

St
Martin
in
the
Fields

The Wind In the Willows



St Martin's Voices
St Martin's Players

St Martin-in-the-Fields
Trafalgar Square
London
WC2N 4JJ
020 7766 1100
www.smitf.org

Available to watch online from Monday 31 May, and for 60 days.



PROGRAMME

The Wind in the Willows – John Rutter (b.1945)

PROGRAMME NOTES

by Sarah Maxted

The Wind in the Willows is a classic and much-loved tale about four characterful animals living in the English countryside. The original children's book was published in 1908 by author Kenneth Grahame, inspired by his childhood memories of living by the River Thames in Berkshire. Over the years, the book's iconic characters Mole, Rat, Badger and Toad have starred in several adaptations for stage and screen. In this charming version they are brought to life through the music of John Rutter with text by David Grant. Described as a 'witty musical entertainment', it was published in 1986 and features a cast of solo voices, chorus, instrumental ensemble and narrator.

The piece begins with a musical prologue which sets the scene and invites us to 'Listen to the sound of the wind in the willows'. As we hear the gentle rippling of the harp and the whispered singing of the chorus, we are transported to a peaceful countryside setting with the breeze rustling through the trees.

Our story starts with Mole, who has had enough of spring cleaning and gone for a walk along the sunny riverbank. Here, Mole meets the cheerful, friendly Rat, who is keen to go on a lovely boat trip. At first Mole is rather shy and unsure, but Rat picks up the tempo with a jolly song about how wonderful it is to spend time messing about in a boat on the river. Most importantly, Rat describes the delicious hamper of tasty food to enjoy – cucumber sandwiches, gooseberry pie and sugary doughnuts, oh my! Together, Rat and Mole share a long summer of happy days spent boating, picnicking and meeting friends along the river.

When winter comes, Rat and Mole decide to go into the Wild Wood to visit Badger. He is a solitary and sensible creature, so he doesn't have much patience for the squeaky Field-Mice who insist on coming in to sing their favourite Christmas carols! Badger asks Rat and Mole for news about their friend Toad. They tell him about Toad's dangerous and foolish obsession with speeding around the country lanes in his new motor car.

The countryside peace and quiet is ruined by the arrival of Toad in his car. We can hear it revving and sputtering in the distance, zooming closer and closer, with amazing descriptive sounds made by the voices of the chorus. Badger, Rat and Mole are very worried about Toad's dangerous driving, but Toad doesn't seem to care at all. He cries, 'Why, I'm the happiest creature alive!'

However, it quickly goes wrong for Toad. He is arrested for car theft and reckless driving. Accompanied by a solemn funeral march, the Magistrate sentences Toad to many, many years in the horrid dungeon of the County Gaol. Toad is miserable. When the Gaoler's Daughter tries to tempt him with a jazzy song about the prison food, Toad just finds it all totally revolting!

Toad comes up with a crafty plan and manages to escape from prison. Feeling extremely pleased with himself, he croons a smug tune about his remarkable talents and intelligence. Suddenly, Badger arrives and puts an end to Toad's boastful good mood. We hear dramatic music with rushes of fast notes and trembling chords, whilst Badger explains that Toad has no home to return to because an evil gang of weasels has taken over Toad Hall! Thankfully, all is not lost, because wise Badger has a plan. Together with Rat and Mole, they will sing a 'ferocious and blood-curdling chorus' and recapture Toad Hall. Listen out for the cries of the weasels, ferrets and stoats as they get thwacked and squished!

Safely back in Toad Hall, Badger gives a toast and asks Toad to share a few words about the lesson he has learned. Toad is no longer a reckless, arrogant creature hurtling around in his stolen motor car. Instead, he is thoughtful and calm. Accompanied by the soothing sounds of the flute and harp, Toad reflects on his gratitude for his home and his friends. 'Home is a special kind of feeling. There's nowhere better, no other place like home.'



