



ROCHESTER CHORAL SOCIETY
SUMMER 2026 CONCERT

Make More Sail

BY **ADRIAN BAWTREE**
AN ORIGINAL CANTATA ABOUT
THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

Gloria

BY **FRANCIS POULENC**

CONDUCTED BY
ADRIAN BAWTREE

SOLOISTS:
GREG TASSELL
BELLA MARSLEN

PROGRAMME

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH

192 ROCK AVENUE, GILLINGHAM ME7 5PW

Saturday 11 July 2026, 6pm



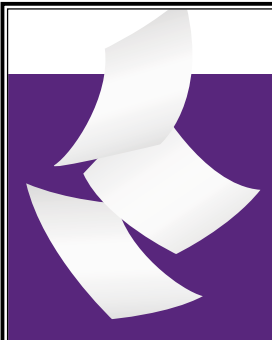
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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Goodness me, our Summer Concert is here already, although recent weather has had us experiencing all seasons within one week!

Fortunately, the weather was kind to us when, after two years in the planning, a group of 60 choir members, guests and family finally went on a truly amazing trip to Barcelona. The whole experience was organized by Musica Europa who did an outstanding job and managed to find us five venues in which to perform, including the famous La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. Personally, I felt the most emotional was our a capella performance at Basilica de Montserrat with its ornate Gothic design and outstanding location close to the top of a mountain. You can watch that performance on YouTube at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAety6kBeL8>. Heartfelt thanks must go to the small team who worked so hard to make it happen. Time for a rest now before the next one!



Our repertoire this evening is, to quote Monty Python: "And now for something completely different." Our talented Musical Director has composed a piece with a nautical theme surrounding the famous Battle of Trafalgar and its hero, Lord Horatio Nelson. The tale is told by the signals officer on board at the time and the whole piece has echoes of a "Last Night at the Proms" with some flags-waving patriotism. We have learned that the Purser, Walter Burke, who was on board the Victory and with Nelson at the time of his death, retired to and is buried in the graveyard at All Saints Church, Wouldham.

Our opening piece is also something rather different, especially from a rhythmic point of view. Those of you familiar with time signatures will know what I mean when Poulenc seems to take great delight in changing them every few bars, thus giving the piece its interesting character. First performed in 1961, it certainly has an exploratory element and keeps all singers on their toes. There are places within the piece that evoke a circus theme. Indeed, Poulenc himself likened his *Laudamus Te* to the sight of seeing solemn Benedictine Monks playing football.

As always, grateful thanks go to the teamwork of our members for all the work done behind the scenes to enable this event to take place.

Sandra Paine
Chair, Rochester Choral Society

Photo: Sandra Paine with Robbie Carroll on our tour. Photo by Jocelyne Wilson

**Rochester Choral Society
Summer Concert 2026**

Gloria

Francis Poulenc

Soprano *Bella Marslen*

Organist *Robbie Carroll*

Interval

Make More Sail

Music by *Adrian Bawtree*

Lyrics by *Jonathan Jeffery*

Admiral Lord Nelson *Greg Tassell*

Lady Emma Hamilton *Bella Marslen*

Narrator *Simon Paisley Day*

The Rochester Chamber Ensemble

Conductor
Adrian Bawtree

Adrian Bawtree

Director of Music

Adrian believes in the power of music to enrich lives, and as a professional musician he has seen first-hand the impact music and other creative activities can have on improving wellbeing.

Adrian studied the organ at *Christ's Hospital* and progressed to the *Royal Academy of Music* and then as Organ Scholar at *Worcester College, Oxford*. He has been church organist at *St Bride's Church, Fleet Street*; *St Mary's Church, Portsea* and *St Peter's Church, Hammersmith*. He studied orchestral conducting at the *Royal College of Music* on a post-graduate course, which he completed with distinction. Previous conducting appointments include; *Worthing Choral Society*, *The Weald Choir of Crawley*, *Harpenden Choral Society*, *Guy's King's and Thomas' Medical Schools Music Society*, *Southampton University Chamber Choir*, *Cantores Dominicae* and *The Canterbury Singers*.

From 2000-2011, he worked at *Christ's Hospital School* in Horsham, initially as Organist and latterly as Director of Music. He followed this as one of the Assistant Organists at Canterbury Cathedral and taught the organ at *The King's School* and *St Edmund's School* in Canterbury.

Adrian is also a composer and arranger, having written for the theatre as well as larger cantatas based on; the life of St Peter (*On This Rock*), the battle of Trafalgar (*Make More Sail*) and events from World War 1, '*Remembrance & Reconciliation*'.

From 2022, Adrian has been Director of Music and Organist at Rochester Cathedral and he is also a co-Director of the Kent Arts and Wellbeing partnership.

Photo - Adrian Bawtree with lyricist Jonathan Jeffery
Photo by Adrian Lacey



Robbie Carroll

Assistant Director of Music and Accompanist

Robbie Carroll was appointed as our new Assistant Director of Music and Accompanist in January 2025.

Robbie has been the Assistant Director of Music and Sub-Organist at *Rochester Cathedral* since November 2024. Before this, he was Assistant Organist of *Norwich Cathedral* for two years, and was also the Musical Director of *Keswick Hall Choir*. He is originally from Galway and his earliest musical training began as organ scholar of *Galway Cathedral*, under cathedral organist Ray O'Donnell. He then went on to study on the BMus degree at *DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama*, graduating in 2017 with a first-class Honours in organ performance.



Upon graduation, he also won the Michael McNamara award for 'excellence in performance'. His organ tutors whilst studying included the late Una Russell, Colm Carey, Siobhán Kilkelly and Simon Harden. During this time, he was also the organ scholar of *St Mary's Pro-Cathedral (Dublin)*, where he accompanied the choir on tours to the USA, Brussels and Rome.

Upon completion of his Bachelor degree, Robbie pursued further studies in Germany. In 2019 he graduated from the *Hochschule für Musik und Tanz, Cologne*, with a first-class Honours in the Orgel-Solo Master degree. There he studied with Prof. Winfried Böning, organist of *Cologne Cathedral*. During his time in Germany, he was also the organ scholar of the *Parish of St. Peter und Paul, Ratingen*, where he studied improvisation with Ansgar Wallenhorst. He was the Assistant Director of Music of *St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork* from 2019-2022, where he accompanied the Cathedral Choir, and assisted in the running of a diocesan church music outreach programme.

