



Composer/Arranger Profile: David Willcocks (1919-2015):

David Valentine Willcocks, the much loved, respected and highly influential conductor, organist, composer and music administrator, was born in Newquay, Cornwall.

He was a chorister at Westminster Abbey, then a music scholar at Clifton College, Bristol and an organ scholar at Kings College, Cambridge.

During the war he was involved in action at Normandy, and was decorated with a Military Cross by Field Marshall Montgomery.

After the war he returned to Cambridge and became a fellow of King's College, going on to spend three years as organist at Salisbury Cathedral, and Worcester Cathedral, and acting as principal conductor of the *Three Choirs Festival* in 1951, 1954 and 1957 whilst at Worcester.

In 1957 he became the Organist and Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge, succeeding Boris Ord. It was the annual broadcast of the *Nine Lessons and Carols* services from Kings College that brought him international fame and recognition.

The pure, vibrato-free sound of his choristers was instantly recognisable.

For 38 years he was director of the Bach Choir and made several important recordings with them, including the premiere recording of the Britten *War Requiem* and the first complete Bach *St Matthew Passion* in English.

To the amateur musician Willcocks is remembered for having edited several volumes of *Carols For Choirs*, along with Reginald Jacques, and John Rutter, which with their attractive harmonies and soaring descants, have become a mainstay of choirs during the Christmas Season.

Programme Notes: Carols For Choirs 1:

In August 1961 Oxford University Press published a practical, inexpensive new collection of carols and Christmas hymns in choral arrangements, with accessible orchestrations for many of the items available on hire.

The book; *Carols for Choirs* with its green livery and design of an angel on the cover, soon became one of the best-selling carol anthologies of all time.

The editors, Reginald Jacques and David Willcocks, ensured that the contents would serve concerts and services equally well, and that familiar repertoire was complemented with items especially written for the collection.

One of the book's features was the concept of uniting under one cover all the material that a choir would need for their event.

Such was the success of *Carols For Choirs 1*, that further volumes followed in the 70s and 80s, with John Rutter joining David Willcocks as fellow series editor (Jacques died in 1969).

Collectively, the books have enhanced and, in many cases, shaped and defined the Christmas musical experience of many thousands of singers, musicians and listeners for more than fifty years.

The *Carols For Choirs* series is used by cathedrals and town-square carol-singers, schools and parish churches, and by choral societies and folk simply wishing to enjoy carols in their homes.

Simon Wright, OUP 2012

1. O Come, All Ye Faithful:

Tr. F. Oakeley, W. T. Brooke and others. Composer unknown (probably 18th Century).
Arranged by David Willcocks.

2. Ding Dong Merrily On High:

16th Century French tune. Words by G.R. Woodward. Harmonized by Charles Wood.

3. Blessed Be That Maid Mary:

English traditional tune. Words by G.R. Woodward. Arranged by David Willcocks.

4. Good King Wenceslas:

Words by J. M. Neale. Harmonies by Sir John Stainer. Tune from *Piae Cantiones*. Arranged by Reginald Jacques.

5. Away In A Manger (first tune):

Words: Anon. Tune by W.J. Kirkpatrick (1838-1921). Arranged by David Willcocks.

Away In A Manger (second tune):

Traditional Normandy tune. Words by G.R. Woodward. Arranged by Reginald Jacques.

6. The Three Kings:

Tr. H. N. Bate. Peter Cornelius. Arranged by Ivor Atkins.

7. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing:

Words by C. Wesley, T. Whitefield & M Madan. Melody & Harmony adapted by W.H. Cummings from a chorus by Mendelssohn. Descant & organ part by David Willcocks.