PERFORMERS

St Martin's Voices
St Martin's Players

Conductor Gabriella Noble

Narrator and Gaoler's Daughter Laurel Neighbour

Toad Richard Robbins

Mole Helen Stanley

Badger Peter Norris

Ratty Alexander Hume

St Martin's Voices

Soprano

Rachel Haworth

Daisy Walford

Alto

Sophie Overin

Tenor

James Botcher

Bass

George Cook

Ben Tomlin

St Martin's Players

Flute

Ian Mullin

Oboe

Lydia Griffiths

Timpani

Tristan Fry

Double bass

Andrew Davis

Harp

Elizabeth Bass

Piano

Michael Cayton

St Martin's Voices is one of London's finest and most flexible vocal ensembles. As the flagship professional choral ensemble of St Martin-in-the-Fields, they sing for concerts, broadcasts and special services at St Martin's and beyond. Recent years have seen tours to the USA and South Africa and performances alongside the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, London Mozart Players, Southbank Sinfonia and Will Todd Ensemble. Their concert repertoire ranges from Bach *Mass in B minor* to Brahms *Requiem*, Purcell *Dido and Aeneas* to Parry *Songs of Farewell*.

At the heart of St Martin's Voices performance schedule is Great Sacred Music, a hugely varied weekly exploration of our religious heritage in words and music. This is accompanied by regular podcast episodes, most recently as part of the series *The Song and The Story* with Rev Dr Sam Wells.

St Martin's Voices feature frequently in BBC broadcasts including Radio 3 *Choral Evensong*, Radio 4 *Sunday Worship* and *Daily Service*. In addition, they have sung for a variety of televised events and services, along with performances at Lambeth Palace, the Houses of Parliament and Greenbelt Festival. St Martin's Voices can also be heard on CD recordings, including two releases in collaboration with composer Will Todd, *Christmas in Blue* (2013) and *Passion Music* (2019).

In response to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, St Martin's Voices have extended their digital recording projects, sharing regular online services and concerts, as well as featuring in the Church of England online worship resources that have attracted more than 40 million views across digital platforms.

St Martin's Players is a newly established ensemble bringing together some of London's finest musicians for concerts and broadcasts from St Martin-in-the-Fields, in the heart of the city. Since their premiere performances for the Sound of St Martin's inaugural Summer Online Festival in 2020, St Martin's Players have delighted audiences with their versatility and flair in programmes ranging from Haydn's *Nelson Mass* to Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. Through these performances, they have played a key role in the reimagining of concerts from St Martin's during the period of COVID-19 and lockdown, bringing digital engagement to the fore and championing creative programming and fresh musical arrangements.

Highlights have included concerts in collaboration with renowned broadcaster and author Zeb Soanes, as well as recording the Christmas Morning broadcast for BBC Radio 4 in December 2020. St Martin's Players also perform regularly in close partnership with St Martin's Voices, infusing larger scale choral works with chamber music vibrancy, including a special performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria* in its original arrangement for upper voices.



Laurel Neighbour has performed with many professional choirs in London, for example London Contemporary Orchestra, St Martin's Voices, Philharmonia Chorus, National Portrait Gallery Choir, and St Paul's Cathedral Consort.

She has toured the UK and made several TV and radio appearances with Gareth Malone's Voices, performed in Europe with Apollo5, and was lucky enough to sing with The Rolling Stones in 2012 at the O2 as part of the choir for "You Can't Always Get What You Want".

She has studied on The Sixteen's training programme, Genesis Sixteen, and held choral scholarships with Voces8 and St Martin-in-the-Fields, and studied Music at the University of Nottingham. She grew up in Kent, benefiting from Kent Youth Choirs training, and playing in Ashford Youth Jazz Orchestra, learning to play several instruments in her mother's folk band.

Laurel is known for her versatility, with her upper vocals having a unique and ethereal sound, whilst she maintains presence and expression in her lower range. She can sight-read music fluently or learn by ear, is used to memorising parts quickly for professional performance, and experienced at home recording.

Tenor **Richard Robbins** sings with 'irresistible baritone softness' according to Classical Source and has just been appointed a Young Artist for the City Music Foundation 2020-22.



He has recently collaborated with Ante Terminum Productions to acclaim for his portrayal of the Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River*, with the Spectator describing his acting to be 'expertly judged.'

Richard has also been a Young Artist for Handel House, Leeds Lieder, Oxford Lieder, Brighton Early Music and has participated in a Fellowship with St Martin in the Fields. This has led to workshops and masterclasses with artists like Sir Thomas Allen, Dame Felicity Lott, Mark Padmore CBE, John Mark - Ainsley OBE, Roger Vignoles and Ann Murray.

He currently studies with Amanda Roocroft and studied Vocal Performance on the postgraduate course at the Royal Academy of Music under the tutelage of renowned tenor, the late Philip Dohan and highly respected interpreter of song, Joseph Middleton, winning the Rhonda Jones Scholarship upon graduation.

