



Derby City Council

The Music of **Joseph Wright** of Derby



Sunday 26 February 2012

A concert to celebrate the reopening of the
Joseph Wright of Derby Gallery
at Derby Museum and Art Gallery

The Music of Joseph Wright of Derby

Dr Alan Barnes, University of Derby

Why a concert to celebrate a painter? First, because music was of central importance in Wright's personal life and work, and second, to express feelings about his paintings in instrumental music and songs. This concert brings together music we think he would have known and liked with new music inspired by his art. In the spirit of the 18th century, it encompasses a mixture of genres, including popular music.

The programme is framed by two of the great choruses of Handel, of which Wright was reminded by the sublime landscape of the Lake District he painted towards the end of his career. It reflects the tastes of a keen flautist, who enjoyed both chamber music and singing. Musicians he played with in Derby from the 1760s included William Denby, organist at All Saint's (now the Cathedral) and his son Charles, who succeeded him. The latter, a leading figure in musical life in Derby, played the organ at the famous Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784 where the Derby tenor, Samuel Harrison starred. These two later organized a similar event in their home town.

We will hear a Duet for keyboard and German Flute composed by Charles Denby that Joseph Wright probably played. In London he would have known the London pleasure gardens, such as Vauxhall, where both public concerts and exhibitions of art developed, and also the subscription concerts run by Johann Christian Bach. We hear the famous song, 'The Lass of Richmond Hill' by the Director of Marylebone and Vauxhall Gardens, James Hook. We also feature a Flute Quartet by J.C. Bach.

Wright joined the Howdalian Society; members of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, who were also fond of music. A friend says he participated enthusiastically in the singing 'possessing an agreeable voice and a perfect knowledge of music.' This group influenced his work and career moves. The Society of Artists even built an Exhibition Room that could also be used as a Concert Hall as part of their struggle with the rival Royal Academy!

Later in his career, Wright's painting of the hero of a then famous poem by James Beattie, *The Minstrel*, brought him into contact with its highly musical author. Its companion piece, Maria and her dog 'Sylvio', hangs in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery. Both pictures combine music and pastoral landscape. We will hear a setting of another of Beattie's popular poems.

Welcome to a very special concert

Today's concert is a celebration of Joseph Wright, and the newly refurbished Wright of Derby Gallery which opened yesterday at Derby Museum and Art Gallery. The concert is part of the Wright of Derby Festival, an MLA Cultural Olympiad funded event. Concert participants received grant funding through the festival for their individual Wright-inspired projects, and have come together today in a concert of their own devising. We would like to extend our thanks to Derby Cathedral for hosting this unique collaboration.

The concert will be introduced by Jonathan Wallis, Assistant Head of Derby Museums.

Please join us after the concert at Derby Museum and Art Gallery- enjoy light refreshments and spend a quiet moment in the galleries.

You are invited to return to the Cathedral at 6.00pm for a special evensong which celebrates the life of Joseph Wright.



Edwin, from Dr Beattie's 'Minstrel'
Joseph Wright of Derby 1777 – 8
Private Collection



Maria and her dog 'Sylvio'
Joseph Wright of Derby 1781
Derby Museums



A Philosopher by Lamplight (or a hermit) Joseph Wright of Derby
c.1769, Derby Museums

Programme

Anthem: Zadok the Priest by George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759

The Wright Festival Chorus conducted by **Ann Miller** with **Richard Hodges** - organ, and **Musica Donum Dei**

'Duett' for harpsichord with accompaniment for German Flute in A Major

by Charles Denby, c.1735-1792 **Musica Donum Dei**

The Hermit: a favourite ballad by Tommaso Giordani, 1730-1806

Ann Miller – soprano, with **Richard Hodges** - piano

Quartetto III in C Major for flute, violin, viola and cello by Johann Christian

Bach, 1735-1782 **Musica Donum Dei**

O salutaris hostia by Giovanni Battista Martini (known as 'Padre' Martini), 1706- 1784 **Derby Youth Choir**

How can I keep from singing Traditional melody arr. Peter Hunt

Derby Youth Choir

Will you go, Lassie, go? Celtic traditional arr. Dan Miller **Voices Choir**

Close to you by Burt Bacharach arr. Milt Rogers **Voices Choir**

Interval

The Orrery string quartet by John MacDonald Mackenzie, composed for the Wright of Derby Festival **Musica Donum Dei**

