

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Music for Spring

A concert of beautiful choral music on Palm Sunday

Williamson: Procession of Palms
Stainer: Crucifixion
Vivaldi: Gloria

Sunday 13th April 2025 | 3pm
Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells



Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY
www.rtwcs.org.uk
registered charity 273310

KENTISH OPERA



JOHANN STRAUSS

Die
Fledermaus

1st to 3rd May 2025
Stag Theatre, Sevenoaks

Sponsored by
 Sevenoaks District Arts Council funded by
  kentishopera.co.uk

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society & Orchestra

President: Roy Dunstall

Music for Spring

The Crucifixion John Stainer

Interval

Procession of Palms Malcolm Williamson

Gloria Antonio Vivaldi

Conductor: Robyn Sevastos

Orchestra Leader: Andrew Laing

Rebecca Mitchell Soprano

Gabriella Noble Mezzo Soprano

Dominic Lee Tenor

Hector Bloggs Bass

Our audience is invited to join in with the singing of the hymns in this work. The words are shown on the sheets provided

The Crucifixion

John Stainer 1840-1901

This work was composed in 1887, and dedicated to Stainer's friend, William Hodge, and his choir of Marylebone Parish Church in London. It is subtitled *A Meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer*.

Described variously as an oratorio or cantata and intended to be part of a Lenten church service, the piece was designed to match the limited capabilities of the choir, albeit one that could provide all four voices. It is accompanied by an organ, and the solos for tenor and bass suggest that there were at least a few stronger voices at his disposal.

The subtitle gives us a clue as to the way Stainer approached this project, basing it on the traditional formats of Bach's *Passions*. It takes narratives from the Bible and intersperses them with choruses, solos and hymns that reflect on the Passion story. These were new hymns, the words written by William Sparrow-Simpson to music by Stainer, and, while they were unfamiliar to Hodge's congregations, they were similar to many of the Victorian period. It was expected that the audience would join in the singing of the hymns, just as congregations in Bach's time might have done with the Lutheran chorales that he incorporated into his works.

It is interesting to consider how composers have sought to find more accessible alternatives to the chorales that are an integral part of Bach's famous works. Here we have hymns for the audience to sing, whereas in the middle of the twentieth century Michael Tippett chose traditional spirituals for his secular oratorio *A Child of our Time*, a work also framed on Bach's structures.

Stainer was no stranger to the great works of sacred music, having been a boy chorister at St Paul's Cathedral. At 16 he moved to Worcestershire where he took up the position of organist at St Michael's College, Tenbury, a newly established school for Anglican church music. While studying at Oxford he composed large numbers of liturgical settings and directed numerous ensembles. In 1872 he returned to St Paul's as organist and set about overhauling many of the traditions of choral music that had been established over the previous centuries. He later published treatises on music theory and organ technique, and was in the forefront of the interest in Medieval and Renaissance music. He spent much of his retirement in Italy, and died in Verona on Palm Sunday.

This work highlights the period after the Crucifixion has taken place and until Jesus' death.

The first 'performance' of *The Crucifixion* was as part of a series of Lenten services. The initial reception was enthusiastic, but as the musical world fell out of love with the sentimental Victorian style of music, often using a version of the normal patterns of language twisted to fit the verse, criticism became stronger. One critic wrote in 1971 that the *appalling doggerel set to Stainer's squalid music is a monument to the inane*. While this work does not necessarily show Stainer off to greatest advantage, there are moments in *The Crucifixion* that demonstrate significant choral writing skill, as in *God so loved the world*, which has become an anthem in its own right.

The Crucifixion

RECITATIVE (Tenor)

And they came to a place named Gethsemane:
and Jesus saith to His disciples, sit ye here, while I shall pray.

THE AGONY (Bass)

Could ye not watch with me one brief hour? Could ye not pity my sorest need?
Ah! if ye sleep while the tempests lower,
Surely, my friends, I am lone indeed!

