



The Chiltern Choir

President: Patricia Parkes

Conductor: Michael Cayton

A dramatic photograph of a lighthouse on a rocky island. The lighthouse is white with a dark top and a glowing light. The sky is dark with a bright sunburst effect, and the sea is turbulent with white-capped waves crashing against the rocks.

Haydn: A Mass for Troubled Times (The 'Nelson' Mass)

**Mozart: *Vesperae
solennes de Confessore***

Gjeilo: *The Ground*

**Saturday Nov 15, 19:30
Amersham Free Church HP6 6AJ**

Christmas Cheer

with Carols and More



Saturday, December 13
17:00-18:00

Chorleywood
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Chorleywood WD3 5LN

Mince pie & drink included!

Come & Sing!

Selections from Brahms'
Ein deutsches Requiem

An Open Workshop with Vocal Coach

Saturday, January 31. 9:30-15:30
Amersham Free Church
Details on the website

A Welcome from the Chair

We are pleased to be back in Amersham Free Church for the start of our new season. It's lovely to see you here and we hope that you enjoy the selection of music this evening. We have a busy term and after tonight we will be preparing for our 'Christmas Cheer' concert (details opposite, and on our website).

During the summer break Michael took a group of Choir members on tour to Stoke Gabriel in Devon for a weekend of singing. We were made to feel very welcome and it was a beautiful part of the world to visit. The warm days of the summer seem a distant memory now.

As we continue to fund-raise for the Choir, can we encourage you to sign up for 'EasyFundraising' and to nominate the Chiltern Choir? All details are on the choir website (under the 'Support Us' tab) – do have a look. It is very easy to use and many retailers will donate to your chosen charity when you shop online.

We are looking forward to a season of lovely music and will be back here for our spring concert in 2026. Thank you for your continued support.



Lyndsay Ward
Chair



Programme

Mozart:

Vesperae solennes de confessore (K 339)

Gjeilo:

The Ground

————— *Interval* —————

Haydn:

Missa in Angustiis

(Hob. XXII/11, the ‘Nelson’ Mass)

—————

Victoria Mulley *Soprano*

Ruby Bak *Mezzo-soprano*

Matthew Pochin *Tenor*

Matthew Bernstein *Bass*

Ben Frost *Organ*

This Evening's Choir Singers



Sopranos

Caroline Bartlett
Sam Beard
Hilary Broadbent
Mary Bungard
Anni Facer
Gabrielle Fisher
Christine Guy
Jill Haslam
Sue Kesteven
Charlotte Kohnhorst
Sarah Moreton
Sonya Raymond
Stefanie Robinson
Beverley Small
Lyndsay Ward
Gill Watson

Altos

Cathy Amos
Ana de'Ath
Rita Fryer
Philippa Goss
Clare Hearnshaw
Anne Keyworth
Sarah Reynolds
Maggie Shrive
Marian Wax

Tenors

Philip Brown
Andy Etchells
Anju Sharda
Isabel Walker

Basses

Simon Boulcot
John Haslam
Dylan John
Martin Robinson
Robert Thackery
Richard Watson
Tim Wynne-Jones

Programme Notes

***Vesperae solennes de confessore* (K 339)**

In 1771, at age 15, the young Mozart attained the prestigious position of *Konzertmeister* for the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, Siegmund III Christoph Graf von Schrattenbach. Following the Archbishop's untimely death in December of that year, he was succeeded in 1772 by Hieronymous Colloredo.

Colloredo was a very different patron: an authoritarian autocrat who demanded economy and efficiency in his church services and in the music created for those services; for example, the Mass was to be no longer than 45 minutes.

Under these less than ideal circumstances, Mozart searched for work in other places. He spent extended periods in Vienna, where he completed many commissions as well as an opera to be premiered in Munich. But he always returned to Salzburg as finances ebbed. By 1777 his discontent with the situation in Salzburg came to a head when he petitioned the Archbishop that both he and his father Leopold be released from his employment. Colloredo agreed, but Leopold decided he could not afford to leave, and Mozart was reinstated.

Mozart went on his next journey accompanied by his mother, the first time he was ever away from his father. They went to Munich, Mannheim, and eventually to Paris. He did not like Paris, stating in letters that he despised French music and French taste. He refused to be deferential to possible patrons and

consequently had trouble finding work. Then in 1778 his mother came down with a fever and died a few days later.

