

Johannes Brahms
A GERMAN REQUIEM

Richard Strauss
**DEATH AND
TRANSFIGURATION**

MONDAY 4 MARCH 2019

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Monday 4 March 2019, Barbican Hall

Richard Strauss
**DEATH AND
TRANSFIGURATION**

Interval

Johannes Brahms
A GERMAN REQUIEM

Mark Forkgen *Conductor*

Claire Seaton *Soprano*

Thomas Humphreys *Baritone*

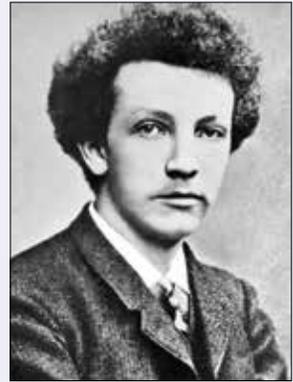
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Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

Death and Transfiguration

Tod und Verklärung (1889)

Tone Poem for Orchestra



The Composer

Richard Strauss benefited from an informal music education by friends and colleagues of his father, who was a professional horn player in the Munich court orchestra. Before too long his talent in composition was noted by the influential conductor Hans von Bülow who not only commissioned a piece by the 18-year old, but two years later made him Assistant Musical Director at the Meiningen court orchestra, the first stepping stone to a long and distinguished musical career as a conductor and composer.

A great admirer of Brahms in his youth, Strauss built on Classical form and incorporated late Romantic influences in developing his individual style. Although his conservative father tried to steer him away from Wagner, Strauss became more and more intrigued by Wagner's leitmotif-driven music, his orchestration and his ability to create great emotional effects. Strauss began to develop his own sumptuous soundworlds, modern in their use of chromatic harmonies, but rooted in classical tonality.

During the 1880s and '90s he composed tone poems, his version of programme music that Liszt had called symphonic poems. These are orchestral compositions in a single movement that use an extra-musical stimulus such as nature, a work of literature or art, or an idea to reflect in music. Strauss developed the genre with major works such as his first, very successful *Don Juan*, followed by *Tod und Verklärung* and, amongst others, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, culminating in *Ein Heldenleben*. He was not only concerned with pictorial representation but psychological exploration.

At the turn of the century Strauss successfully turned to opera. Despite tarnishing his reputation in later life by accepting the presidency of the Reichsmusikkammer in 1933, Richard Strauss left a rich musical legacy that remains a towering example of musical expressiveness. Strauss also had a profound influence on twentieth-century composers, including Puccini, Mahler, Schönberg, Zemlinsky and Berg, who all attended a performance of his opera *Salome* in 1906.

Tod und Verklärung

The tone poem is organised in four parts that are played without a pause:

- I Largo
- II Allegro molto agitato
- III Meno mosso, ma sempre alla breve
- IV Moderato

Strauss's friend Alexander Ritter provided a programme to be published with the score. However, this explanatory poem was written after the work was completed and does nothing more than elaborate on Strauss' own outline. Of greater interest is the detailed explanation of the work's underlying idea that Strauss himself gave in a letter of 1894:

It was six years ago that it occurred to me to represent, in a tone poem, the dying hours of a man who had striven towards the highest idealistic aims, maybe indeed those of an artist. The sick man lies in bed asleep, with heavy irregular breathing; friendly dreams conjure a smile on the features of the deeply suffering man; he wakes up, he is once more racked with horrible agonies; his limbs shake with fever – as the attack passes and the pains leave off, his thoughts wander through his past life; his childhood passes before him, the time of his youth with its striving and passions and then, as the pains already begin to return, there appears to him the fruit of his life's path, the conception, the ideal which he has sought to realise, to present artistically, but which he has not been able to complete, since it is not for man to be able to accomplish such things. The hour of death approaches, the soul leaves the body in order to find gloriously achieved in everlasting space those things that could not be fulfilled here below.

This programme is astonishing in itself as it sets out to represent in music not only the agonies of a dying person as observed from an outside perspective, but to imagine what goes on in the mind in the shadow zone between life and death. Strauss intends to evoke in music the thoughts and emotions of a person on the threshold of death, and beyond.

