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**St George's Singers
2013-14 Season**

St George's Singers



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Brigit Forsyth

Vice-Presidents
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Singer and Conductor

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Singer, former Senior Producer, BBC Radio 3

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Stephen Williams
Director of Music, Uppingham School

Musical Director
Neil Taylor

Assistant Musical Director
Calum Fraser

Accompanist
Jeffrey Makinson

Assistant Accompanists
Tim Kennedy, Julia Mayall



St George's Singers

www.st-georges-singers.org.uk

Welcome to our 2013-14 season



Dear Friends,

Our first two concerts of the season happen in quick succession in December. Firstly, our 'Carols and Brass by Candlelight' concert features not just our old friends the VBS Poynton Brass Band, but also our very young friends from Bradshaw Hall Primary School. Last year these talented children had much to teach us about singing enthusiastically, accurately and off by heart! With mince pies and mulled wine thrown in, it's a brilliant family occasion for everyone.

Only a week later, we're at the RNCM to perform Bach's beautiful *Christmas Oratorio* with the Northern Baroque Orchestra, and another bunch of frighteningly talented young soloists. That concert also features the world premiere of Will Todd's *Footprints*, commissioned by the Choir, thanks to a bequest from a former and much-missed member, Beryl Pearn.

In spring, we present a selection of English church and cathedral works, in a concert featuring Thomas Tallis's spellbinding 40-part *Spem in alium*. And in summer, we build on our links with the young talents of Bradshaw Hall Primary School to sing the exuberant African-inspired *Zimbe!*, alongside Tippett's *Five Spirituals* in the beautiful setting of Gorton Monastery.

Besides the concerts, January sees another of our famous annual Singing Days. This time we are learning Beethoven's *Mass in C major* over the course of a Saturday, before performing it in an evening concert. This is a wonderful chance for people who have always wanted to try out singing with us to come and do it. Come for the home-made soup and cakes – stay for the Beethoven!

Our Open Rehearsal – on 24 September – is a chance for anyone to see how much fun it is, not just to perform, but also to rehearse with us. Many people decide to join the Choir having shared in the infectious enjoyment of a Singing Day or Open Rehearsal.

We're also delighted to welcome a new vice-president of St George's Singers, baritone Marcus Farnsworth. Marcus, a rising star in the worlds of opera and Lieder, has performed as a soloist with St George's Singers on many occasions and for two years was our assistant MD. We look forward to many years of exciting collaboration with him.

The chief reason why rehearsing and performing is so much fun and so musically rewarding is down to our amazing musical director Neil Taylor. He constantly challenges us to reach higher standards and to tackle new, exciting works. Neil is supported by the outstanding musical talents of brilliant accompanist Jeffrey Makinson and hugely enthusiastic assistant musical director Calum Fraser. On behalf of St George's Singers I look forward to seeing you at our concerts (and maybe a few rehearsals too?) in 2013–14.

Peter Marcus
Chair, St George's Singers

Highlights of last season



2012-13 was an exciting, music-packed year for all the Singers. In addition to our usual season of concerts we found time for a number of extra-curricular activities:

New Year's Eve 2012 saw us at the Bridgewater Hall, where we accompanied Manchester Camerata and the fabulous American soprano Rebecca Nelsen in an evening of opera classics.

We broadcast twice on live national radio: on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* programme in February, and in April we performed the *Daily Service* for BBC Radio 4.

The reputation of Cheshire Consort, our chamber ensemble wedding choir, continues to grow, and this year we have been privileged to perform at ceremonies throughout Cheshire.

In May we went on tour to Paris, performing concerts at the American Cathedral and the church of La Madeleine, accompanying mass at St Eustache, and – a tremendous thrill – giving a recital at Notre Dame.

And in July we returned to the Bridgewater Hall with the young singers and musicians of Chetham's for their Britten celebrations, in a performance of *Ballad of Heroes*.

Now see what we have planned for the coming season ...

Saturday 7 December 2013, 7.00 pm
St George's Church, Buxton Road, Stockport

Carols and Brass by Candlelight

Conductor **Neil Taylor**
Organ **Graham Eccles**

with

Vernon Building Society Poynton Band

Musical Director **Colin Short**

and

Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir

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

For a real family Christmas event to get you in the festive spirit, we extend a warm invitation to join St George's Singers and our favourite brass band, VBS Poynton Band, for our traditional Carols and Brass by Candlelight concert. And, after their amazing performance last year, the young girls and boys of Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir will also be entertaining us with another 'action-packed' selection of carols.

