

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY



CONCERT
PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2025

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR - COLIN STEVENS

JS BACH CHRISTMAS ORATORIO



SOLOISTS

SOPRANO LUCY COX

CONTRALTO CARRIS JONES

TENOR ASHLEY TURNELL

BASS WILLIAM GAUNT

THE SOLOISTS



SOPRANO - Lucy Cox

Lucy Cox studied Music at the University of Oxford, before winning a scholarship for postgraduate studies at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland.

She has a busy schedule as a concert soloist, with recent performances in venues including the Wigmore Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, De Singel in Antwerp and the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London's Southbank Centre. She regularly appears as a soloist in performances directed by Sir John Rutter.

This year Lucy has performed Jonathan Dove's song cycle for unaccompanied soprano Ariel at the Petworth Festival, sung the roles of Belinda and First

Witch in performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Gabrieli Consort and Players, and appeared as a soloist in performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* for Stephen Layton and Polyphony with the Britten Sinfonia.

She has a small teaching practice in Oxford, including students at St Peter's and Somerville and the Girl Choristers at Merton College. She lives in Headington with her husband and 18-month old daughter.

CONTRALTO - Carris Jones

Carris Jones has founded her career on a deep love of singing, and is dedicated to helping others discover the transformational power of the human voice. Equally at home singing Byrd in a consort or solo on stage at the Barbican, she has appeared as a soloist across the UK and abroad with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia and the English Concert. Her operatic career includes performing and covering roles at English National Opera and Garsington Opera.

As a consort singer, Carris has sung across five continents, on radio and television, and on the soundtracks of numerous films including the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* franchises. She was a founder member of Stile Antico, with whom she won a ClassicFM Gramophone award and was twice nominated for the Grammy awards.

Carris has a busy teaching practice and is Vocal Coach to the BBC Symphony Chorus. She is also in demand as an expert on choral music and women in church music in particular, making recent appearances on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour and Radio 3's In Tune. In May 2025 she joined the National Youth Choir as Head of Creative Programmes.



In 2017, Carris joined the Choir of St Paul's Cathedral, the first female Vicar

Choral to be appointed in its 1000-year history. Since joining, she has worked for the introduction of girl choristers into the cathedral's world-famous choir. In 2023, in recognition of this, and her significant contribution to the music industry, she was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

TENOR - Ashley Turnell

Ashley Turnell was born in Nottingham and educated in Leicestershire. As a boy, he sang in his local parish choir, began piano lessons at the age of six, and attended numerous courses run by the Royal School of Church Music, culminating in residential courses at Canterbury Cathedral.

He read Music at Newcastle University and was a choral scholar at St Nicholas Cathedral. In 1995, Ashley headed for Edinburgh to undertake a Music teaching PGCE, and to become a Tenor Lay Clerk in the choir of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral.

Between 1996 and 2008, Ashley worked as a full-time teacher in Edinburgh, principally teaching Music. He is currently working as a freelance singer, specialising in choral and consort work. Recently Ashley held a position in arts management, as a concerts producer for a choir based in the Midlands. He is also a regular in the choir of the Birmingham Oratory.

Ashley has performed and recorded with a number of groups in the UK over the years, including The Tallis Scholars, The Marian Consort, Contrapunctus, Dunedin Consort, Cappella Nova, The Cardinal's Musick and Stile Antico. Ashley was a member of the BBC Daily Service Singers for many years, broadcasting regularly on Radio 4. Currently he undertakes session work with RSVP Voices, and educational work for Oxford University's Leadership Programme for the Saïd Business School.

Recent solo engagements have included Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* for Bath Cantata Group, and JS Bach's *Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen* (BWV66) for Stratford Chamber Choir. Ashley has been fortunate to perform concerts in Europe and further afield in recent times, working with a German-based touring group on a large-scale semi-theatrical production.



BASS - William Gaunt

William Gaunt was born in Yorkshire and began his musical education there as a chorister at Ripon Cathedral. Following a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, he began his professional career in the choirs of Christ Church, Oxford, and Westminster Cathedral. Since 2021 he has been resident in

Ireland.

William has pursued a career performing and recording both as a soloist and with several world-renowned ensembles. Solo performances include Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610) with Le Concert D'Astrée and Emmanuelle Haïm; Purcell *Odes* with Freiburger Barockorchester/Kristian Bezuidenhout; Handel *Messiah* with Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht and Johannes Leertouwer, and with Portland Baroque Orchestra and Desmond Earley; Bach *Johannes-Passion* for Paul McCreesh; Bach *Matthäus-Passion* for Stephen Cleobury; Stravinsky *Les Noces* for Paul Hillier. On the stage he created the role of Homer in Irish National Opera/ANU's production of Evangelia Rigaki's *Old Ghosts*.