Robbie is a Fellow of the *Royal College of Organists*, and also holds an Associate diploma in piano (ALCM). He has won multiple prizes in the ESB Feis Ceoil and has also competed in the Northern Ireland International Organ competition. He was the first ever organist to compete in the Freemasons' Young Musician of the Year, and was the 2016 winner of the Brennan Prize, for the 'most promising musician in the competition'. Robbie is active as a recitalist in the UK, Ireland and Germany. He has participated in masterclasses with Dr John Kitchen, Dame Gillian Weir, Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer-Choplin, Eric Lebrun and Prof. Henry Fairs, among others. He has recorded CDs with the choirs of both *St Mary's Pro-Cathedral* and *St Fin Barre's Cathedral*.

Bella Marslen

Soprano

Australian Bella Marslen is part of the Royal College of Music's International Opera Studio taught by Janis Kelly. She is an Andrew Treagus scholar, a Mimi and Colin Watts scholar and a current Tait Memorial Trust awardee.

Performed roles include "First Wood Sprite" - *Rusalka* (2024, West Australian Opera), "Barbarina" - *Le Nozze di Figaro* (2025, RCM), "Angel" - *Seven Angels* (2025, RCM), "Vixen" - *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2025, RCM) and "Serpette" - *La Finta Giardiniera* (2026, RCM).



Bella was a 2024 Wigmore French Song Exchange artist and is a current Josephine Baker Trust artist. Recent awards include the Tait Memorial Prize for an Outstanding Australian Musician - ROSL Commonwealth Final (2026), Audience Prize - Clonter Opera Awards (2026) and the Cuthbert Smith Prize - Lies Askonas Competition (2026).

Bella is delighted to be making a double debut as the soprano soloist in Poulenc's *Gloria* and Lady Emma Hamilton in *Make More Sail*, conducted by the composer Adrian Bawtree alongside the Rochester Choral Society.

You can find out more about Bella on her website <https://www.bellamarslensoprano.com> and follow her on Instagram @Bella Marslen – Soprano.

Josephine Baker Trust

Rochester Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Josephine Baker Trust for the soloist Bella Marslen in this evening's concert.

Greg Tassell

Tenor

"Personable and musically intelligent" – The Times

"Tenor Greg Tassell made a profoundly moving soldier – utterly secure in the piece's taxing high passages – and singing with an infallibly English sound that sent tears rolling" – Hereford Times review of Cecilia McDowall's *Some corner of a foreign field*

Greg was brought up on a hop farm near Tunbridge Wells in Kent and was a chorister at Durham Cathedral. He studied music at Exeter University, becoming a choral scholar at Exeter Cathedral. He then studied under Welsh tenor Ryland Davies at Royal Academy of Music and won awards at the London Handel Festival and London Bach Festival.

Greg had a three-year career in the chorus of English Touring Opera performing small roles and covering major roles. He was part of their award-winning sensory opera *Midnight Moon* in 2011 and created the role of Badger in Tobias Picker's opera *Fantastic Mr. Fox*.

Greg is now a vastly experienced oratorio and recital singer. He has performed all over Britain for various groups and choral societies, including the London Handel Festival, The Three Choirs Festival, the Orkney Festival and most recently the Jersey Liberation Festival.

Greg has appeared on Polish radio as the Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* and other recent notable engagements have included his first performance in the title role of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for the Three Choirs Festival. In 2025 he collaborated with composer Donna McKeivitt on a piece called *Three Ships* for tenor, soprano, choir, trumpets and cannon fire which was performed in Ramsgate Harbour for the 80th anniversary of the Dunkirk Landings.

Greg teaches singing at St Edmund's School Canterbury, Ashford School and privately in Broadstairs. He conducted Thanet Chamber Choir from 2020-2025, is a founder member of professional chamber choir Sonoro (<https://sonorochoir.com>) and in 2024 he received a long service award for being a deputy tenor at Canterbury Cathedral for 20 years.



Simon Paisley Day

Narrator

Simon, a Kentish man, was born in Gillingham before then heading to Edinburgh, where he spent his childhood. Early signs of a career in showbiz include narrating the *Tay Bridge Disaster* by William McGonagall, off-by-heart, at the age of eleven and doing dodgy imitations of the locals on family holidays in Germany.

After training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School his first job was at the RSC, playing a footman in Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, declaiming nightly and with great clarity his only line: 'Tea is served in the yellow drawing-room, my Lord'.

There followed many years in regional theatre before finally getting a toe hold in London theatre and thence into the world of TV and film.

Notable theatre highlights include the title role in *Timon of Athens* and Petruchio in *Taming of the Shrew* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Coast of Utopia*, *Troilus & Cressida*, *Speer*, *Oh What A Lovely War*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Candide* and *Anything Goes* (National Theatre); *Urinetown* (West End); *The Lorax* (Old Vic); *Private Lives* (West End & Broadway).

Screen highlights include *Star Wars (Rise of Skywalker)*, *Victoria & Abdul*, *Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*, *Sherlock*, *Doctor Who*, *The Witcher*, *The Hack*, *Joy* and *This England*, in which he played Dominic Cummings. An even worse human being he played recently was General Reginald Dyer, who was responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. This was a major Bollywood movie called *Kesari Chapter Two*.

He is very grateful to Greg Tassell (who taught his son Theo how to sing!) for inviting him to take part in this evening's event and he is thrilled to be performing in the town of his birth.



Gloria Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Francis Poulenc was born in Paris, though his roots were in the Aveyron district in the south of France. His parents were wealthy, his father Émile being the co-owner of the family pharmaceutical company (which became Rhône-Poulenc and still exists as part of Sanofi-Aventis, the French multinational healthcare and biopharmaceutical company). His mother Jenny was a talented amateur pianist and his first piano teacher. Unsurprisingly, his father wanted Francis to take a role in the family business, but both his parents died while he was young (his mother when he was 16 and his father at 18), so Francis was able to follow his own inclinations. During World War One Poulenc studied piano with the famous Spanish piano virtuoso and teacher Ricardo Viñes, who became his mentor. Viñes was a champion of contemporary music, especially by Spanish and French composers, and had many works dedicated to him. He also gave the first performances of works by Debussy, Satie, Ravel, de Falla and Albéniz. He became the first player to perform Poulenc's works in public and in many ways took on the role of parent to Francis after their deaths. A great advantage of Poulenc's friendship with Viñes was that the pianist introduced him to many of the most important performers and composers in Paris, perhaps most importantly Satie, who had a great influence on Poulenc's style.

