

Civil Service
Choir

Johann Sebastian Bach Weihnachts Oratorium

Parts one & six

1.05pm Thursday 23 January
St John's Smith Square
London SW1P 3HA

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Welcome to the Civil Service Choir's tenth performance in this prestigious venue – and London's only baroque concert hall. Over 250 concerts are featured here each year, so do look at what is on.

Our first concert here was in 2013, and since 2017 our concerts have featured in the St John's Smith Square Holy Week Festival. In 2019 we were fortunate to perform three concerts here – Schubert's two settings of the *Stabat Mater* in April; Ola Gjeilo's *Sunrise Mass* in July; and Bob Chilcott's *A Little Jazz Mass* and Will Todd's *Songs of Love* in November, as part of the London Jazz Festival. I am so very grateful to Richard Heason, Director of St John's Smith Square, and his team, for giving us the opportunity to perform here regularly and for all their support.

2019 was a remarkable year for the Choir – in addition to the three concerts here, we sang in Westminster Abbey, Central Hall Westminster, and at St Martin-in-the-Fields. What will 2020 hold? We already have two further performances at St John's Smith Square confirmed – in April, when we will perform Dvořák's *Mass in D* as part of the Holy Week Festival, and in November, when we will perform Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* in the London Jazz Festival.

At today's concert you will hear the first and sixth parts of J.S Bach's *Weihnachts Oratorium*. Now you are here we can admit it is the Christmas Oratorio. We hope you will forgive us for stretching Christmas, but Christmastide continues until Candlemass on 2 February and Bach's music is wonderful at any time. We are delighted to have soloists Clare Tunney, Robert Forrest and James Geidt performing with us again and we welcome Frances Gregory, singing with us for the first time. We also have our bespoke orchestra, with many of the musicians now regularly associated with us.

The Choir recently celebrated its tenth birthday. Ten years ago, while trying to rehearse a small group of colleagues in a basement room, with a radio blaring from a room next door, I could not have imagined the incredible choir journey ahead. 125 performances on – some small, some huge – I hope you will be delighted by where we have got to today. On everyone's behalf I should like to thank you for making it all worthwhile by coming to support us and for your generosity at the end, as we do all this for charity.



Music Director, the Civil Service Choir

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Forthcoming public performances:

Tuesday 7 April, 1.05pm

Dvořák Mass in D

Holy Week Festival

St John's Smith Square

Summer Concert

Details to be confirmed

Saturday 21 November, 7.30pm

Will Todd Mass in Blue

London Jazz Festival

St John's Smith Square

Johann Sebastian Bach - Weihnachts Oratorium

(Parts One and Six)

The Civil Service Choir

Orchestra Consort

Clare Tunney (Soprano); Frances Gregory (Alto)

Robert Forrest (Tenor); James Geidt (Bass)

Conductor - Stephen Hall OBE

Part I - Cantata for the First Day of Christmas

1. Chorus

Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage,
Rühmet, was heute der Höchste getan!
Lasset das Zagen, verbannet die Klage,
Stimmet voll Jauchzen und Fröhlichkeit an!
Dienet dem Höchsten mit herrlichen Chören,
Laßt uns den Namen des Herrschers verehren!

Triumph, rejoicing, rise, praising these days now,
Tell ye what this day the Highest hath done!
Fear now abandon and banish complaining,
Join, filled with triumph and gladness, our song!
Serve ye the Highest in glorious chorus,
Let us the name of our ruler now honour!

2. Recitative (Tenor)

Es begab sich aber zu der Zeit, daß ein Gebot von dem Kaiser Augusto ausging, daß alle Welt geschätzt würde. Und jedermann ging, daß er sich schätzen ließe, ein jeglicher in seine Stadt. Da machte sich auch auf Joseph aus Galiläa, aus der Stadt Nazareth, in das jüdische Land zur Stadt David, die da heißet Bethlehem; darum, daß er von dem Hause und Geschlechte David war: auf daß er sich schätzen ließe mit Maria, seinem vertrauten Weibe, die war schwanger. Und als sie daselbst waren, kam die Zeit, daß sie gebären sollte. (Luke 2:1, 3-6)

It occurred, however, at the time that a decree from the Emperor Augustus went out that all the world should be enrolled. And everyone then went forth to be enrolled, each person unto his own city. And then as well went up Joseph from Galilee from the city of Nazareth into the land of Judea to David's city which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and of the lineage of David to be enrolled there with Mary, who was betrothed to be his wife, and she was pregnant. And while they were in that place, there came the time for her to be delivered.