Solo recordings include Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610) with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (Robert Howarth) and the Dunedin Consort (John Butt); *Odes* by John Blow with Arcangelo (Jonathan Cohen); Fauré *Requiem* with the London Symphony Orchestra (Nigel Short); Handel *Messiah* with NPU (Johannes Leertouwer); Bach *Matthäus-Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music (Stephen Cleobury).



THE ORCHESTRA

Leader	Janet Hicks
Violin	Roger Neighbour, Linda Miller, Annie Stamp, Naomi Jacob, Ian Brown, Fiona Jacob, Keiko Iwatsu-Thiele, Judy Hunter, David Glenister, Frances Bigg
Viola	Katie Hayes, Adrienne Cooke, Steffi Cook, Tim Alps
Cello	Caroline Ridout, Mary Harris, Gavin Clements
Double Bass	Sudhir Singh
Flute	Caroline Welsh, Kate Hunter
Oboe/Cor Anglais	Victoria Parkins, Vivien Kroner, Alana Lynch, Samuel Davis
Bassoon	Caroline Cartwright
Trumpet	John Clarke, David Clewlow, John McDominic
Organ/Harpsichord	Ken Martlew
Timpani	Francis Beuttler

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)



JS Bach c.1735

JS Bach wrote his Christmas Oratorio for the festive season of 1734/5 ... in a hurry! As Cantor at St Thomas Church, Leipzig, he was required that year to provide six cantatas, to be performed one at a time on six different feast days, namely Christmas Day, the two days that followed, the Feast of Circumcision, the first Sunday in the New Year and the Feast of Epiphany. Each year since Bach had arrived in Leipzig (in 1723), he had provided music for all six feast days, but not necessarily cantatas, meaning he could use music that he had already composed for other occasions. The requirements for 1734/5 seem to have been more specific. That Christmas season most of the six cantatas were to be performed twice on a single day, once in St Thomas Church and then in St Nicholas Church. It seems pretty clear that there was no intention at the time that all six cantatas (which last about three hours in total) should be performed as a single piece. Though the group of six cantatas was indeed called the Christmas Oratorio in Bach's day, it is probable that it was not performed in one sitting until many years later, in 1857 in Berlin. Since 1857 concert performances of the six-cantata sequence in one evening have become the more usual way of presenting the piece.

We know that Bach wrote the music in a hurry, because he recycled at least 20 of the oratorio's 64 items from pieces he had composed earlier. Several of these items were from another sacred cantata, now lost, and one was from Bach's *St Mark Passion*, also lost. More interestingly, several items were taken from overtly secular cantatas, written a year or two earlier, in praise of sundry members of the Royal House of Saxony. They included one cantata intriguingly entitled *Hercules at the Crossroads*. At least three of the cantatas' splendid opening choruses (Nos 1, 24, 36) were recycled from these secular cantatas. Probably with the help of Bach's favourite librettist, Picander, it proved relatively simple to alter the words to suit their new religious purpose; praising divine beings had many similarities to praising royal personages in those days. Despite this apparent misalliance, there can be no doubt that Bach's Christmas Oratorio is a profoundly religious work, and of the highest quality.

Though Bach's cantatas – he wrote over 250 – varied considerably in content



Thomaskirche, Leipzig
(St Thomas Church) where Bach
was Cantor from 1723-1750

and style (due to their specific purpose, often a saint's day or other religious festival), they do have some structural consistency. Each cantata contains between six and 12 shortish movements, and each includes at least one grand chorus (often the opening movement). Each has one or more hymn-like Lutheran chorale for the choir, a few of these extended with orchestral interludes and more elaborate accompaniments (eg Nos 9, 64). The remaining items in most cantatas were almost all recitatives or arias sung by a variable number of soloists. There are four soloists today: a soprano, an alto, a tenor and a bass.

This evening's performance omits a large number of movements from the original *Christmas Oratorio*, including the whole of the fourth cantata (Part 4), reducing each half of the concert to less than an hour, perhaps slightly more bearable when sitting on hard pews. There are several movements to listen out for and enjoy particularly. The very beginning of the oratorio is immensely striking, because of the instrument it is played on. In No 4 the alto soloist gently foretells the birth of Christ. The bass soloist has a spectacular aria (No 8), in which a solo trumpet plays a major part. The Sinfonia (No 10) for the orchestra alone at the beginning of Part 2 has some wonderful pastoral music for four oboes, two of those oboe parts being played this evening on cor anglais. Two oboes also feature in No 19, a lullaby-like aria with the alto soloist singing the Christ-child to sleep. The various recitatives and ariosos concerned with Herod are perhaps the most dramatic moments in the work (Nos 48, 49, 55, 56). The many chorales all have strong melodies and are richly and dramatically harmonised, with very singable lines for each part. And then, of course, there are the choruses.