Two years earlier Tolstoy had achieved a similar feat of the imagination in his groundbreaking story *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), which narrates the dying of its protagonist from inside his consciousness. But then Tolstoy was in his mid-fifties when he wrote his story and had gone through an existential crisis that had brought him to the brink of suicide. That a composer as young as twenty-five, who had not yet had a brush with death, displays such daring and power of the imagination is truly remarkable.

How does it feel to die? And how does that sound in music? Strauss' music lives up to this ambitious premise. He works with leitmotifs, a musical device introduced by Wagner, which represent the central themes of his tone poem: death, memories and the ideal in transfiguration. At the beginning we hear the irregular heartbeat of the artist on his deathbed in the rhythmic figure in the strings and timpani, leading to the motif of looming death. Brief moments of relief in dreams about less troubled times, portrayed in a sadly-sweet descending figure in the woodwinds over a harp and a lyrical melody played by a single violin, are soon disturbed again by the ominous beating rhythm.

A violent outbreak starts the second section depicting the artist's fight with death. Growing distress builds up to stabbing pain, represented in the violins. The struggle between life and death is played out in the full orchestra. A first hint of the transfiguration motif can be heard, suggesting the closeness to death. The pain slowly subsides, opening the way for the third section depicting the dying man's review of his life.

The childhood motif from the first part returns and creates a mood of serenity. We hear the child hopping and skipping. A louder, more forceful section depicts the youth confidently marching ahead towards adulthood. His optimistic outlook is portrayed in upwards moving figures, but there is turmoil as well as passion on the way. The dying man's distress returns. The ideal that he was not able to achieve in life presents itself as a grand statement in the brass instruments, pointing forward to its achievement after death. The transfiguration motif manifests itself three times, before the death music returns. A short final flaring up of the violent struggle is followed by the ever fainter heartbeat. The moment of death is marked by an upwards glissando and quiet strokes on the gong.

The final part depicting the journey of the soul arises slowly out of the darkness of death. Starting quietly, the music reaches higher and higher into the region where the ideal is a reality that could not be achieved in life. The transfiguration motif emerges and is developed in all its sumptuous beauty, building to its full orchestral manifestation. The music slowly dies away in peace on a gloriously bright and radiant C major chord. Sixty years later Strauss would quote the transfiguration theme in the fourth of his *Vier letzte Lieder* (Four Last Songs) after the soprano's final line 'Ist dies etwa der Tod?' (*Is this perhaps death?*). On his deathbed, the composer is said to have remarked that 'dying is just as I composed it in *Tod und Verklärung*'.

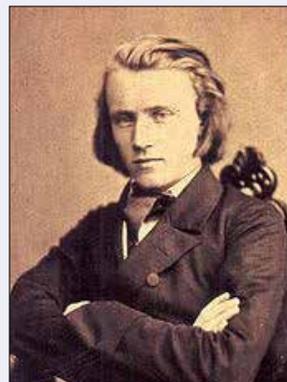
INTERVAL - 20 Minutes

Johannes Brahms (1873–1943)

A German Requiem Op. 45

Ein deutsches Requiem (1869)

for Soprano, Baritone, Chorus and Orchestra



The Composer

Johannes Brahms occupies a unique position in the history of 19th-century music. At a time when composers such as Wagner, Liszt and later Strauss were opening up new paths in music drama and programme music, Brahms was often regarded as a traditionalist whose music remained firmly rooted in Classical form. In reality, his work may be defined as a creative synthesis of Classical structure and Romantic lyricism. He drew inspiration from a wealth of sources; from Early Music to Baroque polyphony, from the Classical composers to folk and dance music, from his love for German Romantic poetry to his fascination with complex rhythms, Brahms integrated the traditions of the past with the Romantic sensibilities of the present.

But his musical language also contains forward-looking elements: his innovative use of rhythm and metre and his symphonic treatment of thematic developments and variations, often based on the smallest musical cell, make him a moderniser as well as a traditionalist. Thus Brahms is not only the last of the ‘three Bs’, as conductor Hans von Bülow put it, referring to an unbroken line from Bach to Beethoven and Brahms. He is also ‘Brahms the Progressive’, as Schönberg called him.

Brahms’ education in his native Hamburg instilled in him a life-long love of learning and made him an avid collector of books and musical manuscripts, which he studied diligently. His broad interests covered not only music, but also literature, art and history. His first success in music was as a virtuoso pianist appearing in public from his early teenage years onwards, playing Bach, Mozart and Beethoven as well as his own compositions. His parents, worried about his future prospects, urged him to pursue a career in performing music rather than composing.