In 1918 Poulenc was conscripted into the French military. In the final months of the war he served on the Franco-German front, though after that he was given "behind the lines" posts, ending up as a typist for the French Air Force by the time he was de-mobbed in 1921. Having been born in 1899, Poulenc was entering his period of maturity in these years immediately following the First World War. This coincided with what I always think of as music's "bolshie adolescent" period - it almost didn't matter what style a composer adopted, as long as it was a complete rejection of that of the previous generation. Romanticism was the enemy. The two major schools of composition were the Serial, following the 12-tone techniques of Schönberg, and the Neo-classical, the style most importantly embodied in the works written by Stravinsky in the 1920s. Since the second half of the 19th century, there had been considerable French opposition to the dominance of German composers, so it is no surprise that almost all French composers adopted Neo-Classicism (whose cool, clear, sophisticated, emotionally restrained feel very much fitted France's view of itself at the time - another reason why they also rejected the "whispery meandering" of the Impressionism of Debussy).

In 1920, the critic Henri Collet wrote a couple of articles in which he gave the title "Les Six" to a group of young composers, including Poulenc. This was an almost random grouping of composers who did not have a great deal in common, and the number six was little more than simply a "one-up" on the "Mighty Handful" which was the nickname of a group of five eminent 19th century Russian nationalist composers. "Les Six" consisted of Poulenc, George Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, and Germaine Tailleferre. Milhaud later admitted that:

"In completely arbitrary fashion Collet chose the names of [these] six composers for no other reason than that we knew each other, that we were friends and were represented in the same programmes, but without the slightest concern for our different attitudes and our different natures. Auric and Poulenc followed the ideas of Cocteau, Honegger was a product of German Romanticism and my leanings were towards a Mediterranean lyrical art ... [but] Collet's article made such a wide impression that the Groupe des Six had come into being."

Serge Diaghilev, impresario of the famous Ballets Russes, commissioned Poulenc to write a ballet score for his company in 1924 and *Les Biches* was a great success, leading to his being regarded as one of France's leading young composers. In 1934 Poulenc began an artistic association with the French baritone Pierre Bernac, for whom he composed some 90 *mélodies* (as such art songs are called in French music) which they performed together in their regular song recitals and on many recordings over a 25-year period. These have become among the most widely performed songs written since First World War.

There are two very distinct sides to Poulenc's character, which may be characterised as the "secular" (indeed sometimes outrageous, such as the opera *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*) and the "sacred". The music critic Claude Rostand wrote that "In Poulenc there is something of the monk and something of the rascal", and the American composer Ned Rorem considered that Poulenc was "a whole man, always interlocking soul and flesh, sacred and profane." The composer's family were devout Catholics, especially his father, whom Poulenc described as "profoundly religious ... but without the least petty-mindedness", but he admitted later in life that "from 1920 to 1935, I was very little concerned with the faith." The change in the composer's attitude came about in 1936.

In that year, Poulenc's friend and fellow composer Pierre-Octave Ferroud, whilst on holiday in Hungary, was killed in a car accident which was so violent that he was decapitated. Ferroud was almost exactly a year younger than Poulenc. Later the composer wrote, "The atrocious extinction of this musician so full of vigour left me stupefied. Pondering on the fragility of our human frame, the life of the spirit attracted me anew."

The other event happened only a couple of weeks after this tragic event, when the composer was also on holiday. Visiting the Occitanie region of southern France, he visited the town of Rocamadour, a famous pilgrimage centre associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary since medieval times, and the home of the statue of the Black Virgin. He wrote later:

"A few days earlier I'd just heard of the tragic death of my colleague ... As I meditated on the fragility of our human frame, I was drawn once more to the life of the spirit. Rocamadour had the effect of restoring me to the faith of my childhood. This sanctuary, undoubtedly the oldest in France ... had everything to captivate me ... The

same evening of this visit to Rocamadour, I began my *Litanies à la Vierge noire* for female voices and organ. In that work I tried to get across the atmosphere of 'peasant devotion' that had struck me so forcibly in that lofty chapel."

The next year he composed his *Mass in G major*, his first large-scale religious work. Soon after, in 1938-39, he wrote the *Quatre motets pour un temps de pénitence* (*Four Penitential Motets*), and in 1939 the song *Bleuet*, an elegiac meditation on death.

Tonight's *Gloria* was written 20 years or more after these first fruits of Poulenc's conversion. It was commissioned by the Foundation which the Russian conductor Serge Koussevitsky set up to commemorate his wife Natalia, who had died in 1942. Koussevitsky had been the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1949, and had been a great champion and commissioner of contemporary composers. The Foundation continued this work after his death in 1951, and in 1959 approached Poulenc. Their first thoughts had been for a symphony, but Poulenc replied that this was "not my sort of thing". They then suggested an organ concerto, but the composer refused because he had already written one. The foundation decided to offer Poulenc a fee of \$2000 for a piece of his own choosing. He accepted this offer, and decided on the *Gloria* - a piece which he had already been planning for some time. The piece was written between May and December 1959, and first performed in January 1961 by the Boston Symphony and Chorus Pro Musica, conducted by Charles Munch, who had taken over the orchestra after Koussevitsky's retirement in 1949, and remained their conductor until 1962.

Why Poulenc composed only the *Gloria* rather than the whole mass is unclear, but perhaps it was because it allowed a combination of seriousness and light-heartedness which the other sections did not to the same extent; he made clear that he intended the *Gloria* as a concert piece rather than as part of a liturgical Mass celebration. The *Gloria* certainly confirms Rostand's view that Poulenc personality contains "something of the monk and something of the rascal." The work consists of six short movements.

