



SINFONIA  
SMITH SQ.

# CIVIL SERVICE CHOIR CHORAL REFLECTIONS FOR EASTER

TUE 15 APR 2025 | 1.05PM  
SMITH SQUARE HALL

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**EASTER FESTIVAL**  
15-19 APRIL 2025

## PROGRAMME

**Giovanni Battista Pergolesi**  
(1710–1736) (attrib.)  
O Sacrum Convivium 6'

**František Tůma (1704–1774)**  
Stabat Mater 20'

**Charles Gounod (1818–1893)**  
Troisième Messe Solennelle de  
Pâques 40'

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### **Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–1736)**

*O Sacrum Convivium (attrib.)*

At the time of his death from tuberculosis at the age of 26, Pergolesi had become already established as one of the foremost musicians of his age. Born Giovanni Battista Draghi, his adopted nickname of Pergolesi is derived from the birthplace of his ancestors, Pergola. Among his masterworks are the opera *L'Olimpiade* and the celebrated *Stabat Mater*.

Such was Pergolesi's posthumous fame that over three hundred works have been attributed to him. However, modern scholars are of the opinion that only around thirty of these compositions are true Pergolesi. *O Sacrum Convivium* is one such work of questionable authenticity.

The Latin text gives thanks for the Holy Communion, at which Christ's body and blood are consumed in the form of bread and wine, in memory of his sacrifice on the Cross. The text has been attributed to Saint Thomas Aquinas.

### **František Ignác Antonín Tůma (1704–1774)**

*Stabat Mater in G minor*

František Tůma was a Czech composer of the late Baroque era. Born in Kostelec, Tůma received his early musical education from his father and noted composer Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský at the Minorite Church of St James the Great. Thereafter, Tůma moved to Vienna, where he spent most of his life and established himself as a highly regarded composer, organist, gambist and theorbist. Here, he held the prominent positions of director of music for Count Franz Ferdinand Kinsky and later for the widow of Emperor Charles VI.

Tůma's sacred music was well known to Haydn and Mozart. His output, predominantly for the Church, includes 65 masses and 29 psalms, in addition to a number of instrumental and orchestral compositions. The *Stabat Mater* we hear today, one of five settings Tůma composed, is, in common with his other sacred works, characterised by its chromaticism and highly expressive and vivid realisation of the text.

The work is in nine short movements. The text depicts the suffering of the Virgin Mary as she witnesses the crucifixion of her son Jesus Christ. The opening line, "*Stabat Mater dolorosa*" means "the sorrowful mother was standing".

### **Charles-François Gounod (1818 – 1893)**

*Troisième Messe Solennelle De Pâques (Third Solemn Easter Mass)*

Charles Gounod was born in Paris to a musical and artistic family. As a student of the Conservatoire de Paris he was the recipient of France's most esteemed musical prize, the Prix de Rome. During his studies Gounod travelled widely, including Prussia, where he met Mendelssohn. He composed prolifically for a wide range of genres including twelve operas, the most famous being *Faust* (1859) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867). Gounod also wrote many songs, including the popular *Ave Maria* based on Bach's *Prelude in C*.

Although Gounod's music has largely fallen out of fashion and few of his works have remained in the international repertoire, there is no doubting his considerable influence on later French composers, a fact acknowledged by Debussy: "Gounod, for all his weaknesses, is essential ... the art of Gounod represents a moment in French sensibility. Whether one wants to or not, that kind of thing is not forgotten".

Gounod was particularly prolific in the sphere of sacred music, having composed 23 masses, over 40 liturgical settings and seven cantatas or oratorios. While perhaps best known for the opera *Faust*, Gounod was more highly regarded for his religious music during his lifetime.

To mark Holy Week, the Civil Service Choir presents the opportunity to hear Gounod's rarely performed and unjustly neglected Easter Mass. The piece is in the usual format of the sung Mass:

- Kyrie-eleison - Lord have mercy;
- Gloria - Glory be to God in the highest;
- Credo - I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ;
- Sanctus - Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;
- Benedictus - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;
- Agnus Dei - Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us your peace.



## THE CIVIL SERVICE CHOIR

The Civil Service Choir is no ordinary workplace choir. It boasts over 200 members, and a reputation for remarkable performances, having performed 197 times since being formed in 2009.