3. Recitative (Alto)

Nun wird mein liebster Bräutigam,
Nun wird der Held aus Davids Stamm
Zum Trost, zum Heil der Erden
Einmal geboren werden.
Nun wird der Stern aus Jakob scheinen,
Sein Strahl bricht schon hervor.
Auf, Zion, und verlasse nun das Weinen,
Dein Wohl steigt hoch empor!

Now is my dearest bridegroom rare,
Now is the prince of David's stem
As earth's redeeming comfort
Here born in time amongst us.
Now will shine bright the star of Jacob,
Its beam e'en now breaks forth.
Rise, Zion, and abandon now thy weeping,
Thy fortune soars aloft.

4. Aria (Alto)

Bereite dich, Zion, mit zärtlichen Trieben,
Den Schönsten, den Liebsten bald bei dir zu sehn!
Deine Wangen
Müssen heut viel schöner prangen,
Eile, den Bräutigam sehnlichst zu lieben!

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection,
The fairest, the dearest soon midst thee to see!
Thy cheeks' beauty
Must today shine much more brightly,
Hasten, the bridegroom to love with deep passion.

5. Chorale

Wie soll ich dich empfangen
Und wie begeg'n ich dir?
O aller Welt Verlangen,
O meiner Seelen Zier!
O Jesu, Jesu, setze
Mir selbst die Fackel bei,
Damit, was dich ergötze,
Mir kund und wissend sei!

How shall I then receive thee
And how thy presence find?
Desire of ev'ry nation,
O glory of my soul!
O Jesus, Jesus,
Set out for me thy torch,
That all that brings thee pleasure
By me be clearly known.

6. Recitative (Tenor)

Und sie gebar ihren ersten Sohn und wickelte ihn
in Windeln und legte ihn in eine Krippe, denn sie
hatten sonst keinen Raum in der Herberge. (Luke 2:7)

And she brought forth her first-born son and wrapped
him in swaddling clothes and laid him within a manger,
for they had no other room in the inn for them.

7. Chorale (Sopranos) and Recitative (Bass)

Er ist auf Erden kommen arm,
Wer will die Liebe recht erhöhen,
Die unser Heiland vor uns hegt?
Daß er unser sich erbarm,
Ja, wer vermag es einzusehen,
Wie ihn der Menschen Leid bewegt?
Und in dem Himmel mache reich,
Des Höchsten Sohn kömmt in die Welt,
Weil ihm ihr Heil so wohl gefällt,
Und seinen lieben Engeln gleich.
So will er selbst als Mensch geboren werden.
Kyrieleis!

He is to earth now come so poor,
Who will the love then rightly praise
Which this our Saviour for us keeps?
That he us his mercy show
Yea, is there one who understandeth
How he by mankind's woe is moved?
And in heaven make us rich
The Most High's Son comes in the world
Whose health to him so dear is held,
And to his own dear angels like.
So will he as a man himself be born now.
Kyrieleison!

8. Aria (Bass)

Großer Herr, O starker König,
Liebster Heiland, O wie wenig
Achtest du der Erden Pracht!
Der die ganze Welt erhält,
Ihre Pracht und Zier erschaffen,
Muß in harten Krippen schlafen.

Mighty Lord, O strongest sovereign,
Dearest Saviour, O how little
Heedest thou all earthly pomp!
He who all the world doth keep,
All its pomp and grace hath fashioned,
Must within the hard crib slumber.

9. Chorale

Ach mein herzliebtes Jesulein,
Mach dir ein rein sanft Bettlein,
Zu ruhn in meines Herzens Schrein,
Daß ich nimmer vergesse dein!

Ah my beloved'd Jesus-child,
Make here thy bed, clean, soft and mild
For rest within my heart's own shrine
That I no more fail to be thine!