The first movement consists of fanfare-like phrases, which are set with a very French accentuation of the text, as is the case throughout Poulenc's setting. In French Latin, the stress is often thrown forward onto the last syllable of the word, unlike the standard English pronunciation of Latin. In this movement the opening line is stressed "*Gloria* in *ex**celsis* *Deo*" rather than the "*Gloria* is *exc**elsis* *Deo*" of English usage. The chorus asserts with utter conviction the joy that is in the glory of God. The second movement was somewhat controversial when the work was new. Later the composer recalled that: "The second movement caused a scandal; I wonder why? I was simply thinking, in writing it, of the Gozzoli frescoes in which the angels stick out their tongues; I was thinking also of the serious Benedictines whom I saw playing soccer one day." The movement has great rhythmic verve, impelled by constant accenting of the off-beats in the strings. Each phrase of the text has a

crisp, distinctive setting, with a completely unexpected dark, chromatic setting of "Gratias agimus tibi" of just seven bars, which then, just as unexpectedly, returns to the vivacity of the opening. The third movement, "Domine Deus", introduces the solo soprano, who leads the chorus through a quiet recitation of the solemn phrases of worship, though the bright wit and chuckling insouciance of the "Laudamus te" return in the fourth movement, "Domine fili unigenite." It is this movement which seems to me to portray the high jinks of the young angels in the Gozzoli frescoes. Poulenc's love of sudden contrasts is displayed in the move into the fifth movement. The unexpected, angular intervals of parts of the solo soprano's line contrast markedly with the gorgeous harmonies of the orchestra and chorus. Poulenc begins the final movement in a more celebratory mood, but I think few would disagree that the essence of it is in the glowing, luminescent beauty of the section beginning "Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris" and on to the end of the work. The section is marked "Extraordinarily calm" and the chorus is directed to sing in "an almost imperceptible murmur." A finale of true benediction.

Toward the end of his life, Poulenc said "I think I put the best and the most authentic side of myself into my choral music...I believe that it is truly in this domain that I have contributed something new", and to his great friend and collaborator, the baritone Pierre Bernac, that the *Gloria* was "certainly the best thing I have done."

Paul Steinson

Chorus:

I. Gloria in excelsis Deo
Et in terra pax hominibus bonæ
voluntatis.

Chorus:

II. Laudamus te, Benedicimus te,
Adoramus te, Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi Propter magnam
gloriam tuam.

Soprano soloist and chorus:

III. Domine Deus, Rex cælestis, Deus
Pater omnipotens.

Chorus:

IV. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Soprano soloist and chorus:

V. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,
Rex Cælestis
Deus Qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere
nobis; suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Soprano soloist and chorus:

VI. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, Tu solus
Dominus, Tu solus Altissimus.
Jesu Christe, Cum Sancto Spiritu in
gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

I. Glory to God in the highest
And on earth peace, goodwill to all
people.

II. We praise you, We bless you, We
worship you, We glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your great
glory.

III. Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty
Father.

IV. Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus
Christ.

V. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father, King in Heaven
Who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us. Receive our prayers.

VI. You who sit at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us.
Only you are holy, only you are Lord.
Only you are most high.
Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit in the glory
of God the Father. Amen.

Make More Sail (2004)

We are delighted to present the fourth performance of *Make More Sail*, composed by Adrian Bawtree with lyrics by Jonathan Jeffery. They met in the early 1990s when both were working in Portsmouth, Adrian as Director of Music at St. Mary's Church and Jonathan as a solicitor. Following the success of their first collaboration, a musical about the life of St Peter called *On This Rock*, they decided to create a piece about Nelson's great victory.

The cantata was first performed on 28th June 2005, as part of the Trafalgar 200 celebrations to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The premiere took place with Christ's Hospital pupils & The Horsham Children's Choir singing alongside the Royal Marine School of Music Band.

The second performance was on Trafalgar Day, 21st October 2017, in front of HMS Victory in Portsmouth by the Fine Voice Academy, Cantores Dominicae and the 4Villages Sing, and was directed by Simon Long.

It was reprised on 6th July 2020 as part of the Deal Music and Arts Festival at Nye Hall, the Duke of York Military School in Dover. Directed by Tim Claydon, the cast included Katie Bray mezzo-soprano, Greg Tassell tenor, Alex Knox narrator, White Cliffs Symphonic Winds, Deal and Walmer Handelian Choral Society, Singing for Pleasure, Cantores Dominicae, Ash, Cartwright and Kelsey Primary School.

Here is their original mission statement:

Make More Sail! is an original and new musical telling the story of the Battle of Trafalgar – the decisive victory won on 21st October 1805 by Nelson over the combined French and Spanish fleet.

With stirring and memorable songs, *Make More Sail!* tells the tale of the days leading to the battle up to and after the death of Nelson. Viewed through the eyes of John Pasco, the Signal Lieutenant of Nelson's flagship HMS Victory, the songs are based on the signals given to the British fleet as the conflict drew closer. The musical lays emphasis on the three "H's" – Heritage, Heroism and Humanity.

Heritage – in that there is an accurate re-telling of the events leading to the Battle of Trafalgar. Included are several interpretations of actual historical documents, including Nelson's last letter home, his codicil, his famous prayer and, of course, the "England expects...." signal.

Heroism – not just of the crews but especially Admiral Lord Nelson who inspired such devotion from his men, and who despite his death in the battle, assumed immortality

as Britain's finest Naval Commander. A genius and a great leader of men. Humanity – telling the tale through the eyes of one who was inspired by Nelson, and observing that "common touch". Above all recognising that the English, French and Spanish fleets shared a common adversary, namely the sea. The common struggle against the elements remains an enduring feature of the musical.

Adrian Bawtree & Jonathan Jeffery
October 2004

An interesting choice from the outset was to support the sung anthems, duets and solos featuring the Chorus, Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton with a spoken narrator which drives the story. The narration shows the action through the viewpoint of John Pasco, the Signals Officer aboard HMS Victory, and brings the story to light in a very direct and colourful way.



*Admiral
 Nelson
 and Lady
 Hamilton in
 Naples*

Chorus: "General Chase South East"

It can be a lonely life at sea – even with the busy-ness of a chase. Your thoughts turn to loved ones and those back home waiting for news of our return. Lord Nelson know the value of letters for morale. Not so long ago the Bosun set off in the long boat to take the post. I'd been on an errand for Nelson and my letter to my beloved was still tucked into me tunic. Well I wasn't goin' to say nothin' but my face must have been as long as a Pompey "run ashore". Nelson demanded to know the cause of my distress and when I told him, he signalled the boat to return for just this one letter! Imagine that! Well with Victory gently cruising we all get down to the task of writing home once more – even Nelson himself I should fancy...

