

St George's Singers 2018-2019 Season

Mahler Symphony no. 2, 'The Resurrection'
Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra

Sing Together!
A Whittingham Lives Project

A Hundred Years On
Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*

Carols and Brass by Candlelight
Chetham's Brass Ensemble

Singing Day
Gounod *St Cecilia Mass*

Bach *Mass in B minor*
Northern Baroque Orchestra

The Well-Conducted Tour
Music from St George's Singers' European tours

Mahler Symphony no. 8, 'Symphony of a Thousand'
Chetham's Symphony Orchestra



St George's Singers



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Neil Taylor

Assistant Musical Director

Robert Brooks

Accompanist

Peter Durrant

Assistant Accompanists

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Ticket hotline: 01663 764012

Online ticket bookings: www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

General enquiries: 01625 875437

St George's Singers is a Registered Charity, No 508686, and a member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies

www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

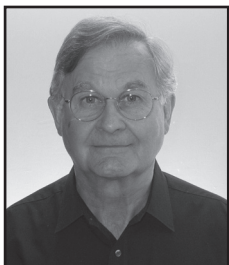


St George's Singers



SUPPORTING &
CHAMPIONING
VOLUNTARY MUSIC

Welcome to our 2018-19 season



John Smith

Chair, St George's Singers

Dear Friends,

Welcome to St George's Singers 2018–19 season of concerts, full of musical contrasts and highlights.

I'm beginning to nickname this season our 'Mahler Season', because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience both of the great Mahler choral symphonies in one season! We start the season early, with the Mahler 2, the 'Resurrection', on Sunday 23 September at Gorton Monastery, and finish our season with Mahler 8, the 'Symphony of a Thousand', at the Bridgewater Hall.

But the concerts in this Mahler sandwich are not to be missed either. Leonard Bernstein was born 100 years ago this October, so we couldn't resist the opportunity to present *Chichester Psalms* at the RNCM. What greater contrast could you have to the huge romanticism of Mahler and the bright modernity of Bernstein than the Bach *Mass in B minor*, one of the greatest choral works ever written.

Add to these hugely influential works our ever popular Christmas concert and annual Singing Day, and we have one of the most exciting and varied seasons we have ever presented. I hope you will join us and share the excitement!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', on a light-colored rectangular background.

St George's people



Neil Taylor

Musical Director



Robert Brooks

Assistant Musical
Director



Peter Durrant

Accompanist

Neil Taylor is a sought after and renowned choral director, organist, piano accompanist, teacher and coach, based in the North West of England. After winning a Scholarship to the Royal College of Music, he held appointments at St Albans and Norwich Cathedrals, and was Organist and Director of Music at Sheffield Cathedral until 2016. During his time in Sheffield, the cathedral choir toured both at home and abroad and broadcast frequently on BBC Radios 2 & 3. His CD Recordings include *Music for a Millennium*, a Classic FM Magazine CD of the Year Award Winner, and nine CD recordings with the cathedral choir, all to high critical acclaim. As solo organist, he has played at many of the major venues in the UK, and has worked with the Hallé, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera. He is Music Director of St George's Singers, Manchester, The Sheffield Chorale, and Artistic Director of the Keele Bach Choir; he appears frequently with the BBC as Musical Director and Organist on *Songs of Praise*, *Daily Service* and *Sunday Worship*.

Robert Brooks is a baritone, conductor and composer based in Manchester. He directs the Preston Cecilian Choral Society, the Manchester Singers and the Abney Orchestra. Robert attended Junior Guildhall, studying piano and guitar, and sang as a treble in New College Choir under Edward Higginbottom. He completed a music degree at Manchester University, where he received an award for services to choral conducting, and also sang in the Genesis Sixteen choral programme. In 2018 he was a member of the National Youth Choir Fellowship, a flagship ensemble for the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. He is assistant conductor and vocal coach of St George's Singers and conducting scholar with Leeds Festival Chorus.

Pete Durrant is a pianist, accompanist and teacher in demand across the North of England. He is the accompanist of Keele Bach Choir, Stafford Choral Society and St George's Singers, and has accompanied the BBCSO Chorus, the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, Manchester Chamber Choir, and the Hallé, Hallé Youth and Hallé Children's Choirs. He has also played with the Hallé Orchestra. Currently he is the répétiteur for Adam Gorb's new opera *The Path to Heaven*. Pete was a chorister at Westminster Abbey, touring worldwide and singing at many high profile events, including the funeral of Princess Diana. He studied music at The University of Manchester, where he learned with Tom Scott. In 2010 he completed a Masters in Piano Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Jeremy Young and Colin Stone. Pete has also conducted Manchester University's chamber choir, Ad Solem, and Leek Choral Society, for whom he composed his Requiem for his final concert with them in May 2018.

