

24TH ANNUAL  
Christmas  
Festival

St. John's, Smith Square  
14 - 23 December 2009

Christ Church Cathedral Choir  
Alamire

Clare College Choir  
Ex Cathedra

The Cardinal's Musick  
Chapelle du Roi

The Tallis Scholars  
Polyphony  
Britten Sinfonia



St. John's, Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HA



**Welcome to the 24th Annual Christmas Festival at St. John's, Smith Square.**

2009 has been a bumper year for anniversaries – Handel (who will of course be celebrated in our annual performance of *Messiah* on 23 December), Purcell, Mendelssohn and Haydn have all reached significant milestones – but it is the 500th anniversary of the accession of Henry VIII to the throne to which we turn our attention.

Henry was a founder of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, so it is only fitting that its world-famous Choir should open their programme – and our Festival – with music from his royal court. Alamire is a vocal ensemble with a fine reputation for historical accuracy and scholarship under the direction of David Skinner. They will be presenting a programme of works written by or in honour of Henry VIII.

It was Henry VIII, of course, who began England's move away from Roman Catholicism, but we have

some dissenters in our midst in the form of The Cardinal's Musick, who will present a programme *In Honour of the Virgin*. The Tallis Scholars have also taken a Marian theme with Flemish motets, a Mass by Josquin in praise of the Blessed Virgin and a blaze of colour from William Byrd to complete the rebellion.

Chapelle du Roi will explore a 'Second English Renaissance' which has seen contemporary composers take their inspiration from masterpieces of the sixteenth century. After their hugely popular debut in the Festival last year, Ex Cathedra are back with a fresh programme of Christmas Music by Candelight, and we have three world premières from The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge.

Our annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* follows the release this autumn of the CD recorded at last year's performances.

With best wishes for a peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year,

Stephen Layton  
Artistic Director

# Christ Church Cathedral Choir

Director: Stephen Darlington

**A CELEBRATORY  
TRIP AROUND EUROPE  
Introduced by Howard Goodall**



Henry VIII was crowned King of England 500 years ago and, as founder of Christ Church, it is particularly fitting that tonight's programme opens with music from his sumptuous court, before setting out on a journey around Europe, to celebrate some of its most famous carols, old and new.

A wonderful opportunity to hear one of the greatest cathedral choirs in the world perform at Christmas.

Clive Driskill-Smith organ

**Programme includes:**

- |                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Nowel Syng we</i>                | English trad. C15 |
| <i>Green growth the holly</i>       | Henry VIII        |
| <i>Der Wind auf leeren Strassen</i> | Howard Goodall    |
| <i>Salten y ballen</i>              | Canteloube        |
| <i>Nina nana</i>                    | Virgili           |
| <i>Riu, riu, chiu</i>               | Catalan trad.     |
| <i>The angel Gabriel</i>            | arr. Willcocks    |

*"Under Darlington's direction, they sing ... with confidence and warmth."*  
Sunday Times

*"To hear a choir like this is to hear a quality of musicianship with no equal anywhere in the world."*  
Independent on Sunday



**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061  
[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

Tuesday 15 December 7.30 pm

# Alamire

Director: David Skinner

## HENRY'S MUSIC: A KING'S CHRISTMAS



Amidst splendid festivities, Henry Tudor was crowned King of England on 24 June 1509. Christmas that year was spent at Richmond with his wife, Catherine of Aragon, enjoying the revels of their Yuletide court. Tonight we explore the musical entertainments they might have enjoyed as we begin our own Christmas celebrations five hundred years later.

Alamire has been central to the Henry VIII celebrations held in the UK and abroad, including projects for the British Library, Folio Society, and David Starkey's Channel 4 documentary series 'Henry VIII: Mind of a Tyrant'.

This is the final concert in Alamire's 'Henry's Music' series, featuring festive vocal and instrumental motets, songs and carols from the early Tudor court: sacred and secular music written by Henry and for Henry, including delights by Fayrfax, Verdelot, Taverner and others.

Andrew Lawrence-King *gothic harp*  
Clare Wilkinson *mezzo-soprano*

*"They sing marrying galvanizing spirit with impeccable tuning and blend. Nothing but this music can transport you to the indescribable warmth that must have greeted the new King ... Awesome."* Classic FM Magazine (Henry's Music)

*"The performances glow, and so does one's spirit after hearing them ... consummate polish."* Gramophone



Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10

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# The Choir of Clare College

Conductors: Timothy Brown and Sir Roger Norrington



## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Sir Roger Norrington, noted interpreter of Heinrich Schütz, conducts the *Deutsches Magnificat* and the evocative *Christmas Story*. The programme is completed by a Buxtehude cantata and three brand new commissions by composers closely associated with Tim Brown and Clare College Choir.

Internationally renowned, the choir has given concerts around the world, made many acclaimed recordings, and worked with leading conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Ivor Bolton and René Jacobs.

