



# BACH'S B MINOR MASS

WITH RICHARD EGARR

**12-13 October 2023**



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# BACH'S B MINOR MASS

## WITH RICHARD EGARR

**Thursday 12 October, 7.30pm**, Usher Hall, Edinburgh

**Friday 13 October, 7.30pm**, City Halls, Glasgow

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### **BACH** Mass in B minor

Kyrie

Gloria

*Interval of 20 minutes*

Credo

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

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**Richard Egarr** Conductor

**Rowan Pierce** Soprano

**Mhairi Lawson** Soprano

**Helen Charlston** Mezzo soprano

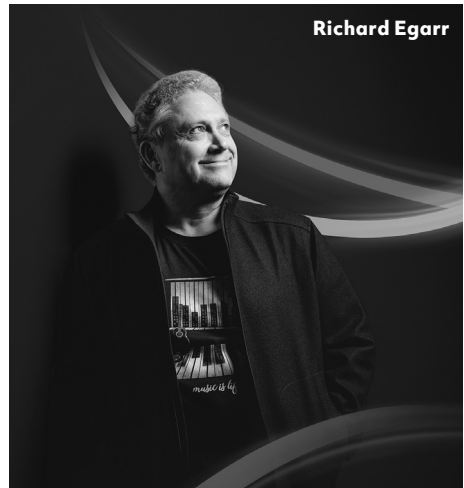
**James Gilchrist** Tenor

**Roderick Williams** Baritone

**SCO Chorus**

**Gregory Batsleer** Chorus Director

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Siún Milne  
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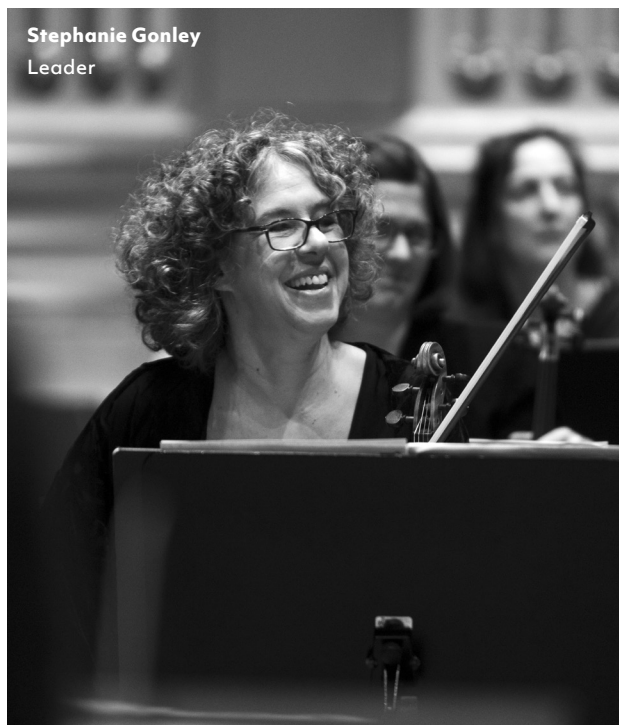
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# WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO HEAR

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## **BACH (1685-1750)**

### **Mass in B minor, BWV 232 (1748-49)**

#### **Kyrie**

Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison

#### **Gloria**

Gloria in excelsis  
Et in terra pax  
Laudamus te  
Gratias agimus tibi  
Domine Deus  
Qui tollis peccata mundi  
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris  
Quoniam tu solus sanctus  
Cum Sancto Spiritu

#### **Credo**

Credo in unum Deum  
Patrem omnipotentem  
Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum  
Et incarnatus est  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis  
Et resurrexit tertia die  
Et in Spiritum Sanctum  
Confiteor unum baptisma  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum

#### **Sanctus**

Sanctus  
Osanna in excelsis

#### **Benedictus**

Benedictus qui venit  
Osanna in excelsis

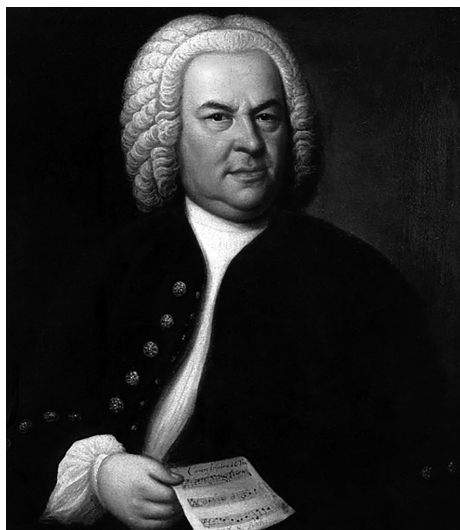
#### **Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei  
Dona nobis pacem

It's been placed on a lofty pedestal alongside the greatest plays of Shakespeare, the glories of the Sistine Chapel, even the Pyramids of Giza. Its first publisher, Hans Georg Nägeli, called it 'the greatest artwork of all times and all people' (though he only managed to publish half of it in his lifetime). It's been revered, pondered, analysed and debated (as have its performing traditions) since JS Bach's death in 1750.

