

# St George's Singers



**2022-23 Season**



# St George's Singers



**Marcus Farnsworth**  
President, St George's Singers

## President

**Marcus Farnsworth** MA ARAM

## Vice-Presidents

**Sasha Johnson Manning**, composer and singer  
**Stephen Threlfall**, conductor and educationalist  
**Stephen Williams**, conductor and teacher

## Musical Director

**Neil Taylor**

## Accompanist

**Peter Durrant**

## Tickets

Tel: 01663 764012

Email: [tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk)

Online: [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)

## General enquiries

Tel: 01625 875437

Email: [enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk)

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](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)



## Welcome to our 2022–23 season



**John Smith**

Chair, St George's Singers

Dear Friends

Fingers crossed, of course, but things do seem to be getting back to normal after the Covid-19 lockdown. Last season we tempted audiences back from lockdown with blockbuster concert programmes – including Bach's *St John Passion* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* – and you responded enthusiastically. Our 2022–23 season's programme is no less exciting and no less tempting! As I'm sure you know, this year is the 150th anniversary of Ralph Vaughan Williams' birth. In November we celebrate this event with a concert devoted to his work, featuring the well-loved work *The Lark Ascending* in a remarkable and beautiful arrangement by Paul Drayton for choir and solo violin. Definitely not to be missed!

In 2021 our *Christmas Carols by Candlelight* was limited by Covid restrictions, but this year we are back to normal festivities, with the return of our guest children's choir *and* mulled wine and mince pies. What better way to get into the seasonal spirit! And after Christmas, if you are a singer, you can recover from Christmas indulgence by joining us at our annual Singing Day, singing all the great coronation anthems.

Returning to our concert series, in March we bring you the delightful *Petite Messe Solennelle* by Rossini, a great favourite of singers and audiences everywhere. As this brochure notes elsewhere, this operatic 'Mass' is neither small nor solemn, but full of contrast, drama and memorable tunes – a musical treat. We end the season in June with a bang! Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* gives us a chance to show the Choir's versatility, singing his joyous jazz rhythms alongside the big band sound of the Cotton Tail Orchestra and the smouldering voice of soloist Louise Marshall.

2022–23 is yet another season of contrasts and drama from St George's Singers. I hope to see you in the audience!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John".

Saturday 19 November 2022, 7.30pm  
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NU

## The Lark Ascending

A celebration of Ralph Vaughan Williams

*The Lark Ascending* (for solo violin and chorus)

*Mass in G minor*

*Lord Thou Hast Been our Refuge*

*Te Deum in G*

*O Clap your Hands*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Violin **Annabel Drummond**

Organ **Darius Battiwalla**

2022 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of one of Britain's greatest composers, Ralph Vaughan Williams. Our opening concert of this season is a celebration of his music and will feature some of his best-loved choral works, including a thrilling new version of *The Lark Ascending* by Paul Drayton for solo violin and choir, the *Te Deum in G* written for the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1928, and his *Mass in G minor*, which marries the sound worlds of Tallis and Byrd with modern idioms to produce a quintessentially English work.

£16, £10 students/children, group discounts

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Saturday 10 December 2022, 7.00pm  
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NU

## Carols by Candlelight

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Organ **Peter Durrant**

with

Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir

Director **Vicky Sunderland**

After our Covid-restricted carol concert last year, we're thrilled to start the Christmas festivities by welcoming back the children of Bradshaw Hall to sing with us, and our audience, in the candlelit atmosphere of St George's Church, Stockport – popularly known as 'The Cathedral on the A6.' The mulled wine also makes a welcome return, and the mince pies and iced biscuits will be as delicious as ever. Do bring the whole family – there's something for everyone!

£14 full, £10 parents, £8 students, £5 under-16s, £3 under-5s

Saturday 21 January 2023

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

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

## **Singing Day Coronation Anthems**

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Accompanist **Peter Durrant**

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, our 2023 Singing Day features some of Britain's best-loved 'royal' anthems. In addition to Handel's *Zadok and Let thy hand be strengthened*, we'll be singing anthems by Wesley (*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace*) and Stanford (*Gloria in excelsis*). The line-up is completed by Parry's *I was glad*, originally written for the coronation of Edward VII, then revised for George V, and Walton's spectacular *Coronation Te Deum*, composed for the Queen's own coronation in 1953.

£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](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk), or contact Gillian Banks, tel 01925 213949, email [stgeorgessingingday@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgessingingday@gmail.com).