There will be a brief pause before Part VI

Part VI - Cantata for Epiphany

1. Chorus

Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben,
So gib, daß wir im festen Glauben
Nach deiner Macht und Hülfe sehn!
Wir wollen dir allein vertrauen,
So können wir den scharfen Klauen
Des Feindes unversehrt entgehn.

Lord, when our boastful foes blow fury,
Help us to keep our faith unshaken
And to thy might and help to look!
We would make thee our sole reliance
And thus unharmed the cutting talons
And clutches of the foe escape.

2. Recitative (Tenor, Bass)

Da berief Herodes die Weisen heimlich und
erlernet mit Fleiß von ihnen, wenn der Stern
erschieden wäre. Und weiset sie gen Bethlehem
und sprach: — Ziehet hin und forschet fleißig
nach dem Kindlein, und wenn ihr's findet, sagt
mir's wieder, daß ich auch komme und es anbetet.

Then did Herod summon the wise men in secret, and
with diligence he learned from them when the star was
to appear. And he sent them forth to Bethlehem and
said: - Go ye forth and search with diligence for the
baby and when ye find him, bring me word, that I as
well may come and worship him.

3. Recitative (Soprano)

Du Falscher, suche nur den Herrn zu fällen,
Nimm alle falsche List,
Dem Heiland nachzustellen;
Der, dessen Kraft kein Mensch ermißt,
Bleibt doch in sichrer Hand.
Dein Herz, dein falsches Herz ist schon,
Nebst aller seiner List, des Höchsten Sohn,
Den du zu stürzen suchst, sehr wohl bekannt.

Thou liar, seek nought but the Lord's destruction,
Lay ev'ry cunning snare
And pitfall for our Saviour;
He, whose great pow'r no man can gauge,
Abides in hands secure.
Thy heart, thy lying heart e'en now,
Along with all its guile, to God's own Son
Whom thou dost strive to fell is fully known.

4. Aria (Soprano)

Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen
Stürzt ohnmächtger Menschen Macht.
Hier wird alle Kraft verlacht!
Spricht der Höchste nur ein Wort,
Seiner Feinde Stolz zu enden,
O, so müssen sich sofort
Sterblicher Gedanken wenden.

But a wave of his own hand
will bring down feeble human might.
Here is all dominion mocked!
Speak the Highest but one word,
His opponents' pride to finish,
Oh, then surely must at once
Change its course all mortal purpose.

5. Recitative (Tenor)

Als sie nun den König gehöret hatten, zogen sie
hin. Und siehe, der Stern, den sie im Morgenlande
gesehen hatten, ging für ihnen hin, bis daß er kam
und stund oben über, da das Kindlein war. Da sie
den Stern sahen, wurden sie hoch erfreuet und
gingen in das Haus und funden das Kindlein mit
Maria, seiner Mutter, und fielen nieder und beteten
es an und taten ihre Schätze auf und schenkten ihm
Gold, Weihrauch und Myrrhen. (Matthew 2:9-11)

And as soon as they had heard the king, they went their
way. And lo, the star, which in the East they had seen
already went before their way, until it came and stood
above that place where the baby was. And when they
saw the star they rejoiced with great gladness and went
into the house and found there the baby with Mary, his
mother, and fell before him and worshipped him and
opened up their treasures then and gave to him gold,
incense, and myrrh.

6. Chorale

Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier,
O Jesulein, mein Leben;
Ich komme, bring und schenke dir,
Was du mir hast gegeben.

I stand before thy cradle here,
O Jesus-child, my being,
I come now, bring and offer thee
What thou to me hast given.

Nimm hin! Es ist mein Geist und Sinn,
Herz, Seel und Mut, nimm alles hin,
Und laß dirs wohlgefallen!

Take all! It is my spirit, will,
Heart, soul and mind, take all to thee,
And let it serve thy pleasure!

7. Recitative (Tenor)

Und Gott befahl ihnen im Traum, daß sie sich
nicht sollten wieder zu Herodes lenken, und
zogen durch einen andern Weg wieder in ihr
Land. (Matthew 2:12)

And God then warned them in a dream that they
should not go again unto Herod, and they went by
another way back to their country.