Yes, the B minor Mass is one of the monuments of Western classical music, a long, complex work that addresses some of humankind's profoundest questions of faith and purpose across its many contrasting movements. But we should remember, too, that Bach's epic creation is also a piece of music, composed by a man, that sets out to entertain and delight as well as to enlighten and inspire, all from a perspective that's deeply human.

Indeed, it even began life (as did Bach's Brandenburg Concertos) as a kind of speculative job application. Bach had been working in Leipzig since 1723, nominally as Kantor, which involved overseeing the city's religious music at the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche. It was in that capacity that he wrote more than 200 church cantatas during his 27-year tenure, as well as the St Matthew Passion and St John Passion. But he also threw his musical net far wider, directing the city's Collegium Musicum orchestra in front of huge audiences (most famously at the fashionable Café Zimmermann coffee house), and hopping between high-class soirées where he'd join colleagues for what we'd now call chamber music. He was a busy man, and the town council took notice – especially when it received a complaint that he was neglecting his religious and educational duties. Bach later described the councillors as 'very strange and little interested in music, so that I have to



*Johann Sebastian Bach*

***We should remember, too, that Bach's epic creation is also a piece of music, composed by a man, that sets out to entertain and delight as well as to enlighten and inspire, all from a perspective that's deeply human.***

live amid almost constant vexation, envy and persecution'.

So on the death of Augustus II, Elector of Saxony, in 1733, he spotted a possible escape from Leipzig's daily grind of frustration and musical politics, in a more senior, far more prestigious position from the Dresden court under the new ruler. To demonstrate his abilities, he put together a *Missa* – what we might now call a *missa brevis* – containing just the Kyrie and Gloria sections of a full mass. He used the appointment of his son Wilhelm Friedemann as organist at Dresden's Sophienkirche to travel with him in July 1733, to present the new work and petition the new Elector, Augustus III, for a role in his court. It was in terms that these days we might find toe-curlingly obsequious:

'To Your Royal Highness I submit in deepest devotion the present small work of the science which I have achieved in *musique*, with the most wholly submissive prayer that Your

Highness will look upon it with Most Gracious Eyes, according to Your Highness's World-Famous Clemency and not according to the poor composition; and thus deign to take me under Your Most Mighty Protection.'

It wasn't until three years later that Bach received a positive response from Dresden, and though his eventual role carried no specified duties nor salary, it added to his political clout back home in Leipzig. More importantly for us tonight, however, the episode gave us the opening section of what would become the B minor Mass. And it began to answer one fundamental question that hovers behind the work: why would a devoutly Lutheran composer write a musical setting of the Roman Catholic mass? First of all, because Augustus III was himself Catholic. And secondly, because Latin settings of the Kyrie and Gloria sections would have been widely used even in Lutheran services (though the rest of the Lutheran mass would have been in the vernacular German).



*Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*

***Bach himself never heard his massive mass setting in its entirety – indeed, it's not clear whether he even intended it to be performed in a single sitting, whether in a church or elsewhere. His son CPE Bach directed a performance of the Credo section in 1786, more than three decades after the composer's death.***

It's at this point, however, that things get a bit murkier, and a bit more speculative. How we move from the Kyrie and Gloria to a full-blown, two-hour setting of the entire mass – and what motivated Bach to add its missing sections – have long been the subject of debate. It's a question that's further complicated by the fact that the composer so brazenly raided his back catalogue for material, to the extent that about a third of the B minor Mass's material had already been performed and heard in other forms. We might balk at the audacity of plundering existing music for a new piece, but it wasn't for reasons of speed or laziness. In Bach's time, there was no shame in reusing material in this way – in fact, everyone was at it. What was more important than crass originality was fit: how well did the music suit its new context, or convey its new purposes? In the case of the B minor Mass – and the intricate, detailed adaptations Bach made to individual word settings or instrumental articulations for the new work – the answer is very well indeed.

