



**RYTON CHORAL SOCIETY**  
***A History of Performance***  
from 1971 to the present

compiled by Neil Pont

## 1971

The first concert of '**Christmas Music**' took place on **10<sup>th</sup> December 1971**.

The conductor was Derrick Parkyn Marshall and the soloist for Vaughan Williams' 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' and Peter Cornelius' 'The Three Kings' was Howard Taylor, who was still singing with the Prudhoe Gleemen in 2009.

Members of the choir who are still singing today (November 2009) are Margaret Scott, Margaret Simpson and Marjorie Forster (nee Reeve).

The choir was joined by the St. Mary's Technical School Brass Group.

## 1972

### **21st April - Haydn's 'The Creation'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Aileen Robinson (sop), Tom Morson (tenor), Harvey Williams (bass)

New Tyneside Orchestra - Leader, Mike Smith

### **22<sup>nd</sup> November - Music for St. Cecilia's Day**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

The programme notes by Jack Edmondson (Chairman) explain that the Society has had its first Annual General Meeting and appointed officers. Today's Vice Chairman, Margaret Scott was a member of that first committee. The programme also sported the Society's logo (designed by Dale Robinson) for its first appearance.

The choir was augmented by students from the Newcastle upon Tyne School of Music led by Layton Ring in a concert that featured 'A Song for St. Cecilia' by 20<sup>th</sup> century composer Michael Hurd. The choir also sang Britten's setting of The National Anthem and his 'Jubilate Deo'

### **20<sup>th</sup> December**

Derrick Parkyn Marshall conducted the choir singing carols in Newcastle Cathedral

## 1973

### **24<sup>th</sup> March - Selections from 'The Gondoliers' & Fauré's 'Requiem'**

Conductor - S. Gaynor (standing in for the unwell D. Parkyn Marshall)

Soloists for the Requiem- Brian Scraton (baritone) and Gerard and Daniel Goulé (boy trebles - who are two of triplets)

Soloists for 'The Gondoliers' included Colin Smith (tenor) who is a member of today's Society. He is described as "a frequent winner at Ryton Music Festival before he left England in 1966, to take up an appointment as Head of Music at Queen's College, Nassau". Welcome back, Colin!

The programme says: "The two works being given on this occasion could be considered to form a strange mixture" - who are we to disagree!

The local press gave a pretty good review:

"The Sullivan was provided in generous measure, but bereft of dialogue and action, something of the genial quality of this joyous and exuberant opera seemed to be missing. It had its moments however, in the solos, the choruses and the ensembles where a fine blend was achieved. There was the exhilarating Cachucha, some fine musical enunciation by Howard Taylor in Don Alhambra's songs, an assurance born of experience with a clear vocal line by Margaret Jones singing *Gianetta* and a beautifully poised piece of singing by Colin Smith in that gem 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes' - tender, fresh and unhackneyed. (*Just how the current choir would describe Colin!*).

But for me, the serenely level **Requiem** was the feature of the evening. Here was some beautifully controlled and positive singing, well integrated, of a work scored with great gentleness....the solo, *Pie Jesu*, was entrusted to two trebles (who) had a beautiful unified vocal line and a wonderful purity of tone and their solo was one of the highlights of the evening.

Altogether the Requiem was sensitively handled, the chorus singing with sincerity, Brian Scraton using his attractive baritone voice to good effect.

There was disappointment that Derrick Parkyn Marshall was prevented by illness from conducting, but Stan Gaynor took over the baton at short notice and handled his choral forces with great skill, also stepping from the rostrum to sing *Giuseppe* in the quartets and quintets."

### **30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December - Handel's 'Messiah'**

At Robert Young Memorial Church and again at Stanley Central Methodist Church on December 21<sup>st</sup>

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Pamela Priestley Smith (soprano), Ann Lampard (alto), Tom Whitfield (tenor), Brian Scraton (bass)

Organist - George Sutcliffe

This was repeated at Stanley Central Methodist Church on **21<sup>st</sup> December** with different soloists: Patricia Green (soprano), Muriel Churcher (alto), Sam Scorer (tenor) and Harvey Williams (bass)

**4<sup>th</sup> May - Coleridge-Taylor's 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast' (+ Plantation Songs and 'Tales from the Vienna Woods')**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloist - Kenneth Ormston (tenor)

The programme notes bemoan the fact that support from Ryton Urban District Council (both financial and in providing floral arrangements for concerts) will no longer forthcoming as it had ceased to exist. Jack Edmondson hopes that "help will be continued by the new authorities". Well - we don't get flowers but from 2002 onwards Gateshead Council has provided a grant, which is gratefully received.

The local press described the concert as "excellent entertainment for a summer evening...Derrick Parkyn Marshall coaxed his singers into telling expression of the words (of Hiawatha's Wedding), cleverly manipulating the subtle cadences and nuances with which the work abounds"

**14<sup>th</sup> December - Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' (Parts 1, 2 &3) (+ carols)**

At Holy Cross Church

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Margaret Jones (soprano), Ann Lampard (alto), Colin Smith (tenor), Harvey Williams (bass)

Current member Jean Grave, who has sung solos and presented fund-raising concerts for the society as part of 'The 2 Js', is listed for the first time.

**1975**

**17<sup>th</sup> May - Vivaldi's 'Gloria' and Mozart's 'Requiem'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - (Gloria) Margaret Jones (soprano), Muriel Churcher (alto)  
(Requiem) Brenda Raine (soprano), Jean Kelly (alto), Robert Tully (tenor), Robin Makepeace (baritone) (known collectively as The Croft Singers)

The Vrayne Orchestra (Pamela Willson - leader)

The choir was some 85 in number and the programme announced that the committee had 'reluctantly decided to set some restrictions on further growth in membership'. There is the first listing of a singer who still sings with us today - Michael Grave.

This performance was well received by the Hexham Courant under the head line: *'Ryton concert is a triumph of team work'*

"Ryton Choral Society and the Vrayne Orchestra....provided an evening of sheer musical delight....Integrity and authenticity abounded and the choir, perhaps finding even greater inspiration from an orchestra in top form, showed considerable versatility. It provided great power in the climax of the Mozart, vigour and

discipline in the contrapuntal choruses of both works, and beautifully sensitive nuances and subtleties in the lyrically expressive sections....There were many moments of breath-catching beauty in this performance, the flexibility and phrasing of the 'Lacrymosa' and 'Hostias' provided a very moving experience, whilst, at the opposite extreme, the 'Dies Irae' taken at a really exciting speed, was swung with stunning power and savagery. The final double-fugue 'Cum Sanctis Tuis' was superb. The many subject entries were exact and made without unstylish heaviness as the other voices eased to allow prominence to each important part; the semiquaver runs were clearly articulated and fairly danced along to the big adagio cadence with its flourish of brass and kettle-drums.

The performance was a personal triumph for the conductor, Derrick Parkyn Marshall, whose authoritative control was evident throughout. Once again, his musically detailed preparation and uncompromisingly high standards provided Ryton with a memorable occasion."