Duet - The Letters

Saturday becomes Sunday and only light breezes mean the combined French and Spanish fleet creeps out of harbour. Sunday 20th October sees strong wind and thicker weather. Nelson's in bad spirits – his third column of ships has not rendez-vous'd at Gibraltar, and there's no enemy either. His Lordship's plan is to attack in two columns, cutting across the enemy; bold and daring that's Nelson. "I'll give them such addressing as they never had before" he says. The men start to think about what the morning will bring – bloody battle with the French, prize money, glory - maybe injury or death? Who will be the unlucky ones when we fight? The sea has been our home, this crew our family but, of course, we think about those we love and may never see again. As for me, I make myself busy, cleaning the decks and securing the furniture and stores; say me prayers and at 6 o'clock that evening Nelson calls for Order 13;

Chorus: "Prepare for battle"

Dawn breaks on Monday 21st October 1805 with the British Fleet and the combined fleets converging at a distance of 10 miles or so. Cape Trafalgar is east by south at a distance of 7 leagues I should say. During the night Nelson turned us away from the straits of Gibraltar whilst Villeneuve led his fleet towards 'em. It's a dry and fine day, hazy at first mind, but only a light wind. There's a heavy swell from the west warning of a storm to follow. We've signaled: "To interchange places in the lines, or order of sailing" and now Nelson seems to be racing Admiral Collingwood on board the Royal Sovereign.

Seeing today was the day we'd fight, Nelson calls for the signal: "make more sail" followed by his favourite, no 307 "Make all sail possible with safety to the masts".

Chorus: Interchange Place in the Lines & Make More Sail

We're making steady progress, forcing the sea back in our wake. Leaving the sea behind and slicing through the sea ahead. What lies before us – the battle certainly, but what else? And what for each and every man jack? Only God knows. What lies astern? What do we leave behind, trailing away from us to lap against another shore? Waves that lap England's shore. Tides that touch our homeland. The sea that carries our thoughts back home.

Solo: Our last goodbye

You'll need to know something about Nelson. On all his ships, the most senior Lieutenant acts as his Signal Lt. And not – as on other ships his first Lieutenant. I'm the most senior Lieutenant on Victory but I'm not first Lt, so even if the good Lord spares me in the battle, I still may not get a command. I decide I must ask Lord Nelson to see if he will commend me to the Admiralty. Well, I go to his cabin, only to find the great man at his prayers. I can't disturb him so I just have to hope for the best. If he survives and England is victorious then maybe I shall get a command in any event.

Solo: The Prayer

Midday: back on deck and battle will not be far off. With an eye to the storm that is to come, Nelson has called for Popham signal no. 8 (execute at the end of the day) and Signal 63 (Anchor as soon as convenient). Then he calls me over – my four mid-shipmen and six seamen standing ready. He commands me to send the signal "England confides that every man will do his duty." I see a problem. "Confides" is not in our code vocabulary so we would have to spell it out letter by letter. Clearing my throat and taking a deep breath I says "Beg pardon, sir, but we could send the message more quickly if I substitutes "expects" for "confides". I could see him thinking it over:

"England expects that every man will do his duty". "It will do" says Nelson, "make it directly. I have one last signal to send". Well a great cheer spreads through the fleet as they spy the flags. My heart was fit to burst with pride.

Then he orders the signals: "Close Action" and "Engage the enemy more closely" and that one remains flying.

Chorus: England Expects

Battle at sea is like a slow dance. From the time Victory crossed the French at about 1 o'clock it took two hours for 2/3's of the British fleet to pair off with the enemy and engage. For the next two hours, English successes saw twelve prizes taken and then disaster! A rifle shot from the French (Frigate) ship "Redoutable" saw Lord Nelson stagger and fall. Young John Pollard one of my midshipmen, who sends the signals, shoots down that accursed Frenchman, but Nelson is taken below looking pale. Ever the sailor, Nelson reminds me to "signal the fleet to anchor after Battle"

Solo: The death of Nelson

Our hero, a nations hero, slipped away below decks. The battle only lasted an hour after Nelson's passing. The French "Achille" exploded at 17.30 virtually signaling the end of the battle and that was that.

As evening came on the 21st October 1805 we knew a great Victory had been won. Twenty seven British ships defeating 40 of the French and Spanish – and even then not all of our boys had much of a fight – the first ships doing all the beating. But even as we prepared for the storm that Nelson saw off Cape Trafalgar we felt like we'd lost. Nelson was dead, the sea and the wind would take our prizes and scatter the rest...

Nelson's prayer before the battle

May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after Victory be the dominant feature in the British Fleet. For myself, individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessings light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Version by Jonathan Jeffery

O God I worship you, great is your name Grant to fair England and Europe the same
Grant us greatness Grant us glory Grant us victory Free from blemish Free from
tarnish Filled with humanity
And as for me I give my life, I commit my all
To the One who created me I pray he hears my call
For faithfully I seek to serve, with blessings on my part
And so I give myself to Him, I offer up my heart
Our cause is just It falls to us Liberty to defend I hand to Him Our land to Him
Thrice Amen at the end

©Bawtree & Jeffery, 2004

Nelson wrote this letter to Lady Hamilton

Victory, October 19th, 1805, Noon, Cadiz, E.S.E., 16 leagues
My dearest beloved Emma, the dear friend of my bosom. The signal has been made that the Enemy's Combined Fleet are coming out of Port. We have very little wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before tomorrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success; at all events, I will take care that my name shall ever be most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life. And as my last writing before the Battle will be to you, so I hope in God that I shall live to finish my letter after the Battle. May Heaven bless you prays your Nelson and Bronte.

When she received this letter, Emma wrote this on the bottom;

O miserable and wretched Emma O glorious and happy Nelson

Emma wrote this to Nelson's niece

My dear Friend,
I am again broken hearted as our dear Nelson is immediately going. It seems as though I have had a fortnights dream and am awoke to all the misery of this cruel separation. But what can I do? His powerful arm is of so much consequence to his Country. But I do nor cannot say more. My heart is broken.

Jonathan and Adrian were inspired to convey the excitement and danger of the plot, while injecting humour into the life of a sailor, and sharing the passionate love affair

between the protagonists. They also wanted the piece to be accessible to younger voices and contain catchy tunes. The use of rollicking choruses, lively rhythms and soaring melodic lines is very effective in building the atmosphere.

The collaborators' lives have changed since the creation of this work. Adrian moved to Canterbury and Rochester. The thought of being part of Medway history, as HMS Victory was built at Chatham Historic Dockyards, persuaded him to re-stage *Make More Sail*. Jonathan Jeffrey was called to a vocation as an ordained minister of the Church of England. He has been Vicar of Leigh Park and Warren Park churches in the Diocese of Portsmouth for the last 25 years. It has been a welcome reunion for them, and a joy for all the singers in Rochester Choral Society to have the chance to perform this piece.