(Chorus)

Jesu, Lord Jesu, bowed in bitter anguish,
And bearing all the evil we have done,
Oh, teach us, teach us how to love Thee for Thy love;
Help us to pray, and watch, and mourn with Thee.

(Bass)

Could ye not watch with me one brief hour?
Did ye not say upon Kedron's slope,
Ye would not fall into the Tempter's power?
Did ye not murmur great worlds of hope?

(Chorus)

Jesu, Lord Jesu, bowed in bitter anguish,
And bearing all the evil we have done,
Oh, teach us, teach us how to love Thee for Thy
love; Help us to pray, and watch, and mourn with Thee.

(Bass)

Could ye not watch with me? even so: willing in heart,
but the flesh is vain. Back to mine agony I must go,
Lonely to pray in bitterest pain.

(Recitative, Tenor and Bass)

And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him,
and led Him away to the high priest. And the high priest
asked Him, and said unto Him,
"Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
Jesus said, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on

the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”
Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith,
“What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy.”
And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death.
And they bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate.
And Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them,
and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.
And the soldiers led him away.

PROCESSIONAL TO CALVARY (*Chorus*)

Fling wide the gates, for the Saviour waits to tread in His royal way;
He has come from above, in His power and love, To die on the Passion Day.
His Cross is the sign of a love divine, His Crown is the thorn-wreath of woe,
He bears His load on the sorrowful road, And bends ‘neath the burden low.

(*Tenor*)

How sweet is the grace of His sacred face, and lovely beyond compare,
Though weary and worn with the merciless scorn of a world He has come
to spare. The burden of wrong that earth bears along, past evil, and evil to be,
- all sins of man since the world began, they are laid, dear Lord, on Thee.

(*Chorus*)

Then on to the end, my God and my Friend, with Thy banner lifted high!
Thou art come from above in Thy power and love, to endure and suffer and die.

RECITATIVE (*Bass*)

And when they were come to the place called Calvary, there they
crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right, and the other on the left.

HYMN – THE MYSTERY OF THE DIVINE HUMILIATION

Audience: please remain seated but join in the singing if you wish to do so

RECITATIVE (*Bass*)

He made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant,
And was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man,
He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of
the cross.

THE MAJESTY OF THE DIVINE HUMILIATION (*Tenor*)

King ever glorious! The dews of death are gathering round Thee,
Upon the Cross Thy foes have bound Thee, Thy strength is gone.
Not in Thy Majesty, robed in Heaven’s supremest splendour,
But in weakness and surrender, Thou hangest here.
Who can be like Thee? Pilate high in Zion dwelling?
Rome with arms the world compelling? Proud though they be!
Thou art sublime; Far more awful in Thy weakness,
More than kingly in Thy meekness, Thou Son of God.
Glory and honour: Let the world divide and take them,
Crown its monarchs and unmake them; But Thou wilt reign.
Here in abasement, crownless, poor, disrobed and bleeding;
There, in glory interceding, Thou art the King!

RECITATIVE (Bass)

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth
in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD (Chorus)

God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son,
that whoso believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world;
but that the world through Him might be saved.

HYMN – LITANY OF THE PASSION

Audience: please remain seated but join in the singing if you wish to do so

DUET (Tenor and Bass)

So Thou liftest Thy divine petition, pierced with cruel anguish
through and through; So Thou grievest o'er our lost condition,
Pleading, "Ah, they know not what they do." Oh! 'twas love,
in love's divinest feature, passing o'er that dark and murderous blot;
Finding, e'en for each low-fallen creature, though they slay Thee,
one redeeming spot. Yes! and still Thy patient heart is yearning
With a love that mortal scarce can bear;
Thou in pity, deep, divine, and burning, liftest e'en for me
Thy mighty prayer. So Thou pleadest, e'en for my transgression,
Bidding me look up, and trust, and live; So Thou murmurest
Thine intercession, bidding me look up, and trust, and live;
Yea, he knew not; for my sake, forgive.