At the age of 19 Brahms went on a tour through some smaller towns in northern Germany as accompanist to the Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi. Through Reményi he met the celebrated violinist Joseph Joachim who became a life-long friend. At the young age of 22, Joachim was already acquainted with a number of the great composers and musicians of the time, and in 1853 he introduced his friend to Robert and Clara Schumann, a meeting that would prove decisive for Brahms’ future life.

The Schumanns were highly impressed not only by his playing but also by the compositions which he performed for them at their house in Düsseldorf. Robert Schumann's somewhat over-enthusiastic praise of Brahms in a music journal had a divisive effect, but in the end Schumann was instrumental in getting the young composer known and published.

Schumann's suicide attempt in 1854 and his subsequent two-year confinement in an institution came as a terrible blow to Brahms. He rushed to the help of Clara, stayed with her and supported her during her husband's hospitalisation until his death in 1856. A deep friendship and mutual affection developed, but it never went beyond companionship. Clara Schumann continued to champion Brahms as a composer by including his music in her piano recitals.

The Requiem

The musical beginnings of the *Requiem* date back to those years. In 1854 Brahms had started work on a symphony in D minor, later abandoned, but he reused the 'slow scherzo' in the Adagio of his D minor Piano Concerto. The same material eventually found its way into the *Requiem*'s funeral march in the second movement ('Denn alles Fleisch'). It was not until 1865 that he mentioned in a letter to Clara that he was composing a Requiem. The death of his mother earlier that year had left Brahms devastated, and this deeply-felt loss may well have given him the creative impetus to finish it. By 1866 he had completed the work in its six-movement form, adding a seventh movement in 1868 (number V in the complete work), in which the choir has the repeated line 'Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet' (*I will comfort you as a mother comforteth her child*).

The first three movements were premiered in Vienna in 1867, but the performance was not a success, possibly due to a timpanist drowning out everyone else in the third movement. On Good Friday 1868, a six-movement performance in Bremen Cathedral under the baton of Brahms himself was a resounding success, and in 1869 the complete work was presented in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. The longest work in Brahms' entire canon, the *German Requiem* laid the foundation for the 36-year old composer's fame, seven years before his first symphony, and is regarded as one of the most important choral works of the 19th century.

Ein deutsches Requiem is a highly original work that eschews the traditional form of a Requiem by not using the liturgical Latin text of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead. Brahms made a personal choice of texts from Martin Luther's translation of the Bible, selecting passages from the Old and New Testaments as well as the Apocrypha. The title refers to the use of the vernacular language, but as Brahms revealed to the director of music at Bremen Cathedral he would gladly have called it '*Ein menschliches (human) Requiem*'.

At the centre of the work is humankind with its suffering and its need to come to terms with death. Unlike the traditional Requiem this is not a prayer for the dead to ascend to heaven through the terror of the Day of Judgement with its threat of eternal damnation. There is no plea for mercy, no mention of redemption through Christ, nor are there direct references to

Christ's resurrection. Instead the focus of the work is on the living; it laments the transience of life and offers consolation to those who mourn, reassuring them about the blessings of being with God and providing comfort in the knowledge of a final triumph over death. Not bound to a specific creed, the work carries a universal message of comfort and hope.

The *German Requiem's* seven movements are arranged in the symmetrical structure of a pyramid with the fourth movement at its peak, praising the Lord's dwelling place in heaven. Movements III and V, both with a soloist joining the choir, are about the suffering on earth that leads to the comfort found in God, as described in part IV. Movements II and VI speak of the transience of life and the promise of eternal joy. The first and last movements relate to each other in terms of music as well as content. The keyword beginning and ending the work is 'selig' (*blessed*), referring first to those who mourn and at the end to those who die in the Lord.

The *Requiem* as a whole represents a journey from earthly sorrow to heavenly peace. The representation of this journey can also be found within the individual movements, which depict the progression from suffering to consolation and everlasting joy. The choir sings in every movement; the baritone soloist has a lead role in two movements and the soprano soloist in one; but unlike the arias in an oratorio their parts are integrated into the ensemble. Brahms' *German Requiem* exemplifies his unique synthesis of historical awareness and innovation, formal rigour and creative freedom, highly developed technical skills and emotional expressiveness, religious sentiment and universal humanist appeal.

