

## Who is the Workshop for?

This Workshop is appropriate for people with ALL levels of musical/vocal experience. Michael brings the message that everyone has a singer and a musician inside them and looks forward to sharing his passion for choral folk singing with you.

So come and sing your heart out this weekend and hear these ancient springs of song sounding anew!

*A BOOKSHOP OF RESOURCES will be for sale at the workshop, including Michael's books of Choral Folk Song arrangements*

- *Songs for English Seasons & Ceremonies (vol. 1 & 2)*
- *The Magic & Mysteries of Celtic Folk Songs and*
- *Mysteries, Magic & Miracles in English & Celtic Folk Songs.*

## Workshop Leader

*Michael Deason-Barrow* - Director of Tonalis Music Centre - runs inspirational courses all over the world connected to Singing, Choir Leading and Community Music. Michael performed for a number of years in a folk/early music group called, 'The Chanters of Taliesin' in which he sang and played the hurdy gurdy. He has spent years researching the mysteries of modal music, as well as the Sean Nós tradition of Irish folk singing. Michael has over 25 years experience of leading folk music in community choirs and specialises in creating distinctive and original arrangements of folk songs for choirs.

**FEES: £98** (for booking by May 20) **£108** (by July 1) **£115** (thereafter)

**Concessions: £90** for students, OAPs, & people on income support by .

**Couples/Partners & Group Bookings (3+): £85/ £92/ £98** (see date deadlines above)

**Work Scholarship: £70** (by ) For details, contact the Tonalis office.

**Times:** 11am - 6:30pm Saturday 10am - 5pm Sunday

**Lunches:** Bring your own or local cafés. Tea & Coffee @ £2 per day

A Registration Letter incl. travel directions will be sent on receipt of your application.

**Tonalis, 4 Castle Farm Close, Leighterton, GLOS GL8 8UY**

## APPLICATION FORM - 'Ancient Ritual Songs'

Please complete & send a cheque to the above address payable to - 'Tonalis', or pay directly to Tonalis Music Centre: Sort Code 08-92-50, Acc.# 68684633

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Ancient Ritual Songs of Season and Ceremony



Journey into:  
the Mysteries, Magic and Miracles  
of English and Celtic Folk Song  
& Explore the Wheel of the Year in Song

Meet an extraordinary Cast of Characters including John Barleycorn, the Green Man, Old Mother Eve & the Hoodening Hoss. . . Sources include Pagan Customs, the Gnostic Gospels & Ancient Myths

*Tonalis*

Led by Michael Deason-Barrow

25 – 26 July, 2026

VENUE - THE ARKELL CENTRE, NAILSWORTH, GLOS  
Enquiries: Tel. 01666-890460 info@tonalismusic.co.uk

## Go on a Musical Journey around the Wheel of the Year.

Underneath all music there is an ageless and archetypal layer of folk songs called **the 'Songs of Season and Ceremony'**.

A strand of spellbinding mysticism runs through these songs which often involve pre-Christian mysteries with imagery drawn from Gnostic, ancient folklore and Celtic sources. These songs, you will find, are not mere curiosities, they contain deep seeds for our souls. Moreover, they often sing of the threshold between the physical and the spiritual worlds.

**This workshop invites you to re-discover forgotten and lost treasures and step through a gate into a completely different realm of music, so that a hidden vision of music can arise out of the shadows and provide us with deep and alternative sources of meaning.**

All over Albion there are ancient songs and ritual customs which have left their traces in the land, the collective psyche of its people and, above all, in our musical culture: if only we knew where to look for them. But this music has been consigned to the margins as it's been replaced by the kind of superficial substitutes that are so influential today.

So just as Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger and Seán Ó Riada collected folk songs many years ago believing that they expressed something that was much truer and more authentic, so this workshop will step off the well-known musical pathways offered by classical music, jazz and pop music, etc.

*For each song Michael will introduce you to the deeply meaningful stories, symbols and myths that stand behind them. We'll then sing the songs in one of two ways:*

- i) in their original form - namely as an unaccompanied line of pure modal melody. You'll find some songs are chant-like, some are hypnotic and others are ritualistic and elemental. Above all, each song is full of 'shape-shifting' melodies and rhythms.
- ii) as songs with magical harmonies which complement the essence of the original song in the distinctive arrangements Michael has specialised in creating over the years. Here you'll find added parts influenced by improvised folk voicing including the use of drones, parallel harmonies and chords full of open 5ths and 4ths

You will also have the chance to meet beautiful forms of ORNAMENTATION, FREER RHYTHMS and the natural wildness of choral heterophony that brings about a RE-WILDING OF MUSIC so that the FREE STYLE and NATURAL SOUND OF FOLK SONG can emerge.

## Here's the magical REPERTOIRE of RITUAL FOLK SONGS we'll sing:

'THE LEAVES OF LIFE' - encounter the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death from Gnostic sources in song

'IN COMES I, OLD APRIL FOOL' - sing a new folk song on the ancient myth of April Fool's Day

The PADSTOW 'OBBY 'OSS' - join the celebrated Cornish Maytime fertility ritual

'DOWN IN YON FOREST' - meet the Grail myth, the May Queen and the Virgin Mary in song

'THE DANCERS OF STANTON DREW' - join a mid-summer folk song telling the story of the wedding of Sue & William and how they're turned into standing stones at midnight

'OLD MOTHER EVE' - explore the myth of Adam and Eve in a rare summer wassail from Somerset

'THE FAIRIES LOVE SONG' - sing an enchanting Hebridean song uniting the physical & the spiritual

'JOHN BARLEYCORN' - sing the classic folk song on the killing & resurrection of the ancient Corn God

'LYKE WAKE DIRGE' - explore the mysteries of Samhain and All Souls in a magical incantation

'COCK ROBIN AND CUTTY WREN' - sing an incantation featuring Shiver to Shudder & Chatter to Chill

'THE KING' - explore why the wren is the 'King of the Birds' & is ceremonially paraded around villages

A WINTER 'GREEN MAN' SONG - join in some mayhem with a winter Green Man

'THE BITTER WITHY' - sing of Christ's childhood miracles drawn from the apocryphal Gospels

'THE HOODENING HOSS' - meet the Marie-Lwyd tradition in a glorious re-telling by Hugh Lupton

'THE CHERRY TREE CAROL' - sing one of the most subtle of all English folk songs with its glorious organic rhythms that tell of a miracle from the Gnostic gospels

*The workshop will then conclude with the chance to sing an old Gaelic blessing - 'Deus Meus' - which is full of Celtic Knot-like spirals in music.*

### Testimonial

**"this is amazing, vibrant choral music that sounds like nothing else I've ever heard before!"**