

26TH ANNUAL
Christmas
Festival

St. John's, Smith Square
14 - 23 December 2011

Christ Church Cathedral Choir Oxford
The English Concert
Ex Cathedra
Chapelle du Roi
The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge
Holst Singers
City of London Sinfonia
The Cardinal's Musick
The Tallis Scholars
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Academy of Ancient Music
Polyphony



St. John's, Smith Square
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Welcome to the 26th Annual Christmas Festival at St. John's, Smith Square



The Festival this year offers diversity of scale, from intimate performances of Renaissance polyphony to choral and orchestral works on a grand scale. This year we are joined by three of the greatest British period instrument orchestras – the Academy of Ancient Music for Handel's *Messiah*, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, and The English Concert in *The Christmas Story* by Schütz.

We are proud to present performances from some of the most highly regarded exponents of Renaissance music in the world – The Tallis Scholars with some rare Palestrina;

The Cardinall's Musick celebrating the 400th anniversary of one of the most sublime Renaissance composers, Tomás Luis de Victoria; and 'Meet The Tudors' with Chapelle du Roi.

Many of us enjoy the traditional at Christmas and we will be well provided for by The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford in a programme presented by Howard Goodall; the ever-popular 'Christmas Music by Candlelight' performed by Ex Cathedra; and two of Britten's best-loved seasonal works performed by The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, the Holst Singers and City of London Sinfonia.

We look forward to welcoming you to our glorious venue in the heart of Westminster, this season and in years to come.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Layton".

STEPHEN LAYTON
Artistic Director

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Welcome

Wednesday 14 December 7.30pm

Christ Church Cathedral Choir

Director: Stephen Darlington

CHRISTMAS TREASURES

Introduced by Howard Goodall



Clive Driskill-Smith and
Michael Heighway piano

The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, was founded just under 500 years ago by Thomas Wolsey and Henry VIII. Now world famous in its own right for the excellence and versatility of its singing, the Choir tours worldwide and undertakes a prodigious recording schedule as well as singing daily in the cathedral. Additionally, the Choir collaborates with a number of orchestras, recently recording Goodall's *Eternal Light: A Requiem* for EMI, which won a Classical Brit Award.

For this year's Festival, director Stephen Darlington has chosen Christmas gems, many of which are familiar and all of which are very beautiful, to create a programme of *Christmas Treasures*. The programme features two brilliant pianists whose colourful accompaniments are as breathtaking as their seasonal duets. All this is presented by Howard Goodall in informative and entertaining festive form.

Programme includes:

- Christmas Carols
- In the bleak midwinter* Holst
- Good people all this* Rutter
- Christmastime*
- Zadok the priest* Handel
- Shepherd's carol* Britten
- The three kings* Cornelius

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

This concert is sponsored by
PBJ Management

Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

The English Concert

Director/organ: Harry Bicket



THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Founded by harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock in 1973, The English Concert is among the finest chamber orchestras in the world, with an unsurpassed reputation for inspiring performances of Baroque and Classical music.

Heinrich Schütz was the leading German composer of the 17th Century and the first of truly international renown. Towards the end of his long life he devoted himself entirely to composing church music, of which *The Christmas Story* is his masterpiece. The story is told by a tenor Evangelist whose narration is accompanied to great dramatic effect. The heavenly choir is

represented by a 6-part chorus, bringing this wonderful work to a joyful conclusion.

Christopher Gillett *Evangelist*
The Choir of The English Concert
Nadja Zwiener *violin*
Walter Reiter *violin*

Programme:

- Beatus vir* Monteverdi
- Rosary Sonatas* Biber
- 'Annunciation' & 'Nativity'*
- Magnificat* Monteverdi
- The Christmas Story* Schütz

"Nothing short of electrifying."
The Daily Telegraph

This concert is sponsored by
BAWLINSON & HUNTER Bircham Dyson Bell

Tickets: £30, £25, £17.50, £10

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Thursday 15 December 7.30pm

Ex Cathedra

Director: Jeffrey Skidmore

Chapelle du Roi

Director: Alistair Dixon

Friday 16 December 7.30pm

CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT



Andrew Fletcher organ

Ex Cathedra returns to the Festival once more with a sequence of Christmas music from across the centuries, combining rare, rediscovered, foreign and contemporary repertoire alongside seasonal favourites. Interspersed with a selection of readings and lit by candlelight, there is a very special atmosphere.

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. The group's appearances in this Festival over the last three years have proved very popular, so early booking is recommended.

