

WOKINGHAM CHORAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

***'And all the people rejoiced'***

*A majestic programme of choral classics  
with piano, organ and young soloists*



wcs

Programmes £2

In memory of

Rodney Hart, with heartfelt thanks for his long-term support of WCS  
and  
Marjorie Fletcher, a much valued member of WCS for more than 40 years.

# Concert Programme

Mozart: *Coronation Mass - Kyrie & Gloria*

Mozart: *Sonata in G (K274)*

Mozart: *Coronation Mass - Credo*

Parry: *My soul, there is a country*

Mozart: *Coronation Mass - Sanctus, Benedictus and  
Agnus Dei*

Parry: *I was glad*

*Interval 20 minutes*

Haydn: *Insanae et vanae curae*

Bridge: *Adoration*

Schumann: *Dichterliebe (exerpt)*

Brahms: *Geistliches Lied*

Brahms: *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*

Wolf: *Auch kleine Dinge*

Handel: *Zadok the Priest*

Soprano	Alice Fisher
Mezzo-soprano	Adrianna Forbes-Dorant
Tenor	Hugo Williamson
Bass	Edward Chesterman
Organ & Piano	Ben Giddens
Conductor	George de Voil

Please silence mobile phones.

No photographs or recordings may be taken during the performance.

Thank you for your cooperation.

# Programme Notes

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)** **Mass in C major, K. 317 “Coronation Mass”**

In 1779 Mozart was named court organist and composer at Salzburg Cathedral and it is believed that his Coronation Mass was composed for his first Easter Sunday Mass there. During his years in Salzburg, Mozart composed at least 17 short masses, *Missae brevia*. They were designed for the Ordinary Mass to provide the necessary Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus/Benedictus, and *Angus Dei* in no more than 30 minutes. The Mass balances the practical constraints of ecclesiastical performance with the grandeur suitable for high feast days and showcases Mozart’s ability to integrate sacred solemnity with the dramatic flair of the Viennese Classical style. The title Coronation Mass (*Krönungsmesse*) likely became associated with the work due to its frequent use in coronation ceremonies of the 19th century, notably that of Emperor Francis II, and in services at Vienna’s Imperial Court Chapel.

### **1. Kyrie ( Andante maestoso )**

The mass opens with a stately Andante maestoso in homophonic texture, presenting a sense of ritual gravitas. After only 5 bars the Kyrie eleison then shifts into a livelier phase with a duet between the tenor and soprano soloists which is somewhat fugal in nature. The chorus returns for the third section, repeating their majestic music. The movement ends quietly and peacefully. The alternation between chorus and soloists recalls the mass style inherited from the Neapolitan tradition.

### **2. Gloria ( Allegro con spiritu)**

The Gloria is one of the most inspired Glorias ever written. Mozart contrasts lively and vivacious music for the chorus with short sections for the soloists. The use of solo quartet in *Gratias agimus tibi* and *Domine Deus* introduces operatic arioso textures, while the choral writing remains rhythmically energetic and harmonically rich.

It is likely that Mozart inserted a brief church sonata between movements. The normal place in the church service for such a sonata would have been between the Gloria and the Credo, as the celebrant moves from one side of the choir, where he has read the epistle, to the other side, where he reads the gospel. In today’s performance the church sonata K274 in G major has been written for organ and piano and similarly will be performed between the Credo and the Gloria.

### **3. Credo (Allegro molto)**

The Credo, the longest movement of the mass is unusually structured in a rondo form (with a reoccurring theme). The Credo begins with a lively and rhythmic section where the chorus proclaims the dogmatic text (*Credo in unum Deo – I believe in one God*). Just as the music cascades through the words “*descendit de coelis – He descended from Heaven*,” it halts suddenly. The pace changes to a much slower tempo with a deeply moving solo quartet as they announce the earthly life of the Savior – “*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu*”. The Crucifixus (Crucifixion) and Passus (Death) follow and provide some of the most moving moments of the Mass. The deep seriousness is immediately broken with the return of the rhythmic music of the beginning, set to the words “*Et resurrexit – And He was resurrected*.” The uplifting *Et Spiritu Sanctum* by the soloists leads on to the choir introducing the rondo theme for the third time. The movement closes in grand style with a powerful and vigorous “Amen” featuring staggered entrances in the chorus.