I. Selig sind, die da Leid tragen

The opening melody is given to the violas, while the violins are silent throughout this movement, which creates a dark, sombre mood that evokes the heavy weight of grief. Frequent short *crescendo-diminuendo* figures express sadness, crying or yearning for consolation. The simple three-note motif sung by the sopranos at the beginning of the movement recurs in various forms throughout the work. The middle part conveys a quiet confidence in the coming of joy to those who experience pain; this is followed by a return to the initial expression of grief, ending in the trustful assertion that there will be consolation for those who suffer.

Chorus

Selig sind, die da Leid tragen,
denn sie sollen getröstet werden.

Die mit Tränen säen,
werden mit Freuden ernten.
Sie gehen hin und weinen
und tragen edlen Samen,
und kommen mit Freuden
und bringen ihre Garben.

Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted. *Matthew 5:4*

They that sow in tears
shall reap in joy.
They that go forth and weep,
bearing precious seed,
shall come again with rejoicing,
bringing their sheaves with them.

Psalms 126:5-6

II. Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras

This sombre but melodic funeral march – in a strangely dance-like triple time – is the music Brahms saved from his abandoned symphony. The choir sings the gloomy text repeatedly over ominous timpani triplets, building up to a threatening climax before a sudden change of mood expresses serenity and optimism in the future in God for those who wait patiently. A return to the gloomy mood of the beginning abruptly turns into a forceful declamation of the permanence of God's word. The idea of 'Schmerz' and 'Seufzen' (*pain* and *sighing*), painted in uncomfortable harmonic shifts, is forcefully pushed out of the way ('weg ... weg ... weg' meaning *away* ...) by the 'ewige Freude' (*everlasting joy*), underscored by trumpets and horns, that awaits the redeemed. This joyful declaration quietly wafts away into eternity.

Chorus

Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras ist verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.

So seid nun geduldig, liebe Brüder,
bis auf die Zukunft des Herrn.
Siehe, ein Ackermann wartet
auf die köstliche Frucht der Erde
und ist geduldig darüber,
bis er empfahe den Morgenregen und
Abendregen.

Aber des Herrn wort bleibet in Ewigkeit

Die Erlöseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen
und gen Zion kommen mit Jauchzen;
ewige Freude wird über ihrem Haupte sein;
Freude und Wonne werden sie ergreifen
und Schmerz und Seufzen wird weg müssen.

For all flesh is as grass,
and all the glory of man
as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth,
and the flower falleth away. *1 Peter 1:24*

Be patient therefore, dear brethren,
unto the coming of the Lord.
Behold, the farmer waiteth
for the precious fruit of the earth,
and hath long patience for it,
until he receive the early and latter rain.

James 5:7

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.
1 Peter 1:25

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with songs;
and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads:
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isaiah 35:10

III. Herr, lehre doch mich

The baritone soloist introduces the third movement, echoed by the four voices of the choir singing in homophony, mournfully pleading for God's guidance in understanding the ephemeral nature of human life. The following section asks in a more agitated, urgent manner where to find comfort if life is insignificant. After an optimistic rising figure expressing hope, the answer comes in the form of a mighty fugue which shows Brahms' masterful handling of counterpoint. The fugue is set over a long-held pedal point on D representing the certainty and security that the righteous will find in God. The insistent repetition of 'keine Qual' (*no torment*) promises a state free of suffering.

Baritone Solo and Chorus

Herr, lehre doch mich,
dass ein Ende mit mir haben muss,
und mein Leben ein Ziel hat,
und ich davon muss.
Siehe, meine Tage sind einer Hand breit vor dir,
und mein Leben ist wie nichts vor dir.

Ach, wie gar nichts sind alle Menschen,
die doch so sicher leben.
Sie gehen daher wie ein Schemen,
und machen ihnen viel vergebliche Unruhe;
sie sammeln und wissen nicht,
wer es kriegen wird.

Nun Herr, wes soll ich mich trösten?
Ich hoffe auf dich.

Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand
und keine Qual rühret sie an

Lord, make me to know mine end,
and the measure of my days, what it is:
that I may know how frail I am.
Behold, my days are as an handbreadth to Thee;
and my lifetime is as nothing before thee.

Surely every man living
is altogether vanity.
Every man walketh as a shadow:
surely they are disquieted in vain:
they heap up riches, and know not
who shall gather them.

Now, Lord, in whom shall I take comfort?
My hope is in Thee. *Psalms 39:4-7*

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of
God and there shall no torment touch them.
Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

IV. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen

This state of bliss is evoked in the lyricism and lilting melody of the fourth movement, which represents a point of calm at the heart of the *Requiem*. A short fugal section in the middle illustrates the heavenly praise of God.

Chorus

Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen,
Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlangt und sehnet sich
nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn;
mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
in dem lebendigen Gott.
Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen,
die loben dich immerdar!

How lovely are Thy dwellings,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth and fainteth
for the courts of the Lord:
my heart and my flesh rejoice
in the living God.
Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house:
they will praise Thee evermore.

Psalms 84:1, 2&4

V. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit

The fifth movement, the only one to feature a soprano soloist, is a very intimate expression of grief that was last to be added to the work. Jesus' words to his disciples consoling them in their sadness with the promise of a joyful reunion after death is associated here with Brahms' mother, as the choir sings quietly in the background about the comfort that a mother gives.

Soprano Solo and Chorus

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
aber ich will euch wieder sehen
und euer Herz soll sich freuen,
und eure Freude soll niemand von euch
nehmen.

Ye now therefore have sorrow:
but I will see you again,
and your heart shall rejoice,
and your joy shall no man take from you.
John 16:22

Sehet mich an:
Ich habe eine kleine Zeit
Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
und habe grossen Trost funden.

Now behold me:
ye know that for a little time
I had labour and sorrow
and have found great consolation.
Ecclesiasticus 51:27

Ich will euch trösten,
wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.

I will comfort you
as a mother comforteth her child.
Isaiah 66:13

VI. Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt

The chorus begins a collective lament about the transience of life, which then disperses into individual voices, before the baritone soloist interrupts by revealing the mystery of transfiguration and the resurrection of the flesh at the sound of the last trumpet. After a mighty crescendo of brass and surging strings the choir comments on the baritone's words that the dead will be raised incorruptible, each word strongly emphasised by timpani.

This is not a depiction of the Day of Wrath, but a confident affirmation that death will be overcome by victory. In an almost taunting manner the choir challenges death and hell to show their power, ending with the rhetorical question 'wo?' (*where?*) repeated several times, each one higher and more daring than the previous. The triumphant climax on a long-held C major chord is still resonating as the altos begin a new section that comes as a complete surprise: an elaborate, magisterial fugue culminates in an even bigger climax praising God's might.

Baritone Solo and Chorus

Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt,
sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.

For here we have no continuing city,
but we seek one to come. *Hebrews 13:14*

Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis:
Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen,
wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden;
und dasselbige plötzlich, in einem Augenblick,
zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune.
Denn es wird die Posaune schallen,
und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich,
und wir werden verwandelt werden.

Behold, I show you a mystery:
We shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be changed,
in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the last trump:
For the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.

Dann wird erfüllet werden
das Wort, das geschrieben steht:
Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg.
Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?
Hölle, wo ist dein Sieg?

Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen
Preis und Ehre und Kraft,
denn du hast alle Dinge erschaffen,
und durch deinen Willen haben sie das
Wesen und sind geschaffen.

Then shall be brought to pass
the saying that is written,
Death is swallowed up in victory.
O death, where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory?

1 Corinthians 15:51-52,54-55

O Lord, Thou art worthy to receive
glory and honour and power:
for Thou hast created all things,
and by Thy will they have their being
and were created. *Revelation 4:11*

VII. Selig sind die Toten

The last movement begins with an ethereal melody sung first by the sopranos and then by the basses, uniting heaven and earth in the knowledge that the dead are blessed. The keyword 'selig' (*blessed*) refers back to the beginning of the Requiem, but the mood is now one of consolation and confidence. The music goes through a number of key changes before the opening theme returns, the sombre hues from the first movement being transformed by the presence of the violins. The harp brings the work to a calm resolution.

