



Louise read Music and French at Reading University, specialising in performance. She studied conducting at the Conservatoire de Pau in France during her year abroad, and returned to direct the Reading University Singers for two years.

Louise then spent seven years in Church music as organist at two Berkshire Churches and founded Tamesis in 2003. She also directs Tamesis Cathedral Singers, an occasional choir which sings Cathedral Evensongs twice a year. She is in demand locally as a deputy conductor, and enjoys the challenge of stepping in when other directors are indisposed.

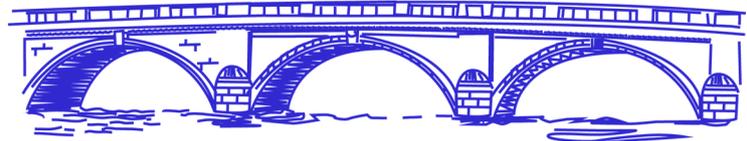
Louise works full-time at Shiplake College as a musician, a teacher and an administrator. She runs the Shiplake College Chamber Choir and Shiplake Community Choir, a choir for singers of all ages and abilities, singing a mainly popular repertoire. She is a regular panellist on Radio Berkshire, where she tries her hardest to appear both cultured and funny, and was named 'Creative Woman of the Year' in the 2013 Sue Ryder Women of Achievement awards. Last year she started a new Community Choir in the village of Hagbourne near Didcot, which is proving to be a great success. Do get in touch with Louise on lourap@gmail.com if you are interested in joining any of her choirs!

Simon Dinsdale is a former Organ Scholar of Chichester Cathedral, where he accompanied the world-renowned choir regularly during daily services in the cathedral. He moved on to become Director of Music at St. Mary's Choir School, Reigate and organist for its professional choir. Simon moved to Reading in 1998 and now travels extensively as accompanist, continuo player and organist to a number of choirs including Tamesis, and regularly plays at cathedrals up and down the country. Simon has appeared as organist with the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and is a regular organist with the Chameleon Arts Orchestra. Concert tours have taken him to Ireland, Germany, Belgium and the USA in recent years; he has broadcast on BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Berkshire and Classic FM and is frequently in demand for recordings.

Simon has also performed with the organ virtuoso, the late Carlo Curley. He counts being accidentally locked in Westminster Abbey one Friday night whilst playing the organ amongst his lifetime's achievements! As sub-organist at The Royal Memorial Chapel, The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst since 2005, Simon has the weekly pleasure of playing the largest Allen digital organ in the UK.

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tamesis



chamber choir

director - Louise Rapple Moore

organist - Simon Dinsdale

www.tamesischamberchoir.co.uk

presents

Six Sacred Songs

Saturday 12th March 2016

7:30 pm

Christ Church, Henley-on-Thames





Tamesis Chamber Choir

Sopranos

Miranda Bradshaw
Clare Garner
Louise Hill
Katie Johnston
Julie Kench
Vicky Mason
Anne Owen
Claire Pollard
Tania Pratt
Kate Whiting
Tamsyn Wilson

Altos

Sarah Finch
Charlie Gregory
Charlie Hobson
Emily King
Alison Wilkins
Catriona Wilson

Tenors

Tim Beavan
Nick Brown
Simon Eastwood
Laurence Hicks
Jude Watts

Basses

James Allen
Steve Block
Andy Button
John Cobb
Ed Hobson
Patrick Moore

Tamesis evolution - the changing seasons!

Long-term Tamesis supporters may have noticed recently that we have abandoned our traditional seasonal theming. A hallmark since our launch in 2003, musical, topical and geographical themes ranging from “The Three Bs” to “The Coalition” have given a focus to Louise’s much-praised concert programming across the three concerts of our year.

Over the last couple of years, the choir has found itself in increasing demand by other organisations to perform at their events. While we welcome the exposure to new audiences that these performances bring us and are enjoying our semi-professional status as a paid choir at such events, it was becoming impossible to maintain our three-concert season and exacting musical standards while making more and more paid-for appearances.

Clearly though, Tamesis has Berkshire in its blood and we love our loyal, local audience. To embrace both of these priorities, we’ve decided for now to stop theming entire seasons and to be more flexible in the dates and locations of our concerts, depending on demand. We’ll still perform a core of Tamesis-only concerts in Reading and environs, but we’re also looking forward to new inspiration working with other musicians, organisations and venues, including over the next few months Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra, Queen Anne’s School and Eton College Chapel. We’ll keep you posted on the latest concerts online and in these concert programmes.

The *Adagio* was composed in 1936 as the second movement of Barber’s *String Quartet*. Conductor Arturo Toscanini asked him to arrange it for string orchestra and directed the NBC Symphony Orchestra in its inaugural performance in New York in 1938, also broadcast on the radio. Toscanini’s championing of the work brought instant fame to Barber and the *Adagio*. However, critics complained that the piece was too accessible and conservative, lacking in the pioneering modernist spirit.

Almost 30 years later, Barber adapted the piece again, this time to set the Agnus Dei’s words for mixed chorus with optional piano or organ. Allmusic.com commentator Graham Olson suggests that in doing so, Barber acknowledged and “brought to the surface the work’s sense of spirituality.”

