

Fortismere Community Choir

presents



featuring Isabelle Peters, Elise Lefay, Florence Price,
Ryan Vaughan Davies *and* Thomas Kennedy

with players from Fortismere Community Symphony Orchestra

and John Eady – *continuo / organ*

Marvin L. Perrott – *musical director*

We are delighted to welcome you back to our first concert at St Andrew's for two years.

Bach's *Magnificat* and Christmas carols

Magnificat in D major – Johann Sebastian Bach

INTERVAL

Hark the herald angels sing (audience carol)

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen

O little town of Bethlehem (audience carol)

God rest you merry, gentlemen (audience carol)

In the bleak midwinter – Harold Darke

Good King Wenceslas (audience carol)

Coventry carol – 16th century, arr. Martin Shaw

Once in royal David's city (audience carol)

Stille nacht – Franz Gruber, arr. David Willcocks

Ding dong! merrily on high (audience carol)

The first Nowell (audience carol)

O come, all ye faithful (audience carol)

**The bar will be open before the concert and during the interval
for drinks and festive refreshments**

With thanks to Fr Andy Coates and St Andrew's Church

Fortismere Music Centre Manager: Joseph Winters

Programme design: Anne Hutchings

***Magnificat in D Major* – Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

In May 1723 Bach was appointed *Kantor* of St Thomas, Leipzig - we would probably call him the Director of Music - where he remained until his death in 1750. It was a hugely demanding post, involving teaching at the church school, playing the organ, training the choir and composing the music for the city's two principal Lutheran churches as well as supervising and training the musicians at three others. Despite this enormous workload and recurrent disputes with the city authorities, Bach composed some of his greatest music during this period. His choral compositions alone include such towering masterpieces as the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, the *Magnificat* and the *Mass in B minor*, as well as the *Christmas Oratorio* and some 250 church cantatas.

The *Magnificat* - the canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke I: 46-55) - traditionally formed part of the ancient Roman Catholic service of Vespers. After the Reformation it was incorporated into the evening services of the Lutheran and Anglican churches, in which it was linked with the *Nunc Dimittis*. The *Magnificat* has been set to music more often than any liturgical text other than the Mass itself, in settings that vary enormously in style, from the purity of Palestrina's exquisite four-part unaccompanied compositions to Monteverdi's grand, dramatic settings written for St Mark's, Venice, and later the almost symphonic conception of Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, of which the *Magnificat* forms the final movement, composed in 1780 for use in Salzburg Cathedral.

Bach's *Magnificat* was written in Leipzig for the 1723 Christmas Vespers. This original version was in E-flat and included several additional Christmas texts inserted at various points in the piece [which we are singing tonight]. Some years later he revised it, transposing it into D, a much brighter and more satisfactory key for the trumpets in particular.

The extraordinary impact of Bach's great choral works derives essentially from his remarkable ability to balance, yet at the same time to exploit to the full, the spiritual and dramatic elements of each text, whether it be one as concise as the *Magnificat* or as monumental as the *St Matthew Passion*.

The *Magnificat* is conceived on a grand scale, requiring five soloists, a five-part choir and, for its time, an unusually large orchestra consisting of three trumpets, two flutes, two oboes, strings and continuo. In its splendour and jubilation, the piece anticipates the great choruses of the later *Mass in B minor*. It begins with a brilliant orchestral introduction in which the trumpets feature prominently. This leads directly into an equally impressive chorus, 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum' (My soul doth magnify the Lord). The ten verses and Gloria that comprise the *Magnificat* canticle form a continuous and homogenous whole, in contrast with the libretto of an oratorio or Passion with its wide variety of extracts from many different Biblical and poetical sources. For this reason there are no recitatives in the *Magnificat*. Instead, each verse receives extended treatment, the chorus supplying appropriate emphasis to sections such as 'Fecit potentiam in brachio suo' (He hath showed strength with his arm), while the more reflective verses are assigned to the soloists. In the

trio, 'Suscepit Israel' (He hath holpen his servant Israel), Bach gives the oboes a plainsong melody traditionally associated with the *Magnificat*. It appears as a *cantus firmus*, i.e. a melody in greatly extended notes, against which the three soloists weave decorative vocal lines. For the final verse, 'Sicut erat in principio Amen' (As it was in the beginning Amen), Bach appropriately mirrors the words by recalling the music that was heard 'as it was in the beginning', the *Magnificat* therefore ending as exuberantly and dramatically as it began.

