

In memory of
Clifford Bunford 1919 - 2018
founder and conductor

CARDIFF BACH CHOIR

British Sinfonietta

Conductor Luke Spencer

Johann Sebastian Bach.

Mass in B minor



Saturday 11 May 2019
Hoddinott Hall, Wales Millennium Centre

Cliff in an unpublished personal memoir shares with the reader his personal view of his long career. He wrote: *'It was many years before I realised I was involved in one of the most edifying, humanising, creative and soul-enhancing activities of all. I was once asked which of the 3 musical activities in my life, i.e. singing, conducting, and teaching, I enjoyed most. I can only say that each had its splendid rewards: singing, for hopefully giving an audience pleasure; conducting, for the joy of investing the written notes with beauty; and teaching, for the opportunity to reveal to the pupil the loveliness of song.'*

We also remember tonight two of our choir members who both lost their battle with cancer earlier this year. Val Spittle and Angela Pirie Dye were enthusiastic members of the choir for many years. They brought to the choir a love of singing, friendship, fun and laughter and are both greatly missed .

The choir acknowledges the continued support of Ty Cerdd and Making Music

Cardiff Bach Choir is a registered charity. registration no 1115503

CARDIFF BACH CHOIR

PRESIDENT Dr Haydn Jones OBE

BRITISH SINFONIETTA

LEADER Naomi Rump

MASS IN B MINOR *J S BACH*

Conductor Luke Spencer

SOLOISTS

Soprano Gail Pearson **Counter tenor** Kieron Connor- Valentine

Tenor Guy Withers **Bass** Philip Lloyd Evans

Continuo Sally Tarlton

CLIFFORD BUNFORD (CLIFF) 1919-2018

FOUNDER AND CONDUCTOR OF CARDIFF BACH CHOIR FOR FORTY YEARS

Clifford Bunford, who died two hours into his hundredth year, had a career as a singer, singing teacher and choral conductor stretching over eighty years. He was an astute musician who was held in great affection by students, choristers and music-lovers. He had a very appealing personality and was generally regarded as a 'one off', whose vibrant personality reflected a wealth of life experiences. For almost 20 years he was head of practical studies in the Department of Music (as it was then called) at University College, Cardiff

He was brought up as one of a large family in Moy Road, Aberfan, a small house just below that infamous coal tip, typically in very impoverished circumstances. But his surroundings were very cultural and his early development was nurtured by a community whose values ran deep and where social and artistic activities acted as an escape from the 'violence of mining'.

Singing and choral music was of a high standard in the Merthyr valley and the young Cliff was blessed with a wonderful voice. He excelled as a boy soprano. It seems that he was very much the Aled Jones of his day. Cliff had progressed very well academically in Quakers Yard Grammar School. but there was to be no smooth transition for Cliff to College or University. Instead in 1939 there was enforced entry into coal mining.

However, in 1945 at the age of 25 escape was possible and he took the opportunity to enter the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire to study for an Arts degree focusing on music. By then he had a solid reputation in Wales and beyond as a successful freelance tenor. During the 1940s and 50s he shared the stage with distinguished artists, including the late Kathleen Ferrier. In the 1950s he started to perform on the BBC as a soloist, giving first broadcast performances of songs by his friend Grace Williams and also songs by David Wynne, Mansel Thomas and others. He was a founder member of the BBC Octet and during the 1960s appeared often on television in programmes like *Land of Song*.

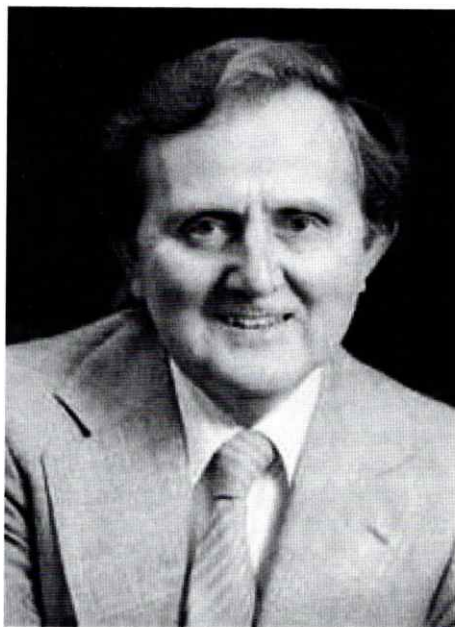
A career in opera would surely have been a natural development, but Cliff sang in only one production for the WNO. Cliff came to a disappointing conclusion that opera was not for him because he regarded himself as too short for the best roles. He himself explained this in his characteristic way, saying '*It would have taken a huge suspension of disbelief to accept me winning battles against burly baritones or winning the hand of equally burly sopranos.*'

Instead Cliff opted for teaching becoming an effective and inspiring music teacher. In the early 1950s he was appointed Head of Music at Cathays High School and his pioneering work there in promoting musical performances was widely acclaimed.

Towards the end of the 1960s, Cliff became head of practical music at the expanded University Music Department in Corbett Road. He gave vocal tuition to many aspiring singers – some of whom were to achieve fame in Wales and outside. Visiting singers and notable musicians such as Peter Pears and Sir Geraint Evans took up his invitation to give master classes at the University. He conducted scores of concerts, but pride of place must surely be given for the great effort that went into producing magnificent performances of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Britten's *War Requiem* in St David's Hall involving the combined forces of the University Choir and the Cardiff Bach choir

In 1962 Cliff Bunford founded the Cardiff Bach Choir, with his devoted wife Ann as accompanist. He was determined that Cardiff would have its own Bach Choir. For over forty years under his direction the Bach Choir made a great contribution to the musical life of the city and it was no coincidence that music by Bach featured prominently in his funeral. In his rehearsals his musical preparation was meticulous and demanding. They were never boring occasions and were generally enlivened by an inimitable dose of wit and humour. There are still members of the choir who remember his rehearsals and his never-ending repertoire of jokes and stories, some of which they heard many times. The choir continues to flourish and is delighted to give this performance the B Minor Mass in his memory. I think he would have approved!!!

(thanks to Richard Elfed Jones)



Clifford Bunford 1919-2018