On hearing the news, Leopold suggested that Mozart return to Salzburg, where a better post had opened up. He would still be a *Konzertmeister*, but now as court organist with accompanying duties rather than violinist. The Archbishop offered a salary increase and generous leave. So in 1779 Mozart, who had hoped to escape the provincial atmosphere of Salzburg, returned home after 16 months away.

The years 1779–80 were uneventful in Mozart's personal life and he busied himself writing a string of works for the church, the opera *Zaide*, and a variety of instrumental works, including three symphonies. The last work to be completed in Salzburg was the *Vesperae solennes de Confessore* during spring of 1780.

Vespers is the Christian prayer service held in the late afternoon or early evening. It is part of the Divine Office, a series of eight daily prayer services held at different times of the day. The service comprises five psalms, each concluding with the *Gloria Patri* ('Minor Doxology'), followed by a canticle, the *Magnificat*. In monastic settings the psalms would be chanted.

Mozart twice set these texts for special services at the cathedral. The title of the second, *Vesperae solennes de Confessore* ('solemn vespers for a confessor'), indicates that the work was composed to honour a saint. Most discussions of this *Vesperae* have been unable to identify which saint, if any, the composition honours (the title "de confessore" was not Mozart's own, but was added to his manuscript later).

The first movement, *Dixit Dominus* (Psalm 110), is an upbeat opener featuring the chorus. Mozart has fun exploring his love of chromatics as well as playing with sudden dynamic shifts. The flow and energy of the first movement continues directly into *Confitebor* (Psalm 111). This time, however, the soloists sing for extended periods in a call-and-response with the chorus, with the chorus taking over for the final “Gloria Patri.”

Beatus vir (Psalm 112) is also energetic – like the first movement, it is marked *Allegro vivace* – but has a slightly different feel, with a switch to triple metre. Note the ascending scale motive used frequently throughout. This contrasts with the dominance of the descending scale heard in *Laudate pueri* (Psalm 113). As the movement proceeds we hear techniques such as the theme turned upside down and *in stretto* (stacked on top of itself) along with the running descending scales. Unusually for a fugue, each entering voice uses the next verse of the Psalm, allowing Mozart to cover a lot of the Psalm in a short amount of time.

Laudate Dominum (Psalm 117) unfolds as one of the most lyrical soprano solos Mozart ever wrote, and it is often performed as a standalone work. The soprano line spins out in shimmering beauty. The chorus takes over at the “Gloria Patri” with a harmonized version of the melody, bringing the movement to a gentle conclusion, but not before the soprano returns for a final turn at the “Amen.”

The final movement, *Magnificat*, is a hymn in which the Virgin Mary expresses joy and thanksgiving. It begins with emphatic triplets in the accompaniment and dramatic, staggered entries on the text “Magnificat anima mea Dominum” (‘My soul

magnifies the Lord') for the chorus. The soprano soloist returns with a jaunty "Et exaltavit spiritus meus" ('And my spirit has rejoiced') before the chorus and all the soloists trade phrases right up to the triumphant concluding "Amen."

— Sanford Dole, *Bay Choral Guild*

The Ground

"*The Ground* is based on a chorale from the last movement of my *Sunrise Mass* (2008).¹ The chorale, beginning at *Pleni sunt caeli* in that movement, is the culmination of the Mass, and it's called *The Ground* because I wanted to convey a sense of having 'arrived' at the end of the Mass; to have reached a kind of peace and grounded strength after the long journey of the Mass, having gone through a lot of different emotional landscapes.

I wanted to make a version that could be performed independently of the Mass, and one that was also more accessible in terms of instrumentation, with a piano and optional string quartet accompaniment."

— Ola Gjeilo

¹ The Choir will be performing the *Sunrise Mass* in full in March 2026

Missa in Angustiis: the Nelson Mass

In the summer of 1798, Haydn was suffering extreme exhaustion after having completed and premiered his great oratorio *The Creation*. On his doctor's orders, he was confined to his rooms; but confinement for Haydn meant that he had time to compose the Mass that he needed to write for the name day of the Princess Maria Josepha Hermengilde Esterházy de Galantha, wife of his patron Nicholas II, Prince Esterházy. Instead of the three months that it would normally take him to write a Mass, he was able to stay home and complete this work, one of his greatest compositions, in six weeks spanning July and August. It is remarkable that a composer in his mid-60s – then considered an advanced age – could immediately follow such a brilliant oratorio with a Mass on an equally high level of inspiration.

