



He has continued his career as an arranger and teacher of keyboard in schools ranging from Chetham's in Manchester, St. Helen & St. Katharine in Abingdon, St. Mary's, Wantage and latterly Oxford High School.

In all this, his love for the organ and for accompanying choirs, singers and instrumentalists as a pianist remains supreme, though he has also found time to research pressing theological issues, and he was ordained priest in 1989.

**Simon Dinsdale.** Simon still remembers where he was standing at the age of about 10 when he saw an organist at work and decided that if he did nothing else in life he had to learn to play the organ. It was a then long three years before he had grown sufficiently in height and competency on the piano to begin taking lessons at the local church in Crowborough, East Sussex. After finishing school, Simon was appointed Organ Scholar of Chichester Cathedral for three years where he accompanied the world-renowned choir regularly during the daily sung services in the cathedral before moving on to become Director of Music at St. Mary's Choir School, Reigate and organist for its professional choir of boys and men. There he accompanied the choir in its daily services, on tours, broadcasts and recordings.

Simon travels extensively throughout the UK as a continuo player and organist to a number of choirs, and regularly plays at cathedrals up and down the country. Further afield, concert tours have taken him to Ireland, Germany, Belgium and the USA in recent years. As well as his concert engagements in 2008 and 2009, Simon has been the organist on four discs, accompanying

**Sir Peter Beale** has conducted AVE since its inception and has recently been a guest conductor in Swindon, Salisbury and Romsey. Between times he sings tenor, acting as a Deputy Lay Clerk in both Salisbury and Wells cathedrals as well as in several choral groups, chiefly in Wiltshire. As a tenor soloist, his rôles range from parts in Gilbert and Sullivan operas to oratorios such as *Messiah* and *The Creation*.

From his early years, music was ingrained. Following 6 years as a chorister in St. Paul's Cathedral, he became a Choral Scholar at Cambridge. He subsequently trained as a Medical Doctor culminating in a career in the British Armed Forces for which he was knighted in 1992; but wherever he served he formed, conducted and took part in choirs when the care of his patients allowed!

Now living in Avebury, he is delighted to be working with the Singers from AVE.

**Dr Christopher Tadman-Robins** trained as an organist with Magnus Black on the famous five-manual Schulze organ in Doncaster Parish Church. In 1964, at the age of seventeen, he went to the Royal Northern College of Music to read music, specialising in conducting and keyboard studies under Kendal Taylor.

After completing his educational study at the University of London he was appointed Musical Director of the Northern Ballet Theatre (1970–82), conducting here and abroad with the Manchester Camerata and notably with the South African Broadcasting Orchestra.

Locus iste *Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)*

Mass in E $\flat$ , J224 *Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)*

*Mary Phillips (soprano), Alison Hillman (contralto)*  
*Robin Cockett (tenor), David Edwards (bass)*

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|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Kyrie       | 4. Offertorium |
| 2. Gloria      | 5. Sanctus     |
| <i>Reading</i> | 6. Benedictus  |
| 3. Credo       | 7. Agnus Dei   |

Ave Maria *Anton Bruckner*

————— **INTERVAL** —————

Three Shakespeare songs *Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)*

1. Full fathom five
2. The cloud-capp'd towers
3. Over hill, over dale

Music divine *Thomas Tomkins (1572–1656)*

Though Amaryllis dance in green *William Byrd (c 1540–1623)*

*Reading*

Panis angelicus *Cesar Franck (1822–1890)*

O Thou, the central orb *Charles Wood (1866–1926)*

The long day closes *Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)*

The Avebury Vocal Ensemble (AVE) is delighted to be performing its Autumn Concerts for 2009 on two consecutive nights in October, firstly in the lovely acoustic of Lechlade Parish Church and secondly in the redundant church of St. Peter's at the west end of the High Street in Marlborough (whose acoustic is largely untried vocally).

Two composers dominate the programme. As our main work, we present Carl Maria von Weber's *Mass in E flat*; and at the beginning of the second half, Ralph Vaughan Williams's popular *Three Shakespeare Songs* test the choir's versatility. As with all our concerts, smaller items are included to complete a varied programme, and a reading or two may be slipped in! A peculiarity of the choice of these venues is that, in Lechlade, the organ is used as an accompaniment while in Marlborough, without an organ, the piano is used instead. We welcome, respectively, Christopher Tadman-Robins and Simon Dinsdale as our accompanists.

Weber is an important composer of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, not because he was unduly prolific but partly because he significantly influenced both Wagner and Rossini. Born in Eutin near Lübeck in Germany, he toured the country at an early age with a theatre company his father directed. At one stage he settled for a short time in Salzburg where he was taught by Michael Haydn, but his itinerant life-style ended when he accepted the post of joint musical director of Dresden's Opera House where he was, rather narrowly, responsible for German Opera. He composed early on, but spasmodically, albeit in most genres. Instrumental music was his staple interest but he did compose three operas himself, *Oberon*, *Euryanthe* and the ever-popular *Die Freischütz*.

His Mass contains all the usual movements plus an *Offertorium* between the *Credo* and the *Sanctus* which seems to have been prompted as an after-thought. Similar to much of Joseph Haydn's choral work, the soprano solo part is by far the most taxing—he was apparently heavily motivated by a famous Italian

castrato of the time, one Giovanni Sassaroli, who was “excellent in elaborate music with lungs like a horse”. It is a happy Mass, with a wealth of melody. The original accompanying instructions for its performance were never clear, so we interpret it tonight in the way we feel it should sound! We welcome Mary Phillips as our soprano soloist.

On either side of the Mass, two Bruckner motets seem appropriate as the bread of a sumptuous Weberian sandwich.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was a towering figure in English 20<sup>th</sup> century music—highly individualistic but approachable and heavily influenced by English Folk Songs, particularly from East Anglia. In contrast to most other composers he became more prolific with age. He was a contemporary of Elgar whom he outlived by more than two decades, but their music is quite dissimilar. The *Three Shakespeare Songs* demonstrate Vaughan Williams's ability to capture an appropriate atmosphere and, in themselves, show both his own versatility and also his understanding of the capabilities of the human voice.

For the remainder of the second half, we show the choir in various moods. Franck's *Panis angelicus* is intended as a memory of the late Luciano Pavarotti's rendering in a duet with his father, and also because it's featured on the recent CD produced by AVE!

Two madrigals are a reminder that we neglect 16<sup>th</sup> century English music to our detriment. *O Thou the central orb* is part of the regular diet of English Church Music and Charles Wood was one of Vaughan Williams's teachers of composition. Arthur Sullivan is more than just a composer of light opera and *The long day closes* makes a suitable draw-down to a weekend evening. The choir could have an encore up its sleeve should the audience need to tap its way home!

Peter Beale