

Our trio of Beatles songs kicks off with Here comes the sun, from Abbey Road (1969). It was composed by George Harrison when he visited Eric Clapton. He was feeling frustrated by dealings with the record company and the song reflects his relief at getting away from it all. (Clapton claims it was written under the influence of LSD, watching the sun come up!) If you're wondering how Got to get you into my life (1966) fits our theme, fast forward a few years to a remake by the rather more topical group Earth Wind and Fire in 1989. Their version won a Grammy award and sold over a million copies. The lyrics are as of a love song, but, continuing with the drug motif, McCartney revealed in a book that the song is actually about being high on marijuana. McCartney also penned I'll follow the sun, featured on 1964's Beatles for Sale album, though it's thought to have been composed several years before that.

Great Balls of Fire was most famously recorded in 1957 by Jerry Lee Lewis. The title is a Southern US saying which some consider blasphemous - it refers to the moment at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit manifests itself as "cloven tongues as of fire". You are the sunshine of my life was a hit in 1973 for Motown singer-songwriter Stevie Wonder. It's said to have been written a couple of years earlier for Gloria Barley, the backing singer he'd fallen in love with, but tact prevented him from putting it on an earlier album as he was still married to someone else. Music journalist Giles Smith has claimed that no-one who has since covered the song has carried it off. You will have to make up your own mind whether Tamesis succeeds where the likes of Shirley Bassey, Frank Sinatra, Liza Minelli and Engelbert Humperdinck allegedly failed!

In writing Fire and Rain, James Taylor was influenced by sadness at the death of a close friend, his struggle to overcome drug addiction and depression and his experience of becoming famous. Not surprisingly the song has an introspective and moody feel. The original, sparse recording came to be recognised as his signature sound.

Choir opinion is divided as to whether Colors of the Wind, from the Disney movie Pocahontas, is infantile and schmaltzy or lyrical and profound. The Oscar judges in 1995 clearly took the latter stance, as they crowned it Best Original Song. It also picked up Grammy and Golden Globe awards for its expression of the Native American belief that the earth is a living entity where humans are connected to everything in nature.

The Bangles' ballad Eternal Flame was another 1989 hit. Hoffs and her co-writers were inspired by the eternal flame for Elvis Presley which burns at Graceland. Tamesis' Simon Eastwood has created a new choral arrangement, capturing the powerful lyricism of the original, and delighting the altos by giving them the lovely melody.

LER/CAH June 2009

2009-2010

The "3Bs" Season

'Sacred Bs': our autumn concert takes place at beautiful Douai Abbey, Woolhampton, on Saturday November 21st. It's a very important concert for us as it's the first time we've been invited to Douai, so we would love your support!

tamesis

chamber choir

musical director - louise rapple

presents the final concerts in the
2008-9 "Elemental" season

Music of Fire and Air

Saturday June 20th 2009

7:30 pm

St Laurence's Church,
next to the Town Hall, Reading

and

Saturday June 27th 2009

7:30 pm

St Mary's Church,
Henley-on-Thames

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

Programme

Madrigali - 'Six Fire Songs' - Morten Lauridsen

1. Ov'è lass', il bel viso?
2. Quando son più lontan
3. Amor, io sento l'alma
4. Io piango
5. Luci serene e chiare
6. Se per havervi, oime

Interlude:

'To Romeo, when the breeze is gently blowing' from

'The Marriage of Figaro - WA Mozart

Sopranos: Jenny Haggart and Lisa McAdam

'The Windhover' - Gerard Manley Hopkins

Read by Charlie Hodgkinson

The lark in the clear air - Trad. Irish arr. Rowley

Londonderry Air - Trad. Irish arr. Knight/Lawson

Smoke gets in your eyes - Jerome Kern arr. Blackwell

INTERVAL

Medley from 'Saturday Night Fever' - Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb, arr. Rutherford

Here comes the sun - George Harrison arr. Billingsley

Got to get you into my life - Lennon/McCartney arr.