### **4. Sanctus (Andante maestoso)**

The Sanctus mirrors the grandeur of the opening Kyrie, with its stately tempo and

ceremonial character. The choir sing “Sanctus Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth” (Holy Holy Lord God of Host) followed by a rhythmic proclamation of the divine glory the “Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua” (Heaven and Earth are full of your glory). At the Hosanna excelsis the tempo changes to a more vigorous allegro assai before the soloists enter with their duple meter Benedictus.

### **5. Benedictus ( Allegretto)**

A notable contrast, the Benedictus is written as a quartet for the soloists, marked by lyrical interplay and chamber-like textures. Its relative intimacy and tonality provide a moment of contemplative beauty, before the choral reprise of the Hosanna links back to the Sanctus.

### **6. Agnus Dei (Andante sostenuto – Allegro spiritu)**

The soprano solo of the Agnus Dei recalls the style of Mozart’s contemporaneous operatic writing, bearing resemblance to the Countess’s aria Dove sono in *Le nozze di Figaro*. The prayerful Agnus Dei gives way to the exuberant “Dona nobis pacem”, which reuses thematic material from the Kyrie—a unifying device that lends the mass a sense of cyclical closure.

### **Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848–1918)**

#### **I was Glad**

The text of I was Glad has been used at most coronations since that of Charles I in 1626. Parry’s version was written for Edward VII in 1902. It has continued to be used in subsequent coronations including that of Charles III and Camilla in 2023.

The anthem marks the arrival of the monarch and attendants at the Abbey door and accompanies them, with a steady beat, as they process to their places. It is performed much as a hymn would be in church: while the top voices carry the tune, the other parts sing the same words in harmony. The music is full of pomp and splendour, in keeping with the Edwardian era. It goes through several changes of mood: anticipation, acclamation of the sovereign(s) (Vivat Regina Camilla and Vivat Rex Carolus). It finishes with a quieter prayer for peace and a more expansive wish for prosperity and plenty.

#### **My soul, there is a country (from Songs of Farewell)**

“My soul, there is a country” is the first and perhaps best-known of Parry’s Songs of Farewell, a set of six unaccompanied choral motets composed during the final years of his life. Written between 1916 and 1918, against the harrowing backdrop of the First World War, these works reflect Parry’s deep introspection and spiritual yearning in response to the turmoil of his time.

The text, a 17th-century poem by Henry Vaughan, speaks of a “country far beyond the stars,” a metaphor for heaven or spiritual peace. Vaughan contrasts the transience and suffering of earthly life with the promise of eternal refuge and serenity—a theme that would have resonated powerfully during the war years.

### **Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)**

#### **Insanae et Vanae**

Haydn’s first oratorio, *Il Ritorno di Tobia*, written in 1775 was never successful. After its last staging in 1808, he chose to salvage one chorus as the setting for this new Latin text. It is surprising that a revered composer with so many masterpieces to his name should want to do this: he appears to distance himself from some of his earlier works. He died in 1809. There are two distinct sections: *Insanae et Vanae Curae* (Insane and vain cares) is passionate and fretful at first: then at *Prodest O mortalis* it quietly asks “What profit if you neglect Heaven?”. Just to make sure, Haydn asks us to go over the whole text a second time.

## **Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)**

### **Geistliches Lied**

After the re-emergence of Bach's music in the 19th Century, many composers, Brahms included, studied his work and adopted some of his compositional techniques. In this serene 'Spiritual Song' he offers us a simple invocation to trust in God. It is written as a double canon: tenors follow sopranos at a separation of one bar; and basses follow altos in the same way. The music rises and falls with just enough freedom to allow the choir to respond to the text. A long, repeated 'Amen' grows through the choir and fades away until there is nothing left.

### **Wie melodien zeiht es mir**

This is a song set to a poem by Klaus Groth. The poem explores the ephemeral nature of inspiration and expression, describing a feeling that "moves like a melody" but is fleeting and difficult to capture. The music reflects this with its flowing motion and subtle harmonic changes, mirroring the singer's thoughts and their tendency to fade.