This concert was repeated on **May 21<sup>st</sup>** at Hookergate Secondary School with Ursula Bell providing the continuo in place of the Vrayne Orchestra.

### **6<sup>th</sup> December - Carols and 'Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo' (Flanders & Horvitz)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloist - Stan Gaynor

The choir was joined by the City of Newcastle upon Tyne Youth Orchestra, conductor - Christine Ballantyne.

Jack Edmondson's ever-enlightening notes tell of the choir having made recordings for Tyne Tees Television that were to be used for the Epilogue slot. The choir were 'anxiously awaiting transmission'!

### **1976**

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> May - Elgar's 'The Music Makers'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloist - Margaret Cooper (alto)

#### **6<sup>th</sup> November and 18<sup>th</sup> December - Handel's 'Messiah'**

Both conducted by D. Parkyn Marshall.

6/11/76 at Crookhill Methodist Church

Soloists: Sandra Wright (soprano), Renee Schill (alto), Colin Smith (tenor), Howard Taylor (bass); organist: John Robinson

18/12/76 at Ryton Comprehensive School

Soloists: Pamela Priestley Smith (soprano), Anne-Marie Owen (alto), Anthony Peacock (tenor), Howard Taylor (bass) with the Vrayne Orchestra

### **1977**

There was a Spring concert at which the society sang 'Music for The Royal Jubilee'.

On **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 1977**, Ryton Choral Society joined with a Newcastle Combined Primary Schools' Choir and the Northumbria Brass Concert to present a concert at Newcastle City Hall in aid of UNICEF. Once again they featured Stan Gaynor in 'Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo'. They also performed Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols', with Margaret Jones and Janet Taylor singing soprano solos.

### **1978**

The choir sang Schubert's 'Song of Miriam', Haydn's 'Te Deum' and 'Imperial (Nelson) Mass' at their Spring Concert.

**16<sup>th</sup> December - Strauss's 'Tales from the Vienna Forest', Brahms' 'Songs of Love', Lehar's 'The Merry Widow' (excerpts)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Margaret Jones (soprano), Robert Tully (tenor)

The programme notes show that Jack Edmondson has stood down as Chairman to be replaced by Frank Bollen. Frank acknowledges the Society's debt to Jack for his commitment since its inception.

### **1979**

The Society hosted a 'Sing It Yourself Messiah' on 13<sup>th</sup> January at the Centenary Methodist Church, Crawcrook conducted by Derrick Parkyn Marshall. Soloists were: Gillian Brunton (soprano), Kathleen Todd (alto), Colin Smith (tenor), Howard Taylor (bass).

**12<sup>th</sup> May - Vivaldi's 'Gloria', Schubert's 'Mass in G' and Fauré's 'Requiem'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - (*Gloria*) Margaret Jones (soprano), Muriel Churcher (alto)

(*Mass*) Mary Sproxton (soprano), Graham Morris (tenor),

Richard Hayton (bass)

(*Requiem*) Carolyn Nesham (soprano), Richard Hayton (bass)

Frank Bollen writes that the 'Sing It Yourself Messiah' was a great success that it was hoped to repeat because 'the proceeds will help to offset the financial loss

which is the inevitable result of engaging an orchestra, as in tonight's performance'.  
Things don't change then!!

**6<sup>th</sup> December (St. Nicholas's Day) - Britten's 'Saint Nicholas' (in The Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas, Newcastle-upon-Tyne)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloist - Godfrey Hutchinson (tenor)

(Nicholas - as a boy: Carolyn Nesham; 3 Pickled Boys: Michael Fairless, Ian Rollinson, Michael Spearman)

Current member (and stalwart raffle organiser!) Jean Williams is listed in the programme for the first time.

**8<sup>th</sup> December - A Concert of Christmas Music at Robert Young Memorial Church**

**22<sup>nd</sup> December - Carol Concert** with Newcastle upon Tyne Youth Band at Brancepeth Castle

**1980**

Another 'Sing it Yourself Messiah' was held on 29<sup>th</sup> March at the Church of The Holy Spirit, Crawcrook. Soloists were: Gill Scott (soprano), Sheila Young (alto), Colin Smith (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass) with David Higgins (organ ) and Brian Davidson (trumpet)

**10<sup>th</sup> May - Haydn's 'The Creation'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Gillian Brunton (soprano), Michael Oswald (tenor), Harvey Williams (bass)

**27<sup>th</sup> September - A Concert with Denis Weatherley**

The choir sang a mixture of songs including Johnny Dankworth's 'Folk Mass'.

Denis Weatherley, a native of Ryton, was a former member of the B.B.C. Singers, an active member of Durham County Opera and Palatine Opera and Chairman of Opera Nova.

**6<sup>th</sup> December - Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Pauline Ash, Gillian Scott, Margaret Jones, Geoffrey Hughes

Current member Madeline Mather makes her first appearance in the programme.

## **1981**

**17<sup>th</sup> January** - The choir sang 'Messiah' at St. Theresa's, Heaton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. Derrick Parkyn Marshall conducted, with Margaret Clark, Maureen McCauley, John Sharrocks and Michael McCabe as soloists.

### **16<sup>th</sup> May - Mozart's 'Coronation Mass' and 'Solemn Vespers'; Haydn's 'Paukenmesse'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Gill Scott (soprano), Renee Schill (alto), Robin Ritson (tenor), Brian Artist (bass)

### **5<sup>th</sup> December - Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols' + carols**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Janet Taylor (soprano), Jean Kelly (alto) Anne Garratt (harp)

## **13<sup>th</sup> December**

The choir joined with the Newcastle City Chorus and Heaton School Choir (both led by Len Young) in a performance of Messiah with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes) at Newcastle's City Hall.

Ken Darling, in The Newcastle Journal wrote:

"...it is the choir which makes or breaks a Messiah and the Tyneside singers never seemed to flag during the succession of big demanding choruses. There were moments of real beauty not often heard even of societies like the Huddersfield in their heyday"

## **1982**

### **15<sup>th</sup> May - Bach's 'St. John Passion'**

At the Church of the Holy Spirit, Crawcrook

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Evangelist - Godfrey Hutchinson; Gillian Brunton (soprano), Jean Kelly (alto), John Sharrocks (tenor), Robert Seaton (bass)

(other solos by choir members - Brian Hamshere, Stan Davison, Stan Gaynor, and Michael Grave).

The programme lists current choir members David Telford-Reed, Paul Gailiunas, Kathleen Lucas and Barbara Crozier for the first time.

## **18<sup>th</sup> July**

The choir were part of A Service of Thanksgiving for the Centenary of the Church Army that was broadcast by Tyne Tees Television (for the National Network) from



The Grove, Ryton. The choir was joined by The Ovington Band (Director - William Hopkinson). Derrick Parkyn Marshall conducted the concert.

**4<sup>th</sup> December - Vaughan Williams' 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' and 'Serenade to Music'; Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Howard Taylor, Susan Dutton, Robin Ritson, Jean Kelly, Stan Davison

This concert marked the end of an era as Ursula Bell had retired, for health reasons, from her role as accompanist. She was, accordingly, made the first Honorary Life Member of Ryton Choral Society.

