

Stretton Choral Society

presents

“Stuff and Nonsense”

Conductor

Michael Turner

Accompanists

Gill Styles, Piano

Jon Kedge, Double Bass

Jake Allen, Percussion



Sunday 10th May 2025

7.30 pm

Silvester Horne Institute

P R O G R A M M E

Stuff and Nonsense

Music by Michael Turner

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | The Jumblies | Edward Lear |
| 2 | The Crocodile, or Public Decency | A E Housman |
| 3 | The Owl and the Pussycat | Edward Lear |
| 4 | I Saw a Peacock | Anon |
| 5 | Hey Diddle Diddle | Anon |

Reading

Smiling Is Infectious

by Spike Milligan

Aesop's Fables

Translated by George Fyler Townsend

Music by Bob Chilcott

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | The Hare and the Tortoise |
| 2 | The Mountain in Labour |
| 3 | The Fox and the Grapes |
| 4 | The North Wind and the Sun |
| 5 | The Goose and the Swan |

Reading

On the Ning Nang Nong

by Spike Milligan

Geographical Fugue

Ernst Toch

INTERVAL

*Please remain seated until the choir and instrumentalists have left the hall.
Refreshments will be available for sale at the side of the hall.
A bell will be rung at the end of the interval.*

Ten Songs from Alice in Wonderland

Words by Lewis Carroll

Music by Colin Baines and *Michael Turner

- 1 Down the Rabbit Hole (words by Jenny Baines)
- 2 You Are Old, Father William
- 3 Speak Roughly to Your Little Boy
- 4 The Lobster Quadrille
- 5 Beautiful Soup (melody: Sayles arr. Tucker/arr. Baines)
- 6 They Told Him You Had Been to Her
- 7 Jabberwocky*
- 8 The Aged, Aged Man
- 9 Bonnie Dundee
- 10 Finale (words by Jenny Baines)

Humpty Dumpty explains:

Outgrabe: "*outgribing* is something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle".

Borogove: "*Borogove* is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round, something like a live mop."

Tove: "*Toves* are something like badgers, they're something like lizards, and they're something like corkscrews. ... Also they make their nests under sundials, also they live on cheese."

Brillig: "*Brillig* means four o'clock in the afternoon, the time when you begin broiling things for dinner."

We do trust that helps.

Musical Notes

Our Music Director, Michael Turner, shares some thoughts about tonight's programme.

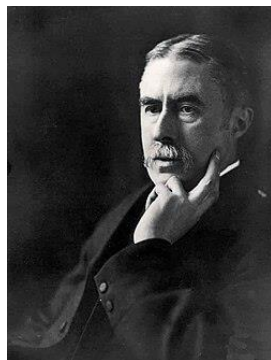
Nonsense poetry and writing is such fun. In one respect you can just “go with the flow” in terms of the streams of consciousness coming from the writers while, in another, you can expend energy trying to reach and understand a deeper meaning contained within the text. The choice is yours.

The first piece tonight is a collection of five nonsense settings that I've produced over several years that are being performed together for the first time this evening under the title *Stuff and Nonsense*. Edward Lear is well known for his nonsense writing but, perhaps surprisingly, A E Housman puts in an appearance. *The Crocodile* is conceivably more silly than nonsensical, nevertheless its daftness is in significant contrast to poet's most well-known output which is often dark and serious. I've also included two anonymous texts. *I Saw a Peacock* was new to me when I set it, while *Hey Diddle Diddle* takes me back to my childhood - we had a puzzle featuring all the key characters in the poem.

Bob Chilcott, who celebrates his 70th Birthday this year, is well established as one of the most prolific and engaging British composers of vocal music. His version of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is a masterpiece of choral writing, making references to a wide range of musical styles along the way, while his *A Little Jazz Mass* has quickly become established as one of the staples of contemporary music for choirs. Chilcott composed his settings of *Aesop's Fables* in 2008. He uses the nineteenth century translations of the original Greek by the Reverend George Fyler Townsend, setting five of the over six hundred fables apparently written by Aesop. Each movement starts with its title and ends with the moral of the tale spoken by the choir. The choral writing, while challenging, is tuneful and harmonically attractive.



Edward Lear



A E Housman



Bob Chilcott

The Geographical Fugue by Ernst Toch is best known for being a purely spoken piece. Surprisingly (!), the text is built upon the names of a number of (largely “exotic”) locations, ranging from Trinidad (at the opening and close) including Mexico, Mississippi, Yokohama and more. It being a fugue, each part (in order: tenor, alto, soprano and bass) states the “theme” – *Trinidad! and the big Mississippi, and the town Honolulu and the Lake Titicaca* – before it is then taken up by the next part and so on. The theme is then truncated, given new rhythm, halved in speed, and similar, before the whole choir launches the most enormous crescendo leading to a final *TRINIDAD!*