This concert is one of the final opportunities in London to hear the unique sound of the choir under Tim Brown's direction before he retires after thirty years as Director of Music.

Eleanor Caine *soprano*  
Mark Dobell *tenor*  
The Schütz Ensemble  
Ashok Gupta *organ*

### Programme includes:

<i>Christmas Story</i>	Schütz
<i>Jesu, meine Freude</i>	Buxtehude
<i>Deutsches Magnificat</i>	Schütz
<i>Three carols</i>	John Rutter
(world première performances)	Tarik O'Regan Giles Swayne

*"Thrillingly fresh and feisty singing of the Choir of Clare College."*  
The Times



Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10  
10% discount for concessions

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[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

Wednesday 16 December 7.30pm

Thursday 17 December 7.30pm

# Ex Cathedra

Director: Jeffrey Skidmore

## CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT

A stream of music moves seamlessly from traditional favourites to rare, rediscovered, foreign and contemporary repertoire, broken only by a selection of thought-provoking readings. This year we celebrate the joy of Christmas and make no apologies for emphasising the favourites that have emerged over Ex Cathedra's 40-year history.

Under its founder and Artistic Director, Jeffrey Skidmore, Ex Cathedra is known for its vibrant performances and a passion for seeking out the best, the unfamiliar and the unexpected in the choral repertoire.

Andrew Fletcher organ

### Programme includes:

<i>In the bleak midwinter</i>	Darke
<i>Quid petis?</i>	Pygott
<i>When Jesus our Lord</i>	Mendelssohn
<i>Videte miraculum</i>	Tallis
<i>Coventry Carol</i>	Leighton
<i>The Three Kings</i>	Jonathan Dove
<i>Noël</i>	Naji Hakim

*"This concert made my Christmas ... an utter joy; intelligently put together, mixing the familiar and the unknown in thoughtful, meaningful relationship."*  
Michael White, The Catholic Herald

Ex Cathedra is supported by:



This concert is sponsored by:



Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10  
10% discount for concessions

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[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

# The Cardinal's Musick

Director: Andrew Carwood



## IN HONOUR OF THE VIRGIN 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert

It is 20 years since The Cardinal's Musick performed their first concert in Oxford at Christmas in 1989, and in this festive programme they return to the most exciting and vibrant composers of the 16th century for their programme dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Lassus' stunning double-choir *Missa Osculetur me* is set against motets by Victoria. William Byrd is represented by a set of Mass Propers for the Nativity of the Virgin, and the evening is brought to a rousing close by Palestrina's vibrant, celebratory double-choir *Magnificat*. A roll-call of great names from the past to prepare for Christmas.

### Programme includes:

<i>Missa Osculetur me</i>	Lassus
<i>Ave regina caelorum</i>	de Padilla
<i>Ave regina caelorum</i>	de Anchieta
<i>Regina caeli [a 8]</i>	Guerrero
<i>Propers for the Nativity of the Virgin Mary</i>	Byrd
<i>Magnificat primi toni [a 8]</i>	Palestrina

*"The Cardinal's Musick is an expert body of singers who know exactly what they are doing."* Gramophone

*"Performances of exquisite perfection."*  
International Record Review

*"The Cardinal's Musick ... as overwhelming as a Mahler symphony at a tenth of the volume."*  
Daily Telegraph

Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10  
10% discount for concessions

Box Office: 020 7222 1061  
[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

Friday 18 December 7.30 pm

Saturday 19 December 7.30pm

# Chapelle du Roi

Director: Alistair Dixon

## NEW LAMPS FOR OLD

Christmas has inspired composers for more than five hundred years. The legacy of English and continental composers from the Renaissance is rich and varied.

In recent years a 'Second English Renaissance' has seen contemporary composers taking inspiration from plainchant, secular carols and polyphonic masterworks of the sixteenth century. A new tradition of Renaissance-inspired music flourishes in the hands of composers such as Francis Pott, Gabriel Jackson and Robert Hugill.

In this programme Chapelle du Roi explores the links between works by Tallis, Palestrina and Guerrero and contemporary composers from England, Scotland and America. The result is a balance of sumptuous textures and harmonies and contrasting approaches to the great Christmas texts.



### Programme includes:

*Videte Miraculum* Tallis & Robert Hugill (world première)

*Lullay My Lyking* Traditional & Francis Pott

*Coventry Carol* Traditional & Leighton

*O Magnum Mysterium* Palestrina & Morten Lauridsen

*Hodie Nobis* Tallis & Gabriel Jackson

And works by Guerrero and Victoria.

*"Intimate, aromatic, lovingly crafted marriage of text and music."*  
Evening Standard

Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10

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[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

# The Tallis Scholars

Director: Peter Phillips

## BEATA VIRGINE

The world-renowned Tallis Scholars were founded in 1973 by their director, Peter Phillips. Their extensive recording and highly-acclaimed concert performances have established them as the leading exponents of Renaissance sacred music throughout the world.