Haydn called this work *Missa in Angustiis* ('Mass in Troubled Times'). In the previous year, Napoleon had defeated the Austrian armies and threatened Vienna, and then, in the summer of 1798, had broken through the allied naval blockade and appeared to be ready to conquer Egypt. It was a tense and uncertain time, but in mid-September, about a week before Haydn's new mass was to be performed, word reached Vienna that Admiral Nelson had destroyed Napoleon's fleet in a brilliant victory at Aboukir. Exactly how or when Haydn's *Missa in Angustiis* became popularly known as the 'Lord Nelson Mass' is something that, even at that time, no-one was able to say for certain, but perhaps the first listeners would have associated the terrifying trumpets and timpani of the opening *Kyrie* and the

jubilant, dramatic music that followed with the political turmoil – and then the military victory – that was on everyone's minds. In any event, two years later, Haydn performed this work before the conquering hero himself, during Nelson's visit to the Esterházy palace at Eisenstadt.

Composing masses for the name day of the Princess was among the few obligations remaining to the ageing *Kapellmeister* in his later years. By this time, Haydn, who was widely celebrated as the greatest living composer, was no longer writing symphonies, piano sonatas, or trios. Rather, he entered a period that represented not only the pinnacle of his achievement as a composer but also a new direction, a period devoted mainly to a series of vocal masterworks. The 'Nelson' Mass is the third of his six great masses written during this time.

Its orchestration is unusual and striking. In an effort to save money, Prince Esterházy had recently dismissed his woodwind players and horns, and Haydn was able to hire only trumpets and timpani to supplement his string ensemble. Occasionally, the organ – which Haydn himself played at the premiere – is given a brief solo passage, as if to compensate for the missing woodwinds. But out of this limited orchestration, Haydn created the stark, memorable sound that makes this mass so distinctive and powerful.

The strong, rhythmic D-minor opening of the *Kyrie* establishes the tense tone of a work written "in angustiis", in a time of trouble. In the *Benedictus*, we particularly feel this tension, as the chorus intones its text on one note, an effect that conjures thoughts of the Last Judgment. However, much of the rest of the work is in a more joyful and brilliant D major. Throughout,

Haydn creates a fascinating mix of Baroque-style counterpoint, still older Gregorian chant, and contemporary virtuosic writing. For the opening of the *Credo*, the chorus sings a strict canon with two voice parts imitating each other at the interval of a fifth. The rigidity of the canon (the word meaning literally ‘rule’ or ‘law’) seems particularly apt for this strong declaration of faith. In the *Et resurrexit*, the chorus ‘speaks’ a portion of its lengthy text, declaiming it on one repeated note, although here Haydn, who set his mass texts from memory, has apparently inadvertently omitted the words “qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.”

Despite the distinctive sonority of this Mass, there were some attempts made to “normalize” its orchestration by adding woodwinds and horns. Indeed Haydn made some suggestions to editors about how they might do this, but he did not supervise the work. An early edition published by Breitkopf during Haydn's lifetime, based on a pirated version that was full of errors, not only added a full complement of winds but also eliminated the organ solos and simplified the trumpet parts. In that form, the Mass became extremely popular.

— Martin Pearlman, *Boston Baroque*

Tonight's Performers

Michael Cayton – Conductor

Michael joined us as Musical Director in September 2003. Since then he has conducted our performances of repertoire from Bach to Maxwell-Davies, Purcell to Eric Whitacre. He conducted at the premieres of his compositions *Missa Beati Virginis Mariae* (Nov 2017; St Mary's Church, Rickmansworth) and *The Way Through the Woods* (Mar 2024; The Muse, Watford).

Michael is a Lancastrian, educated in Blackpool, where he gained his initial musical grounding, learning the piano and organ. After training at Kneller Hall, Michael served with the Grenadier Guards as a trumpeter, pianist, and organist, performing at a number of State functions in the Royal Palaces. Studying piano at the Royal College of Music, he gained his BMus. He won the Hilda Anderson Deane prize for conducting and improvisation, and became the first Millennium Organ Scholar at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, while completing postgraduate répétiteur studies.