HYMN – THE MYSTERY OF THE INTERCESSION

Audience: please remain seated but join in the singing if you wish to do so

RECITATIVE (Tenor, Bass, and Chorus)

And one of the malefactors which were hanged,
railed on Him, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."
But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying,
"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the
same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for
we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this
man hath done nothing amiss." And he said unto Jesus,
"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."
And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee,
today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

HYMN – THE ADORATION OF THE CRUCIFIED

Audience: please remain seated but join in the singing if you wish to do so

RECITATIVE (Tenor, Bass, and Chorus)

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by,
whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!"

Then saith He to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!"
There was darkness over all the land. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried
with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

RECITATIVE (*Bass*)

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow
Like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath
afflicted
me in the day of His fierce anger.

THE APPEAL OF THE CRUCIFIED (*Chorus*)

From the Throne of His Cross, the King of grief
Cries out to a world of unbelief: Oh! men and women,
afar and nigh, is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
I laid my eternal power aside, I came from the home of the glorified,
A babe, in the lowly cave to lie; Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
I wept for the sorrows and pains of men, I healed them, and helped them,
and loved them; but then, but then they shouted against me, Crucify!
Is it nothing to you? Behold me and see: pierced through and
Through with countless sorrows – and all is for you;
For you I suffer, for you I die; Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Oh! men and women, your deeds of shame, your sins without reason
and number and name, I bear them all on this Cross on high;
Is it nothing to you? Is it nothing to you that I bow my head?
And nothing to you that my blood is shed? Oh, perishing souls,
to you I cry; Is it nothing to you? Oh come unto me!
by the woes I have borne, by the dreadful scourge, and the crown of thorns,
By these I implore you to hear my cry; Is it nothing to you?
Oh come unto me! this awful price, redemption's tremendous sacrifice,
Is paid for you. – Oh, why will ye die? Oh come unto me! Why will ye die?

RECITATIVE (*Tenor and Chorus*)

After this, Jesus knowing all things were now accomplished, saith,
"I thirst." When Jesus had received the vinegar, He saith,
"It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit."
And he bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

HYMN – FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS

Audience: please remain seated but join in the singing if you wish to do so

Procession of Palms

Malcolm Williamson 1931 – 2003

Born in Australia in 1931, at 19 Malcolm Williamson moved to London and worked as an organist. He also played piano in a nightclub to generate income. Against competition from the likes of Benjamin Britten, Malcolm Arnold and Michael Tippett, he was made Master of the Queen's Music in 1975, prompting composer William Walton to remark that *the wrong Malcolm was chosen*. He was the first person born outside the United Kingdom to hold the post, and worked through a number of serious illnesses to produce music for the Royal Family's special occasions until his death in 2003.

The composer was a complex and colourful character who often set himself against those in authority. The son of an Episcopal minister, he converted to Roman Catholicism in 1953. This faith was to sustain him through many challenges, some of which were self-inflicted. His jazz setting of the Mass in 1978 in the *Mass of Christ the King* invoked the wrath of the Catholic hierarchy. His works encompassed symphonies and concertos, vocal and choral works, and operas for both adults and children to perform, and he undertook detailed research into music therapy as part of his support for the disabled and those experiencing difficulties in their lives.

Williamson was composing at a time when music such as 'pop', jazz and rock were in the ascendancy. There were musicians who wrote in more classical forms, such as Vaughan Williams and Shostakovich, but they were being challenged by the rule-breakers like Stockhausen and Cage. Williamson's greatest influence was said to be French composer and organist, Olivier Messiaen, although the Australian's work developed from the austere and modern to more tonal and lyrical as he got older.

He wrote a number of choral works of which the largest, his *Mass of Christ the King*, was commissioned for the Three Choirs Festival in 1977. It is rarely performed these days, perhaps because of the musical forces required to programme it.

Procession of Palms is a much more modest piece, written for Palm Sunday in 1961. It was the composer's protest against a hanging that had taken place earlier that year, and concerned man's faithlessness before God as contrasted with God's abiding love for man.