The choruses are all splendid, most of them festive in mood, and many of them being preceded by long and intricate orchestral introductions. They are immensely enjoyable to sing, but by no means easy. Bach used all his compositional and contrapuntal skills to make all four parts in each chorus challenging but rewarding. He certainly did not give his choristers an easy time, and in his day his choir was probably less than 20 strong.

Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* will never compete with Handel's *Messiah* to be the most popular large-scale choral work performed at Christmastime. However, as a moving narration of the whole Christmas story with much glorious music, it provides both audiences and performers with a most joyful and heart-warming experience.



The imposing statue of Bach outside the Thomaskirche. Carl Seffner modelled Bach's head on a copy of what is believed to be Bach's skull, which was held in the city's University.



The Nativity (1665-70)
BE Murillo

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO - JS Bach

PART 1

Come now with gladness and welcome the morrow, Loudly proclaim that your Saviour is born!...	Chorus	Choir
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And it came to pass in those days That a decree was proclaimed by Augustus Caesar...	Recitativo	Tenor
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Behold the Bridegroom, full of grace, The hero of King David's race; who comes to save the earth...	Arioso	Alto
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Prepare yourself, Zion, in sweet expectation The purest, the fairest soon comes to His bride...	Aria	Alto
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O Lord of all Creation How can I welcome Thee?...	Chorale	Choir
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And she brought forth her first-born son And wrapping him up in swaddling, she laid the baby...	Recitativo	Tenor
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Mighty Lord, and King of Glory Dearest Saviour, Thou dost surely shun all pomp and earthly pride...	Aria	Bass
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Ah, dearest Jesu, babe divine, Rest sweetly in this heart of mine...	Chorale	Choir
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PART 2

Sinfonia		Orchestra
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And there were shepherds in that same country, Abiding in the field and keeping watch by night o'er their flocks...	Recitativo	Tenor
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Break forth, O glorious morning light, Such heavenly comfort bringing! Ye shepherd folk shrink not with fright...	Chorale	Choir
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And the angel said to them: Be not afraid; Fear not! For I bring you good tidings of great joy...	Recitativo	Tenor Soprano
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And this is the sign to you: That ye shall find the baby wrapped up in swaddling...	Recitativo	Tenor
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Behold! Within a humble stall The Lord who ruleth over all. Where cattle rest and beasts are fed...	Chorale	Choir
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Ye shepherds haste with pure delight To see this wondrous sight...	Recitativo	Bass
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Slumber beloved, in blissful repose, Waking here after to gain our salvation.	Aria	Alto
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And suddenly there was with the Angel A multitude of the heavenly host...	Recitativo	Tenor
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Glory to God in the Highest, And peace on the earth, and goodwill be to all men.	Chorus	Choir
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PART 3

Lord of Creation, we lift up our voices, We hearken as each lowly mortal rejoices...	Chorus	Choir
And when the Angels were gone From them into Heaven...	Recitativo	Tenor
Let us, even now, go to Bethlehem, And see this blessed thing which now has come to pass...	Chorus	Choir
He comes, the Lord supreme, His chosen people to redeem...	Recitativo	Bass
And they came with haste And found the stable, with Mary and Joseph...	Recitativo	Tenor
Ah, yes! Forever let me cherish Those things, which, at this hour so blest...	Recitativo	Alto
Let me love Thee, King supernal; Live for Thee, die for Thee, gaining life eternal...	Chorale	Choir
And the shepherds, after this, returned, Glorifying and praising God for all the wondrous things...	Recitativo	Tenor
Rejoice and sing! Your gracious King as man comes down...	Chorus	Choir

INTERVAL

PART 5

Glory to the Lord, for ever Hear us offer thanks and praise...	Chorus	Choir (& Soloists)
Now when King Herod had heard these things He trembled, and with him the whole of Jerusalem.	Recitativo	Tenor
With fear why are ye quaking? And how can Jesu's holy name such terror be awaking?...	Arioso	Alto
And when he had gathered all the chief priests And elders of the people together...	Recitativo	Tenor
This poor heart in which I hold Thee, With no palace can compare...	Chorale	Choir

PART 6

Lord, when the foe is howling madly O grant that we may worship gladly our mighty King...	Chorus	Choir
Then did Herod privily call the Wise Men, And enquired diligently of them at what time the star appeared...	Recitativo	Tenor Bass
You liar! Do you wish to fall before Him, Or falsely, seek to go and slay Him, not adore Him?...	Recitativo	Soprano