As usual, Yuletide mulled wine and mince pies will be served for the adults, whilst the children can tuck into the juice and home-made biscuits – a great success at last year's event! There will be opportunities for the children to join in with the music-making, and for everyone to sing along.

So, with something for all ages, come and enjoy the sights, sounds (and tastes!) of Christmas – and bring the whole family.

Please note the early start time of 7.00 pm.

Ticket prices: £12, £10 concession, £2 students/children
Group discounts / season tickets available



Sunday 15 December 2013, 7.30 pm
Royal Northern College of Music, Oxford Road, Manchester

Bach *Christmas Oratorio*

Will Todd *Footprints* (world premiere)

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Northern Baroque Orchestra

RNCM Jazz Ensemble

Soloists **Eleanor Garside** soprano, **Heather Ireson** mezzo,
Thomas Morss tenor, **Matt Kellet** baritone

Saturday 18 January 2014
9.30-10.15 am (registration for singers), 6.00 pm (concert)
St George's Church, London Road, Poynton

2014 Singing Day

Beethoven *Mass in C major*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**

Accompanist **Jeffrey Makinson**

Soloists **Rebecca Lea** soprano, **Cara Curran** alto,
William Petter tenor, **Terence Ayebare** bass



Bach composed his *Christmas Oratorio* for the Christmas season of 1734–35. A series of six free-standing cantatas, each part was intended for performance on one of the major feast days from Christmas Day to Epiphany at both St Thomas and St Nicholas churches in Leipzig.

Like the first part of Handel's *Messiah*, written some seven years later, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* is full of joyous celebratory and inspiring music, as the Evangelist tells the story of Jesus's birth, and the soloists and chorus comment and reflect on events with brilliant and dancing arias, choruses and chorales. This concert will feature Parts 1–3 (the birth of Jesus, the annunciation to the shepherds, the adoration of the shepherds) and Part 6 (the adoration of the Magi).

Will Todd's new work, *Footprints*, was commissioned by St George's Singers. The piece is a setting of words written by Will himself, inspired by *Footprints in the Sand*, a devotional poem by the American poet Mary Stevenson, and explores how people need and reach for friendship amidst the vastness, power and timelessness of the universe. A modern but highly accessible piece, it makes a fitting musical and spiritual accompaniment to Bach's eternal message of hope for humanity.

Ticket prices: £15, £13 concession, £5 students/children
Group discounts / season tickets available

Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to RNCM
- please contact Dave Francis on 01663 764012. £5 or free to Friends
of St George's Singers.

Ludwig van Beethoven wrote his *Mass in C major* to a commission from Prince Nikolaus Esterházy II in 1807, to celebrate the name day of the Prince's wife. This was Beethoven's first venture into liturgical music, and Haydn's influence is apparent in the work's scale, internal proportions and musical forces. But Beethoven put enough of his own highly individual interpretation into the mass that he occasionally deviated from conformity to strict conventions. After the first performance, the Prince reportedly said, 'My dear Beethoven, what have you written there!' The disgruntled composer was not amused, and dedicated the mass to Prince Kinsky instead.

While the *Mass in C* is often overshadowed by the immense *Missa Solemnis*, it has a directness and an emotional content that the latter work sometimes lacks, and is rightly regarded by many as a long-underrated masterpiece, with the solo quartet and choral parts providing wonderful variations of colour and emphasis, blending tradition with innovation to marvellous effect.

Join St George's Singers for a wonderful day of singing, good company and fantastic food, culminating in a concert performance which always exceeds expectations.

Please note: we will be using the Novello edition of the score

Ticket prices: £22 to sing (including music), £5 audience

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 22 March 2014, 7.30 pm
St Georges Church, Buxton Road, Stockport

Visions of Heaven

a celebration of English church music
featuring **Tallis** *Spem in alium*, **Parry** *I was glad*, and
Goodall *The Lord is my shepherd*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**
Organ **Jeffrey Makinson**

For over a thousand years the festivals and services of the Christian church have been the source of inspiration for England's composers, creating a treasury of music built on a centuries-old unbroken tradition of glorious singing. Many of these works, originally written for liturgical performance, have become firm favourites in the concert hall, whilst others remain embedded in the sacred spaces of our churches, chapels and cathedrals. For this concert, our Musical Director, Neil Taylor, has selected a programme of sacred works that reflect how composers have responded to the demands of their faith – and their times – producing music that is spiritually uplifting as well as musically enthralling.