Colin Baines has been a major character in the musical life of Birmingham over the past fifty years. He’s a singer, a composer, a conductor and a pianist and has held posts with organisations including the CBSO Chorus, The City of Birmingham Choir and, most notably, the Birmingham Choral Union, of which he has been conductor for almost forty-five years. Alongside all this, Colin has been Music Director of a youth drama festival, held in and around St David’s in Pembrokeshire each summer since 1969, where around thirty-five young people (supported by a number of adults) put on a series of performances of open-air Shakespeare, poetry and prose evenings and family shows over a two-and-a-half week period – with no evenings off! In addition to over one hundred and fifty Shakespeare settings (three of which we performed last May) Colin, with his wife Jenny Baines and his sister-in-law Julie Beckett, have created over a dozen enchanting family shows, each containing several musical numbers. One such is the Baines/Beckett/Baines version of *Alice in Wonderland*. Colin wrote nine songs for the show (and asked me to tackle *Jabberwocky*) which we will perform in the second half of tonight’s concert. The opening song (*Down the Rabbit Hole*) and *Finale* are settings of words by Jenny Baines which respectively act as bookends to the Alice story.



Ernst Toch



Lewis Carroll



Colin Baines

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Michael Turner

From Birmingham, Michael Turner studied violin and viola, before settling on percussion as his main instrumental study. As a singer, he has been a member of the CBSO Chorus, along with a number of other choirs across the Midlands.

Michael has attended conducting courses with John Carewe and George Hurst and studied under Hilary Davan Wetton, with whom he settled on adopting the conducting technique favoured by Sir Adrian Boult.

A music graduate of Leicester University, Michael has conducted several amateur and professional ensembles and choirs including the Birmingham Singers, Proteus Chamber Orchestra, the More Singers, the Telford Orchestra, the Marches Choir and the Phoenix Singers. He made his professional debut with the Milton Keynes City Orchestra and has also worked with the Manchester Camerata. Michael has been Music Director of the Bloomsbury Chamber Orchestra since 1996, was Music Director of the Oswestry Sinfonia from 2014 - 2020 and became Music Director of the Stretton Choral Society in September 2021. He has been an ensemble conductor for Shropshire Music Service since 2016.

Michael has composed extensively, with works including a Horn Concerto, several orchestral and choral works, instrumental music and pieces for percussion and wind ensemble. He lives in South Shropshire with his wife. They have three sons, with one boy a former Cathedral chorister.

PIANIST and ACCOMPANIST: Gill Styles

Gill was born in West Yorkshire. She studied music at Goldsmiths' College, London where she focused on piano and voice. For over thirty years she has been a junior-school class teacher with responsibility for music. Throughout her career she has enjoyed accompanying singers and instrumentalists, as well as playing chamber music, performing as a vocal soloist and singing in local choirs.

“Jabberwocky” according to Lewis Carroll

"The Anglo-Saxon word 'wocer' or 'wocor' signifies 'offspring' or 'fruit'. Taking 'jabber' in its ordinary acceptation of 'excited and voluble discussion', this would give the meaning of 'the result of much excited and voluble discussion'..."

Our Christmas concert 2025
Saturday 13th December
Bach's Christmas Oratorio
and other Christmas items
with audience carols

Rehearsals every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church, High Street, Church Stretton, starting on Thursday 11th September.

Do you like the idea of singing in a choir? But perhaps you are put off because you've never had any formal choir training, or because you think all the music will be unfamiliar?

Don't worry!

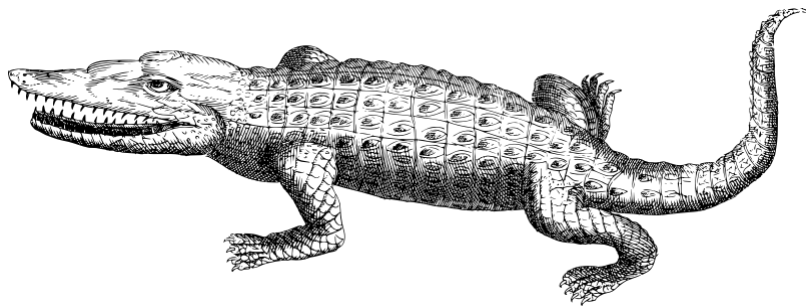
Although we aim for high standards when we perform, we are a very welcoming group - open to anyone, of

any level of ability and experience, and definitely no auditions.

New members are always very welcome. Just turn up and introduce yourself - we will provide the score, introduce you to others singing the same vocal part and help you to learn the music. Do come and join us, and experience the joy and excitement of making beautiful music together!

One more definition, from Lewis Carroll himself:

Uffish: "It seemed to suggest a state of mind when the voice is gruffish, the manner roughish, and the temper huffish".



Thanks for help with “Stuff and Nonsense” to:

Colin Baines for giving us free use of his music.

Shrewsbury Performing Arts Library for the loan of music used.

The helpers and choir members who donate and assist with refreshments.

The Silvester Horne Institute.

And for displaying our posters:

The King's Arms
The Buck's Head
Entertaining Elephants
The Co-op
Burway Books
Soul Bean Coffee House
John R Thomas Florist

PCB Solicitors
Chocolate Haven
Family Shopper
Saxton's
The Old Bank
Peppers

Vine & Co General Store
Stretton Print & Supplies
Mr Bunn the Baker
The Little Cafe (No 54)
Berry's Coffee House
St Laurence's Parish



Website: strettonchoral.org.uk

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