Fund-raising was still an issue. John Roddam had produced a Christmas card that was on sale - proceeds to support Society funds.

**1983**

**14<sup>th</sup> May - Brahms' 'German Requiem'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Susan Dutton (soprano), Harvey Williams (bass)

The splendid poster shows that tickets were priced at £1.50 for this concert - how does this compare with our 2009 charges I wonder? A pint of beer cost about 32p so that's gone up seven-fold ... .. perhaps £10 is about right?

**21<sup>st</sup> May**

A repeat performance in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Whickham.

Soloists - Shirley Wilkinson (soprano), Harvey Williams (bass)

Organist - Frank Bowler

Michael Grave played Brahms' Chorale Preludes (Op. 122)

**3<sup>rd</sup> December - Vivaldi's 'Credo', Handel's 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord', Monteverdi's 'Beatus Vir' and 'Christe, adoramus te', Pergolesi's 'Magnificat' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall is listed in the programme, but an accident in November meant that he was incapacitated. Stan Gaynor deputised.

Soloists - Shirley Wilkinson (soprano), Jean Kelly (alto), Anthony Peacock (tenor), Stan Davison (bass)

Current alto Joyce Ritson made her first appearance - as did bass Lewis Hetherington who went on to become a Life Member.

## **1984**

### **17<sup>th</sup> March - Handel's 'Messiah'**

Robert Young Memorial Methodist Church, Crawcrook

Conductor - Stan Gaynor

Soloists - Susan Jordan (soprano), Maureen McCauley (alto), Brian Ash (tenor),  
Brian Artist (bass)

The concert programme now becomes a printed affair - there were 10 local advertisers for this performance and 21 for the Christmas concert - a sobering thought for today's committee!

### **8<sup>th</sup> June - Gilbert and Sullivan's 'The Pirates of Penzance'**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

The principal parts in the concert version of this G & S favourite were sung by Michael Grave, Stan Gaynor, Lewis Hetherington, David Telford-Reed, Howard Taylor, Carolyn Nesham, Margaret Jones, Dorothy Hall and Jean Grave.

### **8<sup>th</sup> December - Puccini's 'Messa di Gloria', Tippett's Spirituals from 'A Child of Our Time' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Parkyn Marshall

Soloists - Alan Davison (tenor), Alan Price (bass)

Choir members Carolyn Below and Jean Grave also sang solo parts

## **1985**

### **11<sup>th</sup> May - Mendelssohn's 'Elijah'**

Conductor - Stan Davison

Soloists - Susan Jordan (soprano), Carole Wilson (alto), Robin Ritson (tenor),  
Harvey Williams (bass)

### **23<sup>rd</sup> November - Handel's 'Alexander's Feast'**

Conductor - Stan Davison

Soloists - Shirley Wilkinson (soprano), Ronald Bridget (tenor), Robert Seaton (bass)

The programme notes regrettably announce the resignation of Derrick Parkyn Marshall as Musical Director of the Society. After 14 years in charge he was made a Life Member.

**15<sup>th</sup> December** - the choir sang carols at the Robert Young Memorial Church in aid of a children's charity.

**1986**

**17<sup>th</sup> May - Schubert's 'Mass in G major', Bach's motet 'Jesu, Priceless Treasure', Bruckner's 'Two Motets', Britten's 'Rejoice in the Lamb', Parry's 'Blest Pair of Sirens'**

Robert Young Memorial Methodist Church, Crawcrook

Conductor - Richard Bloodworth

Soloists - Dorothy Eavis (soprano), Beth Kessler (alto), Richard Virden (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass) plus Len Young (organ)

A new era for the choir - the Bloodworth years! This was Richard Bloodworth's first concert. The press coverage described him as "the choir's enthusiastic and talented new conductor". It also says that the choir "sang with conviction, clarity, and full dynamic range" though it "did not always overcome problems of balance". Chairman Laurence Law's notes once again bemoan a perennial problem because "the expense of giving a performance continues to rise although we make every attempt to keep admission charges to a reasonable (but uneconomic) level. Fund raising activities are being arranged". Ditto in 2009!

**5<sup>th</sup> July - "A Light-hearted Summer Concert of English Music"**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Included 'Trial by Jury' with solos by Carolyn Below, Richard Bloodworth, Michael Grave, Lawrence Law, David Telford-Reed and Howard Taylor.

**20<sup>th</sup> July**

The choir sang in The Newcastle Maritime Mass at St. Nicholas' Cathedral. The service featured Schubert's 'Mass in G'.

**22<sup>nd</sup> November - Bach's cantatas 'Sleepers wake!' and 'Sehet, wir geh'n hinauf gen Jerusalem', Beethoven's 'Mass in C'**

Church of the Holy Spirit, Crawcrook

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Shirley Wilkinson (soprano), Joan Kelsall (alto), John Tones (tenor), Robert Seaton (bass)

Current soprano Alison Stancliffe has her first listing.

**19<sup>th</sup> December - Music for Christmas (a selection of carols)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**21<sup>st</sup> December - Music for Christmas (as above - with a few changes)**

Robert Young Methodist Church

Thus bringing to a close the busiest year in the Society's history - 6 concerts!

**1987**

**11<sup>th</sup> April - Monteverdi's 'Christe Adoramus Te', 3 Bruckner Motets, Rutter's 'Gloria' (+ Music for Brass, featuring Nova Brass)**

Robert Young Memorial Church

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**4<sup>th</sup> July - "Sing America" (featuring music by Porter, Kern, Bernstein, Rodgers, Tippett and Gerswin)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**14<sup>th</sup> November - Bach's motet 'Lobet den Herrn', Fauré's 'Requiem'**

Robert Young Memorial Church

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Susan Jordan (soprano), David Curtis (baritone)

**12<sup>th</sup> December - Words and Music for Christmas**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

The simple programme (one sheet of A4) for the first time announces a break for the RAFFLE DRAW - a worthy Ryton Choral tradition!

**1988**

**March 26<sup>th</sup> - Bach's 'St. John Passion'**

Church of the Holy Spirit, Crawcrook

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Evangelist - John Gallagher, Christ - Clive Constance, Pilate - David Saunders and Gillian Marshall, Maureen McCauley, Brian Ash

**June 25<sup>th</sup> - German's 'Merrie England'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Solos sung by Carolyn Below, David Telford-Reed, Alison Stancliffe, Howard Taylor, Jean Grave and Terry Edwards

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> - Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle'**

Robert Young Memorial Church, Crawcrook

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Sylvia Dunn (soprano), Maureen McCauley (alto), John Gallagher (tenor), Clive Constance (bass)

**1989**

**March 18<sup>th</sup> - Handel's 'Messiah'**

Ryton Parish Church

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Gillian Marshall (soprano), Carole Wilson (alto), Anthony Grylls (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass)

**June 24<sup>th</sup> - 'A Promenade Concert!' (featuring Horowitz's 'Horroratorio' and traditional 'Proms' music)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Solos were sung by Carolyn Below, Jean Grave, David Telford-Reed, John Below and Stan Gaynor

**November 11<sup>th</sup> - Music for Remembrance Day (featuring Elgar's 'The Spirit of England' and Stainer's 'Crucifixion')**

Robert Young Memorial Church

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Adrian McLeish (tenor), Clive Constance (bass)

As well as being dedicated to all those who had died in the service of their country, this concert was also in remembrance of founder member Syd Gotts who had tragically died the previous week.