St George's Singers

A passion for singing

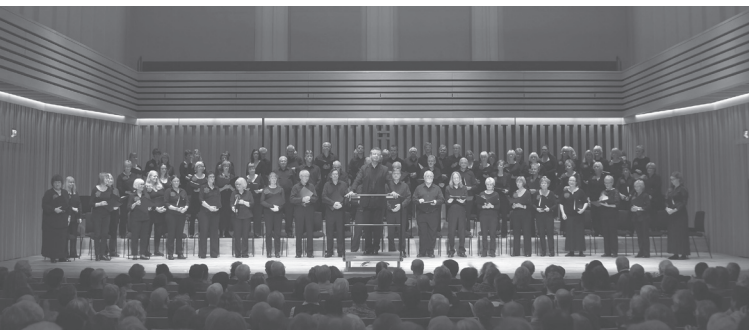
St George's Singers is widely recognised as one of the most enterprising, innovative and versatile choirs in the North of England, with a genuine passion for singing. The Choir was formed in Poynton, Cheshire in 1956 with 23 founding members drawn from the local community. Today, it has over 100 members who travel from Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.

Under Musical Director Neil Taylor, the Choir performs an extensive and eclectic repertoire that covers renaissance, baroque, classical, jazz, modern and newly commissioned choral works. We put on at least four major concerts a year, hold an annual open Singing Day, and are frequently invited to take part in collaborative ventures with other choirs and orchestras, particularly Chetham's School of Music. Concert venues in Manchester include the Bridgewater Hall, The Stoller Hall, Gorton Monastery, Manchester Cathedral and the Royal Northern College of Music, but we also perform in our 'home' churches of St George's Stockport and St George's Poynton. We sing with world-class soloists and orchestras, and tour regularly in the UK and overseas.

Although a large choir, St George's Singers is also an extremely friendly and welcoming group. Entry to the Choir is by audition, and new members can join at any time. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings in St George's Church Hall, Poynton, SK12 1NH and we recommend you come along to a few rehearsals before auditioning.

For more information about joining St George's Singers, please contact our Secretary, Jacqui Smith, tel 01625 875437, email: enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

St George's Singers at The Stoller Hall, Rachmaninov Vespers, October 2017



Sunday 23 September 2018, 7.00 pm
Gorton Monastery, Manchester

Mahler Symphony no. 2, 'The Resurrection'

Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra

Conductor Benjamin Ellin

Soprano **Bibi Heal**

Mezzo **Olivia Ray**

Founded in 1891, Slaithwaite Philharmonic is recognised as one of the top five amateur orchestras in the country, with a reputation for bold and adventurous programming. The orchestra have invited St George's Singers to join them in Mahler's Symphony No 2, known as 'The Resurrection'. First performed in 1895, the symphony was regarded during Mahler's lifetime as one of his most popular and successful works, and its power has not waned since, being voted the fifth-greatest symphony of all time in a survey of conductors by *BBC Music Magazine*.

Tickets: £16, £14 concession, £7 students, group discounts available

Saturday 24 November 2018, 7.30 pm

Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

A Hundred Years On

Bernstein *Chichester Psalms*

Goodall *Eternal Light: A Requiem*

Johnson Manning *War's Embers* (première)

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Graham Eccles**

Piano **Pete Durrant**

Harp **Louise Thomson**

Percussion **Ged Marciniak**

Soprano **Léonie Maxwell**

Countertenor **Joseph Judge**

Baritone **Terence Ayebare**

A hundred years after the end of the First World War in 1918, this concert presents three works that allow us to reflect on events of this most momentous of years. Howard Goodall's *Eternal Light* is an intensely moving requiem setting of compassion for the grieving, its text including the poem 'In Flanders Field'. Sasha Johnson Manning's choral suite *War's Embers* was commissioned by the Whittingham Lives project and is based on the poetry of Ivor Gurney, a tragic victim of war who spent many years in an asylum. Leonard Bernstein, born in 1918, combined the Hebrew and Christian choral traditions in his uplifting setting of the Psalms in 1965, a plea for peace in Israel during a turbulent time in the young country's history.

£16, £14 concessions, £7 students/children, group discounts
Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to RNCM.