## **George Frederic Handel (1685–1759)**

### **Zadok the Priest**

1727 was a notable year for Handel: he became an English citizen and he wrote four anthems for the coronation of George II and Queen Caroline (one of Handel's most important patrons). Zadok the Priest is the most popular of the four: it has been used in every coronation since, most recently in 2023. This anthem marks the pivotal point of the service. The text is taken from the biblical description of the coronation of King Solomon. Handel's introduction creates a sense of growing excitement before the choir makes the solemn announcement that the King has been anointed; relaxes a little to welcome the moment; and then breaks into full celebrations with loyal fanfares and intricate flourishes.

## **Robert Schumann(1810–1856)**

### **Dichterliebe, Op. 48 (1840)**

Schumann's Dichterliebe ("A Poet's Love") is one of the most beloved song cycles of the Romantic era. The cycle is from a set of 16 poems by Heinrich Heine. The songs trace a deeply personal emotional journey, from the intoxication of first love through heartbreak and disillusionment, ending in a poignant farewell to love itself. Schumann's music masterfully complements Heine's subtle irony and shifting moods, using delicate piano textures and expressive vocal lines to illuminate the inner world of the poet.

## **Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)**

### **"Auch kleine Dinge" (Even Small Things)**

Hugo Wolf's Italienisches Liederbuch is a collection of short German songs based on Italian love poems—miniatures that capture the joys, sorrows, and ironies of human relationships. "Auch kleine Dinge" (Even Small Things) opens the set with a quiet but heartfelt reminder that even the smallest things can hold great beauty and meaning.

## **Frank Bridge (1879–1941)**

### **Adoration**

Frank Bridge was one of this country's finest string players; as well as being an orchestral conductor and composer he was also a teacher (he taught Benjamin Britten). This piece, composed in 1905, is a song set to a poem by John Keats. The poem reflects themes of love and reverence, and Bridge's setting captures the poem's emotional depth through a flowing vocal line accompanied by a sensitive piano part. The piece is known for its intimate character and expressive phrasing, making it a cherished work in the English art song repertoire.

Music notes in this booklet are copyright to Chris Dunning (CD) and George Thomas (GT).

## Mozart: Missa in C “Coronation Mass”

### Kyrie

Kyrie eleison,  
Christe eleison,  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy upon us,  
Christ have mercy upon us,  
Lord have mercy upon us.

### Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te,  
glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam  
tuam.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.  
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
We give you thanks for your great glory,

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,  
Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;  
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe  
deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere  
nobis.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us; you take away the sins of  
the world, receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the  
Father have mercy on us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu  
Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei  
Patris.  
Amen.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord, you alone are the  
Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen

## Mozart: Sonata in G (K274) - Organ and piano duet

## Mozart: Missa in C “Coronation Mass” (continued)

### Credo

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem  
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae,  
visibilium omnium, et invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum  
ante omni saecula.

I believe in one God, Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and of earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
The only begotten Son of God.  
And of the Father born before all ages.

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum  
verum de Deo vero.  
Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem  
Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt.

God from God, light from light, true God  
from true God.  
Begotten, not made, of one substance with  
The Father, by whom all things made were.

Qui propter nos homines, et propter  
nostram salutem descendit de coelis.

Who for us men, and for our salvation  
descended from heavens.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine. Et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus, et sepultus est.  
Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas,  
Et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris.

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.  
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.  
Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi sæculi.  
Amen.

And by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary. And was made man.  
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried.  
And he rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures.  
And he ascended into heaven, he sits at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory, to judge the living and the dead, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

And in Holy Spirit, Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father and the Son Who with the Father, and the Son together is adored and glorified, who spoke through prophets.

And one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for remission of sins.

And I look for the resurrection of dead.  
And life of the age to come.  
Amen.

## **Parry: My soul, there is a country - Soloists**

My soul, there is a country  
Far beyond the stars,  
Where stands a wingèd sentry  
All skilful in the wars:

There, above noise and danger,  
Sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles,  
And One born in a manger  
Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious Friend,  
And-O my soul, awake!-  
Did in pure love descend  
To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,  
There grows the flower of Peace,  
The Rose that cannot wither,  
Thy fortress, and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges;  
For none can thee secure  
But One who never changes  
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

## **Mozart: Missa in C "Coronation Mass" (continued)**

### **Sanctus**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of Sabaoth.  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.



