

A photograph of the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) in a dark night sky. The aurora is a vibrant green and yellow light that flows from the left side of the frame towards the center. The bottom of the image shows a dark, silhouetted treeline and a snowy ground. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

WrittleSingers
Conductor - Christine Gwynn

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Saturday 17th November 2018
7:30 pm

All Saints' Church, Writtle

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Welcome to our concert this evening

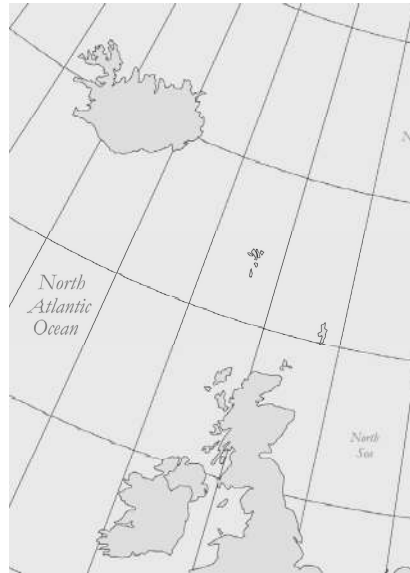
The mysterious, ethereal northern lights epitomise many fond notions of “northern-ness” – beauty, mystery, rarefied air, harsh weather, adventure, romance and awe-inspiring danger. In this venture northwards in words and music we set out to explore something of these impressions, hopes, harsh realities and glorious dreams.

We open with Pearsall’s setting of a traditional Scottish ballad, *Sir Patrick Spens*, which describes the King of Scotland, seated at Dunfermline, summoning the well-recommended Sir Patrick to sail for “Nor-a-way” to bring home a fair princess. Sir Patrick asks who on earth has recommended him for this implausible venture as it’s quite the wrong time of the year for a safe sail: *the sky grew dark, and the wind blew loud and gurdy grew the sea. The anchors brake, the top masts lap, ‘Twas such a deadly storm...*

Elgar’s northern vision conjures something much softer and quite magical: *My love dwelt in a northern land, A dim tower in a forest green but equally elegiac, The grass above my love is green.*

The compositions of New York-based Ola Gjeilo reflect many elements of his native Norway. *Wintertide* is an arrangement of a Norwegian folksong with new lyrics by Charles Silvestri depicting the stillness of the snowfall as it turns autumn to winter and then, eventually, the long-awaited arrival of spring. *Northern Lights* sets passionate verses from the *Song of Solomon* that conjure for Gjeilo the “terrible beauty” of this extraordinary phenomenon of nature.

Composer Tom Cunningham has made several collaborations with his Edinburgh neighbour Alexander McCall Smith – author of *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency* series. *Scotland at Night* comprises six highly descriptive glimpses of natural and cultural Scotland as night falls.



Grieg is a name that doubtless comes to mind for any of us whose early awareness of Scandinavian music comprised such perennial favourites as *Morning* and *Hall of the Mountain King*. *Ave maris stella* is one of just a handful of sacred pieces that Grieg wrote; dating from 1898, it sets the ancient Latin hymn, with its poetic image of Mary as a star, guiding mortal souls over the seas of life – perhaps of particular resonance for one born and living for many years in the port of Bergen.

We turn to another ancient Marian hymn, the *Ave Maria*, for our next two items – in quite contrasting settings. The first, by octogenarian Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, is an unusually animated setting of the text – in Russian. The traditional Latin was the choice of Icelandic Hjalmar Ragnarsson for his meditative 1985 composition.



We conclude our programme with three very colourful Icelandic folk tales – told in music by Lisa McMaster. English-born, and a graduate of Bristol University, Lisa has developed an extremely varied musical career, including an 8 year stint teaching and performing in Iceland and so embracing the rich culture and the extraordinarily complex structures of the language. These pieces came about as her response to a call by Kammerkór Norðurlands (the North Icelandic Chamber Choir of which she was a member) for repertoire about ghosts and trolls! We are extremely grateful for Lisa’s enlightenment and assistance in preparing these pieces and crave indulgence of any listeners who happen to be fluent in Icelandic...