Indeed, gathering together a whole range of musical styles from right across his career may have been very much the point. Bach was working on the B minor Mass around the same time as a clutch of other works – *The Art of Fugue*, *The Goldberg Variations* and *The Musical Offering* among them – that seem explicitly conceived to showcase his expertise, his versatility and his pioneering spirit, not for particular performances, but instead for posterity. As a man who'd spent years in church music, Bach would have been all too aware that his eventual complete mass setting was far too long for liturgical use, so it's unlikely he ever intended it for that purpose. Maybe that's another reason why a Lutheran composer completed a Latin mass: the mass's timeless, centuries-old framework would provide the ideal template for music that would transcend passing fashions and fads. It would be a work of seriousness, weight and permanence. It's perhaps a sentimental, somewhat Romantic view of Bach's motivations behind the B minor Mass,



but whether or not that's what he had in mind, it's what he achieved.

Bach himself never heard his massive mass setting in its entirety – indeed, it's not clear whether he even intended it to be performed in a single sitting, whether in a church or elsewhere. His son CPE Bach directed a performance of the Credo section in 1786, more than three decades after the composer's death, and various other parts got individual performances over the course of later decades. But it wasn't until 1859, more than a century after Bach's death, that the entire work was performed. That's at least partly understandable, however. At the start of the 19th century, there wasn't much interest in Bach's music among listeners: it was good for study and analysis, sure, but few people particularly wanted to hear it (at least until the middle of the century and the efforts to rekindle interest by figures including Felix Mendelssohn). Ironically, early performances would have almost certainly entirely mystified Bach himself: they were in concert halls (virtually unknown in Bach's time), and given by massed ranks of singers in amateur choral societies (rather than the modest church choruses he would have been used to). Even in a performance like tonight's, remember that this isn't a relocation of a liturgical event into the concert hall (as would be the case if we were listening to some of Bach's cantatas, for example). Instead, it's a thoroughly modern concert experience – inevitably and unavoidably.

But let's move on to the B minor Mass's music itself. And despite its origins in Bach's works from across more than three decades, it's far from a hotchpotch of different styles and approaches thrown randomly together. Symmetry and order are everywhere. These were Baroque obsessions, in fact, and seen

as a reflection of heavenly perfection in the designs of everything from buildings to gardens, paintings to music.

Accordingly, the opening Kyrie and Gloria sections – which together form Bach's original *Missa* intended for Dresden – each represent a grand, symmetrical arch of music. Bach's opening 'Kyrie' movement must count as one of the most thrilling beginnings to any choral work, a mighty five-part choral setting using thoroughly modern musical techniques with independent instrumental and choral lines. The 'Christe eleison' movement that follows couldn't stand in starker contrast: it's a gentle, intimate, almost operatic duet for two sopranos (Bach knew that Italian opera was very popular in Dresden, and may have been consciously evoking its style in an attempt to curry favour). He completes his Kyrie section's symmetry with another grand 'Kyrie' choral movement, but this austere fugue is very different from the Baroque opulence of the opening 'Kyrie'. Instead, it looks back consciously to the choral polyphony of Renaissance composers such as Palestrina from more than a century earlier, in the so-called *stile antico* (which he also knew was particularly popular in Dresden), with instrumental parts simply copying the intertwining vocal lines.

There's more symmetry at play, and on a grander scale, in the nine-movement Gloria section that follows. The opening 'Gloria in excelsis' movement may have begun life as an instrumental concerto – certainly the orchestra kicks things off before the chorus eventually joins in, and trumpets and drums express the celebrations of the angels. 'Et in terra pax' is another choral movement that follows without a break, and a solo soprano sings the 'Laudamus te' with a florid solo violin line. Bach reworked the choral 'Gratias

***After an immersion in both the compelling intricacies and monolithic grandeur of Bach's B minor Mass, you may feel that describing it as a monument of Western classical music isn't far off the mark. And that nor are comparisons with the Sistine Chapel or the Pyramids of Giza.***

agimus tibi' movement from the opening chorus of his Cantata No 29. It's followed by the extraordinary 'Domine Deus' for a duet of tenor and soprano, with solo flute, whose tripping accompaniment of muted violins and violas plus pizzicato bassline is a world away from some of the granitic austerity heard elsewhere in the Mass. The 'Domine Deus' also serves as the central point in the Gloria's symmetry, and, like the 'Christe eleison' earlier, is essentially a love duet – symbolised in the idealised male and female singers, who join together to express humankind's love for its maker. From there, things work backwards: the choral 'Qui tollis peccata mundi' movement is a reworking of the opening of Bach's Cantata No 46, and 'Qui sedes ad dextram Patris' is a gigue-like solo for alto, joined by an oboe d'amore. Rather than the perhaps expected chorus, however, Bach's penultimate movement, 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus', is a solemn bass solo with rich, deep accompaniment from a hunting horn and two bassoons. It leads

directly into the exuberant closing choral movement 'Cum Sancto Spiritu', with the return of the trumpets and drums from the opening 'Gloria in excelsis', delivering a joyful close to the original Missa.

