

## Singing for Pleasure Choir Concert – December 2022



The Singing for Pleasure concert "**Countdown to Christmas**" was held on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 in St John's Church, Ben Rhydding. The odds were against us when we found out that Bolling Road, the road outside the church was to be closed for re-surfacing for three days, including the day of the concert.

The Concert was dedicated to Ukraine and donations of about £115.00 were collected.

The concert opened with A "Ukrainian Prayer" written by John Rutter earlier this year following the Russian invasion. This was followed by a Ukrainian song known in this country as "Carol of the Bells". It was written by Mykola Leontovych in 1914. He was murdered by a Soviet agent in 1921.

Our choir of over 40 members was ably assisted by the "Transpennine Harps" and, of course, by our accompanist Ruth Johnson and by Andie Harper our MC.

Our programme consisted of music from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, starting with Gaudete made famous by Steeleye Span and Maddie Prior in the 1970's. 20<sup>th</sup> Century music by John Rutter and Andrew Carter and even a 21<sup>st</sup> Century piece "The first Noel / Pachelbel's Canon" by Michael Clawson. There were plenty of carols for the audience to sing including old favourites: "Once in Royal David's City", "Away in a Manger", "Joy to the world", Hark the herald angels sing, etc. They were all accompanied on the Church's organ and conducted by Vicky Lloyd. I feel singing carols with the organ is the best way.

There were many highlights, but to mention a few. The Ukrainian Prayer is a piece the choir have taken to their hearts. The pieces accompanied by the Transpennine Harps were very special, "Jesus Christ the apple tree" by Elizabeth Poston in particular. Verses 1 & 5 were sung by the Sopranos accompanied by a single harp. It was magic. The merger of the ever popular "Pachelbel's Canon" with the popular carol "The First Noel" was a great success. We don't have sufficient resources to accompany this piece so with a bit of technical wizardry by Robin Morley. We were able to sing the piece with full orchestral accompaniment.

The concert was a great success, and we look forward to participating in the Saturday Christmas concert for you next year.

We are grateful to St John's Vicar, The Reverend Peter Willox and the Church wardens for giving us permission to use their beautiful church for our concert

***Brian Mason***

Musical Director