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Saturday 25 March 2023, 7.30pm

St Michael and All Angels Church, Bramhall, Stockport SK7 2PG

## **Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle**

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Piano **Peter Durrant**

Harmonium **Benjamin Newlove**

Soloists **Monica Toll, Jessica Conway, Alex Grainger,**

**Terence Ayebare**

Rossini composed his 'Little Solemn Mass' in 1863, more than thirty years after he had retired from writing operas, and which Rossini himself described as 'the last of my sins of old age'. In structure a *missa solennis*, the work is scored for the unusual ensemble of four soloists, a small chorus, two pianos and harmonium, and was composed originally for private performance, though Rossini himself later scored the work for full orchestra. It is the most substantial of the works written during Rossini's Indian summer of composition. Neither *petite* nor particularly *solennelle*, despite the religious text the Mass is unmistakably operatic in style, ranging from hushed intensity to boisterous high spirits, and abounding in memorable tunes and rhythmic vitality.

£16, £10 students/children, group discounts

Saturday 17 June 2023, 7.30pm

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

## Ellington Sacred Concert

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

with

Soloist **Louise Clare Marshall**

and

**The Cotton Tail Orchestra**

Duke Ellington, one of the jazz greats, was a prolific composer and a deeply religious man. From 1968 to 1973 he wrote and performed a series of 'Sacred Concerts' throughout the USA and Europe, combining jazz, classical, choral, spiritual, gospel, blues and dance music in a joyous celebration of love, life and freedom. Ranging from serious to swinging, and featuring drummers, choirs and big band sounds, the *Sacred Concert* epitomises Duke Ellington's famous quote, 'Every man prays in his own language.' The *Sacred Concert* music is truly unique, a life-enhancing fusion of classical choral music with jazz. We'll be joined by Oldham-born Louise Marshall, whose smouldering voice spans jazz, classical, R&B and gospel genres, and the Cotton Tail Orchestra, led by orchestral and jazz trumpeter Graham South, a mainstay of Manchester's creative music scene.

£18, £10 students/children, group discounts

Coach transport is available from Macclesfield/Poynton/Hazel Grove to RNCM.

Tickets £8 from 01663 764012, or free to Friends of St George's Singers.

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## And more...

### Come and Sing Evening

Our annual Come and Sing evening is open to all. You are invited to join Neil Taylor, accompanist Pete Durrant and all the Choir members at St George's Church in Poynton to rehearse a selection of music from our current repertoire. For more information, visit our website or contact Jacqui Smith on enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

### 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 07591 586447, email enquiries@cheshireconsort.org.uk, or visit our website: www.cheshireconsort.org.uk.

## St George's people



**Neil Taylor** 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, Norwich, and Sheffield Cathedrals. During his time in Sheffield, the cathedral choir toured both at home and abroad (including Germany, Holland, France, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the USA) and broadcast frequently on BBC Radios 2, 3 & 4. His recordings include *Music for a Millennium*, a Classic FM Magazine Disc of the Year Award Winner, and numerous releases as organist and conductor, 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, Northern Chamber Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Orchestra of Opera North, Huddersfield Choral Society, and the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera. He is Music Director of St George's Singers, Manchester, and Keele Bach Choir; he appears regularly with the BBC as Musical Director and Organist on *Songs of Praise*, the BBC *Young Chorister of the Year Finals*, the *Daily Service*, and *Sunday Worship*.

**Peter Durrant** is the accompanist of St George's Singers and Stafford Choral Society and works at the Royal Northern College of Music and Junior RNCM as accompanist. Pete grew up in London, and was a chorister at Westminster Abbey, during which time he toured world-wide and sang at many high-profile events, including the funeral of Princess Diana. In 2004 he moved north to study music at Manchester University, where he learned piano with Tom Scott. He was awarded the Proctor Gregg prize for performance at the end of his second year. In 2010 he completed a Masters in Piano Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Jeremy Young and Colin Stone. In the past Pete has played for the Hallé orchestra, been the accompanist of Keele Bach Choir, Manchester University Chorus, has directed and played for Manchester Chamber Choir, and has accompanied the BBCSO Chorus, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, Sheffield Chorale, Marple Choral Society, the Hallé, Hallé Youth, Hallé Training and Hallé Children's Choirs. Pete was also the conductor of Leek Choral Society (for whom he wrote his *Requiem* in 2018), the University of Manchester's chamber choir, Ad Solem, as well as Keele Bach Choir in the second half of 2016.