The Lass of Richmond Hill by James Hook, 1726-1827

Tom Elston, tenor, with **Richard Hodges**, piano

Songs of the Light by Richard Hodges, composed for the Wright of Derby Festival

Voices Choir

The Alchemist

Light up your heart - Soloist **Amanda Bonsall**

A poem of light

Hallelujah Chorus, from **Messiah** by George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759

the **Wright Festival Chorus** conducted by **Ann Miller**, with **Richard Hodges** - organ, and **Musica Donum Dei**

Musica Donum Dei

Wendy Hancock	Baroque flute
Diane Terry	Baroque violin
Julia Black	Baroque violin
Ken Mitchell	Baroque viola
Gareth Deats	Baroque 'cello
Guest - Dr Richard Hodges	Harpsichord

MDD is a leading professional period-instrument ensemble based in the Midlands, which aims to achieve the highest artistic standards. Musica Donum Dei consists of a core ensemble of five players, with others added to fit the demands of a given concert. We perform over an increasingly wide area of the Midlands and beyond, in venues ranging from small village halls to cathedrals.

We play mainly music of the 17th and 18th century on instruments of the time, or modern copies in the style of the period. Wendy Hancock, who is a specialist in Renaissance and Baroque music, plays a flute by Anthony Arnold after Grenzer, c.1760-1770. We are noted for our imaginative programmes, which aim to create the spirit of the age in lively and exciting ways, often including readings, dramatisation and visual images. We also sometimes include contemporary music, which we actively commission.

In 2010 MDD strengthened its collaboration with the National Trust, performing in Kedleston Hall and Calke Abbey. For such historic venues we aim to 'make the music match the house' by undertaking historical research. We also work with choirs, providing a full-sized baroque orchestra for choral works by Bach, Handel, Monteverdi etc.

MDD is also available to play for concerts, weddings and other entertainments. CDs are available price £10 or £12 each, postage included :-
All the World's a Stage (music with Shakespearean connections)
Ring a Ring o' Roses (songs and dances for children)
Gaudete : Music from Christmas Past

To order CDs, to join the Friends or the mailing list, or to book the group, please contact Wendy Hancock 0115 9226631 or wendy@philidors.co.uk
Visit our website; www.musicadonumdei.org.uk

Dr Richard Hodges

Dr Richard Hodges is a performer and composer and has taught music at the University of Derby for over twenty years. He studied as an undergraduate at the Royal College of Music and undertook postgraduate study at London University. He is principally an organist and pianist, and some of his performances on the Grand Organ in Royal Albert Hall in London, one of the largest organs in the world, have been televised. He is also a conductor, featuring at the Southbank Centre in London and at St John's, Smith Square, and he conducted a combined choir and orchestra of a thousand performers in one of his own compositions at the Royal Albert Hall in London. He has written music that has featured on television and has also written incidental music for national touring theatre productions.

John MacDonald Mackenzie

Born in Inverness-shire to a highly musical family, John was immersed in the traditional music of Scotland especially violin playing and Gaelic Song. His compositions range from orchestral scores, small ensembles and duets to solo instrument works but his favourite medium is the String Quartet. He attends Dartington International College of Music every summer and is well known for his intricate compositions. He is also a member of the Composers' Alliance. He is a professional Scottish piper and accordionist and, in his spare time, he makes his own wine and enjoys gardening, antiques, history and is a published poet.

The Wright Festival Chorus

Local singers were invited to participate in the large choral pieces in today's concert as the *Wright Festival Chorus*. It is made up of members from choirs such as Derby Bach Choir, Derby Choral Union, Derby City Singers, Derby Hospitals Choir, Derby Youth Choir, Voices Choir and other individuals inspired to raise their voice in celebration of Joseph Wright.

Voices, The City of Derby Girls' Choir

Founded in 1995 by Ann Miller, *Voices* is one of the Midlands' finest youth vocal groups, and is musically educative and enriching to the young singers. Conducting the choir is currently shared between Ann Miller and Dan Miller. The choir regularly commissions new music – among the latest, two superb new pieces from Paul Ayres celebrating our 15th anniversary. *Voices* Choir sings in a wide range of venues - from St Paul's Cathedral and Canterbury Cathedral to impromptu singing in Paris Metro stations - and is in demand for weddings, functions and charity events.

