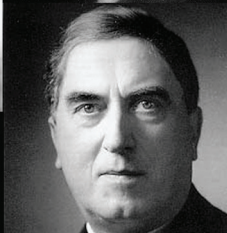
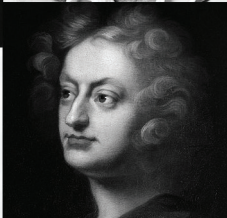
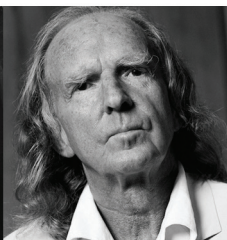
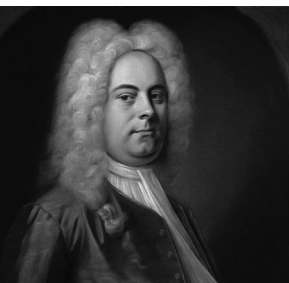




St George's Singers

St George's Singers

2017-18 Season



St George's Singers



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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



SUPPORTING &
CHAMPIONING
VOLUNTARY MUSIC

Welcome to our 2017-18 season



John Smith

Chair, St George's Singers

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 61st season, probably our busiest ever, with eight concerts plus our famous Singing Day.

This is a season of musical delights, not just something for everyone, but a season that just keeps giving and giving – one delight following on another! We have concerts in every type of venue in Manchester, music from every period and genre from the 17th century to 2017, composers everyone knows and loves and composers who may be new to you. We are very pleased to be collaborating twice with Chetham's – for the Beethoven *Choral Fantasy* that starts off our season and, completing our season, *The Music Makers* by Elgar. We are also joining with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and John Rutter in a Christmas concert at the Bridgewater Hall, a concert that follows our own much more intimate and traditional Christmas 'Carols and Brass by Candlelight', now back in the perfect setting of St George's Church, Stockport.

This brochure guides you on a grand tour of choral music! Not only can you enjoy listening to wonderful music, you can also join in yourself by coming along to our deservedly popular Singing Day, to learn and perform the inspiring *Creation* by Haydn (and enjoy wonderful food and excellent company).

But brilliant programming, inspiring compositions, beautiful singing and atmospheric venues don't on their own make memorable concerts. For that we need you, our wonderful audience! We look forward to welcoming you to our concerts, as it is all of you who make every season and every concert special.

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 from 1997 to 2016, during which time the cathedral choir toured both at home and abroad and broadcast frequently on BBC Radios 2 and 3. His CD Recordings include *Music for a Millennium*, a Classic FM Magazine CD of the Year Award Winner, and nine critically-acclaimed CD recordings with the cathedral choir. As solo organist, he has played at many major UK venues, and has worked with the Hallé, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Welsh National Opera Orchestra. He is Musical Director of St George's Singers, The Sheffield Chorale, and Artistic Director of the Keele Bach Choir; he appears frequently with the BBC as Musical Director and Organist on BBC *Daily Service* and *Sunday Worship*.

Robert Brooks is a baritone, conductor and composer based in Manchester. He directs the Edinburgh University Chamber Choir, the Preston Cecilian Choral Society and the Manchester Singers and is a member of the National Youth Choir Fellowship - an octet of exceptional young singers selected to form a flagship ensemble for the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain. Robert was a treble in the choir of New College, Oxford, under Edward Higginbottom. He completed a music degree at Manchester University, where he directed the chamber choir Ad Solem and was given an award by the university for services to choral conducting. During this time he also sang in the third Genesis Sixteen choral programme. After graduating, Robert directed the Leeds College of Music Choral Society and the Oratory Choir of St Chad's, and sings with Patchwork Opera and the Turton Consort.

Pete Durrant is the accompanist of Keele Bach Choir, Stafford Choral Society and St George's Singers and is the conductor of Leek Choral Society. Pete was a chorister at Westminster Abbey, singing at many high-profile events, including the funeral of Princess Diana. He studied music at The University of Manchester, receiving the Proctor Gregg prize for performance, and in 2010 he completed a Masters in Piano Performance at the RNCM. Pete now works at the RNCM and University of Manchester as an accompanist and is in demand as a piano, vocal and theory teacher. Pete has accompanied Manchester University Chorus, the BBCSO Chorus, the Hallé, Hallé Youth and Hallé Children's Choirs under Sir Mark Elder, and has conducted The University of Manchester's chamber choir Ad Solem and Keele Bach Choir.