8. Recitative (Tenor)

So geht! Genug, mein Schatz geht nicht von hier,
Er bleibet da bei mir,
Ich will ihn auch nicht von mir lassen.
Sein Arm wird mich aus Lieb
Mit sanftmutsvollem Trieb
Und größter Zärtlichkeit umfassen;
Er soll mein Bräutigam verbleiben,
Ich will ihm Brust und Herz verschreiben.
Ich weiß gewiß, er liebet mich,
Mein Herz liebt ihn auch inniglich
Und wird ihn ewig ehren.
Was könnte mich nun für ein Feind
Bei solchem Glück versehren!
Du, Jesu, bist und bleibst mein Freund;
Und werd ich ängstlich zu dir flehn:
Herr hilf!, so laß mich Hülfe sehn! Lord, help!

Then go! 'Tis well, my treasure leaveth not,
He bideth here with me,
I will not ever let him leave me.
His arm will in his love
With soft affection's warmth
And deepest tenderness embrace me;
He shall remain my faithful bridegroom,
I will my breast and heart assign him.
I know full well he loveth me,
My heart, too, loves him fervently
And shall always adore him.
What harm to me could any foe
Amidst such fortune do now?
Thou, Jesus, art fore'er my friend;
And when in fear I cry to thee:
Lord, help! let me thy help behold!

9. Aria (Tenor)

Nun mögt ihr stolzen Feinde schrecken;
Was könnt ihr mir für Furcht erwecken?
Mein Schatz, mein Hort ist hier bei mir.
Ihr mögt euch noch so grimmig stellen,
Droht nur, mich ganz und gar zu fällen,
Doch seht! Mein Heiland wohnet hier.

Now may ye boastful foes be frightened;
Ye can in me what fear awaken?
My store, my hoard is here by me.
Be ye unbounded in your fury
And threaten me with utter ruin,
Beware, my Saviour dwelleth here!

10. Recitative

Was will der Höllen schrecken nun,
Was will uns Welt und Sünde tun,
Da wir in Jesu Händen ruhn?

What hope hath hell's own terrors now,
What harm will world and sin us do,
While we in Jesus' hands rest sure?

11. Chorale

Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen
An eurer Feinde Schar,
Denn Christus hat zerbrochen,
Was euch zuwider war.
Tod, Teufel, Sünd und Hölle
Sind ganz und gar geschwächt;
Bei Gott hat seine Stelle
Das menschliche Geschlecht.

Now are ye well avenged
Upon your hostile host,
For Christ hath fully broken
All that which you opposed
Death, devil, hell and error
To nothing are reduced;
With God hath now its shelter
The mortal race of man.

J S Bach (1685-1750) – Weihnachts-Oratorium (Christmas Oratorio) - Parts 1 and 6



Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685 in Eisenach, the son of Johann Ambrosius Bach, a music director of town musicians. It is likely that the young Bach was taught to play the violin and harpsichord by his father, while his brother, Johann Christoph, taught him the clavichord. Bach's early musical life was also enriched by his uncles, who were all professional musicians. During his career, Bach held several key musical posts, among them, Director of Music to Leopold, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen and Music Director at St Thomas's Church, Leipzig. He also became Royal Court Composer to Augustus III in 1736. Bach is especially known for his choral music, such as the oratorios and motets, as well as the *Mass in B Minor*, along with instrumental music such as the *Brandenburg Concertos* and the four orchestral suites. He is also known as one of the greatest composers of organ music.

When the post of Cantor (Music Director) at St Thomas's Church, Leipzig became vacant in 1722, the city authorities had at first tried to persuade the composer Georg Philipp Telemann and then Johann Christoph Graupner to take up the post. Having failed to secure the release of either man from their current positions the authorities turned their attention to J S Bach, prompting a Council official Abraham Christoph Plaz to comment: "Since we cannot get the best, then we will have to settle for average". No doubt Plaz would have been made to eat his words, for in his Leipzig years, Bach produced many of his great choral masterpieces, including the *Magnificat* (1723), the *St John Passion* (1724), and the *St Matthew Passion* (1727).

Once appointed in 1723, Bach's gargantuan duties involved conducting the weekly performances at church services on Sundays and Feast Days and regularly composing for St Thomas's and Leipzig's other main Lutheran Church, St Nicholas'. In just his first two years in office, Bach composed around 100 Cantatas. In addition, Bach was required to teach Latin and Music, play the organ, train the choir and hire orchestral players and singers for the church services.