So much for the B minor Mass's first large section. There are four of them in total, and Bach created each with its own title page, perhaps suggesting he may have imagined them across four separate performances. The second, the Symbolum Nicenum (or 'Nicene Creed', or simply Credo), again has an overall symmetrical structure, again in nine movements, though here they're employed by Bach to symbolise Christ's incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

The opening choral 'Credo in unum Deum' movement returns to the *stile antico* we heard earlier in the second 'Kyrie' movement, using the ancient, slow-moving Credo plainchant as its basis, and with a distinctive walking bassline. And as in the Kyrie section, Bach

contrasts old and new: the 'Credo in unum Deum' is immediately followed by a second choral movement, 'Patrem omnipotentem', in a far more modern style (it's actually a reworking of a chorus from his Cantata No 171). 'Et in unum Dominum' is a duet for soprano and alto with oboe, and there's an appropriate feeling of hushed awe in the subsequent choral 'Et incarnatus est'.

In these four movements, Bach describes Christ's incarnation. It takes just a single movement, however, to represent the crucifixion – the 'Crucifixus'. But the central pivot in the Symbolum Nicenum's symmetrical design is a remarkable creation, based around an implacable, somewhat hypnotic repeating bassline that's never harmonised the same way twice. It's a remarkably effective musical portrait of Christ's crucifixion, leading us into deep despair, and it also represents the oldest music that Bach employed in the entire Mass – it's taken from his Cantata No 12, composed way back in 1714.

The deep despair of the 'Crucifixus' makes the leaping joy of the choral 'Et resurrexit', conveyed in heaven-bound ascending melodic figures, all the more striking. The pastoral gigue of the bass solo 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum' mirrors the earlier 'Et in unum Dominum' soprano/also duet, and takes us into the 'Confiteor' movement, possibly the last choral music that Bach ever composed. The 'Confiteor' begins almost as a mirror of the section's opening 'Credo in unum Deum', again glancing back to earlier styles, and weaving in the traditional Confiteor plainsong about halfway through. But it ends with a remarkably forward-looking, intensely chromatic passage that links it with the joyful closing 'Et expecto' movement, adapted from Cantata No 120.

The Sanctus section is occupied by just a single choral movement, originally written for performance on Christmas Day, 1724, and the only part of the Mass known to have been performed by Bach himself. His final section brings together all the closing parts of the mass. The elaborate choral 'Osanna' movement is based on the opening chorus of his Cantata No. 215, and requires an eight-part double choir. Before it's reprised, we hear an intimate setting of the 'Benedictus' for solo tenor and flute. The meditative 'Agnus Dei' movement is an alto aria with accompaniment from low-lying strings, and it turns away from the vocal virtuosity of earlier solos in favour of quiet, earnest reflection. Bach closes, however, in grandeur, with a jubilant 'Dona nobis pacem' – which, in effectively reprising music from the 'Gratias agimus tibi' from the opening *Missa*, provides the Mass with a sense of overall unity and symmetry.

After an immersion in both the compelling intricacies and monolithic grandeur of Bach's B minor Mass, you may feel that describing it as a monument of Western classical music isn't far off the mark. And that nor are comparisons with the Sistine Chapel or the Pyramids of Giza. There's the sheer scale of the Mass, and the demands it places on musicians and listeners alike. There's also the work's vast ambition, in its profound contemplations of Christian belief and its embodiment of Christian values in its very structure. Most of all, however, the B minor Mass is a deeply human creation, a celebration of human belief in its widest sense, but also of the richness of experience in human life, from fears and traumas to certainties and joys.

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# LIBRETTO

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**BACH (1685-1750)**

Mass in B minor, BWV 232 (1748-49)

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## I. MISSA

### Kyrie

Kyrie eleison. *(Chorus)*

*Lord, have mercy upon us.*

Christe eleison. *(Duet – Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano)*

*Christ, have mercy upon us.*

Kyrie eleison. *(Chorus)*

*Lord, have mercy upon us.*

### Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo. *(Chorus)*

*Glory be to God on high.*

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. *(Chorus)*

*And on earth peace to men of good will.*

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. *(Aria – Mezzo Soprano)*

*We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee.*

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. *(Chorus)*

*We thank thee for thy great glory.*

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe,

Altissime, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. *(Duet Soprano and Tenor)*

*Lord God, heavenly King, Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ the Highest,*

*Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.*

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. *(Chorus)*

*Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Though who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.*



Qui sedes ad dextram Patris, miserere nobis. (*Aria – Mezzo Soprano*)  
*Though that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.*