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 four major concerts a year, hold an annual open Singing Day, 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, 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 1AF 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 in their Diamond Anniversary Concert at the Royal Northern College of Music, April 2017



Saturday 21 October, 7.30 pm
Stoller Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester

Rachmaninov Vespers

Part of Chetham's 'Russian October 1917-2017' series

Gorecki *Totus tuus*

Tavener *Song for Athene*

Lukaszewski *Nunc Dimittis*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Tenor **Stewart Campbell**

For our first concert in Manchester's exciting new concert venue, the magnificent Stoller Hall, we are performing Rachmaninov's Vespers, as part of Chetham's month-long series of arts and music events to mark the Russian Revolution. Written in just two weeks early in 1915, the Vespers (also called the All-Night Vigil) was enthusiastically received by the public on its premiere, but proved to be Rachmaninov's last sacred piece: within two years, religion was banned and the composer forced into exile. The Stoller Hall offers the perfect acoustics for this crowning achievement of the 'Golden Age' of Russian church music.

£15, £6 students/children, group discounts

Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to Stoller Hall. Tickets from Dave Francis on 01663 764012. £6 or free to Friends of St George's Singers.

Saturday 9 December 2017, 7.00 pm
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport

Carols and Brass by Candlelight

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Peter Durrant**

Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir

Directors: Vicky Sunderland and Louise Bousfield

We welcome you back to the 'Cathedral on the A6' for this year's carol concert, where you can be assured of warm hospitality and an evening of great festive music from St George's Singers, the talented youngsters of Bradshaw Hall, and some of Manchester's great young brass players. Mince pies and mulled wine included in the ticket price!

£12, £10 concession, £3 students/children, group discounts

Saturday 13 January 2018, 7.30 pm
Norbury Church, London Road, Hazel Grove

Handel *Messiah*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**
Organ **Graham Eccles**
Members of The Turton Consort:
Soprano **Leonie Maxwell**
Countertenor **Joseph Judge**
Tenor **Ranald McCusker**
Baritone **Robert Brooks**

Most performances of Handel's *Messiah* take place at Christmas or at Easter. Here is an opportunity to hear one of the most famous of all oratorios at a time of year when the nights are darkest and spirits a little low; so come into the warmth of Norbury Church and let Handel's glorious music revive you. We are joined by the soloists of The Turton Consort, one of the north-west's leading chamber choirs.

£12, £10 concession, £3 students/children, group discounts

Saturday 20 January 2018
9.30–10.15 am (registration for singers), 6.00 pm (concert)
St George's Church, London Road, Poynton

2018 Singing Day Haydn *The Creation*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**
Accompanist **Peter Durrant**
Members of The Turton Consort:
Soprano **Leonie Maxwell**
Tenor **Ranald McCusker**
Baritone **Robert Brooks**

Haydn's interest in choral music had been aroused during his first London visit, when he had attended one of the Handel Commemoration concerts in Westminster Abbey. The experience, which had moved him deeply, inspired him to compose two oratorios in the English rather than the Italian manner: giving an important role to the choir rather than basing the work on the aria. *The Creation*, completed in 1798, is full of grand choruses, sometimes hymn-like and simple, sometimes with elaborate parts for solo voices, but always a delight to sing and listen to.

Whether you decide to join St George's Singers for a wonderful day's singing, or just come to the performance in the evening, you are sure to be entertained and enlightened.

£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 gillian.m.banks@gmail.com.

Saturday 17 March 2018, 7.30 pm
St George's Church, London Road, Poynton

Music for Passiontide

Gibbons *Drop drop slow tears*

Gjeilo *Ubi caritas*

Lotti *Crucifixus a 8*

Purcell *Man that is born / In the midst/ Thou knowest/ Remember not
Lord, our offences*

Tomkins *When David heard*

Stainer *Crucifixion*

Vittoria *O vos omnes*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Peter Durrant**

To mark the season of Lent, we present a selection of music composed for Passiontide, from late Renaissance masterpieces to works by renowned contemporary composers. The centrepiece of the concert is Stainer's *Crucifixion* – a work last performed by St George's Singers 60 years ago in 1957. Enormously popular in its day, but infrequently performed nowadays, the *Crucifixion* is a fine example of mid-Victorian church music, written as a more approachable alternative to Bach's Passions.