Focused on just one period in the Crucifixion story, the work begins with the hymn *Ride on! Ride on in majesty!* sung to a staccato organ accompaniment, with the melody rising a semitone for each of the five stanzas. It then breaks out into the jubilant shout of *All glory, laud and honour* as the crowd welcomes the Saviour whom they will persecute a few days later. *O Saviour of the World* follows to represent the soul's cry for mercy, the *Benedictus* is the soul's welcome to its Lord, and in the concluding *Hosanna!* the crowd returns in jubilation.

The words for these stanzas were taken from the writing of Henry Hart Milman, an ecclesiastic and historian, and the words of the medieval bishop Theodulph of Orléans, translated by the priest and scholar J M Neale. Added to these are *O Saviour of the World* from the Anglican Collect for the Visitation of the Sick, and the *Benedictus* and *Hosanna* from the liturgy of the Mass.

Williamson's relationship with his successive publishers was stormy, since he believed that they were frustrating a wider dissemination of his work. In April 1984 he wrote the following to his mother, *Last Sunday was Palm Sunday, and Procession of Palms seemed to be being sung all over the country. It has achieved the status of a classic by a long-dead composer, and I meet people who look older than I who sang it as children!*

Procession of Palms

Ride on! Ride on in majesty

Ride on! Ride on in majesty! Hark, all the tribes Hosanna cry;
Thine humble beast pursues his road with palms and scatter'd garments strowed.

Ride on! ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ thy triumph now begin o'er captive death and conquer'd sin.

Ride on! ride on in majesty! The winged squadrons of the sky
Look down with sad and wond'ring eyes to see th'approaching sacrifice.
Ride on! ride on in majesty! The last and fearful strife is nigh:
Thy father, on his sapphire throne, expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on! ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die;
Bow thy meek head to mortal pain, then take, O God, Thy power, and reign.

All glory, laud, and honour

All glory, laud, and honour to Thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children make sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel, Thou David's royal son,
Who in the Lord's name comest, The King and blessed One.

The company of angels, are praising thee on high,
And mortal men and all things created make reply.

The people of the Hebrews with palms before thee went;
Our praise and prayer and anthems before thee we present.

To thee before thy passion they sing their hymns of praise;
To thee now high exalted our melody we raise.

Thou didst accept their praises, accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest, Thou good and gracious King.

Benedictus

O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood
hast redeem'd us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini,
(*Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord*)
Hosanna in excelsis Deo (*Glory to God in the highest*)

Gloria* *RV 589

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 – 1741)

Vivaldi is now regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Baroque period. As a virtuoso violinist, he was responsible for many developments in violin music, as well as orchestral and the programmatic music, that uses exposition of a narrative.

Born in Venice when it was still the capital of the Republic of Venice, Vivaldi's health was somewhat fragile. He may have suffered from asthma, but this only constrained his musical education to the extent that he was unable to play wind instruments. His father was a professional violinist who trained his young son and, as soon as the latter was capable of making his contribution, included him in the work of the *Sovvegno dei musicisti di Santa Cecilia*, an association of musicians.

In 1693 he started training for the priesthood, and his ordination took place in 1703 at the age of 25. He was soon nicknamed *il Prete Rosso*, or the red priest, in reference to the colour of his hair. The same year he became master of violin at the *Ospedale della Pietà*, an institution for which he worked for over thirty years.

The *Pietà* was an orphanage for girls that placed a particular emphasis on musical education, and it provided the composer with an unusual opportunity to work with the female voice, since all over Europe the idea of female participants in musical performance, and church music in particular, was abhorrent to many. Along with its superb choir and orchestra, Vivaldi developed an international reputation for putting on private concerts, during which the girls performed some of his many operas, concertos, cantatas and sacred choral compositions.