Since 2003 he has been the Director of Music at St John's Wood Church in London, where he conducts both the critically acclaimed professional choir and Community Chamber Choir. During his career he has worked with several music societies (most notably The Medici Choir, Goldsmiths Choral Union, and



Vasari Singers), and he was musical director of the Watford Philharmonic Society until 2025.

As a session musician Michael has made a number of broadcasts, particularly for BBC's Songs of Praise. His compositions are published by Redemptorist Publications and Shorterhouse, and his responsorial psalms are a staple of parish churches up and down the country. With broad musical tastes, a hunger to learn new styles, and a talent for improvisation, he can often be found performing jazz, German cabaret, or Judeo-Spanish Ladino music, as well as fusion and funk.

In addition to conducting, Michael is in demand as a pianist and organist, with regular appearances in Central London venues, especially at St Martin-in-the-Fields. He lives in London with his wife, Gwendolen, and their two children.

Victoria Mulley – Soprano

Victoria grew up in Bradford, West Yorkshire; she read Music at King's College London, and later gained a Masters with Distinction in Vocal Performance from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. During her time at Trinity Laban she was awarded the Elliot Rosenblatt Memorial Scholarship and the Eva Malpass Scholarship, as well as winning the Paul Simm Opera Prize, the Linda Hirst Prize for Excellence in Contemporary Vocal Music,



and the English Song Duo Prize (alongside pianist Francesca Lauri).

Victoria was a finalist in the inaugural New Voices singing competition at the Northern Aldborough Festival 2023. She has sung in operatic productions for companies including the National Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, Barefoot Opera, Opera Loki, About Turn Theatre, and the New London Opera Group, appearing at the Tête à Tête, Grimeborn, and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, and is equally at home on the concert stage, where she has performed as soprano soloist in oratorios including Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Fauré's *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*, as well as appearing in recital across the UK.

As well as her solo work, Victoria enjoys a busy teaching practice and sings with the professional choir of St John's Wood Parish Church. She is one of the two founders and directors of The Lyra Singers, a chamber choir based in Knightsbridge, as well as a founder and director of Jam Factory Opera, a boutique opera company specialising in hidden gems of the Victorian comic opera repertoire.



Ruby Bak – Mezzo-soprano

Nottinghamshire-born mezzo-soprano Ruby Bak has recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with a distinction in her Master's degree in vocal performance. Ruby studied as an undergraduate at King's College London; as a student there she actively contributed to the Chapel Choir, performing in some of Britain's most prestigious venues including St John's Smith Square and St Paul's Cathedral.

As an active oratorio soloist, she has sung the alto solos in Rachmaninov's *All Night Vigil*, the Mozart *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, and both the *St John* and *Matthew* Passions by J.S. Bach. Beyond choral works, Ruby is deeply involved in opera, embodying roles such as Miss Jessel in *The Turn of the Screw* (Britten), L'Enfant in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (Ravel), and she toured *Hansel* (Humperdinck) with King's College London. As part of opera scenes at the Royal Academy, she has performed the role of Fox in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the title role in *Carmen*.

Matthew Pochin – Tenor

Matthew began his career as a chorister at Hereford Cathedral, where he later became a choral scholar and lay clerk. He currently studies privately with Gavin Carr.

After several years working as a pastry chef, Matthew moved to South London in 2007 to continue his career as a singer. He has held positions at several churches across the city and currently sings with the choirs of St John's Wood Parish Church and West London Synagogue. He also sings regularly with the choirs of HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court, Temple Church, and St Mary-le-Bow in the City of London.

Matthew is a founder member and Artistic Director of Scaramella, specialising in music for men's voices from the renaissance to modern close harmony. He researches and prepares new performance editions and arrangements for the group. Future projects include a new complete edition of Adrian Willaert's *Petrarcha* madrigals and *Musica Nova* motets, as well as works by Lassus, Verdelot, Clemens non Papa, and Andrea Gabrielli.

In collaboration with West London Synagogue, Matthew is spearheading a research project focused on the Jewish liturgical music of Abraham Dunajewski, a 19th-century Ukrainian cantor and composer from Odessa. The project aims to rediscover and showcase the rich Jewish musical heritage from this region.