He has collaborated with well respected ensembles and sung solo performances of Bach's *B Minor Mass* with The Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Beethoven's *Mass in C* with the London Mozart Players. He has soloed with The Southbank Sinfonia and musicians from the Academy of Ancient Music and his recent performances include Oratorio, Opera and Concert work in venues such as; St Martin-in-the-Fields; King's Place; Hackney Empire and The National Portrait Gallery. Forthcoming ensemble performances include working with Festival Voices on an electronica infused version of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and a concert collaboration in October with Baroque group, Ensemble Tircis, for Handel House. He is also a founding member of the Chamber Choir of London under the direction of Dominic Peckham which tours across Europe and the UK.

Since graduating from Royal Holloway with First Class Honours, Richard continues to be generously sponsored by The Richard Stapley Trust, The Devon Educational Trust and The Veronica Awdry Foundation.



Helen Stanley studied at the Royal Academy of Music and is a recent graduate of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Opera Course, where she won the Seligman Award for Excellence. Her opera credits include Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algieri*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Fidalma in *Il matrimonio segreto*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and the title roles in *Dido and Aeneas* and *Savitri*. Other recent work includes Juno in *Semele* for Mid Wales Opera, Geneviève in a production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* which incorporated film and live performance and Popova in *The Bear*, performed at the Walton Estate in Ischia, Italy.

Helen is particularly interested in 20th and 21st century opera and has been involved in the premieres of several works at the Grimeborn, Tête à Tête and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals. Most recently, she played Mary in the UK premiere of *Cabildo*, the only opera by American composer Amy Beach, composed in 1932.

Helen's solo concert highlights have included Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* with the Southbank Sinfonia, Bach *B Minor Mass* with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Schmitt *La Tragédie de Salomé* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and Daniel-Lesur *Cantique des Cantiques* with the BBC Symphony Chorus. She has appeared as a soloist in opera galas with Welsh National Opera and Mid Wales Opera and regularly sings as a soloist and a member of St Martin's Voices at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Helen is currently singing in the chorus of Grange Park Opera's 2021 season in *La Bohème*, *Falstaff*, *Ivan the Terrible* and the world premiere of Anthony Bolton's *The Life and Death of Alexander Litvinenko*. She will reprise the role of Mary in *Cabildo* at Wilton's Music Hall this autumn and will later be appearing as Rubia in *La forza dell'amor paterno* with Barber Opera in Birmingham, in a production postponed from 2020.

Peter Norris is currently training at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on the Artist Masters programme where he studies with Robert Dean and Samantha Malk. He studied Music at Royal Holloway, University of London and was a member of the highly renowned Royal Holloway Chapel Choir. He also studied at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Scott Johnson and Julian Tovey.



Peter has performed with renowned artists and orchestras such as The BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Mozart Players, BBC Singers, The Sixteen and Voces8. He has also toured extensively throughout Europe and North America. Upcoming roles include Colliné (*La Bohème*) with The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Zerlensky (*Eugene Onegin*) with Green House Opera. Former roles include the cover for Calmon in *The Little Green Swallow* and Cadmus in Handel's *Semele*. Scene roles such as Don Pasquale, Frere Laurent, Leporello and Pandolfe. He has been in the chorus for Sir John in *Love, Così Fan Tutte*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Carmen* and David Lang's *Prisoner of the State*.

Recent solo performances include Leighton's *Sequence for All Saints* and Chilcott's *Wenceslas*. Other solo highlights include Fauré's *Requiem*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Bach's *St John Passion*, Haydn's *Creation*, Mozart's *Requiem* and Bach's *Magnificat*. Upcoming solo work includes a recital of Brahms *Vier Ernste Gesänge*, a world premiere of Henry McPherson's song cycle *Paper Dreams* and a performance at Wigmore Hall with The Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In September, he will start training in the Opera Studio at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland.



An extremely versatile tenor, **Alexander Hume** has sung with world-renowned choirs and consort in the UK and abroad, including Tenebrae, The Hilliard Ensemble and Les Voix Animées. Opera credits include the title and lead tenor roles in Britten's *Albert Herring* and *The Rape of Lucretia*, respectively, with Aspect Opera. Regularly appearing as a soloist in major choral works all over the country, future projects include his St John's Smith Square debut as the Evangelist in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the English Baroque Choir, and playing the role of Rat in John Rutter's *The Wind in the Willows*, with St Martin Voices and Players at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Gabriella Noble is a conductor and singer based in London. In 2017 she graduated with a First Class degree in Music from Oxford University, where she conducted Oxford University Chorus and held a conducting scholarship with Schola Cantorum of Oxford. She went on to study solo voice ensemble singing under Robert Hollingworth at York University, where she conducted new music with the Chimera Ensemble.