Jocelyne Wilson



*John Pasco,
Signals Officer on
HMS Victory*

General Chase

Pull on the rope that pulls on the rudder
Pull on the rope that pulls the line
Slowly, stately making progress
Praying that the weather is fine

War is bloody, war is dirty
Fought by men and fought at sea
Every swell will draw us nearer
Sailing onto victory

It's not all "yo-ho-ho" when you're at sea
It's not all "here we go" when you're at sea
There are terrible squalls, great waves like walls
The wind don't always blow when you're at sea
It's not all "yo-ho-ho" when you're at sea

Falling winds but getting closer
Slowly hour rolls into hour
Now the day is drawing nearer
Face to face our fire power

All the signs of expectation
Drying throat and sweating palm
Hearts that stir with fire and passion
Hold our nerve and steel our arm

We're not all Jolly Jacks when we're at sea
We have to bend our backs when we're at sea
There's a Bosun cruel and the food's like gruel
We often feel the Cat when we're at sea
We're not all Jolly Jacks when we're at sea

British Tars are we sailing under Victory
Proud to be in Nelson's crew
To sail the seven seas and secure the victories
Ready for our derring-do!
And in our hearts of oak there burns a flame with pride
A dream that one day England rules the tide!

The Letters

Nelson

Now word has come that the en'my's
begun
To come out of port
But the wind's so slight that try as I might
It won't be today that they're caught
May the God of battles offer his caress
May he touch my head and crown me with
success
I shall keep my name always the same
Most dear to you in this strife
My Emma and fair Horatia
Whom I love as my life

Emma

And now it seems I've had a dream
From which I awoke
For misery's afflicting me
I am again heart broke
What can I do awake to find it true
I can make no sense of the consequence
Of immediately you leaving me
Save the call of alarm
For the use of his powerful arm
For his country

Nelson

As this writing last
Before battle starts
Is to you
I hope in him
When battle's dim
I finish this fond adieu
My Emma nearest friend of my heart
I love you so all else above
May heaven bless you
My dearest and my love
My Emma and fair Horatia
Whom I love with my heart

Emma

[With my love at sea
I knew it must be
Somehow like this
I can do no more
Than I've done before
And offer you my kiss
O miserable and wretched Emma
O happy and glorious Nelson]

Prepare for Battle

The call has come to make us ready time to firm our arm
Wav'ring hearts must now be steady and pray be kept from harm
Sirens: In fathomless deeps where Leviathan sleeps
There are powers at work down below
Face the men who we are chasing face the Spanish foe
Any fear or doubt replacing we know all we must know
In watery parts not shown on your charts
There's a place where your race does not go

In the depths of the sea
There's a vitality
That outpasses the pull of
men's hearts
It's the call of the sea
Calling you calling me
It's where this true love
Really starts

Closer closer roll we on
Nearer draws the time
Quicker quicker beats the pulse
We'll say our last goodbye
Lower lower drains the sand
And tighter pulls the line
Harsher harsher dawns the truth
Tomorrow we may die

So let us gaze at one last sunset capture one last dawn
Feel the touch of ocean spray give thanks that we were born
Hear our siren call calling one calling all
Striking home in the heart of the brave
Offer prayers to God who made us who fills our work and play
Hope his hand will guide us when tomorrow becomes today
The pull of the tide lets you know you're alive
Yet it opens a watery grave

Hear our voice as you sail
Pray that you might prevail
But you know that our forces
are strong
For the swells of your life
Be they honour or strife
Draws the sea where you
really belong

Steady steady comes the cry
Bolder are our deeds
Braver braver swell our hearts
We'll say our last goodbye
Louder louder are the shouts
And as further Nelson leads
Colder colder grows the chill
Tomorrow we may die

Let us once more greet our shipmates sail on as a crew
Return safe home to hold our lov'd ones know that thrill anew
Cross ourselves against the darkness – nothing's left to say...

Interchange places in the line

Order order all in order
 Get the greatest fleet arrayed
 Changing places filling spaces
 Show we're not afraid

Ready face what battle brings
 Line up for the real thing
 Strengthen arms and steel our nerve
 Ready now to serve

We wan'na be up to face 'em
 We wan' a place to be true
 We sail ahead past a ship that led
 For we are a feisty crew
 Fighting the sea and chasing time
 Finding our place in the line
 Court the wind and plumb the depths
 Pray the weather is fine
 We wan'na be up to face
 We wan' a place to be true

Hustle and bustle and turn about
 Find the best of the breeze
 Wave as we pass we'll not be last
 No longer we take our ease
 Happy to serve with battl'ing fleet
 Ready for all that we meet
 Make "pell mell" then go to hell
 We'll have a tale to tell
 Hustle and bustle and turn about
 Find the best of the breeze

Make more sail

Sailing on the ocean sailing on the sea
 Ride its stately motion onto victory
 Hoisting up more canvass hope she'll take the strain
 Pretend we couldn't care less its fighting time again

*Make more sail and try to tame her ride her like a wild mare
 Move across her changing face and make all sail save for danger
 See the sea a distant stranger see a dark forbidding place
 Turning tides will come and claim her make more sail but have a care*

Sailing on the ocean...

*The sea can be a fickle mistress one day loving one day cruel
 The sea can hold you like a mother soft warm hands and sweet caress
 Fold you in her full blue dress and then can hurt you like no other
 The sea can be a fickle mistress treat you like a hopeless fool*

Sailing on the ocean...

*Once you think you've won her favour open'd up her treasure store
 Jewels like the azure water deep and dark her mysteries
 Swift and harsh her cruel seas chase the prize so long you've sought her
 Still you offer her your labour oceans call you back once more*

Sailing on the ocean...