He is a member of the unique Jewish barbershop group bOYbershop, performing traditional Jewish liturgical music, folksongs as well as close harmony standards and original comedy songs. In early 2020, bOYbershop had the unique honour of singing Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) music under the central dome of the Grand Mosque in Strasbourg as part of *Les Sacrées Journées de Strasbourg*.

Although he rarely bakes cakes anymore (much to his wife's disappointment), Matthew still enjoys cooking, especially when he can do so outdoors.

Matthew Bernstein – Bass

Matt Bernstein started singing six months before University, moving from huge choruses to smaller amateur groups, and then, after moving to London, juggling an IT career with singing professionally with cathedral and London church choirs as well as live in concert, and on radio and television.

Matt has appeared in a church choir in an ITV drama; a barbershop quintet at a corporate event in Cannes; a quartet to serenade a West End première; a set of spirituals at religious festival in Northamptonshire; immersing guests at an art gallery opening; and in the title role in Britten's *Noye's Fludde*.

On the concert stage, Matt's repertoire ranges from Pérotin to Ted Hearn. Personal consort highlights include Tallis *Lamentations*, Poulenc *Figure Humaine*, Vaughan Williams *Serenade to Music*, David Lang *The Little Match Girl Passion*, and Caroline Shaw *The Isle*. Solo oratorio work includes Handel *Messiah*; *Requiems* of Fauré, Duruflé, Mozart, Howells, Brahms; Mozart *C Minor Mass*; Haydn *Paukenmesse*, Nelson *Mass*, and *Theresienmesse*; Mendelssohn *Elijah*; Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* and Bach *B Minor Mass*, *Magnificat*, *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* and several *Cantatas*.

Benjamin Frost – Organ

Ben studied music at Exeter University, graduating with Distinction in Performance. He was Organ Scholar at Exeter Cathedral and became an associate of the Royal College of Organists. After University he studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where his tutors included Gordon Back and Graham Johnson, and he trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio. He has worked with the BBC, Lesley Garrett, Nelly Miricioiu, Marianne Cornetti, Sally

Matthews, English National Opera, and The Opera Group on several productions including *Die Fledermaus*, *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Magic Flute*, *La Bohème*, *La Cenerentola*, and *Eugene Onegin*.



In 2015 he accompanied Rebecca Front on Radio 4 for *With Great Pleasure*. In 2017 he was appointed Chorus Accompanist of the London Symphony Chorus. He worked with The BBC Singers on *Moth Requiem* by Birtwhistle, and on the premiere of *Belongings* with Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Other recent keyboard performances include the UK premiere of Simon Johnson's *Gloria* with the Waverley Singers, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* at Queen Elizabeth Hall as part of a quartet of pianists, and *Carmina Burana* with The London Symphony Chorus at the Barbican.



The Chiltern Singers, a small group drawn from the Chiltern Choir, is available to sing at events – weddings, funerals, social functions, etc. Please address enquiries to Simon Boulcott at chilternsingers@chilternchoir.org.uk

Patrons and Honorary Members

If you would like closer involvement with the Chiltern Choir, consider becoming a patron. For a modest annual fee we offer:

- Complimentary concert tickets during the season
- Advance publicity
- Invitations to social and other events
- Recognition in concert programmes

If you would like to lend your support in this way, please contact Stuart Marshall – info@chilternchoir.org.uk.

Our current patrons are:

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The following have been made honorary members, in recognition of extended service to the Choir:

Mrs Patricia Parkes – President

Dame Gillian Pugh – Vice-President

Mrs K. Darby	Mr M. Gaudie	Prof. I.D. Howarth
Mr D. Lloyd	Mr D. Treanor	

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The Mozart family in early 1781. With Wolfgang are his sister, Maria Anna, and father, Leopold. The 'portrait within a portrait' shows Wolfgang's then recently-deceased mother, Anna Maria.

[della Croce, courtesy Mozarteum Foundation]

Back cover: Horatio Nelson, painted in 1797 by Lemuel Francis Abbott.

[Royal Museums Greenwich]



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Forthcoming events:
Dec 13, 'Christmas Cheer'
Jan 31, Come & Sing!
Mar 28, Concert: Goodall, Gjeilo