£12, £10 concession, £3 students/children, group discounts

Saturday 23 June 2018, 7.30 pm
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport

Durufié *Requiem*

Pizzetti *Messa da Requiem*

Johnson Manning *War's Embers*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Graham Eccles**

Piano **Peter Durrant**

Mezzo **Amy Shaw**

Baritone **James Berry**

Cello **Margit van der Zwan**

Maurice Durufé's *Requiem* is modelled on that of his French compatriot, Gabriel Fauré, in that it sets the identical text, and creates a similarly subdued, ethereal atmosphere. But Durufé's *Requiem* stands on its own as a spellbinding fusion of plainsong themes from the Mass for the Dead with choral polyphony and orchestration. The *Messa da Requiem* of the Italian Ildebrando Pizzetti employs neo-Renaissance techniques to the text of the Requiem Mass, and exemplifies the transition in Italian sacred music from the 19th to the early 20th century. The concert also features the premiere of *War's Embers*, a work commissioned by St George's Singers as part of the 'Whittingham Asylum Project'. (For more information on this project, see p 10.)

£15, £12 concession, £4 students/children, group discounts

St George's Singers by invitation

Sunday 20 August 2017, 7.00 pm
Stoller Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester

Beethoven *Choral Fantasy* Beethoven Piano Concerto no. 3

Chetham's 2017 International Summer School and Festival for Pianists features St George's Singers in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. Written in 1808 for the unusual combination of piano soloist, chorus and orchestra, the Fantasy bears striking similarities with Beethoven's later Ninth 'Choral' Symphony.

Stockport Symphony Orchestra
Conductor **Stephen Threlfall**
Pianists **Dimitri Alexeev, Murray McLachlan**

Tickets: £15 (£12 conc) from Stoller Hall Box Office 0333 130 0967 (2–4pm weekdays), www.stollerhall.com.

Monday 11 December 2017, 7.30 pm
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

John Rutter's Christmas Festival

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Conductor **John Rutter**

St George's Singers joins Britain's most popular composer, John Rutter, in a star-studded feast of Christmas music. The concert also features the King's Singers, Chetham's Chamber Choir and organist Jonathan Scott.

Tickets: £42 - £17 from Bridgewater Hall Box office 0161 907 9000, www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

Thursday 5 July 2018
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Elgar *The Music Makers*

Chetham's Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
Conductor **Stephen Threlfall**

Once again, Chetham's have invited St George's Singers to join their wonderful young orchestra and chorus, this year in Elgar's celebration of the role of the artist, *The Music Makers*.

Ticket and booking information available later in 2017

And more...

Come and Sing evening

Our annual Come and Sing evening is open to all, and this season will be held on Tuesday 24 April 2018 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 2017, or contact Jacqui Smith on enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

Whittingham Asylum Project

The Whittingham Asylum Project, 'Whittingham Lives', is a two-year arts and heritage project, supported by the Heritage Lottery, to explore the culture and legacy of Whittingham Asylum in Preston, from the 1850s to its demolition in 2016. Music played an enormous part in the lives of patients and staff at Whittingham, and as part of this important North West heritage project, St George's Singers has commissioned a choral piece on the theme of madness. Composed by Sasha Johnson Manning, *War's Embers* sets to music the words of Ivor Gurney, musician and First World War poet, who suffered from mental illness for many years before his death in 1937.

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, 25–28 May 2018

After our amazing tour to Costa Rica in 2017, we stay closer to home in 2018, when we travel to North Wales to perform in Bangor, Colwyn Bay, St Asaph and Caernarfon. More detailed information will be available on our website at the beginning of 2018.

The Cheshire Consort

The Cheshire Consort chamber choir was formed by St George's Singers to sing at church and civil weddings 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 2017–18 Patrons for their support this season:

Intuitive Media Ltd

Our thanks to Margaret Adshead for the donation of a keyboard

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

The Whittingham Lives project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Supported by

The National Lottery®
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



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

Return coach tickets are offered from Poynton/Hazel Grove to Stoller Hall, Manchester. Friends of St George's Singers – one free coach ticket per concert. Others - £6 per person.