Vivaldi composed many settings of parts of the Roman Catholic Mass, but only one full mass, the *Missa Sacrum*. He composed three settings of the *Gloria*, of which one is lost. RV589, the version you will hear tonight, is

divided into twelve brief movements each with a different mood. The work disappeared entirely until it was revived in Siena in 1939 by Italian composer Alfredo Casella

Opening with *Gloria*, we are plunged into a jubilant call to worship, but then move on to a more meditative *Et in terra pax hominibus*, representing the earth's response to the angel's song.

Laudamus te allows the soprano soloists to be heard in an exquisite duet, before the choir interjects a brief *Gratias agimus*, taking us back to the four-part harmonies and on to the bouncy *Propter magnam*.

A soprano solo moves on to *Domine Deus* and is followed by the mens' voices in the choir who pick up *Domine fili unigenite*. The female choir joins them to develop this movement, one of the longer ones of the work, which ends with *miserere nobis*, rather unusually having the instruction that it should be sung *ff* – very loudly.

The choir immediately drop to *piano* (quietly) to sing *Qui tollis peccata mundi* before the contralto soloist sings *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*? This is followed by a rather jolly *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus*, marked *Allegro* and again to be sung firmly. The final movement is a double fugue on the words *Cum Sancto Spiritu*, and encompasses the *Amen*. The instruction for the final bars is *fff* = *fortississimo*, or very, very loud.

There is little doubt in the composer's optimistic approach to this part of the Mass. There are no plaintive expressions of uncertainty as to the glory of God, or His willingness to forgive and stand up for his people, and the result is music that sends an audience out with joy and positivity at the end.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Glory to God in the Highest

*Et in terra pax hominibus
Bonae voluntatis*

Peace and goodwill to men on earth

*Laudamus te, benedicimus te
Adoramus te, glorificamus te
Gratias agimus tibi
Propter magnam gloriam*

We praise You, we bless You,
We adore You, we glorify You
We give You thanks
For Your great glory

*Domine Deus, Rex coelestis
Pater Deus, Pater omnipotens*

Lord God, King of Heaven
God the Father, God the Father
almighty

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe

Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ

*Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris
Qui tollis peccata mundi
Miserere nobis*

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father, Who takes away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us

*Qui tollis peccata mundi
Suscipe deprecationem nostrum*

Father, Who takes away the sins of the
world, hear our prayer

*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris
Miserere nobis*

You who sit at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us

*Quoniam tu solus Sanctus
Tu solus Dominum
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe*

For You alone are holy,
You alone are the Lord, You alone
are the Most High, Jesus Christ

*Cum Sancto Spiritu
In gloria Dei Patris, Amen*

With the Holy Spirit, in the glory
of God the Father, Amen.

Choral Celebrations with Stephen Barlow

Combined Choirs

In Windsor Forest - Vaughan Williams

How lovely is Thy dwelling place - Brahms

Nine Choirs performing their own repertoire

*Bearsted Choral Society
Cranbrook Choral Society
Maidstone Choral Union
Rochester Choral Society
Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society
Sittingbourne Orpheus Choral Society
The Maidstone Singers
Vigo Singers
The Mote Singers*

Saturday 27th September 2025
7pm

**Mote Hall Maidstone.
ME15 7RN**

**Tickets £10 (under 16 free)
email: choralcelebrations25@gmail.com**

Kent Arts & Wellbeing

Music Director – Robyn Sevastos



Robyn graduated from Melbourne University with a BMus and First Class Honours in Performance. She subsequently moved to England to continue her studies, where she obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Piano Accompaniment at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and a Performance Diploma from the Royal College of Music. She has performed extensively as a piano soloist, and has accompanied and coached singers and instrumentalists in the UK and further afield. As a conductor she has directed many choral and operatic works, often with internationally renowned artists. In addition to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society, she is music director of London Opera Productions, Kentish Opera, the Llantilio Crossenny Festival, Sevenoaks Philharmonic Society and Bromley Philharmonic Choir. She has conducted many major choral works including Verdi *Requiem* at Croydon's Fairfield Hall, and Bach *St Matthew Passion* at St Clement Danes in London. She has performed at the Royal Albert Hall, the Barbican and the O2 Arena, and for the then Prince Charles at Kensington Palace and Sandringham.

