

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY



SUMMER
CONCERT
PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 5TH JULY 2025

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IMAGE CREDIT: LEEDS MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY

AND ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR - COLIN STEVENS

SOLO VIOLIN - PAUL BARRITT

BRUCKNER FOUR MOTETS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS THE LARK ASCENDING

ARR. FOR SOLO VIOLIN & CHOIR BY PAUL DRAYTON

— INTERVAL —

J S BACH CHACONNE IN D

RUTTER MAGNIFICAT

SOPRANO SOLOIST
KATHERINE GREGORY

THE SOLOISTS



VIOLIN – Paul Barritt

Paul has been leader of the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the English Chamber Orchestra and until 2022, the Hallé, having performed with this orchestra for 20 years. His numerous recordings for violin and piano include the complete violin sonatas of Howells, Ireland, Stanford and Schoeck as well as the salon pieces of Albert Sammons ('The English Kreisler') and violin and organ works of Rheinberger. With pianist James Lisney he has presented cycles of the Beethoven Violin

Sonatas some 21 times, most recently in Holland and Belgium and has recorded Beethoven's complete works for violin and piano on the Woodhouse label.

As a concerto soloist he performed Bach's Double Concerto with Igor Oistrakh at the Barbican and with Maxim Vengerov with the ECO at the Proms as well as in Germany and Spain. With the Hallé Orchestra he gave performances of Beethoven's Triple Concerto and Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*. A recording of the Brahms Violin Sonatas followed as well as a recording of Antony Hopkins' Partita for solo violin. In addition he teaches and gives masterclasses as well as adjudicating at music festivals. Most recently he has appeared as soloist and director at the St Endellion Festival in Cornwall, given recitals in a Château festival in France, as well as performing chamber music in Munich. He appears regularly as guest leader of the Orchestra of St Johns as well as being involved with OSJ Music for Autism. Now in its twenty third season, he runs and delivers the series of chamber concerts, Tring Chamber Music. In recent years Paul has been much in demand giving talks and writing articles on the subject of Birds and Music, most notably for the Linnean Society of London.



SOPRANO – Katherine Gregory

Katherine is currently studying for an MA at the Royal Academy of Music, learning with Susan Waters and James Ballieu.

Katherine has recently graduated from the University of Cambridge with a BA (Hons) in Theology and Philosophy. During this time she sang with Trinity College Choir. While at Cambridge, she performed many operatic roles, including the Contessa in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Rosalinde in Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, and Queen of the Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. She was also awarded first

prize in the prestigious Clare College Song Competition.

Katherine's recent solo highlights include Amy Beach's *Canticle of the Sun* (Bach Choir, Philharmonia Orchestra, David Hill, Royal Festival Hall), Duruflé's *Requiem* (The Bach Choir, David Hill, Holy Trinity Sloane Square & King's College Cambridge), Brahms' *Requiem* (Trinity College Choir, Stephen Layton and Three Spires Singers, Christopher Gray), Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (Westminster Abbey Choir, Andrew Nethsingha), Handel's *Messiah* (Truro Choral Society, Martin Palmer), Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (The Knightsbridge Festival Choir, Nicholas Danks).

Katherine is the current recipient of the Help Musicians Dick Maidment and Peggy Cooper Award and is generously supported by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.



FOUR MOTETS Anton Bruckner (1824–1896)

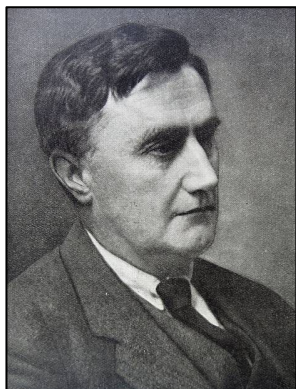
Bruckner was eleven years younger than Wagner and nine years older than Brahms. During the second half of the nineteenth century there was intense rivalry between the supporters of Wagner (and the romantic sweep and daring of his music) and Brahms (with his classical style, tinged with romantic harmonies). Bruckner's music fell between the two styles. He composed symphonies inspired by the classical models of Beethoven and Schubert, but he also adopted Wagner's more fluid harmonies. Bruckner's musical style was also much influenced by his strong Catholic faith.