The most recent concert was just two weeks ago, when the choir performed Mozart's Requiem and Vesperae Solennes de Confessore here at Smith Square.

In early 2024, the choir established an auditioned chamber choir, which you hear today. The chamber choir's debut performance in March 2024 featured a selection of unaccompanied sacred motets by German-speaking composers, which preceded a full-choir performance of the Brahms Requiem with the Kensington Philharmonic Orchestra. Shortly after this, the chamber choir held its own concert as part of the 2024 Sinfonia Smith Square Easter Festival, delighting the audience with Haydn's Little Organ Mass and Schubert's Mass in G. Since then, the chamber choir has appeared in both independent and joint performances with the full Civil Service Choir, enriching the overall offering of the choir with music that members would not otherwise have had the opportunity to perform.

The Civil Service Choir continues to fundraise for charities, including the Charity for Civil Servants, the Cardinal Hume Centre and Sinfonia Smith Square, and has raised over £50,000.

### **Soprano**

Lucia Carini  
Phoebe Clapham  
Abi Coskun  
Daria Gromyko  
Freya Henfrey  
Gill McManus  
Tricia Vincent

### **Alto**

Sally Donaghey  
Clare Essex  
Maria Freeman  
Sue Harling  
Eileen Mortby  
Alex Moyler  
Kim Sibley  
Vicky Vale  
Iona Wakely  
Rachel Worledge

### **Tenor**

Josh Andrews  
Rob Bradburne  
Tim May  
Peter Swift  
Gordon Woods

### **Bass**

Nick Boorer  
David Freeman  
Rob Kirtley  
Alex Rees  
Connor Spence  
Alexander Walford

### **Violin**

John Haworth (Leader)  
Stephen Brown  
Doris Kuo  
Rachel Moyce  
Charlotte Town  
Francis Dickinson

### **Viola**

Rosemary Cook  
Jeremy Cook

### **Cello**

Alison Holford (Continuo)  
Chris Terepin

### **Double Bass**

Susan Moss

### **Organ**

Richard Gowers

## STEPHEN HALL

Conductor Stephen Hall, OBE, is the choir's founder, music director and chairman.

He is a statistician at Defra. He has been instrumental in the choir's development, conducting almost every rehearsal and performance in its 15 years. He is a choral singer, leads a local choir, and is involved in amateur theatre as an actor and trumpeter. In 2018, Stephen was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for voluntary and charitable service.



## FUNDRAISING

Today's donations will go to support three charities.

### **The Charity for Civil Servants**

The Charity for Civil Servants supports current, former and retired civil servants when they face tough times. From mental health struggles and financial assistance to relationship issues, getting through grief, and coping with disability, this charity helps people stay strong, whatever life brings.

Set up in 1886 as a benevolent society to support the widows and orphans of civil servants, the charity has supported civil servants for generations, providing an umbrella of support when it's needed.

### **The Cardinal Hume Centre**

The Cardinal Hume Centre is a Westminster-based charity supporting families and young people facing poverty and homelessness by helping them to thrive.

They provide tailored advice and support to prevent the root causes of poverty at a young age, to break its cycle into later life.

Many families, young people and vulnerable individuals live in poverty and need support. Each year, this charity helps over 1,100 people to reduce their risk of homelessness.

### **Sinfonia Smith Square**

Each year, Sinfonia Smith Square funds an artist development programme for 34 talented musicians at the start of their careers, who go on to become leaders in the classical music world and inspire future generations to the music we love.

The iconic Smith Square Hall (formerly St John's Smith Square) has welcomed musicians and music lovers since 1969, inspiring audiences and championing bright new voices and world-class artists.

Sinfonia Smith Square is a community of music makers and music lovers. Through their transformative concerts and educational programmes, they enrich the lives of many with the universal power of music.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Civil Service Choir would like to thank SPARTA Recreational Association and the Civil Service Sports Council (CSSC) for their financial support; our rehearsal accompanists Matthew Reed, Daniel Leung, Patrick Lillie and Quinn Chan; our occasional stand-in conductor Nick Boorer; the Choir Committee; the team at Sinfonia Smith Square; the Cardinal Hume Centre, Father John Scott and Westminster Cathedral for use of the Sacred Heart Church for rehearsals, and all others who have supported the choir in putting on this concert.