The centrepiece of the concert will be Thomas Tallis's *Spem in alium*, the glorious 40-part motet written for eight choirs of five voices each, composed in c1570 under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Other composers featured will include Purcell, Parry, Howells, Wesley and Stanford, right up to the present day with Jonathan Dove and Howard Goodall.

Ticket prices: £12, £10 concession, £2 students/children
Group discounts / season tickets available

Sunday 22 June 2014, 7.00 pm
The Monastery, Gorton, Manchester

L'Estrange *Zimbe!*

Tippett *Five Spirituals*

Conductor **Neil Taylor**
Bradshaw Hall Primary School Choir
Directors **Vicky Sunderland** and **Louise Bousfield**



Zimbe! – the Swahili word for 'sing them' – is an amazing work for adult chorus, children's choir and jazz quintet, by modern British composer Alexander L'Estrange. Charting a day in the life of an African village, it is a brilliant fusion of song and jazz, built around a vibrant sequence of twelve African and gospel songs, children's playground songs, lullabies, drinking songs and music for religious occasions, and all imbued with the spirit, energy and simplicity that is typical of African tradition. We're thrilled to be bringing this uplifting music to Gorton, placing singing at the heart of its community.

Michael Tippett began his oratorio *A Child of our Time* as the Second World War broke out and its composition gave the composer a creative outlet for his pacifism. Central to the oratorio are the *Five Spirituals* which Tippett later extracted from the oratorio and re-scored for voices alone, brilliantly turning orchestral accompaniments into vocal lines, representing an exultant assertion of compassion and brotherhood against all divisions of race or religion.

Please note the early start time of 7.00 pm.

Ticket prices: £16, £14 concession, £5 students/children
Group discounts / season tickets available

Coach transport is available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to The Monastery - please contact Dave Francis on 01663 764012. £5 or free to Friends of St George's Singers.

Friends and Patrons

St George's Singers finances all its own concerts, no small task when putting on major concerts or touring overseas. So we rely heavily on fund-raising activities, and particularly on our Friends and other Supporters.

Friends

The Friends of St George's Singers was formed by families, friends and former members of the Choir as an easy way to stay in touch with us, and enable them to support our activities.

The Friends 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 £15 for Red Rose, and £30 for Gold Rose Membership, and many Friends make even more generous donations. Many long-standing Friends have also been invited to become Honorary Life Friends, in recognition of their contribution to the Choir.

In return Friends receive:

- reserved seats at concerts, where available, for Friends & two guests
- acknowledgement in programmes
- free coach transport to city centre venues, when available
- free concert programmes
- entry into the Friends' Concert Draw for a chance to win free tickets to our next concert
- invitations to social events, open rehearsals and pre-concert receptions
- the choir newsletter, Hemiola
- early notice of concert information and priority booking
- special rates on CDs

To join our Friends

To join our Friends, simply complete and return the Application Form in this brochure, or contact Jean Egerton on friends@st-georges-singers.org.uk, Tel 01625 871381.

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, and depending on the level of support, on relevant concert publicity.

If you or your company are interested in becoming a Patron, please contact the Chair, Peter Marcus, on chair@st-georges-singers.org.uk, or our Choir Secretary on 01625 533779.

2013-14 Season Patrons

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

Season supporters:

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
Intuitive Media Ltd

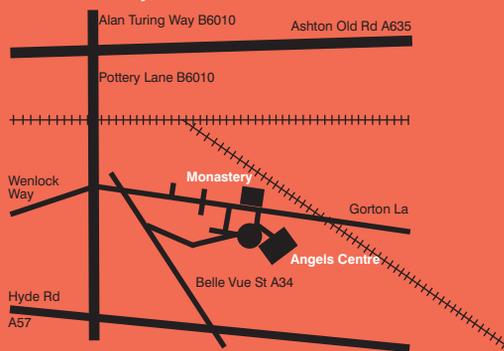
We acknowledge with gratitude the help provided by Cheshire East Library Services throughout the season.

Concert venues

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



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



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



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



Ticket Information

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 in this brochure 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.

Concessions

Concessionary rates are available for Senior Citizens, claimants, students and children. All concessionary prices are detailed alongside each concert in this brochure.

Group Discounts

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.

Season Tickets

Buy a season ticket to our four main concerts and save around 15% on standard ticket prices. A full-rate season ticket costs £47 (saving £8), a concessionary ticket £40 (saving £7).

Singing Day

To book a place on the Singing Day on 18 January 2014, please see our separate Singing Day brochure, available to download from the website at www.st-georges-singers.org.uk, or by contacting Gillian Banks, Tel 01925 213949, Email gillian.m.banks@gmail.com.