# St George's Singers

A passion for singing

The Choir is recognised as one of the most enterprising and innovative choirs in the North of England, with a passion for singing and a commitment to the highest choral standards. The Choir was formed in 1956 at St George's Church, Poynton, and today has around 100 members, travelling from Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Derbyshire and Yorkshire.

Under Musical Director Neil Taylor, the choir performs an extensive and eclectic repertoire that covers renaissance, baroque, classical, modern and jazz works and newly commissioned choral works. We put on four major concerts a year, hold an annual singing day, and are frequently invited to take part in collaborative ventures with other choirs and orchestras. We perform in venues across Greater Manchester, including the Bridgewater Hall, Royal Northern College of Music, The Stoller Hall, Manchester Cathedral and Gorton Monastery, as well as our 'home churches' of St George's in Stockport and Poynton. We have sung with world-class soloists such as Sir Willard White, James Gilchrist, Mark Padmore, Christopher Purves, Kitty Whately, Jacqui Dankworth and Elizabeth Watts. We commission new choral works, have led the BBC Daily Service from Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, appeared on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*, and tour regularly in the UK and in Europe, recent destinations including Poland, Finland, Estonia, Hungary, Prague, Paris, Belgium, Germany, and in 2017, to celebrate our 60th Anniversary, Costa Rica.

Although a large choir, St George's Singers is an extremely friendly group with a lively musical and social life. We rehearse in Poynton every Tuesday evening at St George's Church Hall, and new members are always welcome. Entry is via audition, and we recommend you come and long to a few rehearsals before auditioning.



Bach *St John Passion*, Royal Northern College of Music, March 2022



## Application form

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

**Online:** visit our website [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk) and go to 'Online Tickets'

**Telephone:** 01663 764012

**Email:** [tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk)

**Post:** complete the Application Form below and overleaf, then post with your cheque, payable to 'St George's Singers Poynton', to:  
The Ticket Secretary, 11The Ridgeway, Disley, SK12 2JG



### Your details

*Please complete this form and tick the appropriate boxes.*

Title ..... First name .....

Surname .....

Address .....

.....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

Email .....

### Mailing list registration

*Please tick the appropriate boxes 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 Choir events.

I do not wish to receive further information about St Georges Singers. Please remove my details from your mailing list.

NOTE: 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.

**If you order tickets, please remember to complete the ticket booking form overleaf.**

## Ticket booking form

Concert Date Price	No. of tickets	Price	No. of coach tickets*	Total £
<b>Vaughan Williams</b> <b>The Lark Ascending</b> 19/11/22 £16, £10				
<b>Carols by Candlelight</b> 10/12/22 £14, £10 £8, £5, £3**				
<b>Singing Day***</b> 21/1/23 £5 (audience tickets only)				
<b>Rossini: <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i></b> 25/3/23 £16, £10				
<b>Ellington: <i>Sacred Concert</i></b> 17/6/23 £18, £10			__ free __ @£8	
<b>GRAND TOTAL £</b>				

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

\* Return coach tickets available from Macclesfield/Poynton/Hazel Grove to RNCM. Friends of St George's Singers – one free ticket per concert; others – £8.

\*\* See page 4 for details of concessionary ticket prices. Please indicate price of ticket and number required.

\*\*\* Anyone wishing to sing in the Singing Day should see our separate Singing Day brochure, available on our website.

## 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 more generous donations. Many long-standing Friends have been invited to become Life Friends, in recognition of their contribution to the Choir. In return, Friends receive:

- reserved seats at concerts where available
- 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*

### Patrons

We are immensely grateful to our Patrons, who contribute funds for specific purposes, such as sponsoring concerts or soloists, new music commissions or music purchasing. If you or your company are interested in becoming a Patron, please contact the Chair, John Smith on [chair@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:chair@st-georges-singers.org.uk).

We would like to offer our grateful thanks to our 2022–23 supporters:

Take2TheWeb.com

Poynton Round Table

### Newsletter

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

### Choir tour

Every year members of St George's Singers go on tour, alternating overseas trips with UK tours. In 2023 we take our delayed 'Three Cathedrals Tour' to Bristol and Avon.

### Recordings

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. You can also hear the Choir in performance at recent concerts on our website.



## 2022–23 Season at a glance

- 19 November 2022** The Lark Ascending  
**10 December 2022** Carols by Candlelight  
**21 January 2023** Singing Day  
**25 March 2023** Rossini: *Petite Messe Solennelle*  
**17 June 2023** Ellington: *Sacred Concert*

## Tickets

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