Bruckner painted by Ferry Béron in 1889

Born in Ansfelden, Austria, the son of the village schoolmaster and organist, Anton Bruckner was obviously a talented musician from a very young age. By the age of ten he sometimes deputised for his father on the organ. After various studies, he held organist and teaching posts in St Florian and Linz, but also travelled to Vienna to take lessons in counterpoint and harmony, lessons which he continued to take into his forties. He was never well off, and it was not until the first performance of the seventh of his nine symphonies (in 1884, when he was 60) that his compositions began to receive recognition. Paul Henry Lang, author of the monumental book entitled *Music in Western Civilisation*, described Bruckner as a 'Primitive, left behind from the Middle Ages', 'a believer and a mystic, of disarming purity and fervour'. Lang's words describe well the compositional style of this evening's four motets, which have a somewhat timeless character, the old and the new blended seamlessly together.

Ave Maria was composed in 1861, when Bruckner was organist at Linz Cathedral. The other three motets, *Locus iste*, *Tota pulchra*, and *Os justi*, were composed between 1869 and 1879, when Bruckner had settled in Vienna and held the post of teaching music theory at the Vienna Conservatoire. The motets are not long, but they are all rich in harmony and texture. Sometimes they consist of a single line of music, but occasionally the voices divide into eight separate parts. Even though the tempo of *Locus iste* is marked 'Allegro moderato', none of the four motets are fast. 'Purity and fervour' predominate.



R. Vaughan Williams by Herbert Lambert (1920s)

THE LARK ASCENDING

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

It is probable that Vaughan Williams would be baffled by the present-day popularity of his short 'romance', *The Lark Ascending*, nowadays beloved by millions and often being voted top of classical music polls. In our present frenetic times performances of the piece offer a welcome oasis of calm, security and serenity. But was this what Vaughan Williams intended when he composed the piece, which was ostensibly inspired by a pastoral poem written by George Meredith more than thirty years earlier? The few known facts about its composition do not clarify the 'meaning' of the piece.

One commentator has noted that music in general has the 'mysterious ability to mean what we want it to mean, to acquire a life of its own'. That seems a very appropriate thought concerning this piece.

The Lark Ascending was written in 1914, originally for violin and piano. Before it received its first performance World War I had started, during which Vaughan Williams served as an ambulance driver, often active near the front line. After the war he orchestrated the piece, and that version received its first performance in 1921. Then, as now, it amazed audiences and held many listeners spellbound. The critic in *The Times* in 1921 wrote that the piece, 'showed serene disregard of the fashions of today or yesterday. It dreams its way along'. It is singularly difficult to classify the piece in any way, or to suggest what influenced its style. French people say it sounds like the impressionistic music of Ravel (with whom VW had studied in 1907/8), Chinese people note the similarity between the modal scales used by Vaughan Williams and some of their scales, while Americans chose it (after Barber's *Adagio*) as the piece most suitable to be used at commemorations after 9/11. There is a similarity between the piece and CV Stanford's exquisite partsong, *The Blue Bird*, written in 1910, the beginning of which is equally



Marie Hall, the acclaimed violinist, played for the first performance. It is said that her technical and lyrical style influenced RWV's revisions of the piece.

elusive and the ending of which also fades into eternity.

Is the music of *The Lark Ascending* picturesque? Is it sad, is it nostalgic, is it troubled, is it comforting, or is it something else? Perhaps Vaughan Williams would be delighted at its continuing ambiguity. The piece can delight and almost mesmerise the listener, in whatever way that listener perceives its 'meaning'. The version of the piece heard this evening was re-scored for violin solo and chorus by Paul Drayton and published in 2019.