Notes © John Bawden, MMus (University of Surrey)

1. (Choir)

Magnificat anima mea Dominum

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

2. (Soprano II)

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

And my spirit has rejoiced in God my saviour.

A. (Choir)

Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her, ich bring euch gute neue Mär; der guten Mär bring ich so viel, davon ich sing und sagen will.

From heaven above to earth I come to hear good news to every home; glad tidings of great joy I bring, whereof I now will say and sing.

3. (Soprano I)

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent

Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for behold from henceforth [they] shall call me blessed...

4. Choir

Omnes generationes.

...every generation.

5. Bass

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

Because he who is mighty has done great things to me, and holy is his name.

B. (Soprano I & II, Tenor)

Freut euch und jubiliert, zu Bethlehem gefunden wird das herzeliebe Jesulein, das soll euer Freud und Wonne sein.

Rejoice and be glad, for at Bethlehem you will find the beloved little Jesus, who will be your joy and delight.

6. (Alto, Tenor)

Et misericordia a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.

And his mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear him.

7. (Choir)

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

C. (Choir)

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bona voluntas.

Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

8. (Tenor)

Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.

9. (Alto)

Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.

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

D. (Soprano, Bass)

Virga Jesse floruit, Emmanuel noster apparuit. Induit carnem hominis, fit puer delectabilis, Alleluja.

The rod of Jesse has bloomed, our Emmanuel has appeared. He has taken on human flesh, and become a delightful child. Alleluia.

10. (Soprano I & II, Alto)

Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiae suae.

He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy.

11. (Choir)

Sicut locutus est ad Patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

As he spoke to our fathers: to Abraham and to his seed for ever.

12. (Choir)

Gloria Patri, gloria Filio, gloria et Spiritui Sancto! Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Glory to the Father, glory to the Son, glory also to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning and [is] now and always and throughout ages of ages. Amen.

~~ INTERVAL ~~

Drinks and festive refreshments are available at the bar

Hark the herald angels sing – carol for audience and choir

1. Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

2. Christ by highest heav'n adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the God-head see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all he brings,
 Ris'n with healing in his wings;
 Mild he lays his glory by,
 Born that man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
 Glory to the new-born King.*

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen is a Christmas carol of German origin, commonly translated in English as "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming" or "A Spotless Rose. The rose is a symbolic reference to the Virgin Mary. The hymn makes reference to the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah, which in Christian interpretation foretell the Incarnation of Christ, and to the Tree of Jesse, a traditional symbol of the lineage of Jesus. The hymn has its roots in an unknown author before the 17th century. It first appeared in print in 1599 and is most commonly sung, as today, to a melody harmonized by the German composer Michael Praetorius in 1609.

O little town of Bethlehem – carol for audience and choir

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
 How still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 The silent stars go by.
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth
 The everlasting light;
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 Are met in thee tonight.

3. How silently, how silently,
 The wondrous gift is giv'n!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of his heav'n.
 No ear may hear his coming;
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive him, still
 The dear Christ enters in.

2. O morning stars together
 Proclaim the holy birth,
 And praises sing to God the King,
 And peace to men on earth;
 For Christ is born of Mary;
 And, gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wond'ring love.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell:
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Emmanuel.

God rest you merry, gentlemen – carol for audience and choir

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:
*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

2. From God our heav'nly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:
O tidings of comfort and joy...

3. Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy...

In the bleak mid-winter – Harold Darke (1888-1976)

"*In the Bleak Midwinter*" is based on a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti published in 1872 under the title "*A Christmas Carol*". This setting by Harold Darke was written in 1909 while he was a student at the Royal College of Music. Darke was born in Highbury, and served in the RAF in World War I. His first organist post was at Emmanuel Church, West Hampstead; he was then organist at St Michael Cornhill from 1916 to 1966, except for a brief spell as Director of Music at King's College, Cambridge during WWII.

Good King Wenceslas – carol for audience and choir

1. **ALL:** Good King Wenceslas look'd out
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even:
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

2. **MEN:** "Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
WOMEN: "Sire he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence,
By St Agnes' fountain."