Although by 1734 Bach had been released from his Latin duties, it was still a challenging year, and Christmas, as always, was a challenging season. Christmas in Leipzig was a grand affair and it was celebrated with six events between Christmas Day and the Feast of the Epiphany: the birth of Jesus (25 December), the annunciation to the shepherds (26 December), the adoration of the shepherds (27 December), the circumcision and naming of Jesus (New Year's Day), the journey of the Magi (the Sunday after New Year's Day), and the adoration of the Magi (6 January). Bach's task was to compose a set of six cantatas, to be performed over the course of the six commemorative days of the 1734-5 season. The full set form the *Christmas Oratorio* (BWV 248).

Given the pressures on Bach's time, the composer was left with no option but to borrow music from other pieces he had written, both secular and sacred, in order to get the job done. Indeed, many of the movements are paraphrases from two earlier secular cantatas written the year before, in 1733, to celebrate the birthdays of the Prince Elector of Saxony and the Queen of Poland. The libretto, thought to have been compiled by Christian Friedrich Henrici (known as Picander), was adapted from the narrative of Christ's birth in the account by Luke 2:1-21 and Matthew 2:1-12.

At around three hours long, the complete Oratorio was never performed in its entirety in a single performance in Bach's lifetime. Indeed, the very different instrumental requirements of each cantata may lend credence to the fact that Bach did not necessarily intend for all six cantatas to be performed together. Nonetheless, there are certain unifying factors which show that the composer had a vision of the Oratorio as an artistic whole. For instance, it begins and ends in D major, it uses the same chorale tune in the first and last cantatas (no. 5, *Wie soll ich empfangen* and no. 64, *Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen*), and all of the opening choruses are in three time, understood in Bach's time to be a symbol of the Holy Trinity. Today, the Civil Service Choir performs Parts 1 and 6 (sung in German).

Clare Tunney - Soprano

North-East born Clare Tunney, is a Soprano at Royal Academy Opera studying with Nuccia Focile, Mary Nelson and Jonathan Papp and sings with Academy's prestigious, 'Song Circle'. Her solo Oratorio work includes Verdi *Requiem* (Guildford Cathedral, Romsey and Hexham Abbey), Poulenc *Stabat Mater* (St. John Smith Square), Handel *Messiah* (Arundel Cathedral), Haydn *Creation* (Durham Cathedral), Beethoven *Symphony No.9* (Guildford Cathedral), Mahler *Symphony No.4*, Dvořák *Stabat Mater*, Tippett *Child of our time*, Brahms *Requiem* and Mendelssohn *Elijah*. Her operatic roles to date includes the title role in Tchaikovsky's '*Iolanta*', 'Erste Dame' *Die Zauberfölte*, (Royal Academy Opera), 'Fiordiligi' *Così Fan Tutte*, 'Arminda' *La Finta Giardinera* (Ryedale Festival Opera), 'Mimi' *La Bohème*, 'Valencienne' *The Merry Widow*, 'Lady Billows' *Albert Herring*. In 2020, Clare will sing 'Nina' in Massenet's *Chèrubin* at RAO and will be joining the Glyndebourne chorus for their full summer festival.



In 2017, Clare was awarded first place in the prestigious 'National Mozart Competition', where she also won the Art Song category. In 2019, she placed 2nd in the Pavarotti Prize at the Academy and was a Semi-Finalist in the International Elizabeth Connell Prize. Other achievements include placing 3rd in London Song Festival's English Song Masterclass with Sir Thomas Allen, placing 2nd in the Isabel Jay Operatic Prize at RAM (2016, 2017 and 2018), a finalist in the Richard Lewis Competition, Arthur Burcher Memorial Prize, the John McAslan Prize and Academy's representative in the 'Kathleen Ferrier Bursary Competition'. Clare is a Georg Solti Accademia Scholar and is supported by The Fishmongers Company, John Clements and The Josephine Baker Trust.



Frances Gregory – Alto

Mezzo-soprano Frances Gregory is a recent graduate of Royal Academy Opera, where she was a Karaviotis scholar, winner of the 2018 RAM Club Prize and the Tom Hammond Opera Prize, a RAM/Kohn Foundation Bach cantata soloist, and a member of the Academy's prestigious Song Circle. Notable engagements whilst studying included Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* conducted by Trevor Pinnock as part of the RAM *Bach: the European* series, and her Wigmore Hall recital debut, promoting the Balladen of Carl Loewe, for Song Circle.