Saturday 8 December 2018, 7.00 pm
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport

Carols and Brass by Candlelight

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Pete Durrant**

with

Chetham's Brass Ensemble

and

Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir

Directors **Vicky Sunderland** and **Louise Bousfield**

Following last year's exciting debut at our annual carol concert by Chetham's young brass players, we've invited them back for more festive fun and music-making. Enjoy listening to the youthful voices of Bradshaw Hall choir, teamed with the ever so slightly older strains of St George's Singers, for an evening of carols and Christmas music. Not forgetting the complimentary mulled wine, mince pies and other Christmas treats!

£13, £11 concession, £4 students/children, group discounts
Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to St George's Stockport.

Saturday 19 January 2019

9.30–10.15 am (registration for singers), 6.00 pm (concert)

St George's Church, London Road, Poynton

Singing Day

Gounod St Cecilia Mass

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Accompanist **Pete Durrant**

Soprano **Léonie Maxwell**

Tenor **Christopher Littlewood**

Bass **Robert Brooks**

As a youth, Charles François Gounod intended to become a priest, but decided he was unsuited for the priesthood, and expressed his devotion in numerous works of sacred music. The *Messe Solennelle de Sainte Cécile*, dedicated to the patron saint of musicians, was his first major work, premiered in the Church of St Eustache in Paris on Saint Cecilia's Day, 22 November 1855, and establishing him as a noteworthy composer. Gounod's ability to compose dramatic music for the opera is clearly evident: the Gloria and Credo are famous for their drama, power and memorable melodies. Saint-Saëns ranked the Mass amongst Gounod's best works, commenting 'this serene light which rose before the musical world like a breaking dawn, troubled people enormously ... at first one was dazzled, then charmed, then conquered'.

£22 to sing (including music), £5 students, £5 audience

To register to sing, please download our Singing Day application form from www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, or contact Gillian Banks, tel 01925 213949, email stgeorgessingingday@gmail.com.

Sunday 31 March 2019, 7.30 pm
Gorton Monastery, Manchester

Bach Mass in B minor

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Soprani **Rebecca Lea, Eleanor Gregory**

Contralto **Joyce Tindsley**

Tenor **Richard Dowling**

Bass **Rob O'Connell**

Northern Baroque Orchestra

'The greatest musical work of art of all times and of all nations.' That was the verdict of Hans Georg Nägeli, the first publisher of the *Mass in B minor*. Whilst Nägeli clearly had a financial interest in selling copies of the score, few would disagree with his assessment of this most glorious of choral masterpieces. Never intended to be given a liturgical performance, the Mass was compiled by Bach in the late 1740s from pieces he had composed throughout his long career, creating a coherent, unified and magnificent work of art which brings together an unprecedented range of musical style: stile antico, profoundly expressive choruses, highly ornamented and 'modern' writing in the solo arias, and secular dance music found throughout. Intellectually, spiritually and musically, the *Mass in B minor* unites his creed as a Christian with his creed as a musician, and is the supreme expression of universality.

£16, £14 concession, £7 students/children, group discounts
Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to Gorton Monastery.

Saturday 8 June 2019, 7.30 pm

St George's Church, London Road, Poynton

The Well-Conducted Tour

Music from St George's Singers' European tours

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Pete Durrant**

Every year St George's Singers goes on tour, performing music from the glorious cornucopia that is the British choral music repertoire, and including works specially chosen for our European audiences.

Following our May 2019 tour to Bruges, this concert gives our audience back at home a chance to hear some of the music we normally reserve for overseas listeners. So, come and join us as we revisit exciting places and revive musical memories from across Europe.

£12, £10 concession, £5 students/children, group discounts

Friday 5 July 2019, 7.30 pm
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Mahler Symphony no. 8, 'Symphony of a Thousand'

Chetham's Symphony Orchestra

Conductor **Stephen Threlfall**

Chetham's Chorus, St George's Singers, Leeds Festival Chorus,
Manchester Cathedral Choristers

Soloists: **TBA**

The Symphony no. 8 by Gustav Mahler is one of the largest-scale choral works in the classical repertoire, its huge instrumental and vocal forces giving it the nickname 'Symphony of a Thousand'. The last of Mahler's works to be premiered in his lifetime, it is proof of his position as one of the most visionary and ambitious composers of the romantic era. In 2019, the 50th Anniversary of Chetham's School of Music, St George's Singers joins with Chetham's Chorus and Symphony Orchestra under the baton of their Director of Music, Stephen Threlfall, in a performance of this astounding work.

Tickets: Bridgewater Hall Box office 0161 907 9000,
www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

Special Event

Saturday 29 September, 2018

St John's Minster, Preston, 10.30 am - 5.00 pm

Sing Together!

