating back to the mid 19th century. It is included in his collection of Old American Songs, alongside the better known hymn Lord of the Dance, and describes the bawdy behaviour of boatmen on the Ohio River.

Sadly, the romantic view of the origins of barbershop singing as four hairdressers wearing boaters and breaking into close harmony whilst clipping away is probably stretching the truth. However, the style is an undeniable American genre all of its own and **My Evaline** is a classic example which has maintained its popularity from before the Barbershop Revival of the 1940s to the present day.

The **Rataplan** Chorus and **Chacun Le Sait** are taken from Italian composer Donizetti's 'opéra comique' (containing spoken dialogue and arias) *La Fille du Régiment*. It was first performed in Paris in 1840 and after a rocky start with an off-pitch tenor and negative reviews in the jingoistic French press, the opera quickly became hugely popular.

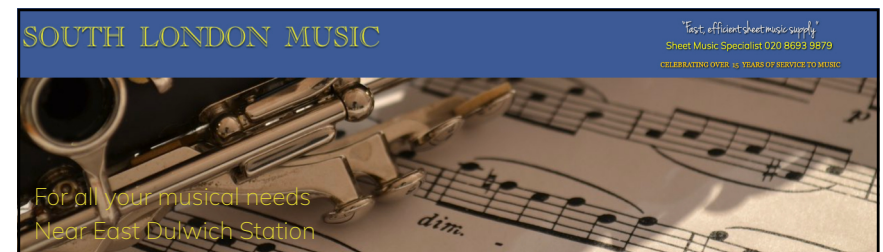
William Martin Joel, better known as Billy, is one of the best-selling singer-songwriters of all time. His 1984 doo-wop number **The Longest Time** is well suited to the a cappella treatment.

Embraceable You is a George and Ira Gershwin song featured in the 1930 musical *Girl Crazy* starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Summertime was composed by George Gershwin for the 1935 opera *Porgy & Bess*. It soon became recognised as one of the finest songs written by Gershwin and a much-recorded jazz standard.

Sit Down, You're Rockin' The Boat is a show-stopping number written by Frank Loesser for the 1950 Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls*. The singer, Nicely-Nicely Johnson, is endeavouring to persuade the members of the Save-a-Soul Mission that he and his gambling friends have 'seen the light' and forsaken their wicked ways. (Although his motivation is suspect: the Mission's attractive leader, Sergeant Sarah Brown, is romantically linked with Johnson's fellow 'crap-shooter', Sky Masterson.)

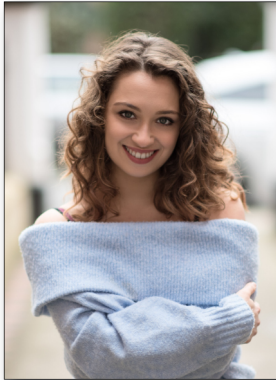
Send in the Clowns is one of Stephen Sondheim's most famous songs. Written for his 1973 musical *A Little Night Music*, the song is sung by Desirée, an actress, after she proposes to Fredrik, her long-lost amour, and he refuses. So the 'clowns' here are not so much circus clowns; in Sondheim's words 'a synonym for clowns is fools, but "Send in the Fools" doesn't have quite the same ring to it.'



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LEILANI BARRATT gained a First Class Honours in Music at Royal Holloway College University of London, where she was a choral scholar in the esteemed chapel choir for three years and was awarded the Dame Felicity Lott Bursary. She went on to win a scholarship on the Masters of Vocal Performance Course at the Royal College of Music and graduated in 2020 with a Distinction.

She has sung with Opera Holland Park Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus and Opera Rara and has performed main roles with opera companies including Diva Opera, Midsummer Opera and Westminster Opera. A keen

recitalist, she was a Leeds Lieder Young Artist in 2019. Her current schedule comprises recitals of lieder, art song and jazz, and touring the UK and abroad with Diva Opera.

Imperial Male Voice Choir is led by top choral director and singer DEBORAH MILES-JOHNSON. Deborah is a former member of the BBC Singers and The Sixteen and sang in the Royal Opera House as a member of the Extra Chorus for many years. She runs choral workshops and has trained the BBC Symphony Chorus and other major London choirs. Her versatile career includes a thriving teaching practice and singing the backing tracks for movies, including *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings*.



PAUL WEBSTER read Music as an Organ Scholar at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, studying composition with Robin Holloway, and subsequently won a scholarship to study Piano Accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

He has worked with established singers such as Willard White and Teresa Cahill, continues to work regularly as coach and accompanist with students, with voice teachers Laura Sarti and Rita Godfrey, and is now in his twentieth year as accompanist for the BBC Symphony Chorus.