**1990**

**March 31<sup>st</sup> - Mozart's 'Mass in C minor'**

The Church of the Holy Spirit, Crawcrook

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Teresa Troiani (soprano), Alison Shiel (alto), Richard Verdon (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass)

**June 30<sup>th</sup> - Gilbert and Sullivan's 'H.M.S. Pinafore'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Solos were sung by Howard Taylor, Richard Bloodworth, John Below, Stan Gaynor, David Telford Reed, Paul Gailiunas, Carolyn Below, Elaine Gotts, Jean Grave

## **October**

Ryton Choral Society started a 12 year liaison with The North East Last Night of the Proms at the City Hall, forming the chorus with The Newcastle Choral Society (led by Len Young). This was the first concert in the series. The North East Promenaders Against Cancer (formed by George and Rosalynd Walker) were supporting Marrow Transplant 2000. Benjamin Luxon CBE sang in this concert - as he did every year. It is interesting to note that the pianist that night was David Murray - who in the future would become Ryton Choral Society's 3<sup>rd</sup> Musical Director.

## **November 17<sup>th</sup> - Handel's 'Zadok the Priest', Haydn's 'Nelson Mass'**

Holy Cross Church, Ryton

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Carolyn Below (soprano), Jean Grave (alto), David Telford Reed (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass)

## **December 15<sup>th</sup> - Music for Christmas (featuring Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols')**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

## **1991**

### **March 23<sup>rd</sup> - Verdi's 'Nabucco'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Guest soloists - Richard Spencer, Brian Ash, Roy Beasley, Hilary Andre

Choir soloists - Carolyn Below, Stan Gaynor, David Telford Reed, Alison Stancliffe

### **June 29<sup>th</sup> - "Paired Pleasures and Double Delights" (featuring 'The Yeomen of the Guard', madrigals and Beatles music)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Jean Grave, Howard Taylor, Elaine Gotts, David Telford Reed, Carolyn Below, John Below, Stan Gaynor.

## **October 6<sup>th</sup>**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Last Night of the Proms'

### **December 7<sup>th</sup> - Britten's 'St. Nicholas' (+ carols)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - St. Nicholas - Neal Younger; The Boy Nicholas - Paul Braiden

The Society was joined by the choir of Ryton Comprehensive School

**1992**

**April 4<sup>th</sup> - Vivaldi's 'Gloria', Bach's 'Cantata No. 51' and 'Magnificat'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Teresa Troiani (soprano), Carolyn Below (soprano), Judith Thompson (soprano), Sally Roberts (alto), Paul Braiden (tenor), Michael McCabe (bass)

Current soprano Sandie Telford Reed makes her debut.

**June 27<sup>th</sup> - "Those We Have Loved!"**

**To celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the choir**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Choir members chose their favourite pieces from the repertoire:

Handel	Zadok the Priest
Mozart	Laudate Dominum (Vespers)
Fauré	from the Requiem (Sanctus, Pie Jesus, Libera me)
Gibbons	The Silver Swan
Bruckner	Locus Iste
Elgar	'As Torrents in Summer' and 'O Happy Eyes'
Handel	from Messiah (His yoke is easy, All we like sheep, Hallelujah)
Verdi	from Nabucco (Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves)
Sullivan	A Savoy Medley
Hammerstein	Oklahoma
Horovitz	Captain Noah
Simon	Bridge Over Troubled Water
Lennon and McCartney	Beatles Medley

Current member, bass Robin Oliphant appears in the programme for the first time.

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

The choir sang with the Ever Ready Brass Band in Durham Cathedral in aid of Amnesty International.

**October 10<sup>th</sup>**

Last Night of the Proms, City Hall - Janice Cairns, Sheila Amit and Ben Luxon, Newcastle Choral Society, Ryton Choral Society and Durham Sinfonia

**December 12<sup>th</sup> - Music for Christmas - carols**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**1993**

**February 13<sup>th</sup> - Brahms' 'German Requiem'**

Robert Young Memorial Church

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Anne Wallace (soprano), Roy Beasley (baritone)

Originally planned for November 1992, this performance was postponed to give the choir longer to prepare a piece they found "vocally taxing" (Richard Bloodworth's words in the programme).

Current bass Derek Lawrence made his debut.

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Handel's 'Messiah'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Liz Lincoln (soprano), Maureen McCauley (alto), Adrian McLeish (tenor), Harvey Williams (bass)

**June 26<sup>th</sup> - "A Summer Pot-Pourri" (madrigals, Brahms' 'Liebeslieder Walzer', 'Mikado')**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**October 16<sup>th</sup>**

Last Night of the Proms, City Hall - Maureen McCauley and the Braathens S.A.F.E. Singers from Norway join the usual suspects.

**November 6<sup>th</sup>**

Ryton Choral Society joined with Northern Opera, members of the New Tyneside Orchestra, Houghton Kieper Brass Ensemble and soloists Elizabeth Lincoln, Maureen McCauley, Brian Ash and Roy Beasley to sing Verdi's 'Requiem' at the Riverside Leisure Centre, Morpeth (in aid of St. Oswald's Hospice)

**November 13<sup>th</sup>**

The choir sang at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Jean Robinson at Newcastle Cathedral.

Music included:

Bruckner - Locus Iste; Parry - I Was Glad; Barber - Agnus Dei



**December 11<sup>th</sup> - Music for Christmas (carols)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**1994**

**March 26<sup>th</sup> - "Vivat!" - mixed concert of church music (Pitoni, Tallis, Parry, Greene, Purcell, Fauré, Wesley, Mozart, Bach, Rutter)**

St. John's Church, Greenside

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Organist - M. Grave

Current bass Stan Entwhistle makes his debut.

**April 15<sup>th</sup>**

A good number of the choir were included in the 'Grand Opera Chorus' for the Northern Sinfonia's 'Grand Opera Gala II' at the Newcastle City Hall, conducted by David Haslam and featuring Jennifer Dakin and Bonaventura Bottone.

**June 18<sup>th</sup>**

A repeat of the concert above, sung at The Chesters

**June 25<sup>th</sup> - Offenbach's 'Orpheus in the Underworld' - a concert performance**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Carolyn Below, Judith Thompson, Brenda Tully, John Below, David Telford Reed, Robert Tully, Richard Bloodworth.

**October 22<sup>nd</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

**November 20<sup>th</sup> - Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' (Parts 1 to 3)**

Church of the Holy Spirit, Crawcrook

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Carolyn Below (soprano), Jean Grave (alto), Paul Braiden (tenor), Roy Beasley (bass)

Ryton Choral goes hi-tech! The programme declares, "Tonight's performance is something of an experiment! It uses a small instrumental ensemble based around modern digital keyboards to accompany the arias and recitatives. The more complex textures of the orchestral accompaniments for the big choruses are generated by a combination of live instruments and pre-recorded tracks from a computer sequencer" (Karaoke Bach??)

