

**Chepstow Choral Society**

*Conducted by Graham Bull*

presents

***A Remembrance Concert***

* *a selection of reflective music & readings to commemorate the outbreak of World War I*

with

**Readings – John Lloyd**

**Organist – Peter Cook**

**Beachley Military Singers & Buglers**

**Chepstow School Ensemble**

Sunday, 2nd November, 2014

St Mary’s Priory Church, Chepstow, 3.00pm

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales  and Making Music – The National Federation of Music Societies

Registered charity no. 1127098

 **Chepstow Choral Society**

* **A Concert of Remembrance**

On behalf of Chepstow Choral Society may I extent a very warm welcome to you all to our concert this afternoon to commemorate the outbreak of World War I. The Society has chosen to remember those who fought bravely and sadly those who lost their lives in a setting of reflective music and readings.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome John Lloyd, Peter Cook, The Beachley Fijiian Military Singers and Buglers and Chepstow School Ensemble. Our concert brings together the young and old of Chepstow and is a community tribute to the brave and fallen. Thank you for joining us for this unique event.

There is no charge for this concert but there will be a voluntary retiring collection in aid of “Care for Casualties”, the charity of the 1st Rifles Battalion, Beachley Barracks.

Sue Carter

Chairman, Chepstow Choral Society

**Care for Casualties** - *the Rifles charity (No. 119061)*

*Care for Casualties* is an appeal that gives the severely wounded, their families and the families of our fallen Riflemen the support, the inspiration and the means to rebuild their lives and make the best of their futures. www.careforcasualties.org.uk.

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**Programme**

**Choral opening** RVaughan Williams*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

**Reading 1** *Peace* Rupert Brooke

**Choir** *1914 (setting of words by Rupert Brooke)* A Gray

**Reading 2** *The Send-Off* Wilfred Owen

**Beachley Fijiian Military Singers**

**Reading 3** *Before Action* W N Hodgson

**Choir**  *Kyrie* K Jenkins *Hymn Before Action (setting of words by R Kipling)* K Jenkins

**Reading 4** *The Christmas Truce*

**Choir** *Stille Nachte*  F Gruber

**Chepstow School Ensemble** *Abide With Me*

**Reading 5** *Letter from a Young Soldier* Pte George Kenyon, 1st/5th East Lancs Regt, Gallipoli, 15/8/15

**Solo** *Is My Team Ploughing?*G Butterworth

**Chepstow School Ensemble**  *Eternal Father Strong to Save*

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**Reading 6** *There Is No Death* Gordon Johnstone

**Choir**  *My Soul, There is a Country* C Parry *There is an Old Belief* C Parry

**Reading** *At the Going Down of the Sun**(from**For the Fallen)* Laurence Binyon

**Beachley Buglers** *Last Post and Reveille*

**All** *The National Anthem* *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau*

**Reading 8** *In Flanders Fields* John McCrae

**Choir** *In Paradisum* G Faure

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**The National Anthem**

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| God save our gracious Queen! Long live our noble Queen! God save the Queen! Send her victorious, Happy and glorious, Long to reign over us, God save the Queen | Thy choicest gifts in store On her be pleased to pour, Long may she reign. May she defend our laws, And give us ever cause, To sing with heart and voice, God save the Queen. |

**Hen Wlad fy Nhadau**

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| Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi,Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri;Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra mâd,Tros ryddid gollasant eu gwaed. | Gwlad, Gwlad, pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad.Tra môr yn fur i'r bur hoff bau,O bydded i'r hen iaith barhau. |

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**A Tribute in Words and Music**

A choral tribute for Chepstow to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 in the summer of 1914 was agreed by the Society’s committee, in July 2013. Since then, millions of words have been written reflecting on the horror that commenced on that fateful day, August 4th 1914, which heralded four long nightmare years transforming our world forever. Not a family in the land was unscathed, and it is surely right that 21st century generations this year reflect on an event that took place in very different times to our life today – but sadly, as we know now, one hundred years on, was not the bravely declared “war to end all wars”.

Out of the subsequent carnage, we now can appreciate – and understand – the legacy of the poets, musicians and artists, many of whom enlisted almost immediately, and actively participated in the war over the four-year period. Poets Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Edward Thomas, WB Yeats are just a very few of the names that immediately spring to mind, but many others deserve wider recognition as well – “In Flanders Field” is a publication which ably illustrates this. What has been less realised until relatively recently, is that the poets were complemented by musicians, and one wonders how many of us now recall – or even know – that Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of this country’s most eminent and outstanding 20th century composers, was 41 years of age when the war commenced. He could have avoided active service – but chose not to, serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps, surviving the Somme, and ultimately suffering almost complete deafness after continual gunfire noise. His friend George Butterworth, a young composer of much brilliant promise, was shot dead in 1916 on the Somme, aged 31. Ivor Gurney returned from the front after 15 months having been shot and gassed – and having written 5 of his most famous and enduring songs practically on the front line. Gustav Holst, having been declared unfit for service, finally forced his way as a volunteer working with British troops in Salonica. Ernest Moeran, a composer of many fine songs, returned from the war with horrific shrapnel injuries.

