



St George's Singers

# St George's Singers

2023–24 Season

# St George's Singers



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

## President

**Marcus Farnsworth** MA DipRAM 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 2023–24 season



**John Smith**

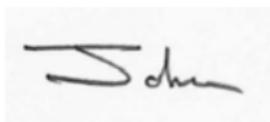
Chair, St George's Singers

Dear Friends

St George's Singers welcome you to another season of musical delights. We start with a concert of works entirely by female composers. You may have heard one of the pieces very recently as it was commissioned for King Charles III coronation – the *Coronation Sanctus* by Roxanna Panufnik. We ourselves had a role in commissioning another of the works, *War's Embers* by Sasha Johnson Manning (a vice-president of the Choir). Commissioned in November 2018 to mark the centenary of the ending of World War I, it is music that speaks to the soul, and is impossible not to respond to.

We then return for the first time in many years to Holy Name Church in Manchester. The church has a most beautiful acoustic and atmosphere, and is an ideal venue for some of the best Passiontide choral music ever written by Bach, Messiaen, Poulenc and Sanders. Do join us to enjoy this wonderful music in a building so very much suited to it.

The last concert of our season is a welcome return to a collaboration that was such a resounding success two years ago when we joined with Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra to perform *Belshazzar's Feast* in Gorton Monastery. This season we perform two massive, thrilling, works: Poulenc's *Gloria* and Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. Both require huge orchestral forces and choral commitment, and consequently the Janáček in particular is rarely staged – it's just too expensive! We perform them twice, first at Huddersfield Town Hall for our Yorkshire audience, and then at Manchester Cathedral for you, our (Greater) Manchester audience. Don't miss it, it's a rare treat!



Saturday 18 November 2023, 7.30pm  
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport SK2 6NU

## Women of Note

*Nine centuries of music by female composers*

Vittoria Aleotti *Three madrigals*  
Hildegard of Bingen *O Euchari* and *O Viridissima Virga*  
Cecilia McDowall *A Fancy of Folksongs*  
Sasha Johnson Manning *War's Embers*  
Fanny Mendelssohn *Gartenlieder: Six part songs*  
Roxanna Panufnik *Coronation Sanctus*  
Clara Schumann *Three part songs*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Piano **Peter Durrant**

Female composers are not rare; just rarely performed. For centuries, it was almost impossible for women composers to have their voices heard as serious musicians. This concert features a selection of the many choral works written by women, from the sacred monophony of Hildegard of Bingen, through the Renaissance madrigals of Aleotti, the songs of the distaff Mendelssohn and Schumann, up to the present day with works by McDowall, Panufnik and Johnson Manning.

£16, £10 students/children, group discounts

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Saturday 9 December 2023, 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**

Welcome back to the children of Bradshaw Hall for our traditional 'Carols by Candlelight' concert to usher in the festive season. As usual, mulled wine, mince pies and iced biscuits will be served at the interval – and don't forget to bring your finest voice for the community singing!

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

Saturday 20 January 2024

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

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

## Singing Day **Smyth *Mass in D***

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Accompanist **Peter Durrant**

Born in 1858, Ethel Smyth fought against the societal restrictions that prevented women from having a profession, and was heavily involved in the Suffragette movement. Internationally recognised in her lifetime, but almost forgotten since her death in 1944, Smyth wrote an astonishingly varied range of works, among which her *Mass in D* has been described as 'one of the crowning glories of the British choral tradition'. It was performed for the first time since Smyth's own lifetime at the BBC Proms in 2022.

£25 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 23 March 2024, 7.30pm

Holy Name Church, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PG

## Music for **Passiontide**

**JS Bach** *Cantata No 4 (Christ lag in Todesbanden)*

**JS Bach** *Jesu, meine Freude*

**WF Bach** *Orchestral Suite in G minor*

**Messiaen** *O Sacrum Convivium*

**Poulenc** *Four Penitential Motets*

**Sanders** *The Reproaches*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

As we enter Holy Week, a time of penitential reflection in preparation for the dramatic events of Easter, this concert presents some of the great choral works inspired by Christ's suffering.

£16, £10 students/children, group discounts

Coach transport is available from Macclesfield/Poynton/Hazel Grove to Holy Name Church. Tickets £8 from 01663 764012, or free to Friends of St George's Singers.