CHACONNE from PARTITA No. 2 in D MINOR for SOLO VIOLIN *JS Bach (1685–1750)*



JS Bach c.1735

Joshua Bell, the distinguished contemporary American violin virtuoso, described Bach's *Chaconne* as 'not just one of the greatest achievements of any man in history. It is a spiritually powerful piece, emotionally overwhelming, structurally perfect'. Vast numbers of musicians, composers and players, are of the same opinion. All sorts of instrumentalists, not only violinists, want to play it. It has been arranged for numerous different instruments or instrumental combinations. It is reckoned that at least 200 transcriptions of the piece have been made.

The chaconne is the last (and by far the longest) movement of one of the six *Sonatas and Partitas* that Johann Sebastian Bach wrote for solo violin. It was written between 1718 and 1720. Some music scholars believe Bach wrote it in memory of his first wife, who died while he was away from home, but that is disputed by others. At its simplest, the piece consists of a four-bar sequence of descending bass notes, surmounted by a chordal theme, which is followed by sixty-four variations. The harmonic, contrapuntal and melodic complexity of those variations is quite amazing, ranging from the violin sometimes 'singing' a solo line, to four-part chords spread across the four strings of the violin, to two (or more) melodies being played simultaneously. Bach often succeeded in making the solo violin sound like a complete orchestra. There are in fact many transcriptions of the piece for full symphony orchestra.

The piece is divided into three sections, the middle of these being in the major key, to lend some variety. Bach included no tempo markings, no expression markings and no dynamic markings. There are two sections where he showed the word 'arpeggio', indicating that he wished that all the notes of a chord were not played at the same time. Thus, every performance and interpretation of the work is different. In whatever way the piece is played it always has a majesty and intensity which is timeless – wonderful!



Maria Barbara, Bach's first wife, for whom some say he wrote the Chaconne as an expression of his grief on her early death



MAGNIFICAT

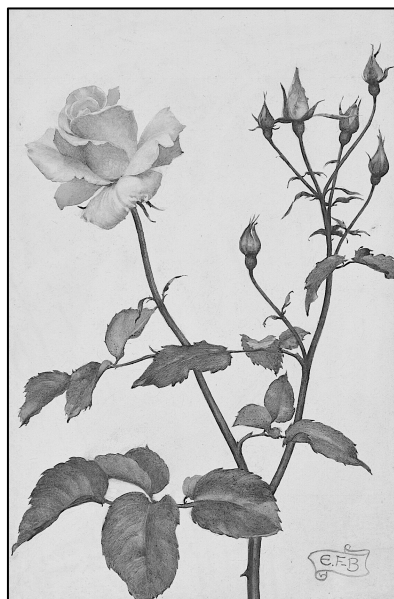
John Rutter (b.1945)

Online it is possible to listen to John Rutter talking about the genesis of his *Magnificat*, and in detail about each of its movements. He had received a commission for a choral work from Mid America Productions, and decided that, after his somewhat sombre setting of the *Requiem* (1985), he wished to write

something predominantly cheerful and festive. It struck him that sunny Catholic countries like Spain and Mexico enjoyed celebrating their religious festivals with processions and feasting. The *Magnificat*, Mary's joyous song after she was told she would give birth to Jesus, seemed an ideal choice. Rutter completed the piece in 1990, and it was first performed in Carnegie Hall, New York, that year.

As happened after the first performance of many of Rutter's compositions, critical reception was decidedly mixed. Most critics agreed that the orchestration was colourful and brilliant, and that the music admirably fitted the text; other critics claimed the score was glitzy and full of clichés. However, it is very easy indeed to find choral society members worldwide who enjoy singing Rutter's *Magnificat* immensely, and audience members who are more than delighted to listen to it. Rutter's music, with its catchy rhythms (sometimes Latin-American in character) and its slower, more lyrical tunes, is immediately appealing and very audience friendly.