3. **MEN:** “Bring me flesh and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither.”

ALL: Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rude wind’s wild lament
And the bitter weather.

4. **WOMEN:** “Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer.”

MEN: “Mark my footsteps, good my page;
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter’s rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.”

5. **ALL:** In his master’s steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourself find blessing.

***Coventry carol* – 16th century, arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958)**

The *Coventry Carol* is an English Christmas carol dating from the 16th century. It was traditionally performed in Coventry as part of a mystery play called *The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors*, which depicts the Christmas story from the Gospel of Matthew. The text refers to the Massacre of the Innocents, in which Herod ordered all male infants under the age of two in Bethlehem to be killed, and takes the form of a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children.

The author is unknown; the oldest known text was written down by Robert Croo in 1534, and the oldest known setting of the melody dates from 1591. Martin Shaw was an English composer, conductor, and (in his early life) theatre producer. Like Harold Darke, he started his musical career as organist of Emmanuel Church, West Hampstead.

***Once in royal David’s city* – carol for audience and choir**

1. Once in royal David’s city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3. And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

4. Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

***Stille nacht* – Franz Gruber (1787-1863), arr. David Willcocks**

Franz Gruber was an Austrian primary school teacher and church organist. One Christmas Eve, Joseph Mohr, an assistant pastor at St Nicholas, asked Gruber to set a poem he had written to music. The church organ had broken down so Gruber produced a melody with guitar arrangement. The two men sang *Stille Nacht* for the first time at Christmas Mass in St Nicholas Church while Mohr played guitar and the choir sang the last two lines of each verse.

***Ding Dong! merrily on high* – carol for audience and choir**

1. Ding dong! merrily on high
In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky
Is riv'n with angels singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

2. E'en so here below, below,
Let steeple bells be swungen,
And i-o, i-o, i-o,
By priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

3. Pray you dutifully prime
Your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime
Your eve-time song ye singers.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!

***The first Nowell* – carol for audience and choir**

1. The first Nowell the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields
as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!

2. They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
Nowell, Nowell...

3. Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:
Nowell, Nowell...

O come all ye faithful – carol for audience and choir

1. O come all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold him Born the King of Angels: <i>O come let us adore him Christ the Lord.</i>	2. God of God, Light of Light, Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb; Very God, Begotten not created: <i>O come let us adore him Christ the Lord.</i>
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3. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
*O come let us adore him
Christ the Lord.*

Our singers

SOPRANOS: *Laura Fransella, Pip Hardaker, Kate Hodgkin, Norma Hunter, Lotta Kitchen, Rose Lamberty, Buz Loveday, Sarah McMenemy, Sue Morrison, Claire Murdoch, Josephine Powers, Penny Sewell, Barbara Tucker, Diane Winters*

ALTOS: *Marcia Beer, Mari-Wyn Burley, Helen Downie, Donna Feldman, Helen Finch, Maggie Garner, Liz Hanchet, Jo Maude, Catherine Mkhize, Mattie Morgan, Anna Mullen, Sue Pascoe, Nicky Rosen, Judith Rosen, Sabine Schutte, Penny Seingry, Sue White*

TENORS: *Mourijn Bok, Steve Dell, Catrin Dillon, Jayne Forbes, Ruth Hogarth, Anne Hutchings, Jack Price, Deborah Rookes, Helen Tackaberry, Nick Thomas, Catherine Whybourn, Carolyn Woodmason*

BASSES: *Graham Bradley, Philip Dunn, Ralph Goldswain, Steven Goodlife, Dominic Green, John Illario, Nick Kitchen, Stuart Little, Gavin Lumsden, Tom Lyon, Andrew Wickham.*

British soprano **Isabelle Peters** is an alumna of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Royal Northern College of Music. Isabelle was a BAME Fellow at English National Opera for their 2019/2020 season, appearing in the role of First Bridesmaid in *The Marriage of Figaro* and covering Frasquita in *Carmen* and Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*. Isabelle regularly collaborates with pianists to perform Art Song repertoire and to take part in music competitions, most recently a 2020 ROSL Annual Music Competition Finalist. Recent engagements: Barbarina *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Holland Park); Dido *Dido's Ghost* (Barbican/Dunedin Consort, Barbican Hall); Dido, *Dido & Aeneas* (Shipwright); Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* (Waterperry Opera Festival); First Lady *Die Zauberflöte* (Garsington).