Our performance this evening aspires to convey this languorous self-reflection: the intertwining of voices to produce the ebb and flow of the haunting melody seems to us to work just as well as the efforts of a string orchestra in doing justice to this enduringly popular and evocative piece.

Programme notes by Charlie Hobson

Forthcoming events

Visit www.tamesis.is for latest news and tickets

Friday 6th May 2016, 7:30pm
Queen Anne’s School, Caversham
Music for a May evening

We join local concert pianist Anita d’Attellis and the choir of Queen Anne’s School for this fundraising concert for Sue Ryder. The programme is shaping up to be absolutely fabulous, with piano works by Mendelssohn and Chopin and Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, a mixture of sacred and secular works from Tamesis and a selection of choral music from the girls’ choir at Queen Anne’s. Tickets are £10 and are available from Claire Richards at Queen Anne’s, on claire.richards@qas.org.uk

Sunday 19th June 2016

In a garden somewhere in Binfield Heath...
...The Tamesis annual garden gig

Following last year’s great success, we return to Binfield Heath for an outdoor concert in a secret location (by which I mean the venue hasn’t yet been finalised!). Once again organised by the Binfield Heath Village Society, this year’s concert will feature a medley of medleys from musicals, pop groups and films galore. Don’t miss this fabulous midsummer garden party! Put the date in your diary and keep an eye out nearer the time for details of venue and tickets.

choirs operate independently, singing in turn, with the second choir performing the chorale and the first choir performing a more decorative and contrasting aria. In the third section, the second choir imitates the first in a series of spirited and dance-like motifs. The motet concludes with the choirs joining to sing a powerful four-part fugue.

It's said that Mozart was particularly impressed by this work when he heard it performed late in the 18th century. There are reports that he copied out some of the parts, perhaps providing inspiration for some of his fugal music?

Commentators have suggested that Bach composed the motet to provide choral exercises for his students. With its relentless pace, wickedly varied repetitions of seemingly familiar note sequences, range of themes and intricate counterpoint, we have definitely been put through our paces in mastering the piece! At least Bach's students of the time would have had the advantage of finding the German words familiar and effortless to pronounce!

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958): Toward the unknown region

Humanist Walt Whitman's transcendental poem is the perfect muse for Vaughan Williams' visionary style of music, with its modal harmonies and flowing melodies. The text suggests a spiritual journey, the soul passing from darkness to light.

In 1955's *The Record Guide*, Edward Sackville-West and Desmond Shawe-Taylor wrote that the composer favours two contrasting moods, "the one contemplative and trance-like, the other pugnacious and sinister." They observed that he tended to use the former style more, as audiences preferred its "stained glass beauty... pastoral poetry... [and] grave serenity." While "in his grimmer moods, Vaughan Williams can be as frightening as Sibelius and Bartok!"

This piece does not display much of the sinister voice, though it is starkly dramatic in places. It certainly showcases Vaughan Williams' contemplative, mystical mode. At the beginning, there's a hushed, harmonious question, "Darest thou now, O Soul, Walk out with me toward the Unknown Region?"

As the poem progresses into spiritual darkness, the music becomes more disruptive, moving through keys and tonalities. There's a crucial moment of anticipation at the word "Then..." as Vaughan Williams prepares to unleash the triumphant assertion "... We burst forth, we float in time and space." This leads to an exultant finale, celebrating the soul's transcending potential.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981): Agnus Dei (Adagio for strings)

One of the most popular, widely recognised and most recorded pieces of classical music, Barber's *Adagio for Strings* is famous as an outpouring of mourning, nostalgia and loss. It's a piece that can evoke powerful emotions in its orchestral form, with its gradual ascent and increasing urgency using all the pathos of the taut and keening strings to great effect.

Programme

Magnificat **Buxtehude**

Soloists: Steve Block, Nick Brown, Andy Button,
Charlie Hobson, Julie Kench, Tamsyn Wilson

Interlude:

Fantasia in G, BWV 572 **Bach**

Organ: Simon Dinsdale

Lo, the full, final sacrifice **Finzi**

Soloist: Tania Pratt

Interlude:

Love bade me welcome **Vaughan Williams**

Tenor: Jude Watts, piano: Louise Rapple Moore

Coronation Te Deum **Walton**

Semi-chorus: James Allen, Tim Beavan, Miranda
Bradshaw, Nick Brown, Andy Button, Sarah Finch,
Clare Garner, Charlie Hobson, Tania Pratt,
Kate Whiting, Alison Wilkins

Interval

Singet dem Herrn **Bach**

Interlude:

Silent noon **Vaughan Williams**

Soprano: Julie Kench, piano: Louise Rapple Moore

Agnus Dei **Barber**

Interlude:

The arrival of the Queen of Sheba **Handel**

Piano: Louise Rapple Moore and Alison Wilkins

Toward the unknown region **Vaughan Williams**

A big thank you

to Vanessa and the authorities here at Christ Church for the use of this lovely building and for making us so welcome. Thanks also to Charlie Hobson for the enlightening and entertaining programme notes.