## **Benedictus**

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

## **Agnus dei**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of

## **Parry: I was glad when they said unto me**

I was glad when they said unto me  
We will go into the house of the Lord.  
Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.  
Jerusalem is builded as a city, that is at unity in itself.  
Vivat Regina Camilla! Vivat! Vivat! Vivat!  
Vivat Rex Carolus! Vivat! Vivat! Vivat!  
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.  
Peace be within thy walls and plenteousness within thy palaces.

## **Interval 20 minutes**

### **Haydn: Insanae et vanae curae**

Insanae et vanae curae invadunt mentes nostras.  
Saepe furore replent corda, privata spe.

Vain and raging cares invade our minds,  
Madness often fills the heart, robbed of hope.

Quid prodest, O mortalis, conari pro mundanis, si coelos negligas?  
Sunt fausta tibi cuncta, si Deus est pro te.

O mortal man, what does it profit to endeavour at worldly things, if you should neglect the heavens?  
If God is for you, all things are favorable for you.

## **Bridge: Adoration - Tenor and Piano**

### **Schumann: exerpt from Dichterliebe: Songs 1-4 - Bass and Piano**

**Im wunderschönen Monat Mai  
Aus meinen Tränen sprießen  
Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne  
Wenn ich in deine Augen seh**

### **Brahms: Geistliches Lied**

Laß dich nur nichts nicht dauren  
Mit Trauren,  
Sei stille!  
Wie Gott es fügt,  
So sei vergnügt  
Mein Wille.

Let nought afflict thee with grief;  
Be calm, as God ordains,  
And so may my will be contented.

Was willst du heute sorgen  
Auf morgen?  
Der Eine  
steht allem für;  
Der gibt auch dir  
das Deine.

Why take thought for the morrow?  
The one God who gives thee  
What is thine watches over all.

Sei nur in allem Handel  
Ohn Wandel,  
Steh feste!  
Was Gott beschleußt,  
Das ist und heißt  
das Beste.  
Amen.

All in thy doings be steadfast  
And true.  
What God decrees  
Is best, and this it is acknowledged.

### **Brahms: Wie Melodien zieht es mir - Mezzo-soprano and Piano**

### **Wolf: Auch kleine Dinge - Soprano and Piano**

#### **Handel: Zadok the Priest**

Zadok the Priest, and Nathan the Prophet anointed Solomon King.  
And all the people rejoiced, and said:  
God save the King! Long live the King!  
May the King live for ever  
Amen. Alleluia.



## Alice Fisher

### Soprano

Alice Fisher is a second-year undergraduate student, reading Music at Merton College, Oxford. Alongside being a Choral Scholar in Merton College Choir, Alice regularly sings at other colleges and performs in solo recitals and chamber concerts. Before coming to Oxford, Alice spent three years at the Royal Academy of Music Junior Department, where she played lead roles in various Gilbert and Sullivan operas, as well as exploring her skills as a soloist. Prior to this, Alice spent three years as a Girl Chorister at Ely Cathedral, where she found her passion for choral singing.



## Adrianna Forbes-Dorant

### Mezzo-Soprano

Adrianna Forbes-Dorant is a first-year undergraduate mezzo-soprano, pianist, composer and violinist studying music at Cambridge University. As a teenager, she played the role of Flora in Garsington Opera's award-winning 2019 production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. Later that year, she was youngest ensemble soloist in the Royal Opera House's production of Britten's *Death in Venice*. In

Garsington's 2022 season she performed the title role of Dalia in the premiere of Roxanna Panufnik's opera. Outside of singing, she studied at Junior Trinity gaining diplomas with distinctions in both piano and violin. She has performed as a solo pianist with the London Mozart Players and plays violin regularly with the Brixton Chamber Orchestra. Her composition was performed at the 2024 Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey. Since starting at Cambridge in 2024, Adrianna was selected for the Lieder scheme, receiving singing coaching from Joseph Middleton and participating in a masterclass with Sir Thomas Allen. She sings in the Cambridge University Chamber Choir, with highlights including a performance of Judith Weir's *Moon and Star* alongside the Cambridge University Orchestra in King's College Chapel. Adrianna is also enjoying being part of the 2024-2025 Genesis Sixteen Cohort. She sings in Pembroke Chapel Choir under Anna Lapwood, performing solos at their Christmas concerts in Snape Maltings and Sinfonia Smith Square and is looking forward to performing at the BBC Proms 2025.