A 2019 Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera, she covered and performed the role of Flamel in Offenbach's *Fantasio*, as well as performing step-out solos in Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with the English Concert and Laurence Cummings, before joining the Lyric Opera Studio Weimar to sing Marcellina *Le nozze di Figaro*. She debuted with British Youth Opera in 2018 as Sycorax in Jeremy Sams' pastiche *The Enchanted Island*, earning herself the Dame Hilda Brackett Award from Sadler's Wells for her performance in the role. One of Laurence Cummings' Handel House Talents for 19/20, further plans for the season include a return to the Amersham Festival of Music to sing Dorabella *Così fan tutte*, the role of Laura in Tom Coult's premiere of *Violet* for Music Theatre Wales, a co-production between Snape Maltings and Theater Magdeburg, which will also run at the Linbury Theatre, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, in Autumn 2020, and The Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen* for Longborough Festival Opera. Also for Music Theatre Wales she will cover the mezzo-soprano role in Philip Venables' *Denis & Katya*, a co-production with Opera Philadelphia.

Further operatic performances comprise Minskwoman *Flight*, Juno *Semele*, Véronique *Docteur Miracle*, Laura *Iolanta* (Royal Academy Opera), Egeo *Teseo* (London Handel Festival), Idamante *Idomeneo* (2018 Amersham Festival of Music), and Hansel *Hansel and Gretel*, directed by Sarah Walker CBE. Chorus work includes the 2017 Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and the 2016 Glyndebourne Festival.

Robert Forrest – Tenor

Tenor Robert Forrest is a student of Royal Academy Opera and a member of the Academy's 'Song Circle' and the Josephine Baker Trust. He is supported by the Karaviotis Scholarship and the Porter Fund Award. He is also a graduate of the Royal College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. As a Garsington Opera Festival (2018) Alvarez Young Artist he covered the role of Flamand and Diener 1 in Strauss *Capriccio* and was honoured to receive their 2018 Helen Clarke Award.



For New Generation Festival, Florence, he covered the role of Don Ottavio, Mozart *Don Giovanni* and Nemorino, Donizetti *L'elisir d'amore*. With Dorset Opera he has sung 1st Soldier in Rossini *Le Comte Ory*, Malcom in Verdi *Macbeth* and covered Lensky in Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*. His professional debut was as King Kaspar with Netherlands Reisopera in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors (2015)*. Previous roles include Don Basilio and Don Curzio, Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Jose, Bizet *Carmen* and Henry Crawford, Dove *Mansfield Park*. He returns to the concert platform in the Mozart *Requiem* at Florence's Opera di Firenze this autumn. Next summer Robert will return to Garsington to cover the roles of Prologue/Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*.



James Geidt - Bass

Bass James Geidt was a choral scholar at New College, Oxford and studies on the Opera Course at the Royal Academy of Music with Glenville Hargreaves and Jonathan Papp. James' studies are generously supported by the Carr-Gregory Trust Scholarship. Operatic roles to date include L'horloge Comtoise and Le Chat in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* and Cadmus in Handel's *Semele* for Royal Academy Opera, Count Almaviva (cover) in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Longborough Festival Opera; and Jupiter in Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* for New Chamber Opera. James sang at the Aix-en-Provence Opera Festival in 2017.

Recent concert appearances include Pilate and arias in J.S. Bach's *St John Passion*, solos in the Monteverdi *Vespers* at St John's Smith Square, Pilate in J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Birmingham Symphony Hall with the CBSO, Mozart's *Requiem* in Dorchester Abbey and the Baritone solos in Philip Lancaster's *War Passion*, a festival commission at the Three Choirs Festival. Current and future engagements include Forester in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with Royal Academy Opera, solos in J.S. Bach's *B Minor Mass* in Saarbrücken, Mozart's *Requiem* for Wokingham Choral Society, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* for Monmouth Choral Society and Pilate in J.S. Bach's *St John Passion* for Edward Higginbottom at the Palau de la Música, Barcelona and the Auditorio Nacional, Madrid.