However, the survivors in this generation of British composers went on to produce a wonderful musical legacy, inevitably much of it influenced by their experiences, and along with their older contemporaries – notably

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Elgar – felt strongly that they should write works that met the country’s emotions of the time.

In selecting the programme for this “Remembrance Concert”, a careful balance has been considered, and the need to represent contrasting emotions, relevant expressions, as well as a 21st century musical viewpoint were all important factors*. “Let Us Now Praise Famous Men”* is one of Vaughan Williams’ most famous short anthems, with words selected from Ecclesiasticus XLIV telling of great and famous men -- “*……and some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore.”* Alan Gray was a Cathedral organist who took three poems from Rupert Brooke’s “1914” - “Peace”, “The Dead”, and “The Soldier”, setting them into a 10-minute cantata which he simply titled *1914* – a beautiful and highly appropriate piece of choral music, largely unknown but nevertheless utterly appropriate for this year and this occasion. Karl Jenkins’ *The Armed Man* is, by contrast, very well known, and two short movements of it *(“Kyrie”* and *“Hymn Before Action”* – a setting of Rudyard Kipling’s words) have been selected for its 21st century style and musical content. The two motets *“My Soul* *there is a country”* *and “There is an old belief”* are from CH Parry’s *Songs of Farewell*, a set of six choral motets reflecting all the emotions of life, pride, love, pain, friendship and death. The inclusion of the Christmas item *“Stille Nachte”* is an obvious choice, given the fame of the 1914 Christmas truce, and the final choral item of the concert, *“In Paradisum”* from Gabriel Faure’s *Requiem,* could not be a more fitting conclusion, with its glorious gentle harmony and evocation of true peace.

George Butterworth’s set of songs entitled “*A Shropshire Lad”* are not only amongst his most famous compositions out of a small input, but also probably rank amongst the most famous of all song cycles of the 20th century – composed just prior to the outbreak of war. Probably the most famous of the set *(“Is My Team Ploughing?”)* was, one feels, an almost uncanny prelude to what was to happen a few years later, as the singer evokes a dead man’s questions and answers about the life in his village and friends with which he no longer plays any part.

Chepstow Choral Society warmly welcomes members of Chepstow Comprehensive School Ensemble, and Simon Hendry, head of music. The Society is also delighted to welcome representatives of the 1st Rifles Battalion, who will give us The Last Post and some traditional singing from the Fijiian members of the battalion who are part of the Royal

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Commonwealth Forces and have been based at Beachley for several years. John Lloyd (reader) and Peter Cook (organ) are welcome return guests, and the Society hopes that this Remembrance Concert will provide a fitting and thoughtful commemoration and tribute to all who suffered during this most tumultuous period in our nation’s – and the world’s – history. If we have learned anything in the subsequent nine-plus decades it is surely that this war had no boundaries – all classes of men and women suffered and died, but out of the horror some lived to bequeath a priceless heritage with their gifts of words, music and art. This has joined the hundreds of thousands of personal letters, memories and reports that so many of us collectively hold in our lofts and family boxes. It has contributed to our understanding of the terrible reality – and why we should never forget. M.D.

**CCS welcomes new members!**

Choral singing lifts the spirits and gives a sense of collective pleasure, and everyone in CCS is a member because they love singing – and we welcome new singers in all voice sections.

We do not have a formal audition policy and prospective members should contact Marjorie Duerden (tel. 01291 623310 or through the website link). ***No-one*** is excluded on grounds of lack of previous choral experience, ability to play instruments, etc.,

***Patrons, Supporters and Friends***

CCS promotes and encourages music within the community through its concerts. We particularly foster and support young and aspiring musicians but our ticket sales rarely cover our costs of our concerts. Patrons (minimum subscription £30) receive a complimentary ticket for each concert, an invitation to our Patrons’ evenings and their names are printed in each concert programme. This patronage helps us to arrange concerts confident that we can cover at least some of our costs.

If you would like to join us please contact ***Jean Parkes, Patrons and Membership Secretary, 13 Orchard Avenue, Chepstow NP16 5RD*** or contact on 01291 620414.

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**Forthcoming concerts by Chepstow Choral Society**

Sunday, December 14th, 2014, 3.00pm at St Mary’s Priory Church, Chepstow; ***A Festival of Christmas Music and Readings***

Saturday, March 21st, 2015, 7.30pm at St Mary’s Priory Church, Chepstow; ***Vivaldi – Gloria; Haydn – Nelson Mass; Schubert – Mass in G*** *with Chepstow Choral Society Orchestra, leader Paula Kempton, and soloists.*

Saturday, June 27th, 2014, 7.30pm at St Mary’s Priory Church, Chepstow; ***Choral Classics for Summer.***

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