The text of Rutter's *Magnificat* is in Latin, and the piece is divided into six sections. Between the first two sections Rutter inserted a setting of *Of a Rose, a lovely Rose*, an English poem of the fifteenth century in praise of Mary. The whole work then conveniently falls into fast, exciting sections alternating with slower, more reflective ones. Hopefully our performance this evening will add a fitting and festive climax to an intriguing and delightfully varied programme of splendid pieces.



FOUR MOTETS - Anton Bruckner

Ave Maria

Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus...

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you,
You are blessed among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus...*

Graduale: Locus iste

Locus iste a Deo factus est
inaestimabile sacramentum;
irreprehensibilis est.

*This place was made by God,
a priceless mystery,
it is beyond reproach.*

Antiphon: Tota pulchra

Tota pulchra es Maria,
Et immacula originalis non est in te...

*Thou art all fair, Mary,
And the original stain is not in thee...*

Graduale: Os justi

Os justi meditabitur sapientiam,
et lingua ejus loquetur judicium...

*The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom,
and his tongue speaks what is just...*

THE LARK ASCENDING – Vaughan Williams

Arranged by Paul Drayton for solo violin and choir

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sounds
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake.
For singing till his heaven fills.
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup.
He the wine which overflows,
Till lost on his aerial rings in light,
Then the fancy sings.

— INTERVAL —

CHACONNE IN D – JS Bach

MAGNIFICAT – John Rutter

1. **Magnificat** anima mea Dominum;
Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo
salutari meo...

*My soul doth magnify the Lord;
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God
my Saviour...*

2. Of a Rose, a lovely Rose

Of a Rose is all my song.
Hearken to me both old and young.
How this Rose began to spring;
A fairer rose to mine liking
In all this world ne know I none.
Five branches of that rose there been,
The which be both fair and sheen;
The rose is called Mary, heaven's queen.
Out of her bosom a blossom sprang.
The first branch was of great honour:
That blest Marie should bear the flow'r
There came an angel from heaven's tower
To break the devil's bond.
The second branch was great of might,
That sprang upon Christmas night,
The star shone over Bethlehem bright,

That man should see it both day and night.
The third branch did spring and spread;
Three kinges then the branch gan led
Unto Our Lady in her child-bed:
Into Bethlem that branch sprang right.
The fourth branch it sprang to hell,
The devil's power for to fell:
That no soul therein should dwell,
The branch so blessedfully sprang.
The fifth branch it was so sweet.
It sprang to heay'n, both crop and root
Therein to dwell and be our bote:
So blessedly it sprang.
Pray we to her with great honour.
She that bare the blessed flow'r
To be our help and our succour
And shield us from the fiendes bond.

3. **Quia fecit mihi magna**, qui potens est,
et sanctum nomen eius...

*For He that is mighty hath magnified me,
and Holy is His Name...*

4. **Et misericordia** eius a progenie
in progenies timentibus eum.

*And His mercy is on them
that fear Him throughout all generations.*

5. **Fecit potentiam** in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

*He hath shewed strength with his arm:
He hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.*

6. **Esurientes** implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.

*He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.*

7. **Gloria** Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto...

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost...*



TRING CHORAL SOCIETY

FORTHCOMING CONCERT

JS Bach Christmas Oratorio

Saturday 20th December, 2025

7.30pm, Tring Church



THE CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Gillie Bligh
Jackie Bignell
Jane Brown
Corinna Chute
Hilary Colbert
Gill Cresswell
Elaine Florsheim
Mary Haywood
Zoe Hill
Katie Hughes
Alison Humphrys
Sue Jones
Christine Keen
Jane Kendall
Lucy Kibble
Rosie Loker
Charlotte Mackinder-Fulford
Hattie Mackinder
Sarah Magee
Victoria Markey
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Elina Rantenen
Pam Rush