Notes on the programme

We considered entitling this concert *Six of the Best* - but in the end, to avoid misinterpretation, we settled on *Six Sacred Songs*. But we do think they are six wonderful specimens, representing the best of each composer. These pieces are all distinctive, tonight offering a series of contrasts between choral works that have in common only the fact that they are medium-sized compositions in one movement.

Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1708): Magnificat

It turns out that Buxtehude's *Magnificat* does not seem very likely to have been composed by him. The only manuscript bears Buxtehude's name very obviously added by another hand later on, and it is generally agreed that the *Magnificat* bears little resemblance to any other of his known works! Bruno Grusnick, who in 1931 edited the first modern edition of Buxtehude's works included this one, despite a lack of evidence for it. The probable misapprehension has been compounded by repetition over the years, despite the fact that even Grusnick later declared that Buxtehude was unlikely to be responsible for the piece.

The style is much more similar to the Franco-Italian middle baroque *bel canto* of Carissimi and Lully, which was widely imitated, but not used by Buxtehude. The soloists enjoy fluid, often intertwining parts that contrast with the substantial and satisfyingly harmonised full choir interludes. Many critics and musicians have described the work as "charming", with its simple and pleasing harmonies and uplifting pace and mood.

If Buxtehude did not compose the *Magnificat*, it's fair to say he would probably not have minded being associated with it, since he was organist at the Marienkirche in Lubeck and steeped in a tradition of choral church music. He was a brilliant virtuoso organist and is best known for his organ music.

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956): *Lo, the full, final sacrifice*

The Reverend Walter Hussey (1909-1985) was an Anglican clergyman who had a great fondness for the Arts and commissioned many well-known pieces, including Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Berstein's *Chichester Psalms*, and this piece. *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* was written in 1946 to commemorate the 53rd anniversary of the consecration of Hussey's church, St Matthew, Northampton, where the work was first performed. Hussey suggested the theme of the Eucharist. The words are by Richard Crashaw, a 17th century English metaphysical poet. Finzi put together extracts from two of Crashaw's poetic translations of the Hymns of St Thomas Aquinas to create the final text.

Finzi wrote in his own programme notes that Crashaw reaches "an ecstasy hardly surpassed in English poetry." Clearly the intensity, passion and imagery of Crashaw's works attracted Finzi to them. He reflects this in his rapturous musical setting, from the awed, hushed opening through an impressive range of different textures and motifs to the final, decisive climax of "Lo the bread of life" in majestic homophony.

There's a tender section that makes an unusual reference to the "soft, self-wounding pelican". This is a

Christian allegory for the martyrdom of Christ, popular in Renaissance art and culture. The pelican was thought to be a particularly selfless mother, to the point of injuring herself to offer her blood to her offspring, if there was no other food for them. There's no scientific evidence for pelicans exhibiting this mythical behaviour.

Diana McVeigh writes of *Lo, the full, final sacrifice* in her biography of Finzi: "The anthem breathes an atmosphere of fervent private devotion and is one of Finzi's finest, most original works."

William Walton (1902-1983): Coronation Te Deum

This magnificent work was commissioned for the 1953 Coronation. It has all the elements of pageantry and flourish required for such an occasion, performed as it was in the climactic jubilation as the new Queen processed out of Westminster Abbey, just before the National Anthem rounded off events.

Frank Howes described the work in his introduction to the original Coronation music score. "The Te Deum... is the most extensive of the new works for this Coronation. It is conceived on the most spacious lines for two choirs, two semi-choruses, boys' voices, organ, orchestra and military brass, forces which are deployed for the maximum splendour of effort. The inspiration in this ancient hymn of the church is inexhaustible, and in this latest most eloquent and jubilant setting it provides a worthy climax to a great national occasion of thanksgiving."

It is certainly extravagantly scored. Walton had at his disposal the massed Coronation choirs comprising 182 boy trebles, 37 male altos, 62 tenors and 67 basses. Allocating the numerous parts has therefore presented a few challenges for our 25-strong number! You will have to decide for yourself if we compensate for our size in the volume and majesty of our performance!

Ebullient and full-bodied as this piece is, Walton provides some textural contrast in the semi-chorus sections, where the smaller groups sing "Holy, holy, holy" and "Praise thee" in angelic, unaccompanied harmony. What did Walton think of his composition? "Lots of counter-tenors and little boys Holy-holying, not to mention all the Queen's Trumpeters and sidedrum." He went on, "I think it is going to be rather splendid." We agree.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): Singet dem Herrn

This double choir motet, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* (Sing unto the Lord a new song), is thought to have been performed for the first time in 1727 in Leipzig. It's unclear whether it marked a particular occasion: it's been attributed to a celebration of the birthday of King August as well as to a memorial for the Queen of Poland.

There are four sections, taking their texts from Psalm 149, Psalm 150 and Psalm 103, in the form of a hymn composed by Johann Gramann and based upon it. The first, vigorous section repeats the word "Singet" more than 50 times, emphasising the renewal of song described in the title. In the second section, the two