Programme includes:

<i>O Adonai</i>	Williams
<i>Bethlehem Down</i>	Warlock
<i>A Boy was born</i>	Britten
<i>Songs of the nuns of Chester</i>	English, 15th-century
<i>In tua memoria</i>	Arnold de Lantins
<i>The holly and the ivy</i>	Gardner
<i>O salutaris hostia</i>	Jennefelt

"...ravishingly performed... They're the Christmas concerts of choice for those seeking quiet poetry rather than commercial schmaltz."

Birmingham Post

Ex Cathedra is supported by



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Tickets: £30, £25, £17.50, £10 Box Office: 020 7222 1061
10% discount for concessions
www.sjss.org.uk

MEET THE TUDORS

Henry VII's victory at the Battle of Bosworth marked the beginning of the Tudor dynasty which was to last for over 100 years until the death of Elizabeth I in 1603.

This relatively short period of time saw the most extraordinary development in sacred music; from the elaborate melisma of the late medieval style, through to the humanistic influences of Erasmus; the telling syllabic style of the Reformation and the golden 'high Renaissance' of Elizabeth I. In this programme Chapelle du Roi performs music from Robert Fayrfax to William Byrd for the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Formed in 1994 and directed by Alistair Dixon, Chapelle du Roi has developed a reputation for unearthing music that has previously languished unseen and unheard on library shelves and bringing it to a wider audience.



Programme includes:

<i>Magnificat regale</i>	Fayrfax
<i>Suscipe quaeso Domine</i>	Tallis
<i>Beati immaculati</i>	Tallis
<i>Hodie Christus natus est</i>	Byrd
<i>Reges tharsis</i>	Sheppard
<i>Videte miraculum</i>	Tallis
<i>Verbum caro</i>	Sheppard

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

Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Saturday 17 December 7.30pm

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge Holst Singers and CLS

Conductor: Stephen Layton

The Cardinall's Musick

Director: Andrew Carwood

Monday 19 December 7.30pm



ST NICOLAS AND A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

Following their critically acclaimed debut performance in last year's Festival, The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge return for the first of two seasonal programmes this year. Tonight they present two stunning works by Benjamin Britten.

For Britten's dramatic *St Nicolas* they are joined by tenor Allan Clayton, City of London Sinfonia, the Holst Singers and boys from the Temple Church Choir. Britten's magical *A Ceremony of Carols* completes the programme, with harpist Sally Pryce. Stephen Layton conducts.

Allan Clayton *tenor*
Sally Pryce *harp*
Boys from the
Temple Church Choir

"Trinity College Choir gave ... an inspiring display of vocal craft and musicality ... The choir grasped the rich tapestry of vocal effects with relish and insight." Sydney Morning Herald

"The evening's finest singing, pure, elegant and tightly focused, came from tenor Allan Clayton." The Observer

"The Holst Singers create great clouds of texture which surge, form and melt before your ears." BBC Music Magazine

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

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
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FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

2011 is the 400th anniversary of the death of one of the most sublime Renaissance composers – Tomás Luis de Victoria. His stunning six-voice Requiem is perfect for the preparation season of Advent. There is also music for Christmas and its celebrations, including the rarely heard battle-mass, the *Missa pro Victoria*.

Since its foundation in 1989, The Cardinall's Musick has been a highly successful and innovative ensemble. Taking its name from the sixteenth-century English cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the group's reputation grew through its extensive study of

music from the English Renaissance. The Cardinall's Musick has produced a number of CDs to great critical acclaim, and has garnered a number of awards, among them five Gramophone Awards including the prestigious Recording of the Year in 2010.

Programme includes:

<i>Missa pro defunctis (1605)</i>	Victoria
<i>Missa pro Victoria</i>	Victoria
<i>O magnum mysterium</i>	Victoria
<i>Magnificat primi toni</i>	Victoria

"The voices of Andrew Carwood and his eight cohorts could probably start a blaze in the Antarctic!" The Times

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

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Tuesday 20 December 7.30pm

Wednesday 21 December 7.30pm

The Tallis Scholars

Director: Peter Phillips

JOURNEY OF THE NATIVITY

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.

In this carefully crafted programme The Tallis Scholars will take us on a journey from The Annunciation (*Ave Maria*), via the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth (*Übers Gebirg*) and the birth of Christ to the Presentation of Jesus in the temple (Nunc Dimittis paraphrased in *Maria wallt zum Heiligtum*).

This concert is particularly rich in that alongside popular works by Praetorius, The Tallis Scholars will perform Palestrina's gloriously architectural (and rarely heard) *Missa Ave Maria*, launching our Journey to Christmas with the most famous of all plainsong melodies, the *Ave Maria*.