## Hugo Williamson

### Tenor

Hugo is in his final year studying music at Robinson College, Cambridge, holding a choral scholarship with Gonville and Caius College Choir and is a current member of Genesis Sixteen. Winner of the 2025 Clare College Song Competition, Hugo has studied for two years with Joseph Middleton on the Sir Arthur Bliss Lieder Scheme, alongside performing with Nicholas Mulroy with the Cambridge University Chamber Choir.

Recital highlights include Vaughan Williams' On Wenlock Edge, Finzi's A Young Man's Exhortation and Schumann's Liederkreis alongside operatic roles such as The Madwoman in Britten's Curlew River, Orpheus in Offenbach's Orpheus in the Underworld and Prologue/Peter Quint in Britten's The Turn of the Screw. Next year, Hugo is excited to be joining the Voces8 Scholars programme and taking up a prestigious lay clerkship at King's College, Cambridge.



## Edward Chesterman

### Bass

Edward was a choral scholar at Merton College, Oxford, under Benjamin Nicholas, where he also completed his studies, achieving a BA in Music. While at Merton, Edward studied singing under Giles Underwood, and participated in masterclasses and workshops conducted by high-profile names such as Andreas Scholl, Roderick Williams, Robin Blaze and Miriam Allen. Edward also co-manages and sings in the newly formed Omnium Ensemble, a choir

specialising in contemporary music and vocal well-being, supported by musical patrons such as Sir John Rutter and Cecilia McDowall.



## Ben Giddens

### Piano & Organ

Ben Giddens is Assistant Organist at The Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks where he accompanies the professional choir and presides over the new Chapel organ by Harrison and Harrison.

Ben previously held the post of Associate Organist at St Martin in the Fields. Whilst at St Martin's, he had the opportunity to perform with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the Brandenburg Sinfonia as well as performing regularly on BBC Radio 3.

Ben has held organist posts at St Bartholomew the Great and Magdalen College, Oxford. At Oxford he toured regularly with the Chapel Choir as well as featuring on recordings and regular broadcasts. Prior to this Ben held the position of Acting Assistant Organist at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, where he performed at many Royal occasions.

Ben holds a first-class honours degree in Music from the University of East Anglia. Whilst studying for his degree, he held the organ scholarship at Norwich Cathedral before returning to St George's, Windsor.

Ben currently maintains an active schedule of freelance performing and regularly deputises at St Bride's Fleet Street and is the accompanist for Wokingham Choral Society.



## George de Voil Musical Director

George de Voil's reputation as a conductor took off in 2014 when he made the world première recording with symphony orchestra of Stanford's Mass in G, Op. 46. The disc was praised by BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone, and led to George being named a Classic FM "Young Artist to Watch". MusicWeb International praised his "stylish" direction, calling his recording of Parry's Songs of Farewell "exciting and full of conviction", while Martin Bird declared in the Elgar Society Journal, "George de Voil is something of a find...He may be young, but his innate musicianship, his feeling for line, for balance, for phrasing, for the placing of chords, is exciting...". Choir & Organ remarked, "the choir achieve a superb blend under their intelligent young conductor".

This year George marks a decade as Director of Music at St James's, Sussex Gardens, in London, with its fine professional choir. Under his leadership, the distinguished musical tradition of this church has been revitalised, with an exciting concerts programme and a major rebuild by Mander Organs of the 1882 Hill instrument. For six years George was Head of Choral Music at Wellington College, where he built the reputation of the Chapel Choir, leading a number of successful foreign tours.

Alongside his role as Musical Director of Godalming Choral Society, he is proud to hold the directorship of Wokingham Choral Society, where his predecessors include Edward Gardner, Paul Daniel, and Stephen Layton. Highlights for 2024-25 include directing Elgar's Dream of Gerontius in Guildford Cathedral, Britten's St Nicholas with the choir of St George's School, Windsor Castle, and Mendelssohn's Elijah in the Memorial Chapel at Charterhouse.