Friends of Writtle Singers

We are most grateful to our Friends, listed below, for their continuing support.

Glyn Buckmaster, John Buckmaster, Pamela Butt, Keith Byatt,
Alistair Fiddes, Heather Gwynn, Jenny Haxell, Brian Marsh,
Vera Mason, Graham Reeve, Pamela Rose, Paul Tarrant, Liz Tiplin

For more details of our Friends scheme, please ring Martin Mason on 01277 657774.

Sir Patrick Spens Robert Pearsall

My love dwelt in a Northern land Edward Elgar

Reading - from Neither Here Nor There: Hammerfest Bill Bryson

Wintertide Norwegian folk tune arr. Ola Gjeilo

Reading - on the composition of Northern Lights Ola Gjeilo

Northern Lights Ola Gjeilo

Pulchra es amica mea,
suavis et decora filia Jerusalem,
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.
Averte oculos tuos a me
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.

*Thou art beautiful, O my love,
sweet and beautiful daughter of Jerusalem,
terrible as an army set in array.
Turn away thy eyes from me,
for they have made me flee away.*

Reading - from Sightlines: Aurora Kathleen Jamie

Scotland at Night words: Alexander McCall Smith music: Tom Cunningham

Dusk ~ Refinery in the darkness ~ Ceilidh ~

Simmer Dim in Shetland ~ Trout loch ~ Lullaby

~ INTERVAL ~

Refreshments will be served at the back of the church

Ave maris stella Edvard Grieg

Ave maris stella, Dei mater alma,
atque semper Virgo, felix caeli porta.
Solve vincla reis: profer lumen caecis,
mala nostra pelle, bona cuncta posce.
Vitam praesta puram, iter para tutum,
ut, videntes Jesum, semper collaetemur.
Sit laus Deo Patri, Summo Christo decus,
Spiritui Sancto: tribus honor unus. Amen.

*Hail, star of the sea, blessed Mother of God
and ever Virgin, happy gate of heaven.
Loosen the chains of sinners, give light to the blind,
drive away our ills, obtain for us all good things.
Obtain for us a pure life, make safe our path,
That seeing Jesus we may ever rejoice with thee.
To God the Father be praise, glory to Christ on high,
honour to the Holy Spirit, one in three. Amen.*

Bogoróditse Djévo Arvo Pärt

Bogoróditse Djévo, rádujssja, Blagodátnaja Maríje,
Gospód ss Tobóju;
blagosslovjéna Ty v zhenákh
i blagosslovjén plod chrvéva Tvojegó,
jáko Sspássa rodilá jeessí dush náshikh.

*Rejoice, O virgin Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls.*

Ave Maria Hjálmar H. Ragnarsson

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum:
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, pray for us sinners
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.*

Reading - from Dreaming of Iceland Sally Magnusson

Three Icelandic Folktales Lisa McMaster

Djárninn á Myrká

Máninn líður,
dauðinn ríður,
Sérðu ekki hvítan blett
í hnakka mínum, Garún, Garún?

Biddu, biddu herna, herna,
Garún, Garún,
meðan eg flyt hann Faxe
upp fyrir garða, garða.

The Deacon of Dark River

*The moon is gliding,
The dead are rising,
Don't you see the white spot
at the nape of my neck, Garún?*

*Wait here, wait here,
Garún, Garún,
while I take my horse Faxi
up to the churchyard garden.*

Horfinn er fagur farfi

Horfinn er fagur farfi,
forvitin, sjáðu litinn,
drengur í dauða genginn
drós, skoða hvarminn ljósa;
hildarplögg voru höggvin
þá háða ég valþing áður;
kám er á kampi orum,
kysstu, mæ, ef þig lystir.

Lost are my good looks

*Lost are my good looks,
observe, see the colour,
a young man walking in death,
maiden, notice the pale eyelids;
my armour was destroyed
that I wore in the days of yore;
now I am unkempt from battle but
kiss me, maiden, if you still wish to.*

Nátttröllid

"Fögur þykir mér hönd þín,
snör mín en snarpa, og dillidó."

"Hún hefur aldrei saur sópað,
ári minn Kári, og korriró."

"Fagurt þykir mér auga þitt,
snör mín en snarpa, og dillidó."