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe. (*Aria – Bass*)  
*For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, Jesus Christ, art most high.*

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris. Amen. (*Chorus*)  
*With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

## **Interval**

## **II. CREDO - SYMBOLUM NICENUM**

### **Credo**

Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. (*Soloists/Chorus*)  
*I believe in one God The Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*

Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt, qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis. (*Duet – Soprano, Mezzo Soprano*)  
*And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.*

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine, et homo factus est. (*Chorus*)  
*And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.*

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est. (*Chorus*)  
*And was crucified also under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried.*

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas, et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris, et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regni non erit finis. (*Chorus*)  
*And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father: and he shall come again in glory to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.*

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur, qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. *(Aria –Bass)*

*And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.*

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. *(Soloists)*

*I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.*

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen. *(Chorus)*

*And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

### **III. SANCTUS**

#### **Sanctus**

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria ejus. *(Chorus)*

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*

### **IV. OSANNA, BENEDICTUS, AGNUS DEI**

#### **Benedictus**

Osanna in excelsis. *(Chorus)*

*Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. *(Aria-Tenor)*

*Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Osanna in excelsis.

*Hosanna in the highest.*

#### **Agnus Dei**

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. *(Aria-Mezzo-soprano)*

*O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.*

Dona nobis pacem. *(Chorus)*

*Grant us peace.*

#### **Ends**

Conductor

## RICHARD EGARR



Richard Egarr brings a joyful sense of adventure and a keen, enquiring mind to all his music-making - whether conducting, directing from the keyboard, giving recitals, playing chamber music, and indeed talking about music at every opportunity.

Egarr joined the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale as Music Director in August 2020, having been Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music for 15 years. He is also Principal Guest of the Residentie Orkest and Artistic Partner of the St Paul Chamber and was Associate Artist with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra 2011-2017.

Egarr straddles the worlds of historically-informed and modern symphonic performance and has conducted many leading symphony orchestras, notably the London Symphony, Royal Concertgebouw and Philadelphia orchestras. In 23/24 season his guest conducting includes Haydn's *Creation* with the Gothenburg Symphony, Schumann 2 with the City of Birmingham Symphony, Bach B minor Mass with the Scottish Chamber, also Handel's *Messiah* and a CD of French repertoire with the Orquesta Sinfónica Castilla y León. He conducts repertoire ranging from Gabrieli to Schubert 9 to Tippett and Ives with St Paul Chamber, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and Beethoven 9 with the Residentie Orkest. With the Philharmonia Baroque, plans include Schumann's Requiem and works by Errollyn Wallen and Tarik O'Regan alongside the core baroque repertoire.

Egarr trained as a choirboy at York Minster, at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and as organ scholar at Clare College Cambridge. His studies with Gustav and Marie Leonhardt further inspired his work in the field of historical performance. He taught for many years at the Amsterdam Conservatoire and was Visiting Professor at the Juilliard School for over 10 years.

***For full biography please visit [sco.org.uk](https://sco.org.uk)***

Soprano

## ROWAN PIERCE



Yorkshire-born soprano Rowan Pierce was awarded the President's Award by HRH Prince of Wales at the Royal College of Music in 2017. She won both the Song Prize and First Prize at the inaugural Grange Festival International Singing Competition in 2017, the first Schubert Society Singer Prize in 2014 and the Van Someren Godfery Prize at the RCM. She was a Britten Pears young artist, a Rising Star of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and a Harewood Artist at English National Opera.

Rowan has appeared in concert throughout Europe and South America. She performs regularly with ensembles including the Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Royal Northern Sinfonia.

Rowan made her BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall in 2017 with the OAE and returned in 2019 for Handel *Jephtha* and in 2023 for Mendelssohn *Elijah* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. She made her Wigmore Hall debut with the London Handel Players and returned with Florilegium in the 2019/20 season.

On the opera stage Rowan has performed Drusilla in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* as a Britten Pears Young Artist, and roles as a Samling Artist included Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Miss Wordsworth in Britten's *Albert Herring* and Princess in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*.

***For full biography please visit [sco.org.uk](https://sco.org.uk)***



Soprano

## MHAIRI LAWSON



Mhairi Lawson has performed in opera houses and concert halls worldwide. In the UK, she has regularly collaborated with such companies as The Gabrieli Consort & Players, The Academy of Ancient Music, English National Opera, The Early Opera Company and The Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and with many leading conductors such as William Christie, Sir Charles Mackerras, Paul McCreesh, Jane Glover and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, in repertoire ranging from traditional folksong to opera.