A prizewinning Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, with a first class degree from Oxford University, George has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4, and given organ concerts in Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral, as well as across the UK and Europe. On New Year's Day in 2025 he broadcast on Radio 3 accompanying the Rodolfus Choir, with music by Schubert and Haydn alongside a new commission by Roderick Williams. George studies orchestral conducting with Russell Keable and is on the full-time teaching staff of King's College School, Wimbledon.

# Wokingham Choral Society

President - Edward Gardner OBE

Vice Presidents - Stephen Layton MBE, Aidan Oliver

Wokingham Choral Society was formed by a small group of enthusiasts in July 1951.

## **Edward Gardner OBE**

Edward was Musical Director of WCS from 1997 until 2002. Starting his career as a chorister at Gloucester Cathedral Edward attended Eton College, the University of Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. In 2005 he was a winner of the Young Artist prize of the Royal Philharmonic Society, and in March 2006 he was appointed Music Director of the English National Opera. During his time with the ENO, he was also Principal Guest Conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, until 2016. In 2013 Edward was appointed as principal guest conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, becoming its principal conductor from the 2015-16 season. In 2012 he was awarded an OBE for his Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours. At the start of the 2021-22 season Edward took up his new role as principal conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

## **Stephen Layton MBE**

Stephen was Musical Director of WCS from 1991 to 1997. He won scholarships to Eton College and then Kings College, Cambridge as an organ scholar under Stephen Cleobury. Whilst studying at Cambridge, Stephen founded and is Director of the mixed-voice choir Polyphony. He was appointed the Musical Director of the Holst Singers in 1993. His former posts include Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Chamber Choir, Chief Guest Conductor of the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia and Director of Music at the Temple Church in London. In 2006 Stephen was appointed Fellow and Director of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge. However he has recently announced that he will retire from Cambridge this summer in order to devote more time to his international guest conducting career. Stephen was awarded an MBE for services to classical music in October 2020.

## **Aidan Oliver**

Aidan was Musical Director of WCS from 2002 - 2007. He has been Chorus Director at Glyndebourne since 2019. He is one of the UK's leading choral directors, with wide experience across the whole spectrum of symphonic, liturgical, operatic and contemporary music. Alongside his work at Glyndebourne, he directs the Edinburgh Festival Chorus, which plays a central role each year in the Edinburgh International Festival; he is also the founding director of Philharmonia Voices, the professional choir that has collaborated with the Philharmonia Orchestra on many of its most ambitious choral-orchestral projects over many years. He has worked regularly on the music staff of ROH and ENO, and his former positions include Director of Music at St Margaret's Westminster and Associate Conductor of the St Endellion Summer Festival in Cornwall.

## **Wokingham Choral Society thank our Friends and Patrons for their support:**

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Business Patrons benefit from multiple discounted tickets, reduced advertising rates in our concert programmes and acknowledgement of their support both on our website and in our concert programmes.

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As an individual, business or other organisation, you may also sponsor a concert. The benefits of our concert sponsorship scheme include discounted tickets, and reduced advertising rates and acknowledgement of your support in our concert programmes. For full details of the above schemes, visit the WCS website at [www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk](http://www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk) and click on the "Support Us" tab.

## **Wokingham Choral Society thank the following organisations for their support this season:**

PWG Consulting (BioPharma) Ltd  
Newbury Building Society, Wokingham  
Jay Design and Print  
Wokingham Information Centre

## **Join WCS for fun, friendship and song!**

Wokingham Choral Society is an auditioned choir renowned for the high standard of our classical choral singing and for quality performances of classical and 'lighter' music. For over 70 years, our friendly, hard-working choir has enjoyed singing and performing together. We pride ourselves on our welcoming ethos and our wish to make good music accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

We offer an exciting and varied programme of four concerts a year. Our two major concerts feature great works from the classical repertoire, as well as lesser-known pieces, performed alongside professional soloists and orchestras. We sing a family Christmas concert and a summer concert of lighter music. We enjoy musical collaborations with other choirs and musicians, and organise regular social events, 'come & sing' workshops and tours to perform at inspiring venues.