'Whittingham Lives' is a two-year arts and heritage project, exploring the legacy of Whittingham Asylum near Preston, which took in nearly 1,000 shell-shocked soldiers from the First World War. As part of the Whittingham Lives project, the choral suite *War's Embers* was commissioned from composer Sasha Johnson Manning, to words by the poet Ivor Gurney, himself an inmate of the nearby sister asylum at Winwick. *Sing Together!* is a special event run by The Whittingham Lives Association, and led musically by Neil Taylor. It aims to bring together experienced singers and those suffering from mental health problems for an enjoyable and rewarding day of singing. Music will include extracts from *War's Embers*, well-known traditional and folk-songs, and much more. Please join us!

For more information contact Eric Northey, email whittinghamlives@gmail.com, tel 0161 431 9131, or visit www.whittinghamlives.org.uk to download an application form.



Supported by

The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



And more...

Come and Sing evening – Tuesday 23 April 2019

Our annual Come and Sing evening is open to all, and this season will be held on Tuesday 23 April 2019 (St George's Day!) at St George's Church in Poynton. If you already sing with another choir and just want an extra evening's music-making, or are thinking of joining St George's Singers, you are invited to join Neil Taylor, accompanist Pete Durrant and all the Choir members in rehearsing a selection of music from our current repertoire. More details will be found on our website towards the end of 2018, or contact Jacqui Smith on enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

CDs

The Choir has made a number of CD recordings, obtainable at concerts or via our website. The most recent, *The Christmas Life*, was selected for broadcast by Classic FM, and features traditional and modern carols, including special commissions by St George's Singers. Other CDs include *Our Spirits Sing*, recorded for our Golden Jubilee in 2006, and *Carols from St George's*.

Newsletter

Pick up a copy of the choir newsletter *Hermiola* at our concerts, download it from our website, or sign up to our Mailing List on the website. You can also follow the Choir on Twitter (@stgeorgessinger) and Facebook.

Choir Tour, 24–27 May 2019, Bruges

After our wonderful trip to North Wales in 2018, we once more head overseas – this time to the magical medieval city of Bruges.

The Cheshire Consort

The Cheshire Consort chamber choir was formed by St George's Singers to sing at church and civil weddings and other formal events throughout Greater Manchester, Cheshire and North Wales. The Consort's repertoire covers sacred and secular choral music to suit any venue and style of ceremony. For more information telephone Alison McLay on 0161 969 7698, email enquiries@cheshireconsort.org.uk, or visit our website. www.cheshireconsort.org.uk. You can also follow The Cheshire Consort on Facebook and Twitter.



Friends of St George's Singers

The Friends of St George's Singers play an important part in the social and musical life of the Choir, as well as providing vital financial support. Annual membership of the Friends costs only £20 for Red Rose, and £30 for Gold Rose Membership, though many Friends make even more generous donations. Many long-standing Friends have also been invited to become Life Friends, in recognition of their contribution to the Choir.

In return Friends receive a number of generous benefits:

Reserved seats at concerts, where available, for Friends plus two guests

Acknowledgement in programmes

Free coach transport to city centre venues, when available

Free concert programmes

Invitation to the annual Friends' Reception

The Choir newsletter, *Hemiola*

To join our Friends, simply complete and return the Application Form in this brochure, or contact Barbara Forshaw on friends@st-georges-singers.org.uk, tel 0161 215 2112.

Patrons

We are immensely grateful to our Patrons, individual and corporate supporters of the Choir who contribute funds for specific purposes, such as sponsoring concerts, soloists, new music commissions or other Choir activities. All Patrons are acknowledged in our Season Brochure and concert programmes on relevant concert publicity.

If you or your company are interested in becoming a Patron, please contact the Chair, John Smith, on chair@st-georges-singers.org.uk, or our Choir Secretary, Jacqui Smith, on 01625 875437.

Thanks

We would like to offer our grateful thanks to our 2018 -19 Patrons for their support this season:

Take2TheWeb.com

Poynton Round Table

We acknowledge with gratitude the help provided by Cheshire Library Services throughout the season.

Booking your tickets

There are four easy ways to buy tickets for our concerts:

Online booking

To buy online using PayPal or credit card, or to download a booking form, visit our website at www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, and go to 'Online Tickets'.

Telephone

Ring the Ticket Hotline on 01663 764012.

Email

Email your requirements to: tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

Post

Complete the Application Form overleaf and post with your cheque, payable to 'St George's Singers Poynton', to the Ticket Secretary, 11 The Ridgeway South, Disley, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 2JG

Discounts are available for group bookings as follows: 10% off 5–9 tickets and 15% off 10 or more tickets. Please contact the Ticket Secretary on 01663 764012 for more information.