A first appearance for current soprano Lis Whitfield.

## **December 17<sup>th</sup> - Music and Readings for Christmas**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

This concert brought another busy year to a close.

## **1995**

### **January 29<sup>th</sup>**

Choir members were part of the 'North of England Chorus' that sang Verdi's 'Requiem' at Newcastle City Hall in a concert dedicated to the memory of Eric Caller. Heinrich Schiff conducted, Bradley Creswick led the Northern Sinfonia and the soloists were Jennifer Dakin, Jean Rigby, Bonaventura Bottone and Alan Ewing.

### **April 1<sup>st</sup> Mozart's 'Requiem' and Fauré's 'Requiem'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Carolyn Below and Judith Thompson (sopranos), Jean Grave (alto), Robert Tully (tenor), Howard Taylor (bass)

Cath Mullinder, current committee member and soprano, makes her debut.

### **June 24<sup>th</sup> "Iolanthe in Concert"**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Jim Miller, Howard Taylor, David Telford Reed, Richard Bloodworth, John Below, Brenda Tully, Jean Grave, Carolyn Below.

First appearance by current member Christine Andersen.

### **October 14<sup>th</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

### **November 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> - Music for Choir and Organ (Holst, Parry, Kodaly, Britten, J.S.Bach, Elgar)**

St. Peter's Church, Sunderland; Robert Young Church, Ryton; St. Michael's Church, Houghton le Spring

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Organ - Michael Grave

Soloist - Hilary Andre (soprano)

### **December 16<sup>th</sup> - "A Festive Evening" - carols and readings**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Guests - The Derwent Brass

## **1996**

### **April 13<sup>th</sup> - Haydn's 'Paukenmesse' and Handel's 'Coronation Anthems'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Judith Thompson (soprano), Jean Grave (alto), Robert Tully (tenor), Jim Miller (bass)

### **July 6<sup>th</sup> - "Unbuttons!" - selection of madrigals and party pieces**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

### **October 19<sup>th</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

### **December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> - Handel's 'Messiah'**

At Ryton Comprehensive School and St. Oswin's Church, Wylam with Ovingham Choral Society. A retiring collection was held to help raise funds to save Handel's house and commemorate him with a museum.

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Susan Jordan (soprano), Maureen McCauley (alto), John Gallagher (tenor), Gerald Robson (bass)

Current basses Jack Chown and John Davison made their debuts.

Current soprano Caroline Warburton and alto Janet Palmer were singing with the Ovingham Choral Society.

## **1997**

### **March 15<sup>th</sup> - J.S. Bach's 'The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Paul Braiden (Evangelist), David Curtis (Christus), Julia Watson (soprano), Maureen McCauley (alto), Brian Ash (tenor), Tim Jones (bass)

This concert was heralded as the climax of the choir's Silver Jubilee season (1971/2 to 1996/7) and was also the 100<sup>th</sup> public performance. A bequest from late member and Society secretary Jean Robinson made the concert possible.

The choir was augmented so that it was 102 strong - but several of the new faces are still singing with the choir today: Jenny Watson, Bronya Read, Jean Southwell and Neil Pont.

### **June 21<sup>st</sup> - '25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summer Concert' (Elgar's 'Songs from the Bavarian Highlands', Barber's 'Agnus Dei', Mozart's 'Ave Verum', Fauré's 'Cantique de Jean Racine' + party pieces)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**October 18<sup>th</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

**December 6<sup>th</sup> - Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols', Vaughan Williams' 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' + carols**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**1998**

**March 21<sup>st</sup> - Handel's 'Theodora'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Hilary Ions (soprano), Elaine Black (alto), James Huw Jeffries (counter-tenor), Brian Ash (tenor), Peter Carey (bass)

The programme notes mark the death of founder member Stan Davison.

This performance was reviewed by Mike Fry in the prestigious magazine *Opera*: "An audience and a choir who normally do *Messiah* or the *St. Matthew* were galvanised by a work whose power is awesome - there is no other 'opera' like it in England before Britten - and to see people moving around Ryton Comprehensive in a daze, stunned by music that burns its way into your soul, was testament to the power of opera to communicate in the most profound way.

The music had to be trimmed, simply because Ryton Choral don't have Glyndebourne's pull with local transport infrastructures to allow them to go on until midnight. Some cuts were made in the prison scene, and some *da capos* omitted, but the work came across with late-Verdian power. The soloists were professional. Peter Carey was the smartly dressed President, with good passage work and an edge to his character. Brian Ash (Septimus) lost some of his arias, but those he retained were sung with beautifully burnished tone. As Irene, Elaine Black's mezzo was reminiscent of early Janet Baker or present-day Catherine Wyn-Rogers - clear diction and great spiritual power in this wonderful part. In the title role Hilary Ions displayed purity of tone and silvery clarity of purpose, and James Huw Jeffries understood why Didymus is a great role - what is he to do about Theodora's moral stand? - and sang with power and passion, throwing off the passage work with bravura. The chorus put everything they had into their music - the opening sequence and the great Widow of Nain finale were stupendous - and the hard-working orchestra was powerful and clear, with the continuo nicely varied in colour. Those present found this an evening of exceptional power and passion, one of those rare occasions when everything conspires to challenge and change you. Isn't opera a great force for humanity? Isn't Handel wonderful? Isn't *Theodora* a masterpiece strangely neglected, like the Composer's Temple in Godsall Park?

Maybe all those metropolitan squabblers should have been flown up to be shown what this art form can achieve, maybe Bloodworth should give up his day job and tell Chris Smith what opera is all about - changing the world."

**June 8<sup>th</sup> - Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Ruddigore'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - David Telford Reed, Richard Bloodworth, Judith Thompson, Carolyn Below, Sandie Telford Reed, Jean Grave, Neil Pont

**October 10<sup>th</sup>**

Choir members joined with others to perform highlights from Messiah at The Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Houghton-le-Spring with Richard Bloodworth conducting. Soloists were Pauline Curtis (soprano), Elizabeth Lincoln (alto), Richard Bloodworth (tenor), David Curtis (bass).

Current Society librarian Julia Black made her first appearance.

**October 17<sup>th</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

Thomas Allen CBE (later Sir Thomas) made his debut at this event.

**December 12<sup>th</sup> - Charpentier's 'Messe de Minuit (+ carols)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Current altos Clare Hagan and Monica Parker joined the choir.

**1999**

**March 20<sup>th</sup> Mozart's 'Requiem' and 'Mass in C'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Julia Watson (soprano), Hilary Ions (alto), Brian Ash (tenor), Peter Carey (bass)

Current alto Liz Patterson first sang.