Our last goodbye

Emma
 If this should be our last goodbye
 Don't want you to see me cry
 If I should never see your face
 Or feel the strength of your embrace
 If we should never meet again
 Don't want you to feel my pain
 For you have been my hero, lover, friend
 I don't want this beautiful dream to end

If now our love affair is through
 I can't live apart from you
 If this hurt that's deep inside
 Is a grief I cannot hide
 If we have said our last farewell
 Don't want now to break the spell
 For you have been my hero, lover, friend
 I don't want this beautiful dream to end

Many times we've been apart the cause of so much sorrow
 But that's the life I chose to lead not living for tomorrow
 Many times we've kiss'd goodbye and gone our separate ways
 But that's the life I choose to lead not living for today

Many years we've had to face that time was not our own
 But I would do it all again for time with you alone
 Many nights I've welcomed sleep alone with just my thoughts

As though the God in heaven's span
Was working out some special plan
We knew that fate might take a hand
Tomorrow counts for nought

I'll still love you till end of time

The Prayer

Nelson
O God I worship you
Great is your name
Grant to fair England
And Europe the same

Grant us greatness
Grant us glory
Grant us victory
Free from blemish
Free from tarnish
Filled with humanity

And as for me I give my life
I commit my all
To the One who created me
I pray he hears my call

For faithfully I seek to serve
With blessings on my part
And so I give myself to Him
I offer up my heart

Our cause is just
It falls to us
Liberty to defend
I hand to Him
Our land to Him
Thrice Amen at the end

England Expects

England Expects is the cry of a nation
Borne on the lips of a leader of men
Finding an echo in the heart of each sailor
Finally sounding a lasting Amen

Softly now upon the breeze comes a voice we know
Taken by the lapping seas deep and dark below
In the sails a brief reprise billowing at the foe
Speaking words so bold and clear calling me by name
Tempting Vict'ry ever nearer flickering like a flame
Over so that we must hear comes the voice again

Nelson
Every town and every highway calls from deep inside
Every town and country byway opens it's heart wide
This is a voice of a nation speaking this is a care that yearns
This is a cry of anguish a passion that burns

Emma
What do I dream of, thinking of my love
So far away from my warm bed at night
I pray for news of his homing from angels up above
Knowing he's given all of himself to the fight

Every child and every woman people of our land
Every worker every statesman offering their hand and heart to you
This is a plea from England's nation a call to stand up tall
This is the shout of expectation a clarion call

England Expects is the cry of a nation
Borne on the lips of a leader of men
Finding an echo in the heart of each sailor
Finally sounding a lasting Amen.

The death of Nelson

Nelson
Now I see the victory will be England's and not mine
I would have wished a loving kiss on British ground one last time
Thank God I've done my duty
I've lived a life that's true
Thank God I've done my duty
I've lived my life for you

*And who'd of thought this would be my end
Lying in the arms of my friend
And who'd of thought this would come to pass
That this is how I'd breath my last?
But now it has come to this
Finally sealed with a kiss*

Now my mind will seek to find
Thoughts of country and of home
I pray her fame and not my name
Will stand up proud and alone
And now I know I've not long to go
I won't see the rising sun
My life will cease I'll rest in peace
Let the will of God be done

And who'd have thought...

Victory with humanity

Hail'd as our heroes, just the survivors
Courage is shown when our freedom's at stake.
Put away old strife, striving for new life,
Hoping a better new world we can make
Silence falls, night-time sweeps,
Slowly inky darkness creeps,
Passing hours, passion seeps.
For we count the cost,
Not what's won but what is lost
Vict'ry, with humanity.

Time for reflection, time to show humanity,
Trading our prisoners and helping the peace
But for God's grace there in their places,
All the survivors now taking their ease
Our emotions are tangled, survival became necessity
Prayers and hurried for the fallen
We'll go on on our way, with little else to say
Vict'ry with humanity.

Hymn to the sea

Strong is the current, strong is its pull on me
Strong are the oceans, and strong is the sea
She is our mistress, carried so gently
Held in her embrace, called by sea!

SOCIETY SPOTLIGHT

Miss Wordsworth

We have just discovered that the maiden name of our long-serving Second Alto, Rosalind Cummins, is Wordsworth, which just shows how old friends can always surprise you. What else can we discover about Roz?

Roz was born in 1948 in Mogadishu in Somalia because her father finished his war in Africa. Soon after the family moved to Tripoli in Libya and stayed for five years. After he left the Army her father worked for the Department of Agriculture at the Sidi Mesri Agricultural Research Centre, researching ways to irrigate the Sahara. Her brother was born two years later. It was a magical childhood full of freedom, cocktail parties at the army club, lots of servants. She went to the army school while her sister Susan boarded at a convent in Malta. The greatest excitement was a fancy dress party for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 for which her mother sewed her a rosebud costume.



Photo by Adrian Lacey

When the family moved back to England they went to her parents' home town of Sheffield, but it was a big shock. Roz mainly remembers the cold and the pervading smell of coal fires in the air. Her father couldn't settle and changed jobs multiple times. Roz went to 13 different schools and as a result has always felt terribly uneducated. When she was 11 they moved to London and lived in Muswell Hill then Highgate and Roz went to Minchenden Grammar School. During the war Roz's mother had been desperate to join the Wrens, but as she had a reserved occupation, working as a secretary to the boss of a munitions factory, she was not allowed to go. In 1960 she took Roz to see the film *Sink the Bismarck!*, starring Kenneth More and Dana Wynter as a terribly glamorous Wren. Roz was inspired to fulfil her mother's dream and joined up herself at the age of 17. The WRNS was a separate women's service of the Royal Navy. The photo on the next page shows her in 1965.

She wanted to do meteorology but ended up in communications, talking to aeroplanes, sending signals to the ships at sea on the teleprinter. During her training she was based outside Reading at HMS Dauntless, then worked in London at Whitehall WR. She lived in the Wrens quarters in South Kensington just down from the Royal Albert Hall, and had great fun sharing with the other girls. In 1967 she was transferred to Singapore, working at the Royal Naval base at Sembawang. She immediately loved it and stayed for two years. She remembers endless parties, and the American soldiers on leave from Vietnam, who would take the Wrens out and spend all their money. She adored the sun and went swimming every day at Aggie Weston's. Dame Agatha Weston was a lady in

the 1800s who decided sailors needed somewhere safe to go to get away from the raucous naval bases, where there were swimming pools, cheap accommodation, restaurants but importantly no alcohol. There she met her future husband Ronald, a Corporal in the Royal Marines.

Roz left Singapore in 1969 and was drafted to RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset. When they married Roz left the Wrens, scared of becoming institutionalised, which is something she regretted later on. The couple moved to Devonport Plymouth where their first child was born, a son called Alexander. Ron left the Royal Marines and joined the Devon and Cornwall Police. After several years he transferred to the Metropolitan Police and they moved to London where they had their second son, Dominic. Roz used her telecommunications experience to get a job for a big law firm in the City of London. Unfortunately the marriage eventually fell apart – Roz thinks Ron never got over leaving the Royal Marines and no longer being a “bootneck”. Now in her 50s, Roz had to start again. For a while she lived with her mother and helped care for her brother, who had long-term health issues following meningitis and hydrocephalus. In August 2003 her mother died, followed by her brother, of leukaemia, in October; a terrible time for Roz and her sister.