We have our 17th annual concert tour abroad in 2012 – this year to Belgium and Germany's Rhineland - and will again be joined by the male voices of Derby Youth Choir, singing in Ypres at the Menin Gate Ceremony, and in Brussels and Cologne Cathedrals.

As part of the project leading to today's concert, *Voices* Choir members visited the Joseph Wright Gallery and, inspired by the paintings, wrote lyrics which Richard Hodges has set to create the three beautiful new songs, 'Songs of the Light' – the sounds of Wright of Derby. You hear the first performance today of this fitting tribute in song to the genius of Joseph Wright, and to the inspiration his work brings us.

Derby Youth Choir: this mixed voice choir of young people joins together some of the sopranos and altos of *Voices* Choir and the tenors and basses of 'VoiceMale'. Both choirs are based at Derby's 'VoiceBox' – the intimate, independent arts centre created by Ann and Colin Miller from an 1820s brewery in Forman Street. Each choir sings a wide range of musical styles, from sacred music to jazz and pop arrangements. We welcome potential new members to audition at any time of the year – rehearsals aim for high standards of music making, along with tea and fun!

Our most recent CD, 'What is this life?' 2010, features all VoiceBox choirs. VoiceBox 10th anniversary in 2011 was celebrated by a commission 'Cantate Domino' – an exciting and vibrant piece for mixed and upper voice choirs, by Richard Roddis.

VoiceBox choirs are delighted to be participating in this celebration of Joseph Wright and the Enlightenment. www.voiceboxuk.com

Musical Notes

Anthem: Zadok the Priest by George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759

Handel's statue presided over Vauxhall Gardens; he was the dominant composer in Wright's youth and the painter's musical friends and acquaintances in Derby and Lichfield were prominent in the revival of his music. This anthem was written for the Coronation of King George II in 1727 and has been used for every coronation since. And no wonder! The tension built up by the quiet opening passage is released in one of the most dramatic choral entries ever achieved even by Handel's standards. It was played at the inaugural Handel Commemoration attended by George III in 1784 and the many reprises in London and elsewhere.

'Duett' for harpsichord with accompaniment for German Flute in

A Major – Charles Denby, c.1735-1792

Charles Denby dominated public music-making locally. His annual benefit concerts succeeded those by his father, who died in 1771. The 1777 concert featured Samuel Harrison (1760-1812), nationally famed as a boy soprano. Later, as one of the leading tenors of his age, he drew the cream of the capital's singers and musicians. This made Derby stand out as a musical centre for decades. The New Assembly Rooms, 1765 (remodelled by Adam) provided a fashionable venue and James Gibbs' All Saints, offered the spacious auditorium in which we sit.

The local papers include notices of William and Charles Denby's compositions. The former published songs and sacred choral works; the latter a range of chamber works. These include two sets of *Sonatas for the Harpsichord*, published in 1775 and 1778. In 1792 he requested subscriptions for a *Concerto for the Pianoforte*; presumably the *Co[n]certo Grand Pianoforte* performed by Denby in the benefit concert at the New Assembly Rooms on Sept 9, 1785. The second set of harpsichord sonatas is dedicated to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the Duets to his pupil, the Hon. Juliana Curzon of Kedleston Hall.

The subscription list for the *Three Duets for Pianoforte with an accompaniment for German Flute or Violin*, published posthumously in London in 1794, contains nearly one hundred names. They include representatives of all the notable families of the area, some of the new industrial dynasties and many of Joseph Wright's friends and sitters for portraits. The first movement is well-crafted and leads to a short slow movement and via the allegretto into a tuneful and catchy rondo. Neither profound nor particularly original this is, nonetheless, accomplished, entertaining and enjoyable chamber music.

The Hermit; a favourite ballad by Tommaso Giordani, 1730-1806

He was a member of a musical Neapolitan family, who appeared in London in the 1750s. Originally a harpsichord player, he had a successful career as a composer in the theatres and opera-houses of London and Dublin. He wrote long-lasting popular songs, at least one of which is still in the repertoire. *The Hermit*, a setting of Beattie's second most popular poem, was mentioned and quoted in Jane Austen's letters to her sister Clarissa.

Quartetto III in C Major for flute, violin, cello and harpsichord by Johann Christian Bach, 1735-1782

J. C. Bach was the youngest son and the favourite of the great J. S. Bach. He was taught by his father and by Martini in Bologna and was invited to London in 1762. He made an early reputation with his operas and took an interest in the infant Mozart when they met in London, even playing a duet with the young prodigy, who admired his music greatly.