**June 12<sup>th</sup> 'Brush Up your Shakespeare'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

A medley of songs connected with the bard - including excerpts from 'Kiss Me Kate'

Soloists: Neil Pont, Margaret Clarke, Judith Dawson, Judith Thompson, Carolyn Below, Katie Below, Jean Grave, Alison Stancliffe, Jonathan Perry, Mary Hale, Richard Bloodworth, Michael Grave

**October 16<sup>th</sup> - NE Last night of the Proms**

**December 4<sup>th</sup> - Schutz's 'A Christmas Story' (+ carols)**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Paul Braiden (Evangelist),

Carolyn Below, Judith Thompson (Angels), Neil Pont (Herod)

**2000**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> - J.S. Bach's 'High Mass in B Minor'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Shelley Everall (soprano), Susanna Spicer (alto), Philip Pooley (tenor),

Peter Carey (bass)

This performance was planned to coincide with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's death and was made possible by a generous donation by Iris and Derek Millward

**May 29<sup>th</sup>** - choir members joined '20,000 Voices' singing in the Newcastle Arena - excerpts from Carmina Burana and Verdi operas were sung + David Haslam's arrangements of Northumbrian folk songs

**June 24<sup>th</sup> - Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Princess Ida'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

**October 21<sup>st</sup> - NE Last Night of the Proms**

**December 2<sup>nd</sup> - Handel's 'Messiah'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Rachel Orr (soprano), Jean Grave (alto), John Gallagher (tenor), Peter Carey (bass)

**2001**

**June 30<sup>th</sup> - Mendelssohn's 'Elijah'**

Conductor - R. Bloodworth

Soloists - Christopher Foster (Elijah), Hilary Andre (soprano), Catherine Crowder (alto), Brian Ash (tenor)

The end of Ryton Choral Society's 'second era' - the last concert directed by Richard Bloodworth. Richard had moved to a new Headship at Durham Johnston School and was still heavily involved in Northern Opera. After 15 years of dedicated service to the choir he felt it was time to move on.

**December 15<sup>th</sup> Handel's 'Messiah' (Christmas music) + carols**

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Julia Watson (soprano), Monica Brett-Crowder (alto)

The third era for Ryton Choral Society under the direction of David Murray, assisted by Eileen Bown. A big step forward for the Society as the decision was made to engage a professional musician as Musical Director. With this decision came a huge new financial commitment for members.

**2002**

**March 16<sup>th</sup> - Monteverdi's 'Beatus Vir', Britten's 'St. Nicolas'**

St. Andrew's Church, Corbridge

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist - James Griffett

With Bishopwearmouth Young Singers and Brinkburn Young Singers

**June 29<sup>th</sup> - 'An Evening with Gershwin and Friends'**

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist - Vanessa Williamson (soprano)

With The Virtuoso Jazz Trio (George MacDonald, James Birkett & Neil Harland)

The choir sang medleys of Jerome Kern, the Carpenters and George Gershwin music arranged by David Murray. A live recording was made and a double CD produced by Donald Wichman - copies are still available (catalogue No. DSW 058 - [wichman@onetel.net.uk](mailto:wichman@onetel.net.uk))

**December 14<sup>th</sup> - Vaughan Williams' 'Serenade to Music' and 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Julia Watson (soprano), George Green (bass)

**2003**

**March 29<sup>th</sup> - Orff's 'Carmina Burana'**

King's Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Caroline Childe (soprano), Tim Jones (bass), Michael Grave (counter tenor)

With Bishopwearmouth Young Singers

'Carmina' took up the second half - David Murray and Eileen Bown played 2 piano duets in the first half.

This was the first concert in a new pattern for the Society - to perform in Ryton at Christmas and in the summer term and to perform a major work elsewhere in the region during the spring term.

**June 28<sup>th</sup> - Vivaldi's 'Gloria', Handel's 'Coronation Anthems'**

Conductor - D. Murray

Also Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'

**December 13<sup>th</sup> - Bush's 'Christmas Cantata', Rutter's 'Brother Heinrich's Christmas' (+ carols)**

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist - Alison Pearce (soprano)

Narrator - John Lawrence

**2004**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> - Rossini's 'Petite Mess Solennelle'**

St. George' Church, Jesmond

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Sarah Murphy (soprano), Valerie Reid (alto), Marl Le Brocq (tenor),

Graeme Danby (bass)

Eileen Bown (piano), Keith Wright (harmonium)

**June 26<sup>th</sup> - 'Heavenly Voices' (Monteverdi's 'Beatus Vir', Palestrina's 'Sicut cervus', Bruckner's 'Locus Iste', Mozart's 'Ave Verum Corpus', Franck's 'Panis Angelicus', Fauré's 'Cantique de Jean Racine', Borodin's 'Polovstian Dances'**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist - Bradley Creswick (violin)

The Society was delighted that Bradley Creswick agreed to play with them. He performed the Brahms Violin Sonata in G in the first half and then played a wild and wonderful medley in the second half that brought forth rapturous applause (and a smile to everyone's faces).

**December 11th - Rutter: Gloria (+ carols)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray



Brass Group - Derek Ruffel, Bob Andrews, Amy Cowan, Ray Poole (trumpets); Peter Wilkie, Steve Baxter, Alan Bravey (trombones); Neil Jewett (tuba); Andy Booth (percussion)

An exciting piece that taxed the choir's learning skills to the limit!

## 2005

### **March 19<sup>th</sup> - Haydn: 'The Creation'**

King's Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Wilma MacDougall (soprano), Andrew Rees (tenor), Graeme Danby (bass) with a 30 piece orchestra (including several Northern Sinfonia players).

Without doubt, the largest performance ever given by Ryton Choral Society and acknowledged by many, both singers and audience, one of the best - before a large and appreciative audience at the King's Hall.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> - 'From North to South - songs from around the world'**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Guest conductor - Felicity Laurence

Soloists - David Murray (baritone), Richard Wistreich (bass)

Piano duets - David Murray and Eileen Bown

This concert was another 'first' for the Society. Felicity Laurence was engaged to work with the choir during the summer term in preparation for her planned involvement with the choir and Ryton Comprehensive School in summer 2006 as part of the Performing Rights Society Foundation's "Music Creator in Residence" scheme. Felicity encouraged the choir to improvise their own harmonies as part of the performance. The choir sang in Norwegian, French, Zulu, Hebrew - and English!

### **December 10<sup>th</sup> - Handel: 'Messiah'**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Sarah Murphy (soprano), Sally Burchall (alto), Jon Grave (tenor), Tim Jones (bass)

## 2006

### **1<sup>st</sup> April - The Glory of Bach (Magnificat; Eine Feste Berg)**

King's Hall - Newcastle University

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Katherine Moore (soprano), Sara Parry (alto), Peter Wilman (tenor), Tim Jones (bass)  
also Brandenburg No 5 - Eileen Bown (harpsichord)

**17<sup>th</sup> June - Singing Together**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

This concert was the culmination of a project where Felicity Laurence, as a Music Creator in Residence (funded by the Performing Rights Society Foundation) worked with students from Ryton Comprehensive School, local primary schools and choir members to create new songs for a song cycle she entitled 'Leap of the Heart'. (More details can be found on the Society's website in the 'Concerts' section). The choir also sang Elgar's 'Songs from the Bavarian Highlands' and David Murray and Eileen Bown played Elgar's piano duet 'Serenade' (Opus 20).