Programme includes:

<i>Missa Ave Maria</i>	Palestrina
<i>Maria wallt zum Heiligtum</i>	Eccard
<i>Übers Gebirg</i>	Eccard
<i>Magnificat V</i>	H Praetorius
<i>In dulci jubilo</i>	M Praetorius

"You could not have hoped for a more finely blended or carefully shaped and entirely affecting performance."
The New York Times

"The Tallis Scholars sang these slow-moving, luminous masses with impeccable blend and balance ... This is music where time stands still." Financial Times

Tickets: £33, £26, £20, £12

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and OAE

Conductor: Stephen Layton



CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge has established itself as one of the leading mixed-voice choirs in the world. In addition to singing the liturgy in the College Chapel, the Choir enjoys a programme of high-profile performances and recordings, international tours and regular broadcasts.

After the sell-out success of their performance in last year's Festival, the Choir again joins forces with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for one of the most enduring and popular pieces of seasonal music, Bach's

Christmas Oratorio (Parts 1, 2, 3 and 6). Stephen Layton conducts and they are joined by four outstanding soloists.

Katherine Watson soprano
Iestyn Davies countertenor
James Gilchrist tenor
Neal Davies bass

"Spectacular ... It takes a very special choir indeed to make not just a good sound but to maintain total musical integrity ... Stephen Layton has inspired his singers to heights of magnificence."
International Record Review

"Absolute purity of tone, perfection of intonation, and depth of feeling ... Time and again I simply stopped writing, frozen in place by the sheer otherworldly beauty of what I was hearing." Fanfare

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

Box Office: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Thursday 22 December 7.30pm

Friday 23 December 7.30pm

Polyphony and AAM

Conductor: Stephen Layton

MESSIAH

The annual performance of Handel's *Messiah* by Polyphony under Stephen Layton has been a part of the Festival for nearly 20 years. We are immensely proud that it is considered to be one of the superlative interpretations. This year Stephen Layton has invited a formidable line-up of soloists and the Academy of Ancient Music for what promises to be an exhilarating performance.

"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

"There are few finer exponents of this great oratorio than Polyphony and Stephen Layton whose annual St. John's, Smith Square performances are a highlight of the season." Classic FM Magazine

Katherine Watson soprano
"The lovely soprano Katherine Watson brought a rosy voice and alluring phrasing to the role."
The New York Times

Iestyn Davies countertenor
"One of the most glorious countertenor voices in the world today."
The Independent

James Gilchrist tenor
"Unsurpassed among lyric tenors in sweetness and technical security."
The Independent

Neal Davies bass
"One of the world's leading Handelian basses." Opera News



Tickets: £50, £44, £38, £19
Please note that this concert is likely to sell out in advance

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The English Concert



HARRY BICKET **ALICE COOTE**

director / harpsichord

mezzo soprano

Gluck Suite from *Alessandro*

Handel Overture, Sinfonia and 3 arias from *Hercules*

Purcell Suite from *Fairy Queen*

Handel Overture, Ballet Music and 3 arias from *Ariodante*

"Alice Coote, singing at her lustrous and expressive best... there is no one quite like her, and her every performance is something to cherish." Opera Magazine

Wigmore Hall, Tuesday 29 May, 2012

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BOOKING AND VENUE INFORMATION

Booking for all concerts opens to Friends of St. John's on 26 September and to the General Public on 3 October.

BOX OFFICE: 020 7222 1061

Mastercard, Visa and Maestro accepted.

Online: www.sjss.org.uk

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

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 17 December to personal callers for that evening's concert only.

ST. JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE INFORMATION:

The Smith Square Bar and 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 fully accessible to wheelchair users. Please inform the Box Office at the time of booking if you will be using a wheelchair. All wheelchair spaces must be reserved at time of booking. We ask that you leave sufficient time to reach your places in the auditorium when attending. St. John's is equipped with a 'loop' system to benefit deaf and hearing-impaired patrons (switch hearing aids to T). Please advise the Box Office when booking. Guide dogs are welcome and they may stay with you whilst you are in the concert hall. If you wish to bring your working dog when attending a concert please inform the Box Office when booking your tickets so that they may advise you of the most suitable seats. There are two parking bays for disabled patrons in Smith Square.

26TH ANNUAL

Box Office
Tel: 020 7222 1061
www.sjss.org.uk

Christmas Festival

St. John's, Smith Square
14 - 23 December 2011

Weds 14 December Christ Church Cathedral Choir Oxford

Thurs 15 December The English Concert

Fri 16 December Ex Cathedra

Sat 17 December Chapelle du Roi

Mon 19 December The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge

Tues 20 December The Cardinal's Musick

Weds 21 December The Tallis Scholars

Thurs 22 December The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge

Fri 23 December Polyphony – Messiah

"The No. 1 British Christmas Festival." BBC Music Magazine

"With so much festive music to choose from, the consistent quality of Stephen Layton's choral festival is hard to beat." Time Out

"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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