

**THE DAWN CHORUS WITH THE ORIANA SINGERS AND THE TABARD PLAYERS July 08**

REVIEW BY DONALD HOLLINS

**On a lovely June evening in the ancient village church of St Martin in North Nibley the Oriana Singers and the Tabard Players joined forces to present The Dawn Chorus in aid of the Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper. The theme was BIRDS . I counted about 25 different birds during the concert plus an indeterminate number of domestic birds, ducks, waterfowl, wild swans and various residents of Old MacDonald's farm , not all of whom had feathers. For the most part singers and readers evoked an England of yesteryear when the pastoral scene predominated, the skylark sang overhead and the countryside was gentle and unblemished.**

**The four Tabard readers were clever to find so many poems with a bird theme. They ranged from The Windhover by Gerard Manley Hopkins and The Kingfisher by WH Davies to The Darkling Thrush by Hardy and Ducks by Gloucestershire's own FW Harvey. Pam Ayres's poem I'm a Starling me Darling had the audience in fits of laughter. All four of the readers read clearly and well .**

**Once again the Oriana Singers were in fine voice and enjoyment in their singing was evident. Banchieri's Contrappunto Bestiale set the tone with numerous miaows and cuckoos. Conductor David Moss's own The Merry Month of May delightfully conveyed the sylvan scene and Vautor's popular Sweet Suffolk Owl was a joy. A highlight of this lighter-hearted concert was The Blue Bird by Stanford where the tone was sadder and more wistful. Soprano Mary Moss excelled in the difficult solo part as she did in The Cuckoo, arranged by her husband. Two madrigals by Weelkes reinforced the rural scene before the choir ended this delightful concert with the syncopated Red,Red Robin and visited that farm of Old MacDonald. Oh, and of course that Berkeley Square nightingale got in the act as well.**