Andrew Laing – Orchestra Leader



Andrew was born in Aberdeen. He started learning the violin when he was five years old and at sixteen became leader of the National Youth String Orchestra of Scotland. He studied with David Martin at the Royal Academy of Music, winning several prizes and scholarships. While still a student, he was appointed leader of the Morley College Symphony Orchestra, also regularly leading the Ealing Symphony Orchestra, the Hatfield Philharmonic and the Forest Philharmonic. At the RAM, Andy formed and led the Locrian String Quartet. The quartet won many awards, was broadcast on BBC TV and radio and gave numerous first performances of works by contemporary composers. Subsequently, he became sub-leader of the BBC Radio Orchestra, then leader of the London City Ballet Orchestra. In the nineties, Andy met his wife, Rachel, another violinist, while both were playing on-stage at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Andy is currently leader of both the Bromley and Maidstone Symphony Orchestras.

Organist - Craig Hudson

Craig Hudson grew up in Poole, Dorset, learning piano and trumpet from the age of eight. He won scholarship to Clayesmore Preparatory and Senior Schools, where he learned to play the organ, and went on to read maths and music at St John's College, Cambridge. From 2005 to 2012 Craig worked at All Souls Church, Langham Place, combining his Christian faith with his love for music and working with young people. Highlights included conducting the All Souls Orchestra and Choir, playing in Proms Praise concerts throughout the UK. Since 2012 Craig has been Music Director at St John's Church, Tunbridge Wells, which he combines with teaching and performing. He enjoys working in many different styles, from choral music to jazz. He has directed the nine voice ladies choir 'Mums and Roses' since 2013, and has accompanied RTWCS since January 2017.

Rebecca Mitchell

Soprano



Rebecca is a Science graduate who undertook her vocal training at Trinity College of Music, graduating with a Distinction in her Postgraduate Performance Diploma. Whilst a student she won a number of awards including the Promis Prize for an 'outstanding contribution to the musical and theatrical life of the college' and a scholarship from the Leverhulme Trust. She sang a variety of principal roles including Lucia in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, Papagena in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Cunegonde in Bernstein's *Candide*. Other concert work included a 'Future and Budding Savoyards' concert with Charles Court Opera for The Gilbert and Sullivan Society and a concert recording of *Candide* conducted by Rumon Gamba at the Royal Festival Hall for BBC Radio 3.

More recently she has performed the roles of Mimi in Puccini's *La Boheme* and Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for Matchbox Opera, Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen* with Opera South East and Annina in Verdi's *Traviata* with Singers Unite London. Oratorio work includes Mozart's *Requiem*, Rutter's *Magnificat*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Rachmaninoff's *Vespers*, Britten's *War Requiem* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*. Rebecca performs as a soloist with choral societies and opera companies in London and the South East, and combines her singing engagements with teaching in Tunbridge Wells.

Gabriella Noble

Mezzo Soprano



Gabriella is a Mezzo-Soprano from London, who recently enrolled on the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Opera Course. Alongside opera and song, Gabriella loves performing early music and was recently the recipient of a Young Artist's Scholarship from Fundaciòn Salvat, and was awarded the 2023 Rodney Gibson prize for Early Music by the Association of English Singers and Speakers.

She has been grateful to develop her craft with young artist positions, including on the Wigmore French Song Exchange, which culminated with recital appearances at Salle Cortot in Paris and at the Wigmore Hall. Gabriella was a 2024 Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington Opera, and is grateful for the support of the Knight Family Foundation, the Worshipful Company of Dyers, and the Worshipful Company of Horners. She is passionate about interdisciplinary arts, and her singing is influenced by her love of poetry and theatre.