Stephen Hall - Conductor

Conductor Stephen Hall is a government statistician and policy advisor in the Rural and Place team of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. He co-founded what is now the Civil Service Choir ten years ago as music director and principal administrator – his first experience of leading a choir. He has been instrumental in the choir's development and success. Since 2013 he has conducted the choir in performances of major choral works at St John's Smith Square, including Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Mozart's *Great Mass in C minor*, Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* and, most recently, during the London Jazz Festival. Today's concert is the 121st time Stephen has conducted a Civil Service Choir performance.



Stephen was until recently chairman of the English Baroque Choir and he sings with the Orchestra of St John's Voices, the Anton Bruckner Choir, and several other choirs. He leads a commu-

nity choir and has performed in many theatre productions with the Lantern Arts Centre. Stephen has been a volunteer leader of National Trust Working Holidays for over 25 years, undertaking countryside management tasks, particularly in Cornwall. In June 2018, Stephen was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for voluntary and charitable service, in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

The Civil Service Choir

The Civil Service Choir is no ordinary workplace choir. It is the largest and most thriving choir in the Civil Service, with over 150 members drawn from government departments and agencies in Westminster, and with a reputation for remarkable performances. It performs a wide range of accompanied and unaccompanied repertoire in ambitious programmes in concerts and for events.

The choir is honoured to regularly give concerts in the prestigious and magnificent baroque concert venue of St John's Smith Square. It has also given concerts at St Martin-in-the-Fields, St Sepulchre-without-Newgate and St Katharine Cree, as part of the Brandenburg London Choral Festival, as well as at St Stephen's Rochester Row, the Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks, and at events in various Government Departments in Westminster. In June 2019 the choir sang in a Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey for the life and work of Jeremy, Lord Heywood of Whitehall GCB CVO. The choir also undertook its first tour in October 2018 during which it sang at the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony in Ypres and gave a concert at the church of St Walburga in Bruges, Belgium.

The choir was officially recognised as The Civil Service Choir in May 2019. However, it was founded in September 2009 as Etcetera, originally as a staff choir covering three government departments - Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); Transport (DfT); and Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). We can however trace our lineage through several predecessor choirs: Victoria Singers (1997-2000), Marsham Singers (1972-97), St Christopher Singers (1964 to 1972) and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Choral Society (1957-72). There was a Civil Service Choir in the 1920s and we are planning to do some research to find out more.

The Civil Service Choir boasts over 150 members, representing around 30 government departments and agencies, as well as former civil servants. Those singing today include:

Sopranos

Amy Austin, Anna Brohan, Elizabeth Chrominska, Phoebe Clapham, Mariella de Soissons, Nicola Ellis, Edith Fehrenbach, Immy Findlay, Carolyn Foxall, Honor Gay, Clare Gillett, Laura Green, Daria Gromyko, Alexandra Hawkins, Sophie Hoare, Beverley Howes, Jackie Jowett, Caroline Levett, Diana MacDowall, Clare Moriarty, Preshanthi Navaratnam, Rosalynde Phillip, Jennie Pick, Maisie Robinson, Emma Scrivener, Iulia Turiac, Tricia Vincent, Gemma Warren

Altos

Jessica Adkins, Ayla Bedri, Katharine Charles, Janet Dixon, Stephanie Freeth, Anne Gair, Esperanza Gomez, Sue Harling, Jane Houghton, Hannah Howell, Catherine Lovell, Bethan MacDonald, Sharon Maddix, Sue Nowak, Florence Pritchard, Jennie Rayner, Meriel Smith, Barbara Stewart, Seonaid Taylor, Suzanne Verhoven, Hannah Vlcek, Edith Walker, Rachel Worledge

Tenors

Alan Bowden, Robert Bradburne, Trevor Dawson, Andrew Frost, Jan Gladysz, Mike Mansbridge, Tim May, Matthew Reed, William Sing Lam Ng, Peter Swift, Richard Vidal, Pam Whittingham Webb

Basses

Chris Bailey, Nick Boorer, Ian Boughton, Simon Croft, Michael Denniss, Tim Diamond, David Freeman, Paul Gillett, Ian Grimley, Harry Grimshaw, Ashley Holt, Graham Hysted, Kevin Lei, Steve Railton, Mark Rothen, Jonathan Tillson, Ed Walkington

Committee: Stephen Hall (chairman, music director, posters, social media, publicity coordination), Graham Hysted (membership secretary, treasurer, score management), Jan Gladysz (assistant treasurer), Beverley Howes (coordination and general support), Eileen Mortby (business manager), Felicity Jones (secretary), Diana MacDowall (concert manager, coordination and general support), Robert Bradburne (repertoire), Alan Bowden (repertoire).

