

## Bude Choral Society – ‘Celebrate Christmas’ Concert – December 2004

### *From The Bude & Stratton Post, 6 January 2005*

A Marathon concert was performed by Bude Choral Society in December at St. Michael's and All Angels Church, Bude, conducted by John Hobbs.

The programme; described as **Celebrate Christmas**, featured works by Eric Thiman, John Rutter, Benjamin Britten and Ralph Vaughan Williams and the voices of Tina Gladwin (soprano) and David Webb (tenor). Instrumentalists included David Robinson (organ), Liz Jones (keyboard), Ruth Corney (flute), Maggie Perriman (oboe) and Richard Sullivan (cello). Gerald Smith was the narrator.

*The Nativity* by Thiman described the traditional story of the Virgin Mary's conception and birth. The piece displayed the qualities of Thiman's writing of melodious music that was sympathetic to the subject and yet gave full compliment to the Glory of the Nativity story.

John Rutter has become very popular with choral groups in recent years and his work, *When Icicles Hang by the Wall* was delightful. The preciseness of Ruth Corney's flute playing provided a perfect ambiance and although the programme described this piece as “a challenge for the choir”, Bude Choral Society gave real justice to the piece and this was thoroughly enjoyed.

Continuing the Rutter theme, *Brother Heinrich's Christmas* was brilliant. Gerald Smith as Brother Heinrich, dressed for the part and performed the narration so well, that one was transported onto the life and times depicted in the story.

*A Ceremony of Carols*, by Britten featured words from a book of medieval and Renaissance carols he had found in Nova Scotia whilst travelling across the Atlantic from America. This was the first of his works to be written for boys' voices and also to use plainsong.

Ralph Vaughan Williams had the final word of the evening in his work *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. The first of several pieces to be inspired by Christmas, drew its melodies and word from the English folksong tradition and is dedicated to Cecil Sharp, who began the resurgence of interest in English traditional folksong and dance at the beginning of the 20th Century. The piece consists of four interlinked sections; the cello begins in simple narrative mood with choral accompaniment and leads into the exuberance of "Comfort and Joy". Things calm down in the "Sussex Carol" whilst the final section interwove the previous choruses with instrumental references to other carols and folk melodies. The tranquillity of the opening returned as the voices vanished into the night across the snow-covered fields.

This was a delightful evening of live music, well presented and good value for money. Well done to Bude Choral.

It is hoped to invite John Rutter to carry out workshops with young people in Bude and to further develop links with him and the Bude Choral Society.

*(Report by Andrew Pitt)*