This season, Mhairi sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bach's B minor Mass with the Bath Bach Choir, Haydn's *Creation* with the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra, and performances of Purcell's *King Arthur* on tour with the Gabrieli Consort.

Recent highlights include performances of Purcell *Songes & Ayres* and Handel's *Messiah* with the Dunedin Consort, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with BBC NOW, Haydn's *Creation* with the Arctic Philharmonic, regular residencies at the Carmel Bach Festival in the USA, and Mhairi continues her recital collaboration with Eugene Asti.

A keen recitalist, engagements have included songs from the British folksong tradition and Lieder by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss and Wolf with appearances in the Edinburgh Festival, Newcastle and York Universities, recordings for BBC Radio 3, and a recital with lutenist Elizabeth Kenny as part of the St Magnus International Festival.

Mezzo-Soprano

## HELEN CHARLSTON



Hailed “a rather special mezzo” (*Music Web International*), Helen is a young artist increasingly in demand in the UK and abroad.

Winner of the 2023 BBC Music Magazine Vocal Awards, she won first prize in the 2018 London Handel Singing Competition and was a finalist in the 2019 Grange Festival International Singing Competition, won the Ferrier Loveday Song Prize in the 2021 Kathleen Ferrier Awards and is a BBC New Generation Artist. Helen was a founder participant of the Rising Star of the Enlightenment programme, working alongside the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; a member of Les Arts Florissants Young Artist Programme (Jardin des Voix) for 2021/22; and is a 2018 City Music Foundation Artist.

On the concert platform in 2023/24, Helen premieres a new song cycle written for her as a companion piece to Schumann *Dichterliebe* by Héloïse Werner at the Oxford International Song Festival and Wigmore Hall, reunites with Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Richard Egarr to perform Bach B minor Mass, tours Bach's *St John Passion* with Les Arts Florissants in Asia, records Britten *Phaedra* live in concert with BBC Philharmonic, sings Handel's *Messiah* with the Warsaw Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, Britten Sinfonia and Huddersfield Choral Society, Bach Cantatas with Dunedin Consort, and Monteverdi's *Vespers* in Geneva with Ensemble I Gemelli.

An artistic advisor for York Early Music Festival, Helen will feature in a three-day residency at the 2024 festival, performing a wide range of programmes with music by Dowland and Couperin, to Schumann and Mendelssohn, and a set of new commissions for her and lutenist Toby Carr by Ben Rowarth and Anna Semple.

***For full biography please visit [sco.org.uk](https://sco.org.uk)***

Tenor

## JAMES GILCHRIST



James Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. His musical interest was fired at a young age, singing first as a chorister in the choir of New College, Oxford, and later as a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge. James' extensive concert repertoire has seen him perform in major concert halls throughout the world with conductors including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, Bernard Labadie, Harry Christophers, Harry Bicket, Masaaki Suzuki and the late Richard Hickox.

A master of English music, he has performed Britten's *Church Parables* in St Petersburg, in London and at the Aldeburgh Festival, *Nocturne* with the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and *War Requiem* with the San Francisco Symphony and the National Youth Orchestra of Germany. Equally at home in Baroque repertoire, appearances include Handel's *L'Allegro il Penseroso ed il Moderato* with Stuttgart Bachakademie and at Teatro Real, Madrid, *Solomon* with Les Violons du Roy, *Semele* with Concerto Köln, *Elijah* with the Orquesta y Coro Nacionales de España, Madrid, Goteborgs Symfoniker and Bach Collegium Japan, all under the baton of Masaaki Suzuki, *Hercules* with the English Concert, *Ode to St Cecilia* with Basel Chamber Orchestra and *Messiah* with Boston Handel & Haydn Society and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St John* and *St Matthew Passion* feature prominently in his schedule, and he is celebrated as perhaps the finest Evangelist of his generation; as one review noted, 'he hasn't become a one-man Evangelist industry by chance'.

James' impressive discography includes recordings of *Albert Herring* (title role) and Vaughan Williams' *A Poisoned Kiss*, and more recently *Songs of Travel* for Chandos, *St John Passion* with the AAM, the Finzi song cycle *Oh Fair To See*, Elizabethan Lute Songs with Matthew Wadsworth, Leighton *Earth Sweet Earth*, Vaughan Williams *On Wenlock Edge*, Finzi songs and Britten's *Winter Words* for Linn Records, the critically-acclaimed recordings of Schubert's song cycles for Orchid Classics and a disc of Schumann song cycles for Linn Records.

**For full biography please visit [sco.org.uk](http://sco.org.uk)**

Baritone

## RODERICK WILLIAMS



Roderick Williams is one of the most sought after baritones of his generation. He performs a wide repertoire from baroque to contemporary music, in the opera house, on the concert platform and is in demand as a recitalist worldwide.