I'll follow the sun - Lennon/McCartney arr. Ives Brymer

Interlude:

Bright Eyes - Mike Batt

Voice: Louise Rapple Piano: Judith Creighton

Excerpts from Four Quartets - 'Little Gidding' - TS Eliot

Read by Andy Button

Great balls of fire - Blackwell/Hammer arr. Huff

You are the sunshine of my life - Wonder arr. Huff

Fire and Rain - Taylor arr. Lawson

Colors of the wind - Menken/Schwartz arr. Huff

Eternal Flame - Steinberg/Kelly/Hoffs arr. Eastwood

Many thanks to our accompanist Judith Creighton who has worked wonders with difficult music and short notice!

Tamesis is:

Sopranos

Miranda Bradshaw, Rachel Burgess, Bethan Davies, Penny Kingswell, Clare Garner, Jenny Haggart, Susie Ingram, Lisa McAdam, Jessica Reid, Tamsyn Wilson

Altos

Jane Anstead, Sarah Finch, Charlie Hodgkinson, Paula Nichols, Liz Rapple, Chloë Robson

Tenors

Nick Brown, Simon Eastwood, Jason Murray, Graham Watt

Basses

Andy Button, John Cobb, Eric Hanson, Austin Jacobs,

Patrick Moore, Stephen Nichols

Tamesis Chamber Choir aims to offer something different from other choirs in the area. We are a high-standard, fun chamber choir performing several concerts per year. We re-audition formally each September but do sometimes have vacancies during the year, so if you are interested in singing with us, contact Louise on 0118 931 4279 or email lourap@gmail.com.

Grateful thanks to the authorities at both these beautiful Churches for offering us the use of them.

Louise Rapple graduated in Music and French from Reading University in 1998, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in southern France and returned to the UK to direct the Reading University Singers for two years, following that with seven years in Church music, as Organist and Choir Director at two local Churches. When not conducting Tamesis, she teaches piano at Queen Anne's School and Shiplake College, where she directs the chamber choir. She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, a larger choir whose members visit Cathedrals twice a year to sing Evensong. In order to prevent her life from being entirely over-run by music, she is planning to cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats next month! If you would like to sponsor her (in aid of Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity) she has forms with her tonight or see www.justgiving.com/lourap. She'd be very grateful for any contributions!

Notes on the programme

Premiered in 1987, Lauridsen's Fire Songs are centred around his 'Fire-chord', which opens the set and recurs throughout in various different forms. Lauridsen was inspired to write these pieces by the original Italian madrigals of the renaissance era, especially those of Gesualdo and Monteverdi. He noticed the recurring theme of flames, burning and fire and based his set of madrigals on this. We have enjoyed the challenge of singing (sometimes very fast) Italian, and we've been childishly amused by the title of the first piece, specially when rendered in a Yorkshire accent...

The lark in the clear air is a traditional Irish melody with words by Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-1886), an Irish poet, barrister, antiquarian, artist and public servant. His poetic style marks him out as a forerunner of Yeats, and the simplicity and stillness of the piece evokes a calm summer's evening. Another Irish air, the Londonderry Air, is so called because it was first written down by Miss Jane Ross of Londonderry. It was then submitted to a music collector who published it in 1855 as an anonymous air which was already 'very old'. In the 1970s an even earlier version of the tune was discovered, transcribed in 1792, which is similar enough to the modern tune to be its forebear. The words to 'Danny Boy' were written by an English lawyer in 1910 as a parting from a woman to a man, although these have often been interpreted as a farewell from a parent to a son going to war.

Smoke gets in your eyes is a show tune from the 1933 operetta Roberta. It was based on a radio commercial of the day, slowing down a catchy melody to produce the hit song of the show. It remains a classic, covered by such divas as Billie Holiday, Judy Garland, Peggy Lee, Eartha Kitt, Edith Piaf, Cher and Elaine Paige.

The album of the 1977 film 'Saturday Night Fever' is among the best-selling film soundtracks of all time. It was mainly written and performed by the Bee Gees, who originally wrote five songs for the movie, four of which feature in our medley. The fifth, 'If I can't have you', isn't included in the medley, which instead includes the better-known 'Jive Talkin', a previously released Bee Gees song. Ironically, although Jive Talkin' is on the soundtrack for the film, it was never actually heard in the film, being used in a scene that was cut before its release!