Chorus

Selig sind die Toten,
die in dem Herrn sterben, von nun an.
Ja, der Geist spricht,
dass sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit;
denn ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Blessed are the dead
which die in the Lord from henceforth.
Yea, saith the Spirit,
that they may rest from their labours;
for their works follow after them.

Revelation 14:13

LONDON CONCERT CHOIR GRANADA TOUR 2019



On **Friday 17 May** LCC will join with massed choirs in the Cathedral to sing in a memorial concert for the organist and composer Juan Alfonso García.

On the following evening Mark Forkgen will conduct a repeat performance of **Brahms' German Requiem** with piano accompaniment by Simon Over and James Longford. The soloists are Laurence Williams, the choir's Assistant Conductor, and the Spanish soprano Leticia Rodriguez Torres.



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Mark Forkgen

Conductor



Mark Forkgen recently celebrated 20 years as the Music Director of London Concert Choir. He is also Music Director of Canticum chamber choir, Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro (the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's New Music Group) and Director of Music at Tonbridge School. Mark was Organ Scholar of Queens' College, Cambridge, before winning a scholarship to study conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Since then he has conducted major UK orchestras, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, English Chamber Orchestra, English Northern Philharmonia and Manchester Camerata, appearing at major venues, including the Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall as well as the Barbican.

A specialist in the field of choral and contemporary music, Mark has given the first performances of more than 150 works. He has also conducted stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company and an ensemble from the Philharmonia, at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Mark's wide range of conducting also includes performances with Deep Purple for the Henley Festival and recreating Pink Floyd's *Atom Heart Mother* in the Chelsea Festival. He also enjoys an active life as a pianist, focusing on twentieth-century and contemporary music.

He has been Conductor and Artistic Advisor for highly acclaimed festivals including Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday, Stravinsky, 'A Festival of Britten', 'Music of the Americas', 'Britain since Britten' and 'East meets West'. Outside the UK he has conducted in Denmark, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Eire, the Czech Republic and Italy (including Handel's *Messiah* in Sienna and *Israel in Egypt* at the Viterbo Early Music Festival) and Bulgaria (concerts broadcast for National TV and Radio).

Recent highlights have included a series exploring the chamber music of the Second Viennese School, another series, 'Green and Pleasant Land', based on the music of the first and second English Renaissance, and the first performance of Stephen McNeff's new WW1-inspired oratorio, *The Walking Shadows*.

Claire Seaton

Soprano



Born in Wolverhampton, Claire studied at the Birmingham School of Music, at the Royal Academy of Music with Rae Woodland and Kenneth Bowen, and subsequently with Linda Esther-Grey. She joined Kent Opera during her final year at the Academy, was awarded the Wessex Glyndebourne Association Prize in 1998 and in 1999 made her Glyndebourne Festival Opera debut singing the role of Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*. Further engagements at Glyndebourne included covering the roles of Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes* and the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, followed by contracts with Opera de Lyon and Opera Europa.

One of the country's most adaptable sopranos, Claire also enjoys remarkable success in the early music field where she has worked with ensembles such as The Tallis Scholars and the Gabrieli Consort, with whom she made her BBC Proms debut in Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, and is known for her performances of the soprano solos in Allegri's *Miserere*.

Claire's oratorio experience is extremely broad and she is particularly renowned for her performances of Verdi's Requiem, Brahms' Requiem and Mozart's C Minor Mass. Her recent repertoire has ranged from regularly performed favourites such as Verdi's Requiem and Mozart's Requiem to less commonly performed works such as Symanowski's *Stabat Mater* and Elgar's *The Light of Life*.

In addition to recording the Allegri, Claire's discography includes the role of The Believer in Rutland Boughton's *Bethlehem* for Naxos, Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* with Jeremy Backhouse and the Vasari Singers for Guild, and the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *The Far Theatricals of Day* with Nicholas Cleobury. Claire has recently made the world premier recording of Samuel Wesley's *Confitebor Tibi, Domine* with David Gostick and the Portsmouth Choral Union for Priory Records.

Later this year Claire will be reprising the role of Matriarch which she created for the world premiere of Paul Meallor's cantata *The Farthest Shore* with the BBC Singers in 2013.

Thomas Humphreys

Baritone



Anglo-Scottish baritone Thomas Humphreys began singing as a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford and studied at the Royal Academy of Music.