Dominic Lee

Tenor



Worcestershire born Tenor Dominic Lee has been singing since the age of eight. Dominic started as a Chorister at Worcester Cathedral in 2004, where over the years he rose through the ranks to become a Lay Clerk. It was through this and a number of school shows that Dominic found his love for performance. He went on to study for his undergraduate degree in Music at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. In 2022 he completed a Master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music and

Drama, where he is now studying at their Opera School.

Dominic has a strong passion for operatic performance. Previous engagements include chorus in *Carmen* with Opera Holland Park, chorus in *L'elisir d'amore* with West Green House Opera and solo ensemble in *The Boatswain's Mate* with Spectra Ensemble. Dominic was most recently part of the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus in their highly acclaimed production of *Dialogues des Carmelites*. Roles include Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* and Mr Rushworth in *Mansfield Park*, both at the Guildhall. Dominic is looking forward to performing with the Glyndebourne chorus this coming summer in their new production of *Parsifal*.

Boasting a wide range of oratorio and concert work, Dominic's concert repertoire has seen him perform well-known works all around the country, from notable pieces such as Handel's *Messiah* and Hayden's *Creation*, to new commissions in the Three Choirs Festival.

Hector Bloggs

Bass



Hector Bloggs is a British Baritone who has just finished the Opera Course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His operatic roles to date include the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Sid in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Silvio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Dr Falke and Frank in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, Il Conte d'Almaviva and Bartolo in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Crébillon in Puccini's *La Rondine* at the Barbican with the LSO and

Sir Antonio Pappano. He has been involved in various competitions, both inside and outside Guildhall.

He is in demand as an oratorio singer, having sung solos in *Carmina Burana*, *St John Passion*, *St Luke Passion*, Mozart *Requiem*, Haydn *The Creation*, Fauré's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* and Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*. Last year he made his Wigmore Hall debut in a Thomas Quastoff Masterclass, where he returns for the Kathleen Ferrier Semi Finals.

Hector is a Gwen Catley Scholar, funded by the Amar-Franses & Foster-Jenkins Trust, a Drake Calleja Scholar 2024-25 and a Samling Artist.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Music Director: Robyn Sevastos

Accompanist: Craig Hudson

ORCHESTRA

1st Violin	Andrew Laing (Leader)	2nd Violin	Mark Cousins
	Andrew Condon		Tracey Renwick
	Rachel Hess		Robert Skone James
	Phil McKerracher		Susan Skone James
	Monika Molnar		

Viola	Jenny Carter	'Cello	Helen Drayton
	Dave Griffiths		Becky Fage
	Liz Tarrant		Helen Griffiths
	Vanessa Townsend		

Double Bass Rob Ferguson

Flute	Neil May	Oboe	Jenny Jaggard
--------------	----------	-------------	---------------

Clarinet	Graham King	Bassoon	Ben Exell
-----------------	-------------	----------------	-----------

Horn	Roy Banks	Trumpet	Tom Thornton
-------------	-----------	----------------	--------------

Organ	Craig Hudso
--------------	-------------

CHOIR

Soprano

Elaine Abbs	Heather Champion	Tricia Hardingham	Michele Palmer
Glynis Avis	Amy Cordiani	Chrystal Hayn	Barbara Ross-Jones
Sue Barke	Sue Cordiani	Anthea Heyes	Frances Rotunno
Debbie Benso.	Alice Davies	Evelien Hurst-Buist	Kate Sarkis
Adrienne Bishop.	Cecilia East	Elena Lewis Grey	Penny Stephens
Diana Blower	Elena Gente	Claire Luxton-Harris	Catherine Whitlock
Felicity Brown	Helen Gotts	Joanna Mace	Anne Willatt
Adriana Capadose	Maggie Hall	Louise Packham	Joanne Wye
			Emilia Yau