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.

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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. 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

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

Friends of St George's Singers

I would like to:

Become a Red Rose Friend for the 2013-14 Season and enclose a cheque for £15

Become a Gold Rose Friend for the 2013-14 Season and enclose a cheque for £30

I am already a Friend, and would like to:

Renew my Red Rose membership for the 2013-14 Season and enclose a cheque for £15

Renew my Gold Rose membership for the 2013-14 Season and enclose a cheque for £30

To order tickets, please remember to complete the Ticket Booking Form overleaf

About St George's Singers

A large group with around 100 members, St George's Singers is also an extremely friendly and welcoming Choir. We hold a wide range of social events throughout the season, including the annual end-of-season Social Evening when choir members have the opportunity to take the solo stage!

Joining the Choir

Entry to the Choir is by audition, and all Singers are re-auditioned every three years. New members can join at any time, and are welcome to come along to a few rehearsals before auditioning. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings in St George's Church Hall, Poynton, SK12 1AF (located on the A523 London Road) from 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm. For more information about joining St George's Singers, please contact our Secretary, Jacqui Smith, Tel 01625 533779, Email enquiries@st-georges-singers.org.uk.

Open Rehearsal

Once a year we hold an Open Rehearsal, which this season is on 24 September 2013 in St George's Church Hall, Poynton. If you're interested in joining St George's Singers, or just want to find out what goes on at our rehearsals, then do come along, sit in at the rehearsal, enjoy a glass of wine and have a chat afterwards with Choir members. For more information, please contact our Secretary, Jacqui Smith.

CDs

The Choir has made a number of CD recordings, available to purchase 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 the Choir's Golden Jubilee in 2006, and *Carols from St George's*.

Newsletter

If you want to read more about St George's Singers and our activities, pick up a copy of the choir newsletter Hemiola at our concerts, download it from our website, or sign up to our Mailing List on the website.

Cheshire Consort

The Cheshire Consort is St George's Singers' wedding choir, and is available to sing at weddings throughout the Cheshire and Greater Manchester area. You can find more information about our wedding choir on the choir website at: www.cheshireconsort.org.uk as well as a guide to choosing the music for your wedding. To discuss your wedding plans and book the Consort, contact Sue Taylor on 01663 766991, email: setaylor9@btinternet.com.

"The glorious singing of the Cheshire Consort made a wonderful day even more special"

For more information on all our activities through the year, visit our website. www.st-georges-singers.org.uk
You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook

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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 2DJ.

Remember to complete your name and address details overleaf!

Concert	Date	Price	No. full price	No. conc	No. student/child	No. coach tickets	Total £
Carols & Brass by Candlelight	7/12/13	£12, £10 concession, £2 students/children					
Bach Christmas Oratorio	15/12/13	£15, £13 concession, £5 students/children					
Beethoven Mass in C Major	18/1/14	Audience tickets only £5					
Visions of Heaven	22/3/14	£12, £10 concession, £5 students/children					
L'Étrange Zimbe	22/6/14	£16, £14 concession, £5 students/children					
Season Tickets 4 concerts		Full £47, concession £40					
Grand Total £							

Return coach tickets available from Poynton/Hazel Grove to Gordon Monastery and RNCM concerts only. Friends of St George's Singers – free, Others - £5 per person.

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



St George's Singers

St George's Singers was formed in Poynton, Cheshire in 1956 with 23 founding members drawn from the local community. Today, the Choir has over 100 members who travel from Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, and is widely recognised as one of the most enterprising and innovative choirs in the North of England. Under Musical Director Neil Taylor, the Choir performs an extensive repertoire that covers baroque, classical, jazz, modern and newly commissioned choral works. Concert venues include the Bridgewater Hall, Gorton Monastery, Manchester Cathedral and the Royal Northern College of Music. The Choir sings with world-class soloists and orchestras, and tours regularly in the UK and overseas.

2013-14 Season at a glance

24 September 2013 Open Rehearsal

7 December 2013 Carols and Brass by Candlelight

15 December 2013 Bach *Christmas Oratorio*, Todd *Footprints*

18 January 2014 Singing Day – Beethoven *Mass in C major*

22 March 2014 Visions of Heaven

22 June 2014 L'Estrange *Zimbe!*, Tippett *Five Spirituals*

Ticket hotline 01663 764012

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

General enquiries 01625 533779

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



SUPPORTING &
CHAMPIONING
VOLUNTARY MUSIC

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