Concessionary rates are available for senior citizens, claimants, students and children.

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.

Singing Day

To book a place on the Singing Day on Saturday 20 January 2018, please download our separate Singing Day brochure from www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, or contact Gillian Banks, tel 01925 213949, email gillian.m.banks@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 p. 15, with details of closest car parking. If travelling to Stoller Hall in central Manchester, coach transport from Poynton/Hazel Grove is available (see above). If you prefer to travel independently, Stoller Hall is located directly opposite Victoria mainline and tram station.

Application form

Please complete this form and tick the appropriate boxes below

Title

First Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Mailing list registration

- ☐ Please include me on your mailing list. (please tick)
- ☐ I agree to my details being stored on the Choir's database and used for publicity relating to St George's Singers only. (please tick)
- ☐ I understand my details will not be divulged to third parties (please tick)

I would prefer to receive information by (please tick one):

☐ post ☐ email

NB: to reduce our costs, please consider receiving information by email.

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!

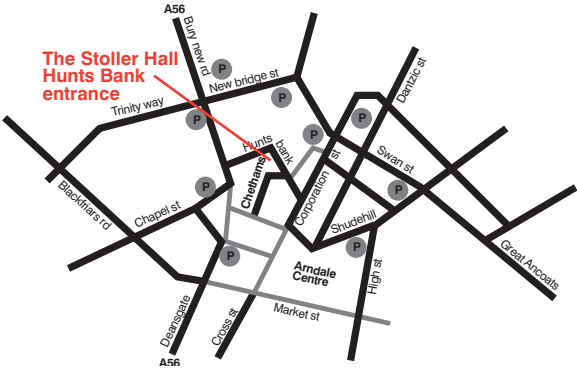
Concert	Date	Price	No. full price	No. conc	No. stdnt/chldn	No. coach tickets			Total £
Rachmaninov Vespers	21 /10 / 17	£15, £6 students/children				Free			
		£6							
Carols & Brass by Candlelight	9/12/17	£12, £10, £3 students/children							
Handel Messiah	13/1/18	£12, £10, £3 students/children							
Singing Day, Haydn Creation	20/1/18	£5 audience only**							
Music for Passiontide	17/3/18	£12, £10 concession, £3 students/children							
Durufle Requiem	23/6/18	£15, £12 concession, £4 students/children							
Friends membership 2017-18		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 Stoller Hall, Manchester: 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

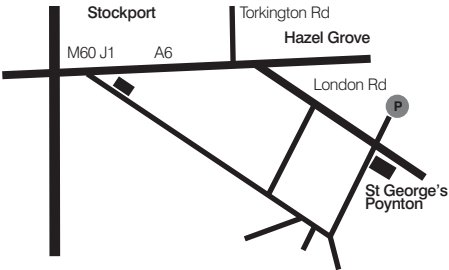
Stoller Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Hunts Bank, Manchester M3 1DA



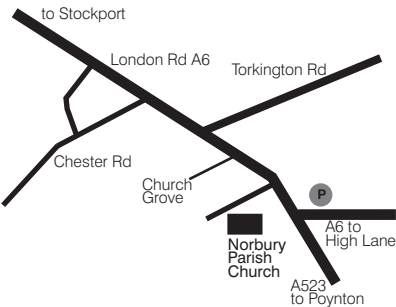
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NU



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



Norbury Church, London Road, Hazel Grove SK7 4RF





St George's Singers

2017-18 Season at a glance

20 August 2017	Beethoven <i>Choral Fantasy</i>
21 October 2017	Rachmaninov <i>Vespers</i>
9 December 2017	Carols and Brass by Candlelight
11 December 2017	John Rutter's Christmas Festival
13 January 2018	Handel <i>Messiah</i>
20 January 2018	Singing Day - Haydn <i>Creation</i>
17 March 2018	Music for Passiontide
25-28 May 2018	Tour to North Wales
23 June 2018	Durufié <i>Requiem</i>
5 July 2018	Elgar <i>The Music Makers</i>

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