Kate Smith
Rosie Southworth
Elizabeth Thompson
Gillian Vila
Jenny Watt

Mary Owens
Harriet Queralt
Chris Sivers
Heather Wignall
Kate Winterbottom

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Kathy Chantler
Rachel Cobb
Sue Collins
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Sophie Dowson
Margaret Flanigan
Louisa Gartrell
Natasha Gething
Bea Glover
Jane Glover
Janet Graves
Eiluned Jones
Suna Kayakiran
Debbie Lea
Rhian Nicholls
Elizabeth Norris

TENORS

Jenny Brannock Jones
Richard Brown
David Hamilton
Philip Hayes
Kevin Scott
Chris Smith
David Wilde

BASSES

John Adderley
Robert Allnutt
Andy Barratt
Bob Davies
Richard Grylls
Richard Holder
Tony Mackinder
Richard Onslow
Stephen Spall
Rob Stevens
John Wignall

THE ORCHESTRA

Leader

Janet Hicks

Violin

Roger Neighbour, Annie Stamp, Ian Brown, Debbie Archer,
Sarah Fairall, David Glenister, Linda Miller, Naomi Jacob,
Fiona Jacob, Marion Garrett, Frances Bigg

Viola

Katie Hayes, Steffi Cook, Adrienne Cooke

Cello

Gavin Clements, Mary Harris, Herrick Hayes

Double Bass

Sudhir Singh

Flute

Sue Noithip

Keyboard/Harp

Carole King

Oboe

Victoria Parkins

Organ

Jon Lee

Clarinet

Teresa Whiffen

Timpani

Francis Beuttler

Bassoon

Caroline Cartwright

Percussion

Anna Stevens

Horn

John Lavelle

John Stevens

Friends of Tring Choral Society

Mr M Baxter
Mr G Bull
Ms A Duckenfield
Mr R Flanigan
Mr R Franklin
Mr C Garrett
Mrs G Glasser
Mr M Herbaut
Mr and Mrs D Langford

Mr G Lewis
Mr N Lewis
Mrs E Marchant
Dr J McKenna
Mrs M F Merlier
Mr R O'Reilly
Mr I Slatcher
Mr J Stack
Mr J Stanhope

Mrs J Stevens
Mrs P Thomas
Mrs S Todd
Mr A Winterbottom

Life Members

Mr and Mrs D Banyard
Mr R Grylls
Mrs R Southworth

Why not become a Friend of Tring Choral Society?

For a minimum donation of £40, you too could become a Friend and be entitled to two free tickets per season. TCS is a registered charity and is very grateful for local support and donations to continue hosting high quality choral and orchestral concerts in Tring. If you already attend our concerts on a fairly regular basis we'd love to have you on board!

You'd also receive a newsletter with details of our forthcoming concerts and an invitation to join our social events (barbecue, autumn walk and quiz night).

If you're interested, please drop an email to friends@tringchoral.org.uk, or go to the Friends section on our website (www.tringchoral.org.uk), or call Brigid Mathers on 07745 106860.

TRING
CHORAL
SOCIETY

If you'd like to join Tring Choral Society, new members are always very welcome. We rehearse term-time on Monday evenings in Tring.

Please ring our Membership Secretary, Margaret Collier, on 01296 660406 for more information, or email: membership@tringchoral.org.uk

Further details about the choir, its background and activities can be found on our website at www.tringchoral.org.uk. You can also find details of the music we have sung at past concerts and what we plan to sing in the near future.

You can also find us on Facebook.





MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

TCS offers a Music Scholarship scheme for local, young musicians willing to participate in the choir for a year, under which a bursary of £250 is awarded to support the student's music tuition.

The aim is to encourage young singers to take part in the choir's rehearsals and performances thus broadening their musical experience and enabling them to acquire a wider musical knowledge, improved technical and sightreading skills and academic achievement.

For further details, go to the Membership page on the website www.tringchoral.org.uk and click on the Scholarship link, or email secretary@tringchoral.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to Richard Grylls for his music notes
and to Zoe Hill for compiling this programme.

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