With His hand the Lord can vanquish Man's strength, And his wishes thwart...	Aria	Soprano
And when the Wise Men heard King Herod They departed; and lo! The star which they had seen...	Recitativo	Tenor
Beside Thy cradle here I stand, O Saviour, meek and lowly...	Chorale	Choir
And being warned of God in a dream That they should not return again unto King Herod...	Recitativo	Tenor
What shall become of Hell's domain When blessed Jesus comes to reign...	Recitativo à 4	Soloists
Now vengeance has been taken Against a mighty foe; The power of the Devil, our Lord has overthrown. Henceforth shall Mankind revel before His heavenly throne.	Chorale	Choir
Come now with gladness and welcome the morrow...	Chorus Reprise	Choir



TRING CHORAL SOCIETY

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

For more information please call our Membership Secretary, Margaret Collier, on 07426 771226, or email: membership@tringchoral.org.uk

Why not try us out at our **Open Rehearsal** on Monday 12th January 2026 - see inside back page for more details.

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.



THE CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Jackie Bignell
Gillie Bligh
Jane Brown
Corinna Chute
Hilary Colbert
Margaret Collier
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
Victoria Markey
Brigid Mathers
Heather Nash
Eileen Patterson
Barbara Pearce
Pam Rush
Kate Smith
Rosie Southworth
Elizabeth Thompson
Gillian Vila
Jenny Watt
Annie Wales

ALTOS

Karen Baldwin
Nicky Bull
Jean Bygate
Kathy Chantler
Rachel Cobb
Sue Collins
Kate Davies
Ann Denwood
Rosemary Dixon
Sophie Dowson
Margaret Flanigan
Louisa Gartrell
Natasha Gething
Bea Glover
Jane Glover
Janet Graves
Eden Jeffes
Eiluned Jones
Suna Kayakiran
Rhian Nicholls
Elizabeth Norris
Mary Owens
Harriet Queralt
Esther Roberts
Chris Sivers
Melissa Smellie
Heather Wignall
Kate Winterbottom

TENORS

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

BASSES

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

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY



FORTHCOMING CONCERT

Vivaldi - Gloria

Haydn - Harmonie Mass

Saturday 14th March, 2026

7.30pm, Tring Church

Friends of Tring Choral Society

Mr C Arney	Mrs C Harwood	Mr T Ross
Mrs C Bell	Mr M Herbaut	Mr I Slatcher
Mr GE Bull	Mr E Jones	Mr H Smith
Ms A Duckenfield	Mr & Mrs D Langford	Mr J Stack
Mrs L Emlyn Jones	Mr G Lewis	Mr J Stanhope
Mr R Flanigan	Mr A Loker	Mrs J Stevens
Mr R Franklin	Mrs E Marchant	Mr R Stevens
Mr C Garrett	Mrs L Martin	Mrs P Thomas
Mrs G Glasser	Mrs S Parkey	Mrs S Todd
Mr D Glover	Mr R O'Reilly	Mr A Winterbottom

Why not become a Friend of Tring Choral Society?

For a minimum annual donation of £50, you could become a Friend and be entitled to a free ticket to each of our concerts. You would also receive details of our forthcoming concerts and an invitation to join our social events (barbecue, coffee morning, annual walk and quiz night).

TCS is a registered charity and we aim to put on three high-quality choral concerts a year, often bringing top British talent to the Tring area. The expenditure incurred in hiring the church, superb soloists and orchestral players is met from ticket sales and members' subscriptions but often needs to be supplemented from other fundraising initiatives and voluntary donations. Having support from Friends helps to give us security to fund these concerts. Your support means a lot to us and if you already attend our concerts on a fairly regular basis we would love you to join our choir community.

If you are interested in joining, please email Lucy Kibble at publicity@tringchoral.org.uk, or go to the Friends section at www.tringchoral.org.uk.



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 sight-reading 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

COVER IMAGE: MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO ANGELS BY FRA FILIPPO LIPPI C.1565

TEMPERA ON WOOD, THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

TRING CHORAL SOCIETY
INVITES YOU TO

COME AND SING
VIVALDI'S GLORIA
& HAYDN'S HARMONIEMESSE
'OPEN REHEARSAL'

7.45pm Mon 12th January 2026
Akeman Street Baptist Church, Tring

Come and try us if you are you thinking of joining a local choir
- or just come for a sing!

Free admission Music supplied

Call Margaret 07426 771226 or email membership@tringchoral.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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