**9<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Celebration (Rutter: Requiem; Chilcott carol arrangements: Away in a Manger, Sussex Carol, What Child is This?; We Wish You a Merry Christmas)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist: Rachel Orr (soprano)

David Murray played his own arrangement of a Christmas Medley where audience (and choir) were invited to identify the 25 different tunes!

**2007**

**31<sup>st</sup> March - Mozart: Coronation Mass; Requiem**

King's Hall, Newcastle University

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists: Bethany Halliday (soprano), Valerie Reid (alto), Patrick Munday (tenor), Graeme Danby (bass)

This concert was performed in memory of Margaret Jones.

A first concert for Peter Rippingale, Tim and Dulcie Pettigrew and the return of Alan Verheyden (now a bass, not a tenor!)

**23<sup>rd</sup> June - Stephen Sondheim: Side by Side**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists: Alison Pearce (soprano), Anne-Marie Owens (alto), Ian Caddy (baritone)  
with David Napthine as the narrator

**8<sup>th</sup> December - Handel: Messiah (Christmas selection); Vaughan Williams:  
Serenade to Music; Chilcott carol arrangements: Away In a Manger; Il est né  
le divin enfant; We wish you a merry Christmas; Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head;  
Jingle Bells; Sussex Carol**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Jessica Holmes (soprano)

**2008**

**15<sup>th</sup> March - Brahms: A German Requiem**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Carole Marnoch (soprano), Thomas Asher (bass)

Piano - Eileen Bown and Alan Fearon

Also: Brahms: Variations on a theme by Paganini (David Murray and Eileen Bown);

Schubert: 'Shepherd on the Rock' (Carole Marnoch and Jennifer Murray - clarinet)

**14<sup>th</sup> June - All That Jazz**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

The Virtuoso Jazz Trio (George McDonald - clarinet; James Birkett - guitar; Pete  
Stewart - bass) with Valerie Anderson - soprano.

The choir sang David Murray's arrangements of Kern, Gershwin and Carpenters  
music.

**13<sup>th</sup> December - Haydn: Nelson Mass; Purcell: Come Ye Sons of Art**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Katherine Moore (soprano), Sara Parry (alto), Sean Clayton (tenor),  
Samuel Evans (bass)

**2009**

**4<sup>th</sup> April - Mendelssohn: Elijah**

King's Hall, Newcastle University

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Jonathan Gunthorpe (bass), Alwyn Mellor (soprano), Lise Christensen (alto), Nicholas Ransley (tenor), Ian Wright (treble)

One of the Society's biggest performances - full orchestra of 40 players and an exceptional team of soloists.

**27<sup>th</sup> June - Rossini: Petite Messe Solenne**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Clare McKenna (soprano), Sara Parry (alto), Richard Roberts (tenor), Tim Jones (bass).

This concert was performed in memory of founder (and Life) members Elva Fairless and Lillian Ford.

The end of a momentous season - Nelson Mass, Elijah and Petite Messe one after the other!

**12<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Celebration (Handel: Messiah {selection}; Michael J Smith: The Prelude {selection}; Chilcott carol arrangements: Away In a Manger, Sussex Carol, Gaudete, Coventry Carol)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Katherine Moore (soprano), Mark Anyan (tenor), Ian Wright (treble)

The Messiah was chosen in order to join in the BBC's project 'Sing Hallelujah' - helping to raise money for Children In Need.

The choir was pleased to perform the world premiere of part of Michael J Smith's large work 'The Prelude' with text derived from Wordsworth's long poem. For more information see the 'Concerts' section on the Society's website.

Performance 140 for the Society!

## 2010

**20<sup>th</sup> March - Purcell: Dido and Aeneas; MacMillan: 'Where are these angels?'**

Gateshead Old Town Hall

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists - Sally Burchell (mezzo - Dido); James Geer (tenor - Aeneas); Jessica Holmes (soprano - Belinda). Other solos were sung by choir members: Jean Williams, Alison Stancliffe, Jean Grave, Jenny Watson and David Telford-Reed.  
with The Edinburgh String Quartet

**12<sup>th</sup> June - "French Fantasia" (Franck: Panis angelicus; Fauré: Cantique de Jean Racine; Fauré: Requiem)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloists: Emily Owen (soprano); Tim Jones (bass)

**11<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Celebration (Vaughan Williams: Serenade to Music; Fantasia on Christmas Carols; Bob Chilcott: Twelve Days of Christmas + Chilcott arrangements of Away in a Manger/Sussex Carol/Coventry Carol/Still, still, still/We wish you a Merry Christmas + audience carols)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - D. Murray

Soloist: Julian Wright

Solos were sung in the Serenade to Music by choir members: Jean Grave, Jenny Watson, Cath Mullinder, Jean Williams, Liz Patterson, Peter Rippingale and Neil Pont

## 2011

**9<sup>th</sup> April - Hummel - Mass in B flat + Franck: Panis Angelicus; Fauré: Cantique de Jean Racine; Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus; Schubert: Psalm 23; Goodall: Psalm 23**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - David Murray

**25<sup>th</sup> June - Jazz Concert - Popular songs arranged by David Murray (The Goslings - Bridge; Dayton Ohio - Newman; There are Bad Times - Coward; You've Got a Friend - King; Tapestry - King; Send in the Clowns - Sondheim;**

**She's Leaving Home - Lennon and McCartney; Bridge over Troubled Water - Simon and Garfunkel; Gospel Train - trad.; Honey, Honey - trad.)**

Ryton Comprehensive School

Conductor - David Murray

with the Virtuoso Jazz Trio (George MacDonald, Tony Abel and James Birkett) and Bradley Johnson (guitar)

**10<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Concert - R. Vaughan Williams: 5 English Folk Songs; Benjamin Britten: Ceremony of Carols; Bob Chilcott - The 12 days of Christmas and other carols**

Charles Thorp School (formerly Ryton Comprehensive School)

Conductor - David Murray

Harp solos were played by Helena Pearson; Neil Pont provided readings.

**2012**

**24<sup>th</sup> March - "Great Choruses" - excerpts from JS Bach: Magnificat; J Haydn: The Creation; GF Handel: Messiah**

King's Hall, Newcastle University

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists: Emily Owens (soprano), Clare Tunney (soprano), Charlotte Heslop (alto), Robert Jenkins (tenor), Nicholas Morton (bass)

**30<sup>th</sup> June - WA Mozart: Requiem; J Haydn: St Nicholas Mass**

Charles Thorp School

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists: Katherine Moore (soprano), Sara Louisa Parry (alto), Jon Grave (Tenor), Richard Gooding (bass)

**8<sup>th</sup> December - Jubilate!! A Jubilee Concert**

**Monteverdi: Beatus Vir; Holst: Four Old English Carols; Lucy Walker: Where is your God?; Handel: Four Coronation Anthems**

Charles Thorp School

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists: Alyss Roberts (soprano), Polly Leech (alto), Hugo Hymas (tenor), Nick Morton (bass)

Martin Hughes also played 'Winter' from Vivaldi's 'The Four Seasons' and Polly Leech sang Purcell's 'Evening Hymn'. It was the first performance of Lucy Walker's composition.