Coach to concerts

Return coach tickets are offered from Poynton/Hazel Grove to most of our concerts at Royal Northern College of Music and Gorton Monastery in Manchester, and St George's Church in Stockport. Please see concert information for coach availability. Friends of St George's Singers – one free coach ticket per concert. Others - £6 per person.

Singing Day

To book a place on the Singing Day on Saturday 19 January 2019, please download our separate Singing Day brochure from www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, or contact Gillian Banks, tel 01925 213949, email stgeorgessingingday@gmail.com. If you wish to buy a ticket to attend the concert in the evening, please use the Ticket Application Form overleaf.

Mailing list

For early notification of concerts, ticket availability, special events, and to receive a copy of our Choir newsletter, please register with our Mailing List by completing the Application Form overleaf, or register online at www.st-georges-singers.org.uk.

Concert venues

Maps showing the location of all this season's concert venues are on page 15, with details of closest car parking.

detach along dotted line

Application form

Please complete this form and tick the appropriate boxes below

Title

First Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Mailing list registration

Please tick the appropriate box(es) below:

Please include me on your mailing list: by post by email

I agree to my details being stored on St George's Singers database, and to receiving information relating to St George's Singers

Please note that we do not share your personal information with any third parties. A copy of St George's Singers' Privacy Policy can be found on our website, www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

To order tickets, please remember to complete the ticket booking form overleaf

Ticket booking form

Please complete the form and post with your cheque, made payable to 'St George's Singers Poynton', to:
Ticket Secretary, St George's Singers, 11 The Ridgeway South, Disley, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 2JG.

Remember to complete your name and address details overleaf!

NOTE: to book tickets for the Whittingham Lives Sing Together! event and Mahler 8 concert, please see booking information on page 9

Concert Date Price	No. full price	No. conc	No. stdnt/chldn	No. coach tickets*	Total £
Mahler 'Resurrection' Symphony, 23/9/18 £16, £14, £7					
A Hundred Years On, 24/11/18 £16, £14, £7				Free £6	
Carols and Brass by Candlelight, 8/12/18 £13, £11, £4				Free £6	
Singing Day, 19/1/19 £5 audience only**					
Bach Mass in B minor, 31/3/19 £16, £14, £7				Free £6	
The Well-Conducted Tour, 8/6/19 £12, £10, £5					
Friends Membership 2018-19	Red rose £20 Gold rose £30				
Grand Total £					

For information on group discounts, please contact the Ticket Secretary on 01663 764012.

* Return coach tickets available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to RNCM, Gorton Monastery and St George's Stockport: Friends of St George's Singers - one free ticket per concert; others - £6 per person.

**Anyone wishing to perform in the Singing Day should see our separate Singing Day Application Form, available on our website

Concert venues

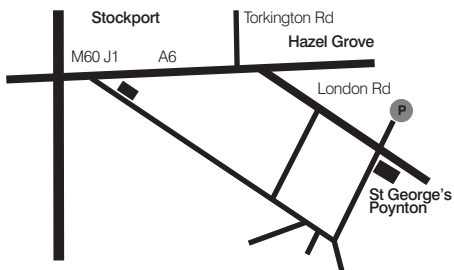
Royal Northern College of Music, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9RD



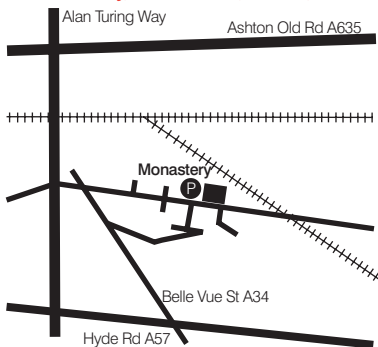
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NU



St George's Church, London Road, Poynton SK12 1NH



The Monastery, Gorton Lane, Gorton, Manchester, M12 5WF





St George's Singers

2018-19 Season at a glance

23 September 2018	Mahler 'The Resurrection' Symphony
29 September 2018	Whittingham Lives <i>Sing Together!</i>
24 November 2018	A Hundred Years On
8 December 2018	Carols and Brass by Candlelight
19 January 2019	Singing Day – Gounod <i>St Cecilia Mass</i>
31 March 2019	Bach <i>Mass in B minor</i>
24 - 27 May 2019	Tour to Bruges
8 June 2019	The Well-Conducted Tour
5 July 2019	Mahler 'Symphony of a Thousand'

Ticket hotline **01663 764012**

Online ticket bookings www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

General enquiries **01625 875437**

St George's Singers is a Registered Charity, No 508686, and a member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies



SUPPORTING &
CHAMPIONING
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