The first half of the programme is dedicated to one of the greatest masterpieces of the Renaissance period: Josquin's *Missa de Beata Virgine*, based on plainchant, is one of his most closely argued compositions in any genre.

After the interval come a succession of Flemish motets with a Marian theme, including the fascinating chromatic motet of Clemens, which sinks a semitone by design. The evening ends in a blaze of colour from William Byrd.

### Programme includes:

<i>Missa de Beata Virgine</i>	Josquin
<i>Ave Maria</i>	Gombert
<i>Qui consolabatur me</i> (diatonic version)	Clemens
<i>Qui consolabatur me</i> (chromatic version)	Clemens
<i>Mirabile Mysterium</i>	Gallus
<i>Ave, Dulcissima Maria</i>	Gesualdo
<i>Vigilate</i>	Byrd

*"They are a remarkable group, perfectly matched in tone and unfaltering in their intonation."* The Guardian

*"The expressive force of what this ensemble and their conductor draw out of Josquin's sweeping progressions takes one's breath away."* Diapason

*"Perfect clarity. A blend finer than any coffee."* The Times



Tickets: £33, £26, £20, £12

Box Office: 020 7222 1061  
[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

Tuesday 22 December 7.30pm

Wednesday 23 December 7.30pm

# Polyphony and Britten Sinfonia

Conductor: Stephen Layton

## MESSIAH

A highlight of the Christmas Festival, the superlative performance of Handel's *Messiah* given by Polyphony under Stephen Layton has become an annual institution. This year promises to be no exception, with a stunning soloist line-up set to give an exhilarating performance that is not to be missed.

*"No-one, but no-one performs Messiah better every year than the choir Polyphony under the conductor Stephen Layton."*

Evening Standard

*"Wow! Words are inadequate to convey the sheer brilliance of Polyphony and of Layton's conducting."*

Early Music Today

*"Britten Sinfonia ... it remains a treat to listen to orchestral players that spark off each other with such enthusiasm."*

The Times

New Messiah CD, recorded live at last year's performances, available on Hyperion from autumn 2009.

Julia Doyle *soprano*  
Iestyn Davies *countertenor*  
Allan Clayton *tenor*  
Neal Davies *bass*



**Tickets: £50, £44, £38, £19**

Please note that this concert is likely to sell out in advance

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

## BOOKING AND VENUE INFORMATION

Booking for all concerts opens to Friends of St. John's on 24 September and to the General Public on 1 October.

### BOX OFFICE: 020 7222 1061

Mastercard, Visa and Maestro accepted.

Post: St. John's, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA. Please enclose sae.

Fax: 020 7233 1618. Online: [www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

**BOOKING FEES:** By telephone £2.00 per transaction (£1.50 to Friends of St. John's). Online: £1.50 per transaction.

**OPENING TIMES:** The Box Office is open from 10am-5pm (until 6pm on concert days) Monday to Friday. Advance bookings cannot be made after 6pm or at weekends/bank holidays. The Box Office will open at 6.30pm on Saturday 19 December to personal callers for that evening's concert only.

### ST. JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE INFORMATION:

The Footstool restaurant in the Crypt is open from 5.30pm for dinner and licensed refreshments for weekday concerts, and opens at 6pm for weekend concerts. Tel: 020 7222 2779

Facilities for people with disabilities: St. John's is equipped with a 'loop' system to benefit deaf and hearing-impaired patrons (switch hearing aids to T). Please advise Box Office when booking tickets. St. John's is a baroque building with entrance up a steep flight of steps. We regret that there is no level access to the hall and that wheelchairs must be carried up steep steps to gain access to the hall. Please inform the Box Office at time of booking if you will be using a wheelchair and attend with able-bodied helpers. Please note that there are no disabled toilet facilities at St. John's.

24TH ANNUAL

Box Office  
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# Christmas Festival

St. John's, Smith Square  
14 - 23 December 2009

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Mon 14 December	Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford
Tues 15 December	Alamire
Wed 16 December	The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge
Thurs 17 December	Ex Cathedra
Fri 18 December	The Cardinal's Musick
Sat 19 December	Chapelle du Roi
Tues 22 December	The Tallis Scholars
Weds 23 December	Polyphony - Messiah

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*"The Christmas Festival at St. John's has the top-end seasonal Baroque field to itself."* The Independent

*"Only the very best seasonal music is programmed and the results are often illuminating ... In all, the perfect start to the season."* Daily Telegraph

*"What better to raise the spirits than the annual Christmas Festival at St. John's, Smith Square."* Evening Standard



St. John's, Smith Square,  
London SW1P 3HA  
General Manager: Paul Davies  
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