"Aldrei hefur það illt séð,
ári minn Kári, og korriró."

"Fagur þykir mér fótur þinn,
snör mín en snarpa, og dillidó."

"Aldrei hefur hann saur troðið,
ári minn Kári, og korriró."

"Dagur er í austri,
snör mín en snarpa, og dillidó."

"Stattu og vertu að steini
en engum þó að meini,
ári minn Kári, og korriró."

The Night Troll

"What a pretty hand you have,
my quick one, my keen one, my dillie-doe."

"It has never raked the muck,
my prowler, my Kári, and corry-ro."

"What a pretty eye you have,
my quick one, my keen one, my dillie-doe."

"Never has it evil seen,
my prowler, my Kári, and corry-ro."

"What a pretty foot you have,
my quick one, my keen one, my dillie-doe."

"It has never trod in filth,
my prowler, my Kári, and corry-ro."

"Day is dawning in the east,
my quick one, my keen one, my dillie-doe."

"Stay and turn to stone,
but be of harm to no-one,
my prowler, my Kári, and corry-ro."



50 YEARS of WrittleSingers



Writtle Singers came about as a result of a Writtle Pageant held in front of Writtle College back in 1968. It was decided that some music was needed for the event, so members of the church choir recorded three pieces, including *Summer is icumen in*, which were relayed at various stages of the production. Following this, we decided that we'd enjoyed ourselves so much that we'd carry on – and so the Writtle Singers was born.

The size of the choir was quite small at the beginning – 16 or so – but over the years the membership increased, reaching over 30 at its highest.

Since 1968, we've sung in many different styles and in many different places, although All Saints', Writtle is our regular venue. We've worked our way through many conductors, ten in all, and a name change – after a break in the 1980s, the choir was reborn as the Writtle Chamber Choir, reverting to Writtle Singers soon after.

Christine Gwynn, our current and longest-serving conductor, has been with us since 1997. She has raised the standard of our singing immeasurably. Under her leadership we have sung abroad in such places as Antwerp, Prague, Zurich and also in this country, in Harrogate, Bolton Abbey, York Minster, the Southbank Centre in London and various venues around Essex.



Jean Rose

soprano and a founder member of Writtle Singers



WrittleSingers

Musical Director
Christine Gwynn

Registered charity no: 1056334

Soprano

Jane Atkinson, Sarah Cuff, Emily Fisher, Michèle Marshall, Jean Rose, Helen Sismey

Alto

Audrey Cassidy, Lucy Elwell, Sue Hirst, Emma Norton, Sophie Richards

Tenor

Martin Atkinson, Alan Flower, Martin Mason

Bass

Peter Brisley, Martin Clarke, Steven Clews, John Cockcroft, Peter Quintrell, Andrew Taylor



Writtle Singers is a friendly mixed-voice chamber choir which aims to perform an exciting variety of music to the highest standard and provide enjoyment for both singers and audience. Based in the village of Writtle where we rehearse on Monday evenings in the historic church of All Saints, our members come from all over Essex and beyond. Our repertoire is varied, and recent concerts have included Gabriel Jackson's *To the Field of Stars*, the *Messe Solennelle* by Langlais, and Duruflé's *Requiem*, along with works by composers from Weelkes and Wilbye through to contemporaries such as Janet Wheeler. Why not come and sing with us? We would welcome new members in all voice parts. For more information, email info@writtlesingers.org or ring 07770 884913.

Forthcoming Events from Writtle Singers

Candlelit Christmas Concert

with Simon Harvey - organ

Wednesday 12th December 2018, 8:00pm

Open Rehearsal

featuring music for our Spring concert Night Watch

Monday 14th January 2019, 7:30pm for 7:45pm start

Night Watch - Music for Vespers

Saturday 30th March 2019

Summer Concert

Saturday 6th July 2019

all at All Saints' Church, Writtle

Look at our website for more details - www.writtlesingers.org
where concert tickets can also be purchased



Writtle Singers CDs

Wroving ~ music from our travels

Wrejoice! ~ Christmas music -
last few available!

Wrelax ~ soothing music

All three CDs are available to buy
tonight, price £7 each