

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY

Conductor - Graham Bull

Piano - Richard Kubiak

Captain Noah & His Floating Zoo

Michael Flanders & Joseph Horowitz

The Zoo

Arthur Sullivan & Bolton Rowe

and with special guests

OPERA IN A BOX

Wed 5th July 2023 @ 7.00pm



www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk

Programme

Captain Noah and His Floating Zoo

Michael Flanders and Joseph Horowitz

The Zoo

Bolton Rowe and Arthur Sullivan

CAPTAIN NOAH and his FLOATING ZOO

Captain Noah, lasting slightly less than half an hour, was originally commissioned by Novello music publishers in 1970 as part of a series of popular/jazz-based choral works for children, that also included Herbert Chappell's *The Daniel Jazz* and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat*. Following a successful televised version by *The King's Singers*, it was soon adapted (1972) for SATB choirs, so that even grown-ups could enjoy the fun! For over 50 years now it has been a perennial favourite with singers and audiences alike.

In around 10 sections, the work closely follows the Biblical story of Noah and the Flood. The early part describes God's displeasure with man, the mocking of sinful citizens, the preparation of the ark and its occupants – "from antelope to zebra...", and the rain coming... Following a central section, in which Noah voices his disquiet at the ceaseless rain, the rest of the work marks the inhabitants of the ark's desire and quest to find dry land, God's command to Noah and family to restart life, and the promise of a rainbow as a covenant between God and Man.

In tonight's performance solo parts are sung by various brave current and ex-members of the choir, including a former founder chorister and Choral Society Chair, no less – lovely to have you with us again, Roger. Despite our attempts to hire extras, no actual animals wanted to take part, but it's surprising what substitutes can be found in lofts, attics and spare rooms...

THE ZOO

Following the collaboration of Gilbert and Sullivan's first success, *Trial by Jury*, in early 1875, a follow-up piece was urgently required. Gilbert not being available, Sullivan turned to Bolton Rowe to provide a story and libretto in haste, and *The Zoo* opened in June 1875, with short revivals over the following months. Similarities in length, character and musical style between *The Zoo* and *Trial by Jury* (which CCS performed with soloists from *Opera in a Box* in 2017) are profound, but *The Zoo* somehow never gained the longevity that *Trial* did, and within 5 years it had faded away. It was presumed lost until rediscovered at an auction in 1965, since when it has enjoyed many fine professional and amateur performances worldwide.

The Zoo Cast:

We are delighted to renew our working acquaintance with Opera in a Box, a Bristol-based company who provide soloists for ventures such as this evening's. Please see below for further details about this group.

Carboy (<i>an apothecary, in love with Laetitia</i>)	Thomas Wood
Eliza Smith (<i>a virtuous young lady, running the refreshment stall</i>)	Jacqueline Auty
Thomas Brown (<i>The Duke of Islington in disguise, in love with Eliza</i>)	Charlie Morris
Laetitia (<i>loved by Carboy</i>)	Gigi Strong
Mr. Grinder (<i>Laetitia's father, a retired grocer – the 'villain'</i>)	Harry Benfield

Synopsis:

London Zoo: The British Public are enjoying a day out. Carboy, mistakenly feeling rejected by Laetitia, is hell-bent on suicide, but is then thwarted by both chorus and the outspoken Eliza Smith, the refreshment stall lady. Meanwhile, Thomas Brown, thinking that the way to Eliza's heart is to eat too much of her wares, gets sick. Carboy, who is an apothecary, prescribes him a medicinal remedy, which Eliza goes off to collect. While she is away, Thomas, now recovering from his over-eating, lets slip that he is really a Peer in disguise. The excited chorus now suggest how he should win his Eliza. At this point, Mr Grinder, Laetitia's father, appears and he is pretty cross. He thinks a mere apothecary, Carboy, isn't good enough for his daughter, besides which, an earlier mis-prescription has resulted in him having a painful blister on his back. Soloists and choir alike try to win him over to the lovers' plight. Carboy once again considers suicide and lengthy choral farewells ensue, as Carboy heads for the fearsome bear pit. Just then. Thomas reappears, now presented rightfully as the Duke of Islington. Eliza is surprised, to say the least. On his offer of marriage, her fear that she cannot accept him because she will miss the animals of the zoo is quickly dismissed – he has already bought the zoo for her! Then Carboy reappears. The bear pit had been moved, so his suicide quest has once again been dashed. Thomas (now as the wealthy Duke of Islington) has heard of his dilemma and has paid off Grinder, so Carboy and Laetitia can now live happily ever after – sorted! The British Public are once again happy, concluding: "while Britannia rules the waves, We Britons never, never, will be slaves. Hurray! Hurray!"

We would kindly ask that you switch off all electronic recording devices during the concert, including cameras and mobile phones. Thank you.

OPERA IN A BOX

Opera in a Box is a touring opera company in the South West of the UK aimed at bringing the opera genre to as wide an audience as possible. Take all of your preconceptions about opera and throw them out of the window as Opera in a Box takes opera in fresh and exciting artistic directions, from off-the-wall venues, to intimate adaptations of large-scale works. We are focussed on gathering young and talented individuals from across all areas of the arts, and bringing them together to create innovative and gripping theatre.

"Opera in a Box have clearly succeeded in their mission to bring the opera genre to as wide an audience as possible."

The Bristol Magazine Carmen 2022

www.operainabox.com

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Future Concert dates for your diaries

Wed 13th December 2023, 7pm Christmas Concert, Chepstow School Arts Hall

Sat 23rd March 2024, 7.30pm Petite Messe Solonelle (Rossini), St Mary's Church

Wednesday 3rd July 2024, 7pm Summer Concert, Chepstow School Arts Hall

Spring 2025 The Creation (Haydn), St Mary's Church