



SYMPHONY CHOIR
OF CAPE TOWN

The Symphony Choir of Cape Town presents

A CELEBRATION IN SONG

Walton, Woodborne, Rutter, Parry

Conducted by Levi Alexander

Cape Town City Hall

Saturday 19 August 2023

A note from our Director

The Symphony Choir of Cape Town is committed to performing classical oratorystyle choral music. Each year, we hope to collaborate with school and youth choirs to pass on some of the traditions of this music and ensure audience development. This year we are delighted to collaborate with the fantastic **SACS High School Boys Choir** and **St Cyprian's Girls High School Choir**. The learners have made a tremendous effort to learn these substantial choral works - hearty congratulations on their superb effort and thank you to Warren Patientia and Riaan Oosthuizen for their preparation.

The SCCT also enjoys collaborating with other musical institutions of excellence. This evening we are privileged to be accompanied by the combined **Windworx** and **Stellenbosch University Symphonic Wind Ensembles**. These bands are at the forefront of wind band music development and promotion in South Africa. Here's to wind bands sharing the professional stage in future! Thank you to Riaan van Wyk and Pamela Kierman, the managers of these two bands.

The programme starts with William Walton's rousing **Crown Imperial**, a nod to the coronation of King Charles III. In tonight's programme, we perform four wind band arrangements by Paul Noble, who has taken a keen interest in the performance of wind band and choral music in Cape Town and is eagerly awaiting the recording of this evening's performance.

During a tour with the SACS Concert Band to Austria in 2017, I happened to come across the **Rohrau Mass** by Cape Town-born composer Shane Woodborne, who for many years has been resident in Austria. This moving work will premiere in South Africa this evening. Shane is delighted with the news that we are performing his work and has given his autographed score, from which he conducted the work's first performance.

The major work this evening is John Rutter's **Magnificat**, or Song of Mary, which sets to music the words spoken by the Virgin Mary when she visited Elizabeth. It is a joyous piece, as we rejoice in the joy of life and music, the unity of our community celebrating its diversity, the overcoming of our personal and collective adversities, and a prosperous future for us all – a **celebration in song!**

The performance ends with Hubert Parry's glorious masterpiece, **I Was Glad**. We could not resist indulging in this triumphant anthem, given this evening's magnificent, combined choirs, extraordinary wind band, and resonant acoustics - truly an anthem of the soul! We hope you enjoy every minute of our programme.

Levi Alexander - Music Director of the Symphony Choir of Cape Town

PROGRAMME

William Walton – Crown Imperial

Shane Woodborne – Rohrau Mass

John Rutter – Look at the World

**** Interval ****

John Rutter – Magnificat

Hubert Parry – I was Glad

PROGRAMME NOTES

William Walton – Crown Imperial (arr. by Paul Noble)

William Walton was born in England in 1902, the son of a music teacher. He was a chorister at Oxford's Christ Church Cathedral Choir from age 10 and at 16 entered the College.

He wrote three pieces for Royal occasions, ***Crown Imperial*** being one of the best known. It was commissioned for the coronation of King George VI in 1937 in Westminster Abbey. The work has been heard at subsequent state occasions in the Abbey, including the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, the wedding of Prince William in 2011, and this year's coronation of King Charles III.

Shane Woodborne – Rohrau Mass

Born in Fish Hoek, Shane Woodborne studied cello and piano in Cape Town, completing his performer diploma at the SA College of Music in 1984. He won the prestigious Oude Meester competition in 1983 and was able to continue his studies at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. During this time, he was increasingly drawn to compositional work and was commissioned to compose a number of works for choir and orchestras in Austria and Norway, as well as solo works and chamber music. Shane has been a member of the Salzburg Camerata since 1992.

The Rohrau Mass was commissioned for the Rohrau congregation in 2007. Rohrau is a small rural village in Austria, with only 1667 inhabitants and is the birthplace of composer Michael Haydn (1737-1806), to whom this piece was dedicated. Every town and village in Austria has a “blaskapelle”, a wind band that performs for all communal occasions. However, when it came time for the premiere in 2007, the Rohrau blaskapelle found this piece too difficult to master and called in help from the next town. The Mass was performed at each village over the weekend of the premiere, becoming an immediate favorite and is performed widely in Austria and Germany.

A **Mass** is a form of sacred musical composition that sets the portions of the Christian liturgy to music. Most Masses are sung in Latin, the sacred language of the Catholic Church.

Only in 1966 did the Catholic Church mandate the use of English or other languages in its liturgy. (thanks Wiki)

John Rutter - Look at the World (arr. by Paul Noble)

John Rutter (1945-present) is an English composer, conductor, editor, arranger and record producer. His compositions are chiefly choral, and include Christmas carols, anthems and extended works. Rutter's music is eclectic, showing the influences of the French and English choral traditions of the early 20th century, as well as of light music and American classic songwriting.

Rutter set *Look at the world* as a harvest anthem to his own lyrics in 1996. The piece was commissioned to mark the 70th anniversary of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, which wanted an anthem or choral song that would be widely usable on the theme of the environment and our responsibility towards it.

