

Please join us for
English

West Gallery Music

in a series of
Monthly Workshops
for Singers and Instrumentalists
led by Bruce Randall

Autumn 2009 dates:

Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, & Dec. 13.

on Sundays from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. (Nov. 8 will be from 1-3 p.m.)

at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 258 Concord St., Newton Lower Falls, Mass.

The October 11 meeting will feature guest leaders

Sheila & Edwin Macadam

of Oxford, England, founders and leaders of the *West Gallery Music* revival.

Don't miss this special event!

You also won't want to miss the Fourth Annual

PUB CAROL SING!

Sponsored by the *Folk Song Society of Greater Boston* and *The West Gallery Quire*.

Sunday, December 6th, 2009, at *Doyle's Cafe* in Jamaica Plain, Mass.

www.fssgb.org

Please join us for our **Eleventh** season of West Gallery Music!

Do you harbour a secret belief that a lot of *Handel* would sound great when sung like a **pub tune**? Do you think the *church choir* would be more fun if you could play along with your **fiddle**? If so, come and join us! Find out what the **English** were doing while we were evolving the *Shape Note* tradition, and hear what **Thomas Hardy**'s characters, or **Jane Austen** and her preacher father, heard on a Sunday morning!

For the first time in America, a group has been formed to sing and play the anthems, psalm-tunes, and hymns of the *West Gallery* tradition. **Bruce Randall**, a member of the *West Gallery Music Association*, leads monthly workshops in the Boston area. Now in their eleventh year, these sessions are open to all **singers** and **melody-instrument** players. For more information, please contact:

Bruce Randall - 218 Broadway, Haverhill, MA 01832 - (978) 373-5852 - melismata@hotmail.com

SEE OUR WEB SITE: www.laymusic.org/wg.html

See the West Gallery Music Association's Web site at: www.wgma.org.uk.

West Gallery Music.

WEST GALLERY MUSIC is traditional sacred music from English village churches of the 18th and early 19th centuries. During that period, choirs were formed from local residents; the village instrumentalists were often also recruited, as a means of assisting the singers. The ensemble of singers and players usually performed from a gallery at the *west* (rear) end of the church, so this music is customarily known as *west gallery* music.

The music is powerful, hearty and rhythmic; sometimes the instruments double the vocal lines, while at other times they play independent “symphonies” between verses. Some of the tunes sound like folk-Handel (also known as “Barnyard Baroque”), others are stark and simple (like an Appalachian folk-hymn), and many are in the “fuging” style which also became popular in late eighteenth-century New England.

Novelist **Thomas Hardy** came from a family of church musicians; his novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* depicts the life and death of a typical church band and *Quire*.

Suggested Readings:

Under the Greenwood Tree. A novel by Thomas Hardy, 1896. The town of “Mellstock” is patterned after Hardy’s childhood home of *Puddletown*, where his father and uncles played in a church band.

Good Singing Still: Handbook on West Gallery Music, by Rollo G. Woods, 1995. Published by the West Gallery Music Association; contains over 60 short articles about the history and practice of West Gallery music, written by an acknowledged authority on the subject. 162 pp., pb. ISBN 1-899947-00-0.

Recordings available in the USA:

The Mellstock Band and Choir have several recordings available in the US. These include *Under the Greenwood Tree* (Saydisc CD no. 360), *Tenants of the Earth* (Wild Goose Records CD no. 281), and *The Dance at the Phoenix* (Beautiful Jo CD no. BEJOCD-28). These recordings present rural English church and village music, including dance tunes, hymns, carols, and traditional songs. See their web site at www.mellstockband.com.

Several *West Gallery Quires* have released their own recordings, often including compositions from their region, but most are available only from the group itself. See links on the **WGMA** web page below for more information.

Sing Lustily and with Good Courage sung by **Maddy Prior and The Carnival Band**. Arrangements of 18th- and 19th-century hymns, accompanied by various instruments. Although many pieces lack vocal harmony and some of the instruments and performance styles are not found in the West Gallery tradition, most of this music can *also* be found in the West Gallery repertoire, and some pieces come *very close* to WG style. The notes describe the emergence of hymn singing in 18th-century England (Saydisc no. SDL 383).

The West Gallery Music Association:

The **WGMA** is an organization of over 400 performers and scholars who share an interest in the psalmody and hymnody which was performed in the rural village churches of 18th and 19th century England. We are also interested in other aspects of the history and popular culture of the English-speaking world which have influenced or been influenced by our musical traditions. See our Web site at: www.wgma.org.uk.

See Our Web Site:

Be sure to see our Web site at www.laymusic.org/wg.html for more information about West Gallery music in the Boston area, including schedules, sounds, a photo gallery, links to other West Gallery sites, an on-line version of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and the opportunity to join our email list.