**To sing with us contact: [membership@wokingham-choral-society.org.uk](mailto:membership@wokingham-choral-society.org.uk)**



## WCS members 2025

### Sopranos

Claire Aldridge  
Sue Allan  
Phaedra Ashford  
Lynsay Atkins  
Audrey Brown  
Sue Budge  
Fiona Butler  
Sandie Cleaver

Marion Connah  
Christine Davies  
Helen Foster  
Carolyn Hammond  
Megan Harrall  
Rhoda Hart  
Claire Hiscock  
Ann Iles

Christina Jordan  
Sally-Ann Krzyzaniak  
Katy Lethbridge  
Judy Mak  
Sue McCollm  
Jane Mellor  
Margot Nowell  
Marilyn Payler

Emma Reid  
Noeline Sanders  
Irene Simons  
Penny Ward  
Sheila White  
Nicola Woodman

### Altos

Elizabeth Asplen  
Teri Austen  
Hilary Blake  
Angela Borland  
Inge Burton  
Vivien Canning  
Jan Carpenter  
Wendy Chan

Sharon Chappell  
Astrid Cobb  
Liz Davies  
Dinah Ford  
Jenny Eaglen  
Holly Ferrari  
Caroline Fulton  
Anne Haycocks

Christiana Kwan  
Joan King  
Diane Lawton  
Judith Mills  
Polly Poon  
Katy Relton  
Marilyn Rogers  
Paula Seddon

Anna Sigurdardottir  
Elizabeth Spriggs  
Anne Stratford  
Jo Tremlett  
Doris Tse  
Claire Ward  
Lorna White  
Marilyn Wright

### Tenors

Simon Gilbert  
Robert Grindley  
Kwok Kit Lau

Gary Jordan  
David Kitching  
Richard Payler

Alison Sears  
Martin Smith  
Richard Turner

David Ward

### Basses

Peter Ambrose  
Neil Arden  
Mike Bowstead  
Rod Bromley  
Chris Dunning

Jeremy Farrow  
Peter Goodson  
Tim Iles  
Ralph Jaconello

Robert Knowles  
Nigel Mellor  
Martin Nowell  
Fred Preston

Steven Robinson  
John Wallis  
Danny Walsh  
Richard Whittington

## WCS honorary life members

Hazel Hunter, Fred Preston, Linda Skilton

## WCS Committee

Chair: Katy Lethbridge  
Secretary: Penny Ward  
Treasurer: Ralph Jaconello  
Soprano Representative: Sally-Ann Krzyzaniak  
Alto Representative: Hilary Blake  
Tenor Representative: Richard Payler

Bass Representative: Tim Iles  
Librarian: Fiona Butler  
Membership Secretary: Caroline Fulton  
Business Manager: Martin Smith  
Publicity: Chris Dunning

## Non-committee, WCS support roles:

Friends Coordinator: Jenny Eaglen  
Concert Manager: Jeremy Farrow  
Ticket Sales Manager: Ann Iles

Events Coordinators: Rhoda Hart and Richard Turner  
Marketing Design: Jo Tremlett

**Thank you to our Front of House team** - Steve, Russ, Paul, and Steve

# Next events in 2025 & 2026

## Baroque Masters: Bach and Handel

Saturday 15 November 2025

All Saints Church, Wokingham, RG40 1TN.

A concert of wonderful music by Bach and Handel featuring 5 professional soloists and a Baroque orchestra of strings, woodwind, trumpets, harpsichord and timpani.

### **Handel: *Ode for St Cecilia's Day***

First performed on 22 November 1739, this stirring piece celebrates Saint Cecilia as the patron saint of music and musicians. The cantata's text is a setting of a 1687 poem by John Dryden based on the Pythagorean theory of harmonia mundi, linking the movement and origin of the celestial bodies to music. The opening chorus, "*From harmony, from heavenly harmony*", praises the power of music.

### **Bach: *Magnificat***

This beautiful setting of the biblical canticle, Magnificat, was Bach's first major liturgical composition on a Latin text. The canticle is Mary's song of praise in recognition of the fulfilment of the Angel Gabriel's prophecy that she would bear Jesus.

## Christmas Carol Concert

Saturday 13 December 2025

## Spring Concert: Sturm und Drang!

Saturday 21 March 2026

German Romantic myths and legends - Beethoven Mass in C, with pieces by Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Humperdinck.

## Summer concert: Saturday Night at the Movies

Saturday 20 June 2026