Did you know?

Despite composing and conducting predominantly sacred music, John Rutter does not consider himself particularly religious.

**** **Interval** ****

John Rutter said this about Magnificat:

The second movement, *Of a Rose, A lovely Rose*, doesn't belong to the traditional Latin Magnificat text. It is a very lovely English poem from the 15th century. No one knows who wrote it. But it's telling a story: "*Hearken to me both old and young*" – is a kind of medieval way of saying: "Listen up folks! I've got something to tell you".

The poem ends with this thought: "*Pray we to her... to shield us from the fiendes bond*". Remember that the 15th century world was lit only by fire, and when the monk – it probably was a monk who wrote these words – blew his candle out at night, it was very, very dark. And everybody believed that there were nasty ghosts and spooks and spirits that roamed around in the dark hours, so this really was a serious prayer. This medieval monk is saying:

"Mary, shield us from the devil."

I think it's rather moving and rather lovely.

(Thank you, YouTube)

John Rutter - Magnificat (arr. by Paul Noble)

The *Magnificat* was completed by Rutter in 1990. It is a musical setting of the Song of Mary on her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, as chronicled in the New Testament (Luke 1:39-56). The text used by Rutter is from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer Latin text (which makes it one of the most ancient of Christian hymns). In addition to the liturgical Latin text, Rutter chose a 15th century anonymous English poem which compares Mary to a rose (see additional note above).

Hubert Parry – I was Glad (arr. by Paul Noble)

Hubert Parry is one of England's most eminent composers who rose to prominence during the latter half of the 19th century. He is perhaps most famous for composing the much-loved hymn *Jerusalem* and his 1902 coronation anthem *I was glad*.

It is perhaps a miracle that Parry survived at all. His mother died from tuberculosis 11 days after his birth, and of his six siblings, he was the only one of his family to live into old age. Parry grew up and had a gentleman's education at Eton and Oxford. When he expressed interest in becoming a musician, his father regarded this as unsuitable.

His father also disapproved of his choice of wife, but Parry was a determined man. After a year of meeting clandestinely, he married Maude in 1872, but, at first, he had to prove himself to her family in the world of insurance at Lloyd's Register of Shipping. This he did reluctantly for seven years (1870-77) while patiently biding his time as a sub-editor of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Settings of Psalm 122 have abounded in church music for hundreds of years, and Parry's setting of the text from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer has become one of the most celebrated.

Perhaps this is for the simple reason that it sets out to achieve musically exactly what the opening words say.

But Parry took a couple of coronations to get it exactly right. He originally wrote it to accompany the crowning of Edward VII, and then, nine years later, offered it up again, for the coronation of George V. This time, he added all manner of further pomp to his original to make it into the version we know and love.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS THIS EVENING

WindWorx Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Windworx was founded in 2005. Over the last 18 years it has played and recorded fine music under the baton of resident conductor, Sean Kierman and guest conductors, and has gained considerable local and international attention.



WindWorx 

WindWorx is a non-profit organisation which assembles some of the finest wind and percussion players in the Western Cape, including music teachers, present and past symphony players and professionals in other fields who are highly proficient musicians. WindWorx aims to provide a vehicle for postgraduate musicians from all walks of life who might not otherwise have the opportunity to practise their art in public, to create an ensemble of such quality that it stands

as an example to the Cape's many other bands, and to play music at an advanced level. Over the last couple of years WindWorx has built a close relationship with the University of Stellenbosch Symphonic Wind Ensemble where it has provided a broader stage for advanced students.

University of Stellenbosch Symphonic Wind Ensemble



Launched in 1976, the USSWE had only 10 members and was the first university-level Wind Band to be established in the Western Cape. Its membership and reputation have grown over the years. Albert Engel, the first full-time brass lecturer at the University's Music Department, who played a leading role in the music of the Moravian Church, was responsible for integrating the broader community, including church and service band musicians, into the USSWE. Over the years, a social impact component was added to all performances of the ensemble and from 2006, an annual Band Extravaganza has included school bands from across the Western Cape.

USSWE draws together a diverse group of people, who are devoted to the promotion of the Wind Band idiom as an educational tool, a creative outlet, and a vehicle for social transformation in the current day South Africa.

The South African College High School Choir

The SACS Choir started in 1908. Currently directed by Mr. Warren Patientia, the ensemble consists of over 80 members and continually grows and develops in its enthusiasm and love for choral singing. The choir embraces inclusivity and acceptance of members from all walks of life. This enables boys to develop an appreciation of music-making, creating a nurturing and musical environment for individuals to reach their full potential whilst finding a sense of belonging with the school through camaraderie and teamwork.



The choir embraces a diverse range of repertoire that includes classical music, film music, traditional African music and popular works from all cultures and styles. The choir performs regularly throughout the year at all main school performances and has collaborated with various choirs including Rustenburg Girls' High School, Rondebosch Boys' High School, Cape Town Camerata, and the Cape Town Male Voice Choir. The choir toured Eastern Europe in 2017 with Springfield Girls' Choir. It was the overall winner in 2017 and 2018 at the Sans FACETS Eisteddfod competition, a gold diploma at the Cape Town Eisteddfod in 2019 and a High Honours award in 2022.