Thomas regularly performs with the conductors Hilary Davan Wetton, Jonathan Willcocks, Katherine Dienes-Williams and Calum Fraser at venues such as Cadogan Hall, St John's Smith Square, St Martin-in-the-Fields, and Canterbury, Winchester and Guildford Cathedrals in a wide range of repertoire including *Messiah* (Handel), *Elijah* (Mendelssohn), Bach's *St John Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*, *Ein deutsches Requiem* (Brahms), the Requiems of Mozart and Fauré, *The Creation* (Haydn), *Nelson Mass* (Haydn) and *Five Mystical Songs* (Vaughan Williams) among others.

In opera, he has sung the title role in *Don Giovanni* for the Opera Holland Park Young Artist Programme, as well as returning for their 2018 season to sing the roles of L'araldo maggiore in Mascagni's *Isabeau* and The Wigmaker in *Ariadne auf Naxos* by Richard Strauss. He made his debut with Glyndebourne Touring Opera as Servo di Flora in Verdi's *La Traviata*, as well as covering the role of The Captain in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera. He has been critically acclaimed for his performance of Jake Wallace in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* for Grange Park Opera. He has also sung and understudied roles for Opera Holland Park, English Touring Opera, the Merry Opera Company, and the King's Head Theatre, recently singing Le Grand-Prêtre de Dagon in *Samson et Dalila* by Saint-Saëns for the Grimeborn Festival.

Future plans include the role of Sir Thomas Bertram in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* with Opera South, Schubert's *Winterreise* with his wife Raya Kostova at South Hill Park, Bracknell, as well as making his debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Cadogan Hall singing the baritone solos in Mozart's *Mass in C* with the City of London Choir.



London Concert Choir

London Concert Choir is delighted to welcome as its new President the baritone and composer Roderick Williams, whose composition *Per Ardua ad Astra*, a major work commissioned to celebrate the centenary of the RAF, was one of the highlights of last season.

Since its formation nearly 60 years ago, London Concert Choir has become one of London's leading amateur choirs, regularly appearing with Music Director Mark Forkgen at London's premier concert venues and in cathedrals and churches in and around the capital as well as touring abroad.

In 2014 the choir performed Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons* in Assisi and in 2016 visited Krakow to perform contrasting concerts of unaccompanied 'Hymns to the Virgin' and jazz standards with Mark Forkgen on piano. The choir's next tour will be to Granada in late May.

The choir's 50th anniversary in 2010 was celebrated with two performances of Britten's *War Requiem*. Among other major works in recent seasons have been Mozart's Requiem with the London Mozart Players, Rachmaninov's choral symphony *The Bells* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*, all with Southbank Sinfonia. The *Sea Symphony* was the main work in a Battle of Jutland centenary concert in 2016 to support maritime charities.

Performances with the Counterpoint ensemble include Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* and Schubert's rarely-heard Mass in E flat. Operas in concert performance have ranged from Gluck's *Orfeo* to Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and the London premiere of *The Chalk Legend* by Stephen McNeff. LCC has also performed Ellington's *Sacred Concert*, Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* and a concert celebrating Leonard Bernstein's centenary.

LCC often gives concerts for charity and continues to commission new works, including *A Light not yet Ready to Go Out* by Alison Willis, performed last March in aid of Breast Cancer Now.

Roderick Williams
President

Mark Forkgen
Music Director

Laurence Williams
*Accompanist and
Assistant Conductor*

Fabyan Evans
Chairman

Martin Goodwin
Concert Manager

Chris Finch
Treasurer

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Jennifer Greenway
Membership

Eleanor Cowie
Publicity

James Finlay
Stage Manager

Simon Livesey
Company Secretary

londonconcertchoir.org

London Concert Choir Members

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Christine Ayre
Dagmar Binsted
Mickey Bowden
Christine Brown
Alison Carpenter
Caroline Clark
Eleanor Cowie
Emma Davidson
Christine Dencer
Gillian Denham
Susan Deville
Emma Dixon
Emily Dresner
Sarah French
Jennifer Greenway
Caitlin Griffith
Dalia Gurari
Philippa Harris
Rebecca Harrison
Rebecca Haynes
Emma Heath
Amy Hilling
Ruth Hobbs
Emily Hunka
Eva Ignatuschtschenko
Christine Ingram
Danielle Johnstone
Jane Joyce
Vickie Kelly
Anna Kosicka
Susanna Lutman
Charlotte Marshall
Sue McFadyen
Annie Meston
Adrienne Morgan
Delyth Morgan
Stephanie Moussadis

