

A truly 'starry' night at Salisbury Cathedral

Are you suffering from post-Christmas depression? Nothing to look forward to? Then worry no more. A star-studded cast of musicians and actors, together with the cathedral choir, are presenting a magical evening on Saturday, January 24.



IF YOU are looking for something really special to brighten up a dreary January once the celebrations for Christmas and the New Year are over, head for Salisbury Cathedral on the evening of Saturday, January 24.

You will find a star-studded cast of musicians and actors who, with the cathedral choir, have been brought together to take part in a wonderful fund-raising gala performance, *A Starry Night*. The show promises to be visually stunning and is packed with glorious music.

The evening has been master-minded by the Countess of Chichester in her role as chairman of Salisbury Cathedral Girl Choristers' Fund. She is "...absolutely delighted to be bringing this marvellous event to Salisbury Cathedral having produced it once before to a capacity and enthusiastic audience in St John's, Smith Square, London.

A Starry Night is based very loosely on the Epiphany story as told in Menotti's 1951 opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors* and I am very grateful to the well-known writer, playwright and librettist Helen Cooper who has adapted

the story and produced this charming script to entertain both adults and children alike."

The story tells of a young disabled boy called Amahl who lives alone with his poor and widowed mother. Their lives are changed forever after a visit one cold winter's evening from the 'night visitors' who are none other than the three wise men. They need a place to shelter as they pursue their travels following the star to Bethlehem to find the newborn king, the infant Jesus.

The simple narrative tells of selflessness, faith and forgiveness. With Tony Graham, artistic director of the famed Unicorn Theatre for Children, as director and Christine Sundt, renowned for her work with London Children's Ballet and the English National Ballet School, in charge of choreography, this is clearly going to be a fantastic production.

Lady Chichester is also thrilled to be bringing Christopher Warren-Green to the cathedral to conduct the London Chamber Orchestra. Warren-Green has been LCO's principal conductor and music director for the past 21 years as well as guest conductor to a long list of prestigious symphony orchestras around the world. They are joined by international award-winning trumpeter Angela Whelan.

Joanna David, one of England's favourite actresses, performs the central role of narrator and the hugely talented young star Daniel Pugh takes the title role of Amahl. Lily Bevan plays Sophia, his bemused mother. The final star of the show is Thérèse the camel who performs a central role as she accompanies the 'night visitors' on their journey. Thérèse is a seasoned professional having performed in front of the



Above: Angela Whelan; Top left: Joanna David; Top middle: Rebecca Evans; Top right: Christopher Warren-Green; Middle: Daniel Pugh with Thérèse the camel; Above right: Salisbury Cathedral Choir; Below: London Chamber Orchestra

Queen and Prince Philip and her television appearances include *Richard and Judy*, *Blue Peter* and *BBC South*.

The musical feast for the gala includes the opening chorus from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, arias from Handel's *Messiah*, Peter Cornelius' setting of *Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar*, and pieces by Copland and Offenbach, all performed by a truly distinguished group of

soloists. Rebecca Evans (soprano), is well known in all the major international opera houses. She appeared in the Proms and was seen – as was Christopher Warren-Green – on the BBC's *Maestro* series. John Mark Ainsley has an international career and regularly appears on the Proms as does Neal Davies (baritone), winner of the Lieder Prize and David Soar (bass baritone).

David Halls, director of music at the cathedral, is very pleased that the cathedral choir is taking part in the gala event. "The choir is honoured to have been invited to feature and add its own particular sound to this musical feast. The girl choristers are especially excited at the prospect of working alongside Thérèse the camel."

Lady Chichester added: "The trustees of Salisbury Cathedral Girl Choristers' Fund are deeply indebted to all the artistes who are involved with this performance. We say an enormous 'thank you' to all the singers and actors who are literally 'giving' their services for the evening and to the Earl of Chichester and Lady Georgina Pelham who have very generously sponsored the orchestra."

The performance is preceded by an exclusive reception. For tickets either for the reception and gala or for the gala alone visit www.salisburyfestival.co.uk or call 01722 782210. Reduced price tickets are available for children under 15 years old. WL