“One of the profound benefits of choral singing and music making is the shaping of individuals, equipping them to think critically as well as being engaged participants, through the development of intellectual resources and human potential, building a cultural identity within our school.”



St Cyprian's School Choir





St Cyprian's School

St Cyprian's School has a long-standing tradition of choral excellence. The choir has toured internationally, winning two gold medals at the International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music (Bratislava, 2014) and another gold medal at the Music Eterna Roma International Choir Festival and Competition (Rome, 2018). Under the direction of Riaan Oosthuizen since 2022, the choir has been involved in several exciting concerts, including performing at the Drakensberg Boys' Choir School.

LEVI ALEXANDER – Director



Levi Alexander graduated *cum laude* with a Masters in Music, specialising in Choral Conducting from Stellenbosch University. He studied for a Bachelor's Degree of Music in baritone saxophone performance and conducting at the SACM (UCT). He earned his Licentiate Diploma (LTCL) in baritone saxophone performance and his Postgraduate Certificate in Education specialising in the subjects of Music and the Creative Arts from Rhodes University.

He has been a multi-woodwind-instrumentalist in the musical orchestras of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and has performed in a number of Wind Ensembles and Bands and is an *ad hoc* saxophonist to the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. He is currently a member of True Voices *ad hoc*, Cape Consort *ad hoc* and the St Michael's and All Angels Church Choir.

Levi was appointed assistant conductor of the SCCT (2015-2021). He is currently the Department Head of Music at SACS High School (2021) where he started his tenure in 2015.

Appointed Director of the Symphony Choir of Cape Town in 2021, Levi hopes to grow both the SACS Music Department and Symphony Choir of Cape Town, his two primary focus areas, to continue to raise the high standard over the coming years.

JANEL SPEELMAN – Soloist



Janel Speelman graduated from the University of Cape Town (UCT) with a Bachelor of Music degree, an Honours in Western Classical Vocal Performance, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Opera. She completed a Masters of Music at the University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre and Dance in 2016. During her study she was invited to sing at the annual prestigious performance at the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC. In 2022 Speelman was nominated for a *Toyota Woordfees* award for the vocal music category, and in November 2022, she was involved in the workshop

and performance of a scene from Paola Prestini's *Sensorium Ex* at the Artscape Theatre, an inclusive operatic production highlighting the abilities of people living with disability. Janel Speelman is currently working as a vocal lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch and the South African College of Music while continuing performance work around South Africa.

WARREN PATIENTIA – SCCT accompanist



In 2020, Warren Patientia was appointed as the resident accompanist (piano and organ) for the Symphony Choir of Cape Town.

He started his music training from an early age in the New Apostolic Church and went on to graduate from the University of Cape Town with a B.Mus.Ed degree in 2010, after which he studied conducting under Margaret Barlow (choral) and Alexander Fokkens (orchestral). He has performed in and accompanied various ensembles in Cape Town.

His focus is on music education, and he is the choir director for the SACS High School Choir, where a number of significant performances include African Sanctus (2013), Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* (2014), John Rutter's *Requiem* (2015) and Karl Jenkins' *The Armed Man* (2019). He has led the SACS choir in collaborations with other school choirs, the Cape Town Youth Choir and the Cape Town Male Voice Choir.

THE SYMPHONY CHOIR OF CAPE TOWN



The Symphony Choir of Cape Town (SCCT) is a non-profit organisation consisting of between 50 and 70 members from all walks of life with a common love of singing, especially choral music.

The Choir was founded in 1972 as an adjunct to the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, performing major choral works each year under the baton of well-known guest conductors. Since 1993 the Choir has been an independent body and has promoted and managed its own concerts.

Under the direction of Levi Alexander, with Warren Patientia as accompanist, the choir aims to provide quality music to the public in conjunction with community organisations and emerging young soloists and conductors.

Don't miss our next concert!

Saturday 2nd December 2023

****** Bach's Christmas Oratorio ******

Venue: The magnificent Lutheran Church, Strand Street

You can book NOW via Quicket through this link:

<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/224356-bach-christmas-oratorio/#/>

Why not stay in touch with all our news by joining our mailing list?

Check out our website for more information:

www.scct.co.za

Find us on Twitter: @SymphonyChoirCT

Email: symphonychoircapetown@gmail.com

The Symphony Choir of Cape Town is always looking for new members.

We are a community-based choir, and our members are amateur singers from around Cape Town. We aim to reflect the diversity of our city, and welcome singers of any gender, age, race or creed. If you are interested in joining us, please apply online via our website:

www.scct.co.za

Email: symphonychoircapetown@gmail.com

Our ability to continue as a choir and to be able to perform choral music for music lovers of Cape Town is entirely dependent on the generosity of our sponsors and you, the audience, who support us.

Should you wish to become a sponsor, please contact us:

Email: symphonychoircapetown@gmail.com

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