Saturday 15 June 2024, 7.30pm (conductor Neil Taylor)  
Huddersfield Town Hall, Ramsden Street, Huddersfield HD1 2TA  
and

Saturday 22 June 2024, 7.30pm (conductor Benjamin Ellin)  
Manchester Cathedral, Victoria St, Manchester M3 1SX

## **Janáček *Glagolitic Mass* Poulenc *Gloria***

### **Slaithwaite Philharmonic Orchestra**

Following the tremendous success of our collaboration with Slaithwaite Philharmonic in *Belshazzar's Feast*, we are delighted to join them again in two performances of the equally thrilling *Glagolitic Mass* by Janáček, regarded as one of the most remarkable and important choral works of the 20th century. We team this with Poulenc's famous *Gloria*, an enthralling mixture of solemnity and exuberance.

Manchester Cathedral:

£18, £10 students/children, group discounts

Huddersfield: tickets available from Huddersfield Town Hall

Box Office: [tickets.kirklees.gov.uk](https://tickets.kirklees.gov.uk), tel 01484 225755

Coach transport is available from Macclesfield/Poynton/Hazel Grove to Manchester Cathedral. Tickets £8 from 01663 764012, or free to Friends of St George's Singers.

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## **And more...**

### **Open Rehearsal**

In May 2024, we will once again be inviting you to join Neil Taylor, 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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@cheshireconsort.org.uk), or visit our website: [www.cheshireconsort.org.uk](http://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 and 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, Stafford Choral Society, N-choir and works at the Royal Northern College of Music and Junior RNCM as an accompanist. Pete grew up in London, where he was a chorister at Westminster Abbey. During his time at the Abbey he toured world-wide and sang at many high-profile events, including the funeral of Princess Diana. He studied music at The University of Manchester before completing a Masters in Piano Performance at the RNCM, studying with Jeremy Young and Colin Stone. Recently, Pete has played with the BBC Philharmonic and Hallé orchestras, and has worked with Manchester Chamber Choir, Keele Bach Choir, BBCSO Chorus, Manchester University Chorus, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus, Sheffield Chorale, Marple Choral Society, and the Hallé Youth, Training and Children's Choirs. Pete was also the conductor of Leek Choral Society (for whom he wrote his Requiem in 2018).

# 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, Europe, and in 2017, to celebrate our 60th Anniversary, Costa Rica.

Although we are 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 in St George's Church Hall, and new members are always welcome. Entry is via audition, and we recommend you come along 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** and go to 'Online Tickets'

**Telephone:** 01663 764012

**Email:** 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, 11 The 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 George's 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.

## Ticket booking form

Concert Date Price	No. of tickets	Price	No. of coach tickets*	Total £
<b>Women of Note</b> 18/11/23 £16, £10				
<b>Carols by Candlelight</b> 9/12/23 £14, £8, £5, £3**				
<b>Singing Day***</b> 20/1/24 £5 (audience tickets only)				
<b>Music for Passiontide</b> 23/3/24 £16, £10			__ free __ @£8	
<b>Glagolitic Mass (Manchester)</b> 22/6/24 £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 concert venue. 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, [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk).

## 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

### Patrons

We are immensely grateful to our Patrons, who contribute funds for specific purposes, such as sponsoring concerts or soloists, commissioning or purchasing music. 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 2023–24 supporters:

Take2TheWeb.com

Poynton Round Table

### Newsletter

The Choir newsletter *Hemiola*, full of fascinating facts about St George's Singers and our music, is now available electronically. View it on our website or join our Mailing List to receive it by email. You can also follow the Choir on Facebook and Twitter.

### Choir tour

Every year St George's Singers go on tour, overseas or in the UK. In 2023 we visited the south west of England, and in 2024 we hope to be returning to Europe. Watch our website!

### 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.



**St George's Singers**

## **2023–24 Season at a glance**

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>18 November 2023</b>      | Women of Note   |
| <b>9 December 2023</b>       | Carols by Candlelight                                     |
| <b>20 January 2023</b>       | Singing Day   |
| <b>23 March 2024</b>         | Music for Passiontide                                     |
| <b>15 &amp; 22 June 2024</b> | Janáček <i>Glagolitic Mass</i> ,<br>Poulenc <i>Gloria</i> |

### **Tickets**

Tel: 01663 764012

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

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