## 2013

### **9<sup>th</sup> March - Johannes Brahms: German Requiem**

King's Hall, Newcastle University

Conductor - David Murray

Jessica Holmes (soprano)

Richard Gooding (baritone)

Eileen Bown and Verena Bojkova (piano)

### **July 7<sup>th</sup> - Carl Orff: Carmina Burana**

The Sage Gateshead (Hall One)

Joint concert with Bishopwearmouth Choral Society and Orchestra North East

Alexander Robin Baker (baritone)

Laurie Ashworth (soprano)

### **14<sup>th</sup> December - David Murray: A Christmas Carol + other Christmas music**

Charles Thorp School

The Society was joined by Bishopwearmouth Young Singers in a semi-staged performance of a musical play written by David Murray and Tony Runham based on Dickens' famous story.

Parts were played by: Ian Wright (Scrooge); Neil Pont (Narrator) and Alan Verheyden, Jack Chown, Peter Rippingale and Michael Grave

Other music: carol arrangements by Bob Chilcott (inc. The 12 Days of Christmas);

John Rutter- All Bells in Paradise; R Vaughan Williams - The Wassail Song

## 2014

### **12<sup>th</sup> April - J.S. Bach - St Matthew Passion**

Sunderland Minster

A joint performance with Bishopwearmouth Choral Society

### **14<sup>th</sup> June - The David Murray Songbook**

Charles Thorp School

with guests:

Sally Burchell (soprano)

Bradley Johnston (guitar)

Lucy Walker (clarinet)

**13<sup>th</sup> December - Haydn: Te Deum; Rutter: Winchester Te Deum + carols (inc. Chilcott '12 Days of Christmas')**

Thorp Academy

Conductor - David Murray

Note: the choir decided to give the '12 Days' a rest after this performance.....

**2015**

**21<sup>st</sup> March - 'Baroque Delights' - Handel: The Ways of Zion Do Mourn; Purcell: Come Ye Sons of Art; Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 3**

Thorp Academy

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Ana Fernandez Guerra (soprano), Charlotte Heslop (contralto)

Simon Lee (tenor), Richard Gooding (baritone)

**June 14<sup>th</sup> - Verdi: Requiem**

The Sage Gateshead (Hall One)

Joint concert with Bishopwearmouth Choral Society and Orchestra North East

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Claire Rutter (soprano), Deborah Humble (contralto), James Edwards (tenor), Stephen Gadd (bass)

A truly memorable 'huge' performance with 4 outstanding soloists, again from the James Black Management stable.

**12<sup>th</sup> December - Durufle: Requiem + carols**

St Mary the Virgin, Wickham Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Sarah Ryan (mezzo-soprano), Richard Gooding (baritone),

Christopher Murray (cello), Magnus Williamson (organ)

As Thorp Academy was being refurbished, the choir now had to seek new performance venues. At this one, it snowed - very heavily! So much so that the choir out-numbered the audience - but 'the show must go on'.



**2016**

**6<sup>th</sup> February - Christopher Wood: Requiem**

Northern Rock Hall, The Sage Gateshead

Conductor - David Murray

A choral workshop, organised by the Society, to learn and sing in one day Christopher Wood's 'Requiem'. The event was open to all choirs in the North East and there were over 200 participants. The composer attended and sponsored the event.

**12<sup>th</sup> March - Vivaldi: Gloria; Handel: Coronation Anthems**

Prudhoe High School (old building)

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Ana Fernandez Guerra (soprano), Kate Schofield (contralto),  
Jon Grave (tenor), Ben Hurworth (baritone)

**11<sup>th</sup> June - Songs and Sonnets (Rutter: A Lover and his Lass; When Daisies  
Pied; Come Live with Me + David Murray Songbook)**

Caedmon Hall, Gateshead

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Jessica Holmes (soprano) Lucy Walker (piano / clarinet)  
Also: Rosie Stancliffe and Jacob Anderton (actors)

**10<sup>th</sup> December - Chilcott: On Christmas Night; Britten: A Ceremony of Carols**

St Mary the Virgin, Whickham

Conductor - David Murray

Soloist - Jessica Holmes (soprano)

The choir also sang at a concert in Blanchland Abbey (Eileen Bown conducting)

**2017**

**1<sup>st</sup> April - Pergolesi: Stabat Mater; Schubert: Mass in G; Purcell: O God, Thou Art my God**

Prudhoe High School (new building)

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Jessica Holmes (soprano), Kate Schofield (contralto)

Jon Grave (tenor), Victor Sgarbi (bass)

**2<sup>nd</sup> July - Song on the Tyne (David Murray Songbook)**

The Sage Gateshead (Hall One)

Conductor - David Murray

Soloist - Sally Harrison (soprano)

This was a charity concert, organised by the Society and Newcastle Rotary, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care and was the third in the series of collaborations with Bishopwearmouth CS at The Sage. The Tyne Theatre Stage School choir also performed and Bishopwearmouth Young Singers joined the two main choirs.

The same programme was sung at the Holy Island Music Festival on 8<sup>th</sup> July with Ana Fernandez as soloist.

**9<sup>th</sup> December - Handel: Messiah (Christmas music); Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols; Whitacre: The Seal Lullaby; Todd: My Lord Has Come: Rutter: There Is No Rose; Vaughan Williams: Wassail Song**

St Mary the Virgin, Whickham

Conductor - David Murray

Soloists - Ruth Jenkins-Robertson (soprano), Ben Laxton (bass)

The choir also sang at Blanchland Abbey on 15<sup>th</sup> December (David Murray conducting). So, the end of 2017 saw the end of David and Eileen's leadership of Ryton Choral Society. December 15<sup>th</sup> 2001 until December 15<sup>th</sup> 2017 - how neat is that?!

The concert on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 was the 50<sup>th</sup> led by David.

The first concert, in 2001, featured the Christmas music from 'Messiah' - as did the last concert on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**2018**

**19<sup>th</sup> May - Britten: Rejoice in the Lamb; Purcell: Come Ye Sons of Art, Te Deum and Jubilate Deo**

St Andrew's, Corbridge

Conductor - Alastair Lord

Soloists: Bonnie Shaw (soprano), Anya Chamacki (oprano), Lewis Cullen (counter tenor), David Booer (tenor), Richard Gooding (bass) Jim Bulger (trumpet)

Organ: Kris Tomsett

The first concert for RCS's fourth musical director, Alastair Lord and his accompanist, Kris Thomsett.

**7<sup>th</sup> July - Summer Showcase - a concert of solos, duets and ensemble pieces by members of the choir**

St Mary's, Whickham

Featuring: Michael Grave (organ and tenor), Caroline Wason (alto), Jean Grave (soprano), Judith Dawson and Andrea Gordon (sopranos), Alastair Lord (trumpet and tenor), Kris Thomsett (organ and counter tenor), Cath Mullinder (soprano), Neil Pont (bass)

With Tom Anderson (bass)