From 1767-1779 he organized highly successful subscription concerts with his compatriot, Abel. His music, in the new *galant* style, is melodious and attractive and he had an important part in developing the new musical form of the symphony. The quartet is typical of his easy-going style.

O salutaris hostia by Martini

This beautifully sculpted piece dates from the 18th century.

Victim slain for salvation, you who reveal the gate of heaven: harsh warfare strikes, grant strength, bring help.

How can I keep from singing? Traditional melody arr. Peter Hunt

Traditional melody arranged by Peter Hunt

'Will ye go Lassie, go?'

This well-known Celtic traditional melody is one of many arrangements and compositions created for Voices Choir by Dan Miller, one of its musical directors.

Close to you by Burt Bacharach arr. Milt Rogers

Written by Burt Bacharach and arranged by Milt Rogers, this was first recorded by Richard Chamberlain in 1963 and best known as The Carpenters' 1970 hit.

The Orrery string quartet by John MacDonald Mackenzie, composed for the Wright of Derby Festival

There is some evidence (though far from conclusive) that the lecturer in Wright's painting 'The Orrery' was posed by William Denby, at whose weekly musical evenings the young artist played. However this may be, what is certain is that the man standing on the left is Peter Perez Burdett, artist and cartographer, who played the 'cello in their ensemble.



A Philosopher giving that lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in the place of the Sun. Joseph Wright of Derby c.1764-1766, Derby Museums

1st movement – Moderato

The quartet commences with a theme rising out of the cello. In the composer's mind this is about The Enlightenment as found in the biblical phrase 'out of darkness comes light'. The movement continues with a great deal of conflict because, at that time, there were many who thought it was evil to study science and that it was against God to study ethereal objects such as the planets.

2nd movement – Allegretto

This movement is evocative of a horse-drawn carriage. In the painting 'The Orrery' the people are wearing outdoor clothes as if they have been travelling. The movement suggests the elegance of the age and the excitement of new discoveries. One can hear the suggestion of the clip-clop of horses in the pizzicato strings.

3rd movement – Andante

In this movement there are many questions about the stars and the universe. There is also more than a hint of the great mechanical improvements at Cromford Mill where great strides had been taken in manufacturing. One can hear the click-clack of the machinery and the rhythm of mechanisation.

4th movement – Allegro

In this movement there is evident the sighs of the Indian Widow, the shovelling of the Earth-Stopper, the sounds of the industrial movement throughout the country and the exuberance of evenings with the Lunar Society. The music jogs along with the mechanical rhythm of a Royal Ball and dances to a climactic

conclusion – an enlightenment in musical experience!

The Lass of Richmond Hill by James Hook, 1726-1827

Hook was a child prodigy from Norwich, who came to London in the early 1760s and made a name as an organist and as the writer of catches and light music. He composed the 'Ode' which accompanied the opening of the Society of Artists' New Exhibition Rooms and wrote much for the theatre. He was best known as organist and director of Marylebone and later, Vauxhall Gardens. 'The Lass of Richmond Hill' is typical of his catchy tunes but is the only piece still in the repertoire today.

Songs of the Light by Richard Hodges, composed for the Wright of Derby Festival

Voices Choir, conducted by Ann Miller

Richard Hodges, piano

The texts of the song cycle were specially composed by members of the Voices Choir in response to the paintings of Joseph Wright. The cycle comprises three songs, and each setting explores particular aspects of the paintings, predominantly in terms of illumination and light.

The Alchymist begins quietly, and evokes a calm reflective atmosphere. The modal setting portrays the meaning of the text essentially as an invocation to contemplation. The two vocal parts exploit occasional undulating clashing melodic concurrences supported by a gentle harmonic accompaniment. There are moments of imitative exploitation, both in the central section and in repetitions of the refrain. The minor tonality of the setting gives way to major in the final chorus.