She decided to make a clean break and remembered visiting Rochester with a friend to watch Gilbert & Sullivan performances in the Central Theatre. In 2004 she made the move, bought a flat near the old railway station and joined Rochester Choral Society. Having come from a very musical family she had always sung and had been part of the Alexandra Choir, formed in 1940 by Sir Henry Wood. She sang at the Proms under the baton of Sir Malcolm Sargeant. The family music legacy lives on as her nephew Gabriel Munns is a fine bass singer, involved with the choir at St John's Church in Glastonbury, and this connection was the link that set up our tour to Glastonbury and Wells in 2023.

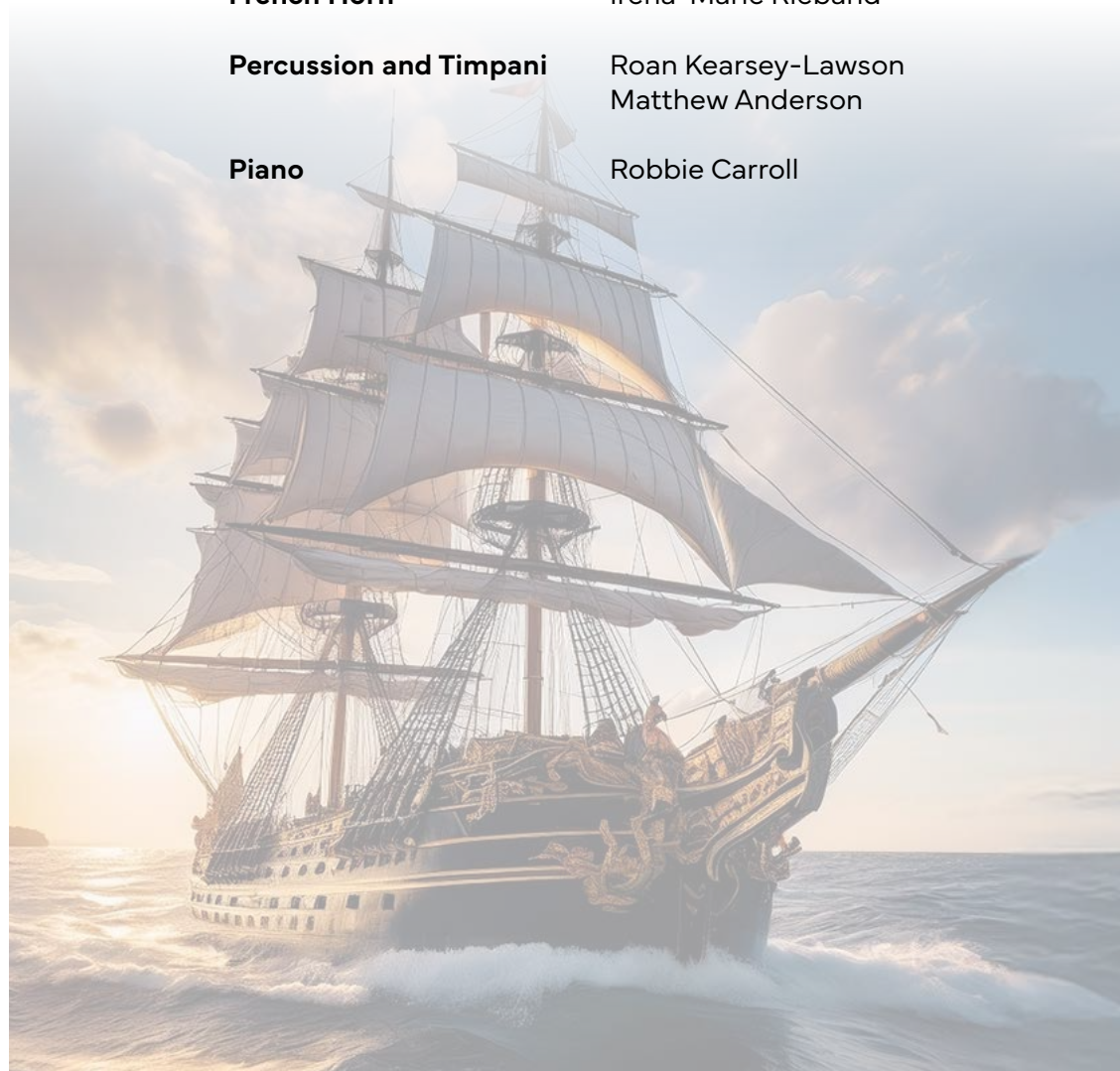
One special memory she has of Rochester Choral is performing the *African Sanctus* by David Fanshawe in 2007 when Roger Sayer was the Director of Music. They didn't use the staging, but stood on the steps and moved in time with the music, which apparently was challenging for some members! Her favourite piece to sing is the *Dream of Gerontius* by Elgar and she also loved the *War Requiem* by Britten which we did in 2018. Outside RCS her best times were singing *Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz with Leonard Bernstein in Walthamstow Town Hall. She also toured to China in 2006 with the Really Big Chorus and sang Handel's *Messiah* in the Forbidden City in Beijing – the first Western choir to do so. With her wealth of experience in life and music Roz is an invaluable asset to our Society and she served as Librarian for two long stints, as her repertoire knowledge is peerless.

Apart from frequent visits to Sydney to stay with her son and two granddaughters, she is keen on pottery – don't get in the way when she is throwing clay pots on the wheel!

Jocelyne Wilson

THE ROCHESTER CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

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Clarinet	Magdalene Joyce
Bassoon	Philip Le Bas
French Horn	Irena-Marie Rieband
Percussion and Timpani	Roan Kearsey-Lawson Matthew Anderson
Piano	Robbie Carroll



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Autumn 2026 Concert

Saturday 21st November

6pm

Saint Nicolas Cantata: Benjamin Britten

Rejoice in the Lamb: Benjamin Britten

Simple Symphony: Benjamin Britten

Soloist: Samuel Boden

St. John's Church, Chatham

18 Railway Street, Chatham ME4 4JT

Spring 2027 Concert

Saturday 13th March

6pm

Requiem: Giuseppe Verdi

Rochester Cathedral

Summer 2027 Concert

Saturday 3rd July

7.30pm

The Maidstone and Medway Sinfonia Centenary Concert

Choral Symphony No. 9: Ludwig van Beethoven

Academic Festival Overture: Johannes Brahms

A new work to be composed by Jacob Bride

All Saints' Church, Maidstone

Mill Street, Maidstone ME15 6YE

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