As a fellow of the National Youth Choir, Gabriella enjoyed leading workshops with young musicians and taking part in outreach work. She continues to work as on the music staff for NYCGB, directing young musicians and exposing them to choral music. Gabriella conducts the Kingston Singers, The Cares Family (charity) choir, and Port Meadow Sinfonia, an amateur orchestra she co-created for musicians who have chosen to work in other fields. Gabriella was the 2019/20 conducting scholar for Genesis Sixteen, The Sixteen's Young Artist Programme.

Our thanks to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, for supporting the ReSound concert series at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

This concert was pre-recorded on Tuesday 25 May 2021 and edited together before broadcast. The performers and technical crew and carefully adhere to all current government regulations for COVID-19.

ReSound

ReSound is a brand new concert series from St Martin-in-the-Fields, aiming to put St Martin's at the heart of music-making in the capital. The series is focused around an exciting range of online concerts, some of which can also be attended in-person.

The concerts are streamed through our online platform, StMartins.Digital, and are available to watch as many times as you like for 30-60 days. We also have the opportunity for you to be a part of the audience for some of our concert recordings. Explore our range of in-person and online events by visiting the links below.

Voices in the Crypt, available [online](#) until Wednesday 21 July

St Martin's Voices with Simon Russell Beale



Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day

Love bade me welcome

Long live fair Oriana

Paddington Bear's First Concert

Available [online](#) until Wednesday 21 July



Rachel Podger: The Guardian Angel

Available [online](#) until Wednesday 23 June

St Martin's Voices: Brahms Requiem

Available [online](#) until Thursday 24 June



**Will Todd Ensemble and St Martin's Voices:
Songs of Love**

Available [online](#) from Saturday 28 May

The Wind in the Willows

Available [online](#), from Monday 31 May





Art Deco Trio: Gershwinicity
Attend in-person, Monday 31 May, 3.00pm

Benson Wilson and James Baillieu
Available online from Monday 7 June
Attend in-person, Saturday 5 June, 7.00pm



Academy of St Martin in the Fields: Miniatures
Available online from Tuesday 8 June
Attend in-person, Thursday 3 June, 7.00pm

St Martin's Voices: Brahms Liebeslieder Waltzes
Available online from Tuesday 15 June,
Attend in-person, Friday 11 June, 7.00pm



Academy of St Martin in the Fields Chamber Concert: Duets, Trios and Quartets
In-person only, Saturday 12 June, 12.30pm

**Quartet for the End of Time:
Melvyn Tan and Friends**
Available online from Tuesday 22 June
Attend in-person, Saturday 19 June, 7.00pm



**St Martin's Voices with Anna Lapwood:
Upon your heart**
Available online from Wednesday 23 June
Attend in-person, Monday 21 June, 7.00pm



Organ Recital: Rachel Mahon

Available online from Saturday 26 June

Organ Recital: Ben Giddens

Available online from Saturday 26 June



The Hermes Experiment

Available online from Monday 28 June

Attend in-person, Friday 25 June, 7.00pm

Vivaldi and the Osperia del Pieta

Available online from Tuesday 29 June

Attend in-person, Saturday 26 June, 7.00pm



I Fagiolini: The ache, the bite and the banger

Available online from Wednesday 30 June

Attend in-person, Thursday 24 June, 7.00pm

Free, non-ticketed events

The Song and The Story, in-person only, Sundays, 3.30pm



With thee there is light, Sunday 30 May

Choral Miniatures, Sunday 6 June

Innocence and Experience, Sunday 13 June

The Passing of the Year, Sunday 20 June

In youth is pleasure, Sunday 27 June

St Martin's Chorus:
Music for joy and living
In-person only, Saturday 26 June, 12.30pm



Festival Evensong with the
Choir of St Martin-in-the-Fields
In-person, Sunday 27 June, 5.00pm,
and live-streamed

As the impact of COVID-19 continues, we need people like you to keep supporting us and helping the musicians we work with.

To help us keep playing on, please consider making a donation today: www.smitf.org/donate

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RESOUND