The Alchymist Joseph Wright of Derby 1795 Derby Museums

The Alchymist - Ellie-Kate Spence / Hannah Paish

*Moonlight through arched window falls,
Lighting up both face and walls,
But in shadows we can see,
All he uses in his striven pursuit of Alchemy.
Listen to our song, hear his tale unfold,
How he turned his canvas into gold.*

*Moon shines through the night,
Wraps the earth in gleaming light,*

*Rippling over water, sparkling over sand,
The moon shines through the night all o'er the land.
Listen to our song, hear his tale unfold
How he turned his canvas into gold
He kneels in supplication to the altar of his quest,
Illuminated by the moon and the light of his success.*

*Radiance, pure gold, burnished bright,
Lustrous, luminescence, bathed in light.
Listen to our song, hear his tale unfold,
How he turned his canvas into gold.*

*Moonlight through arched window falls,
Lighting up both face and walls,
But in its shadows we can see,
All he uses in his striven pursuit of Alchemy.
Listen to our song, hear his tale unfold,
How he turned his canvas into gold.*

Light up your Heart changes the mood of the cycle in establishing a major tonality and is harmonically more evocative. The vocal setting exploits four-part textures of close harmony with consequent expressive 'shimmering' chords. The choral texture is complemented by a soprano soloist, who has ever more provocative interjections as the piece progresses to a climax in the middle section. The piece returns to the subdued mood of the opening, eventually culminating with the final reflective phrase 'light up your heart to love' for the soloist.

Light up your heart – Phoebe Eley

*As the moon slowly drifts into a peaceful world of shimmer,
The night-light grows from the shadows;
Unveiling its beauty and glimmer,
As the woes of yesterday slowly fade away,
The break of dawn begins,
Bringing the start of a new day.
Light up your heart to the love that surrounds you,
For the strength that is found will ultimately guide you.*

A Poem of Light completes the set and the piece begins quietly with a repeated bell-like piano accompaniment supporting a meandering phrase that progressively becomes more sinister, before giving way to a triumphant affirmation for 'illuminating ripples in streams'. The quicker section in the major mode that follows exploits jazzy syncopated rhythms, both for voices and piano. The busy piano accompaniment is rhythmically set against the voices, and indeed the voices are set against each other on occasions, exploiting phrases in canonic imitation. The piece progressively and inexorably leads to a triumphant choral climax.

A Poem of Light

*Dark shadows cast by light,
Black skies scattered with shining stars and an eerie moon.
Moonlight creeps through silhouettes of branches on trees,
Illuminating ripples in streams.*

Sun rising slowly.
Watch as a room gradually transforms from darkness to a gleaming,
brilliance of luminosity.
Creeping its way through gaps in curtains.
Brightening faces of children,
Playing in the sun.
Then sun sets into the mountains.

Light is everywhere.
In the brightest most joyful moment,
In the darkest hour.
Light never dims.
With us forever.

Hallelujah Chorus, from **Messiah** by George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759
The premiere of the oratorio *Messiah*, in the Dublin Music Hall in 1742, was a great success, though its first London performance at Covent Garden the following year was not! Subsequently it has become an enduring monument and the 'Hallelujah Chorus' is one of the best known and loved pieces of classical music. Because of its links with Wright's time and his friends, who performed it frequently, it makes a fitting, and rousing, conclusion to the concert.

Cover image - *Mr and Mrs William Crane*
Joseph Wright of Derby. 1762-3
Private Collection, New York

Derby Museums
The Strand
Derby
DE1 1BS

01332 641901

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The Orrery

John MacDonald Mackenzie.

A

$\text{♩} = 96$

moderato

String Quartet

1.

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

f

f

f

B

f

pizz

f

10 **J** *allegretto* mvmt.2

151

mf *pizz* *mf* *pizz* *mf*

156

arco *f* *f* *f* *f*

161 **K**

f *f* *f* *f*

165

192 *andante*

mf

mf

198

mf

mf

mf

mf

204

mf

210

mf

mf

M

Mvmt.4

247 *allegro vivace*

Musical score for measures 247-252. The score is in 6/8 time and features four staves: two treble clefs, one alto clef, and one bass clef. The first three staves are marked *mf*. The fourth staff is marked *mf* and includes the instruction *pizz*. The music consists of rhythmic patterns with eighth and sixteenth notes.

N

253

pizz

Musical score for measures 253-258. The score is in 6/8 time and features four staves. A double bar line is present at the beginning of measure 253. The first two staves are marked *f*. The third and fourth staves are marked *f*. The music continues with rhythmic patterns.

O

259

arco

Musical score for measures 259-264. The score is in 6/8 time and features four staves. The first two staves are marked *arco* and *mf*. The third and fourth staves are marked *mf*. The music includes a melodic line in the first two staves and a bass line in the last two staves.

265

Musical score for measures 265-270. The score is in 6/8 time and features four staves. The music continues with rhythmic patterns and melodic lines across all staves.