Elise Lefay has recently performed opera roles including works by Charpentier and Lully with Clemens non Papa Consort. She also enjoys performing oratorios, cantatas and motets such as Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate*, *Coronation Mass*, Haydn's *D Moll Mass*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, Couperin's *Leçons de Ténèbres* and Vivaldi's *Nulla mundo pax sincera*. She has sung with choirs including the London Philharmonic Chorus and the BBC Symphony Chorus.

Florence Price studied Music at the University of Manchester, where she learnt singing with Katherine Lally and conducting with Robert Guy. She performed the alto solo in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Manchester University Music Society Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and was a finalist in the Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize Competition 2020 (postponed due to the pandemic). Florence currently sings in Kantos Chamber Choir, directed by Ellie Slorach, and is a HeartEdge Manchester Choral Scholar in association with St Martin in the Fields. She is the Musical Director of Somnium Chamber Choir and the Stockport Male Voice Choir. In 2022, Florence will continue to expand her conducting experience, including participating in the Royal Academy of Music's Sorrell Women Conductors Programme.

Welsh tenor **Ryan Vaughan Davies** studied at the Royal College of Music as the Ivor Llewelyn Foster Scholar. He made his professional operatic debut as Second Priest in Longborough Festival Opera's production of *Die Zauberflöte*, and has since worked with the Buxton International Festival, the Grange Festival, Minack Theatre, Garsington Opera, and has debuted at the Royal Festival Hall and Royal Albert Hall. He is now taking his place at the Royal Academy of Music Opera School.

Previously a choral scholar at New College, Oxford, **Thomas Kennedy** taught maths before returning to postgraduate musical study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, graduating with distinction in 2009. He has performed numerous operatic roles and chorus for ENO, Garsington and Grange Park Opera. His concert work includes Handel's *Messiah*, the song project *Lads in their hundreds* at Kings Place and on BBC Radio 3, and Ives' *General William Booth* with Sir Andrew Davis and the BBCSO at the Barbican Hall.

Our choir

Fortismere Community Choir started in 2009 and is an unashamedly unauditioned choir. We welcome those with and without musical experience, who have a desire to sing with like-minded people. The choir meets at Fortismere School every Saturday in the music block in north wing, from 10.30am to 1.00pm during school terms.

Our repertoire in recent years has included Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Mass in C minor*, Haydn's *The Seasons*, Handel's *Odes* and *Zadok the Priest*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, and Monteverdi's *Lauda Jerusalem*.

The choir has a steering committee and an active social network. Relaxed but supportive home-based sectionals, lunches and parties have all helped to create a friendly atmosphere at rehearsals and events. We are proud to be part of the community that is Fortismere Music Centre, which brings neighbours, teachers and pupils together to create high-calibre music. We welcome new members; for more information and tickets for concerts, please visit our website:

www.fortismeremusiccentre.co.uk

or contact Joseph Winters at: fmcinfo@fortismere.org.uk.



Marvin L. Perrott – musical director

Marvin studied Early Music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has extensive experience both as a singer and conductor. He has performed in numerous roles both in the United Kingdom and abroad. Equally at home in the concert hall Marvin has performed as a soloist in the *Messiah*, Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* and Bach's *H-moll Messe* at the Aldeburgh Music Festival. In 2004 Marvin formed the Clemens non Papa Consort, a group whose aim is to perform lesser known works of the Baroque, Renaissance and Classical periods to a high artistic standard. Marvin has been Musical Director of the Fortismere Community Choir since 2015, seeking to develop their vocal technique and taking on ever more ambitious repertoire including Duruflé's *Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Great C minor mass*, Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* and Beethoven's epic *Missa solemnis*. He is also the guest conductor of the Lavenham Singers.



John Eady – répétiteur and continuo

John studied music at King's College London, the Royal Academy of Music and cello at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2002 he started to learn the organ at the St Giles International Organ School and in 2006 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. He is a freelance cellist and organist, manages his string quartet named Four Strings Attached, and is organist at St Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge.