Further support from: Alan Bowden and Stella Kremer (principal rehearsal accompanists); Doreen Mitchell, Jane Houghton, Andrew Frost and David Freeman (Voice Reps); David Freeman (external score librarian and programme notes); Barbara and John Stewart; Mark Oldfield (vocal coaching); Ian Boughton, Stephanie Freeth, David Freeman, Phoebe Clapham, Sue Harling, Adele Stevenson (repertoire advisory group); Daria Gromyko (social media); Natalie Berman (programme research and production); and choir members and communications colleagues helping with publicity.

Patron: Clare Moriarty CB, *Permanent Secretary of the Department for Exiting the European Union*

Orchestra

The orchestra includes members of the Whitehall Orchestra and other guest players.

Leader: Christian Halstead

Violin: Stephen Brown, Elizabeth Cleary, Alison Collins, Jeremy Cook, Isabella Craig, Stuart Dearnley, Janet Farrell, Chris Terry, Charlotte Town, Catherine Vincent, Anna Wardell

Viola: Rosemary Cook, Victoria Dannreuther, Roger Levett, Bruce Paterson

Cello: John Best, Christopher Humphry, David Rawlins, Stephanie Seeley

Bass: Penny Halnan

Oboe / Oboe d'amore: Alison Bell, Stephen Glaister

Flute: Carla Finesilver, Alicia Swannell

Bassoon: Richard Vincent

Trumpet: Michael Collins, Euan Holwill, Stephen Kenny

Timpani: David Coronel

Organ continuo: Tom Primrose

Orchestra recruitment & liaison: Richard Vincent

Further thanks to: Geoff McMahon of Manders Organs and tuner Michael Broadway for use of the Manders chamber organ; Richard Heason and all the team at St John's Smith Square; Cardinal Hume Centre; Father John Scott and Westminster Cathedral (for use of the Sacred Heart Church for rehearsals); SPARTA – the Sports and Recreational Association of MHCLG and DfT and CSSC Sports & Leisure (for financial and promotional support); Professor Kate Paterson, Head of vocal studies at the Royal Academy of Music (for soloist recruitment); Defra facilities management team.



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Donations can be made in cash in collection buckets
or via contactless credit/debit card payment at the doors



Our principle charity is the **Cardinal Hume Centre** – turning lives around to overcome poverty and homelessness – which provides remarkable support to young and vulnerable people just a short walk from St Stephen's.

www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk



We also support **The Lifeboat Fund** – helping the RNLI to save lives at sea – which is the oldest charity supported by the Civil Service. Reaching its 150th anniversary in 2016, the Fund aims to raise sufficient money to purchase a new lifeboat for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

www.thelifeboatfund.org

Cardinal Hume Centre
Turning Lives Around

www.CardinalHumeCentre.org.uk
Charity number: 1090836

- £5** help a child in our family services programme
- £10** pay the travel costs to college for a teenage hostel resident
- £15** support an Easter activity for a local underprivileged family
- £20** provide a cookery lesson for an asylum seeking child
- £25** buy essentials for a homeless young person in our hostel
- £30** offer an advice session with our immigration lawyers for a destitute family

Housing and Welfare Rights Advice Hostel for Young People Family and Young People's Services Learning and Employment Immigration Advice and Advocacy

Through your generosity we should also like to make a donation to support this special concert venue

In accordance with the requirements of Westminster City Council persons shall not be permitted to sit or stand in any gangway. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment is strictly forbidden without formal consent from St John's Smith Square. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in St John's Smith Square. Please ensure that all digital watch alarms, pagers and mobile phones are switched off.

Refreshments are permitted only in our Footstool Restaurant in the crypt. The Footstool Restaurant will serve post-concert refreshments.