He enjoys relationships with all the major UK opera houses and has sung opera world premieres by David Sawer, Sally Beamish, Michael van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel. Recent and future engagements include the title role in *Eugene Onegin* for Garsington, the title role in *Billy Budd* with Opera North, Papageno for Covent Garden, and productions with Cologne Opera, English National Opera and Netherlands Opera.

Roderick sings regularly with all the BBC orchestras and all the major UK orchestras, as well as the Berlin, London and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Cincinnati Symphony and Bach Collegium Japan amongst others. His many festival appearances include the BBC Proms (including the Last Night in 2014), Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, Aldeburgh and Melbourne Festivals.

Roderick Williams has an extensive discography. He is a composer and has had works premiered at the Wigmore and Barbican Halls, the Purcell Room and live on national radio. In December 2016 he won the prize for best choral composition at the British Composer Awards. From the 2022/23 season he took the position of Composer in Association of the BBC Singers.

He recently completed a three year odyssey of the Schubert song cycles culminating in performances at the Wigmore Hall and has subsequently recorded them for Chandos. Future releases include more Schubert, Schumann in English as well as works by Vaughan Williams.

He was Artistic Director of Leeds Lieder in April 2016, Artist in Residence for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from 2020/21 for two seasons and won the RPS Singer of the Year award in May 2016. He was awarded an OBE in June 2017.

Chorus Director

## GREGORY BATSLEER



Gregory Batsleer is acknowledged as one of the leading choral conductors of his generation, winning widespread recognition for his creativity and vision. Since taking on the role of SCO Chorus Director in 2009 he has led the development of the Chorus, overseeing vocal coaching, the SCO Young Singers' Programme and the emergence of regular *a capella* concerts. As well as preparing the Chorus for performances with the Orchestra, he has directed their recent successful appearances at the East Neuk, Glasgow Cathedral and St Andrews Voices Festivals, at Greyfriars Kirk, and on the SCO's 2022 Summer Tour.

In 2021 Gregory took up the position of Festival Director for the London Handel Festival. He leads the programming and development of the Festival, fulfilling its mission to bring Handel's music to the widest possible audiences. Since 2017 he has been Artistic Director of Huddersfield Choral Society and was Chorus Director with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra from 2015 - 2021.

As Guest Conductor Gregory has worked with many of the UK's leading orchestras and ensembles. Recent highlights include performances with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, RSNO, National Youth Choir of Great Britain, Orchestra of Opera North, Manchester Camerata, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra and London Symphony Chorus, as well as SCO.

From 2012 to 2017, he was Artistic Director of the National Portrait Gallery's Choir in Residence programme, the first ever in-house music programme of any gallery or museum in the world. He has curated and devised performances for the Southbank Centre, Wilderness Festival and Latitude and collaborated with leading cultural figures across a variety of different art forms. Gregory is the co-founder and conductor of Festival Voices, a versatile ensemble dedicated to cross-art collaboration.

As a non-executive director, Gregory sits on the boards of Manchester Camerata and Charades Theatre Company. His outstanding work as a choral director was recognised with the 2015 Arts Foundation's first-ever Fellowship in Choral Conducting.

***Gregory's Chair is kindly supported by Anne McFarlane***

# SCO CHORUS



The Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chorus, under the direction of Gregory Batsleer since 2009, has built a reputation as one of Scotland's most vibrant and versatile choirs. Widely regarded as one of the finest orchestral choruses in the UK, it celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2021.

Members enjoy the unique opportunity to perform with one of the world's leading chamber orchestras, working with international conductors including Maxim Emelyanychev, Harry Christophers, Richard Egarr, Andrew Manze, John Storgårds and Sir James MacMillan.

The Chorus appears regularly with the Orchestra in Scotland's major cities. Recent concerts have covered a wide range of music including Handel Coronation Anthems, MacMillan *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, Stravinsky Mass, Handel *Messiah* and *Theodora*, Haydn *Seasons* and *Creation*, a rare performance of Vaughan Williams *Flos Campi* and the premiere of *The Years* by Anna Clyne, SCO Associate Composer 2019-2022. The 2023-24 Season features the world premiere of *Composed in August* by Sir James MacMillan.

The SCO Chorus also appears on its own in a *capella* repertoire, both digital and live, including an acclaimed performance of Tallis' *Spem in Alium* at Greyfriars Kirk and concerts as part of the SCO's 2022 Summer Tour including the premiere of Anna Clyne's *The Heart of Night*. Its annual Christmas concerts have quickly established themselves as a Season highlight.