Alto

Judith Aveson	Pat Jay	Sara Molyneux	Lucy Smalley
Margaret Butcher	Alison Jenks	Catherine Palmer	Yvonne Spencer
Gillian Cameron-Cooper	Sheila Jones	Helen Patten	Alison Stevenson
Pauline Coxshall	Ailsa Kelleher	Amanda Philip	Nicky Thompson
Celia Grew	Pauline Lloyd	Karene Rennie	Alice Trew
Lauraine Griffiths	Clare Mwambakale	Catherine Rigby	Katherine Tucker
Yvonne Hancock	Laura Marshall	Clare Rooney	Alice Velge
Sally Hamilton	Lesley Martin	Jane Selley	Jane Walters
Judith Henderson	Ailsa McMahon	Jenny Selway	Pam White
Sarah White			

Tenor

David Cook	Janet Noble	Nick Vaisey
Peter Elliott	Alison Orlowska	Richard Walmsley
Richard Hardingham	Alan Spencer	Danny Walters
Peter Mace	Michael Spencer	Brian Wong

Basses

Ian Aveson	Mike Dowden	Anthony Hoskin	Michael Selway
David Barker	Robert Fenn	Steve Margiotta	Christopher Smart
Jeremie Bodin	Paul Gent	John Martin	Julian Spurling
Robin Cameron-Cooper	Graham Hall	Hugh McLeod	Clive Steward
Martin Camus-Smith	David Ham	Stephen Parris	Martin Williams
Tarquin Crouch	Tom Harrison	Stephen Pollard	David Wright
Stephen Davis			

Royal Tunbridge Wells **CHORAL SOCIETY**

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a vibrant community of people from all walks of life. It is an amateur mixed voice choir spanning a wide age group, with members drawn from the Kent and East Sussex area around Tunbridge Wells. Professional Music Director Robyn Sevastos, aided by experienced accompanist Craig Hudson, teaches, guides and inspires us in learning and performing a wide range of choral music.

The Choral Society stages four concerts each year at the Assembly Hall Theatre and at other venues in and around Tunbridge Wells. Professional soloists and orchestra members join us in these performances.

We are always happy to hear from anyone who is interested in joining the Choir. Rehearsals are held every Monday in term time at St John's Church Hall, Amherst Road, Tunbridge Wells. We meet at 7.30pm, rehearsals run for two hours, and you are welcome to come along to try us out. For more details of events and how to join, visit our website: rtwcs.org.uk.

SUPPORTING ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

If you would like to offer financial support to arts in the community, and to RTWCS in particular, you can become a Patron. Your support will help the Choir to employ professional soloists and orchestra members, and to maintain our high standard of performance. Contact our Patrons and Friends Secretary, Elena, at patrons_secretary@rtwcs.org.uk for more information.

We offer our thanks for their continuing support to our current Patrons and Friends:

Gold

Mr G Grant
Mrs E Phillips
Mr W Rutherford

Silver

Mr T Hurrell
Mrs E Lewis-Grey
Mrs P Maxwell

Friends

Mrs H MacNab



BIG ORANGE MEDIA

Integrated Marketing Agency

strategy

branding

video & podcasts

social media

paid search

web design

01892 579906 bigorangemedia.co.uk
Tunbridge Wells | London | Brighton



THE PIANO SHOP

KENT

Nevill Estate Yard, Eridge, Tunbridge Wells,
TN3 9JR 01892 543233

www.thepianoshopkent.co.uk

Forthcoming Concerts for 2025

***Edward Elgar* Sea Pictures**

***Vaughan Williams* Windsor Forest**

***Coleridge-Taylor* Hiawatha's Wedding Feast**

Saturday 28th June 2025 at 7.30pm

Holmewood House School Theatre

Memorial concert for James Whitbourn

Sunday 9th November 2025 at 3pm

The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells

Tickets from rtwcs.org.uk

@RTWChoralSoc @RTWChoralSoc



Registered Charity 273310

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor
150th anniversary

In Windsor Forest
Ralph Vaughan Williams

Sea Pictures
Edward Elgar
Choral arrangement by Donald Fraser

28 June 2025, 7:30 pm

The Jubilee Theatre
Holmewood House School
Langton Green

Tickets: rtwcs.org.uk



Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY
www.rtwcs.org.uk
registered charity 273310