Other notable out-of-Season appearances have included critically-acclaimed performances with the SCO at the BBC Proms in Handel's *Jephtha* in 2019 and in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in 2023.

Our Young Singers' Programme was established in 2015 to nurture and develop aspiring young singers. It is designed for young people with a high level of choral experience and ambitions to further their singing with a world-class ensemble.

Further information at [sco.org.uk](https://sco.org.uk)

***The SCO Chorus Young Singers' Programme is kindly supported by the Baird Educational Trust.***



# YOUR CHORUS TONIGHT

**Gregory Batsleer**

Chorus Director

**Stuart Hope**

Associate Chorusmaster

**Alan Beck**

Voice Coach

**Emma Morwood**

Voice Coach

**Susan White**

Chorus Manager

*\* Young Singers' Programme*

**SOPRANO**

Kirstin Anderson  
Nancy Burns  
Joanna Burns  
Morven Chisholm  
Liberty Emeny  
Lucy Forde  
Emily Gifford  
Holly Gowen\*  
Nicola Henderson  
Caroline Hood  
Lisa Johnston  
Elizabeth McColl  
Katie McGlew  
Jenny Nex  
Ciara O'Neill\*  
Annike Petin  
Alison Williams  
Emily Zehetmayr\*

**ALTO**

Shona Banks  
Dinah Bourne  
Sarah Campbell  
Judith Colman  
Jennie Gardner  
Claire Goodenough  
Anne Grindley  
Caroline Hahn  
Elaine McAdam  
Morven McIntyre\*  
Hilde McKenna  
Charlotte Perkins  
Jan Raitt  
Linda Ruxton

**TENOR**

Matthew Andrews  
Andrew Carvel  
Ben Evans  
David Ferrier  
Colin French  
Ian Gibson  
Fraser Macdonald\*  
Keith Main  
Michael Scanlon  
Alexander  
Vonderschmidt

**BASS**

Mathew Brown  
Luke Francis\*  
David Ireland  
Donald MacLeod  
Sandy Matheson  
Richard Murphy  
Kenneth Murray  
Douglas Nicholson  
David Paterson  
Fraser Riddell  
Peter Silver  
Stephen Todd  
Roderick Wylie

Biography

## SCOTTISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



The Scottish Chamber Orchestra (SCO) is one of Scotland's five National Performing Companies and has been a galvanizing force in Scotland's music scene since its inception in 1974. The SCO believes that access to world-class music is not a luxury but something that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in, helping individuals and communities everywhere to thrive. Funded by the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and a community of philanthropic supporters, the SCO has an international reputation for exceptional, idiomatic performances: from mainstream classical music to newly commissioned works, each year its wide-ranging programme of work is presented across the length and breadth of Scotland, overseas and increasingly online.

Equally at home on and off the concert stage, each one of the SCO's highly talented and creative musicians and staff is passionate about transforming and enhancing lives through the power of music. The SCO's Creative Learning programme engages people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse range of projects, concerts, participatory workshops and resources. The SCO's current five-year Residency in Edinburgh's Craigmillar builds on the area's extraordinary history of Community Arts, connecting the local community with a national cultural resource.

An exciting new chapter for the SCO began in September 2019 with the arrival of dynamic young conductor Maxim Emelyanychev as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor. His tenure has recently been extended until 2028. The SCO and Emelyanychev released their first album together (Linn Records) in November 2019 to widespread critical acclaim. Their second recording together, of Mendelssohn symphonies, is due for release in November 2023.

The SCO also has long-standing associations with many eminent guest conductors and directors including Andrew Manze, Pekka Kuusisto, François Leleux, Nicola Benedetti, Isabelle van Keulen, Anthony Marwood, Richard Egarr, Mark Wigglesworth, John Storgårds and Conductor Emeritus Joseph Swensen.

The Orchestra's current Associate Composer is Jay Capperauld. The SCO enjoys close relationships with numerous leading composers and has commissioned around 200 new works, including pieces by the late Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Sir James MacMillan, Anna Clyne, Sally Beamish, Martin Suckling, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Karin Rehnqvist, Mark-Anthony Turnage and Nico Muhly.

# FRENCH

# CLASSES & CULTURE



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SCOTTISH  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA

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If you are passionate about music, and want to contribute to the SCO's continued success, please consider making a monthly or annual donation today. Each and every contribution is crucial, and your support is truly appreciated.

For more information on how you can become a regular donor, please get in touch with **Hannah Wilkinson** on **0131 478 8364** or **[hannah.wilkinson@sco.org.uk](mailto:hannah.wilkinson@sco.org.uk)**

**[sco.org.uk/support-us](https://sco.org.uk/support-us)**

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