Arielle Murphy
Johanna Pemberton
Margaret Perkins
Jutta Raftery
Ines Schlenker
Frances Shaw
Maddy Shaw Roberts
Caroline Sheppard
Imogen Small
Elizabeth Streatfeild-James
Aisling Turner
Sayuri Uher
Francesca Wareing
Janet Wells
Natalie Whitehorn
Belinda Whittingham
Julie Wilson

Alto

Angela Alonso
Fionnuala Barrett
Kate Britten
Frances Cave
Carys Cooper
Deborah Curle
Rosie de Saram
Philippa Donald
Kathleen Dormer
Rebecca Foulkes
Anna Garnier
Sarah Gasquoine
Mary Glanville
Muriel Hall
Penny Hatfield
Tina Holderried
Denise Howell
Chrina Jarvis
Chris Joseph
Margaret Kalaugher

Sharon Kipfer
Sarah Knight
Sabine Koellmann
Joanna Kramer
Lorna Lewis
Liz Lowther
Norma MacMillan
Bridget Maidment
Adrienne Mathews
Corinna Matlis
Catherine McCarter
Neetu Menon
Anna Metcalf
Sophy Miles
Naomi Nettlehip
Cathy Packe
Judith Paterson
Rachel Pearson
Gillian Perry
Dubravka Polic
Jessica Rosethorn
Pamela Slatter
Rachel Vroom
Gabriel West
Barbara Whent
June Williams

Tenor

David Broad
Fabyan Evans
Miguel Garcia
Sam Hansford
Graham Hick
Richard Holmes
Carolyn Knight
Ian Leslie
Frances Liew
Ben Martin
Eliza Parker

Stephen Rickett
Christopher Seaden
Charles Sicat
Tim Steer
Barry Sterndale-Bennett
Tim Thirlway
Ruth Yeo

Bass

Colin Allies
John Ancock
Peter Banks
Richard Burbury
Andrew Cullen
Chris Finch
James Finlay
Richard Gillard
Martin Goodwin
Nigel Grieve
Julian Hall
Nigel Hartnell
Keith Holmes
Richard Hughes
Ian Judson
Robert Kealey
Stefan Klaazen
Simon Livesey
Alan Machacek
Paul Milican
Joseph Pike
Morgan Roberts
Tom Roles
Anthony Sharp
John Somerville
Ryszard Stepaniuk
Wilson To
Tony Trowles
Philip Vickers
Dai Whittingham



Canticum is one of the most musically versatile chamber choirs in the country. The music critic Richard Morrison, in *The Times*, recently praised it for the “sumptuous beauty” of its singing, in a four-star review. Now in its 29th season, it has been praised for accomplished performances of major works and for exploring contemporary repertoire. The choir has also commissioned new writing and gives regular first performances.

This seasons’ highlights include English Church Music at The Queen’s House in Greenwich, the first performance of Stephen McNeff’s *The Walking Shadows* and Mozart’s Requiem at St Martin-in-the-Fields and Christmas carol concerts in Southwark Cathedral in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care, and at St Martin-in-the-Fields for Liveability. Canticum has also performed BBC Radio 4’s Christmas Morning Service, Bach’s Mass in B Minor with the Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment at St John’s, Smith Square, the première of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies’s *Step by Circle*, dedicated to Mark Forkgen and the choir, and at the Cheltenham Festival, the Bournemouth Arts Festival by the Sea and King’s Place. The choir opened the 2008 Chelsea Festival, providing choral voices for Pink Floyd’s *Atom Heart Mother* alongside soloist David Gilmour.

The choir stages regular tours abroad, with Italy a favourite destination. Canticum has sung in St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican, and has toured with Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, and Handel’s *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, a performance opening the Viterbo Early Music Festival. The choir toured Bulgaria in May 2013, performing in Sofia and Plovdiv for Bulgarian TV and radio. In 2017, the choir performed in Krakow, as well as in the Chapel of St Kinga in the Wieliczka Salt Mine.

Recordings by Canticum include ‘A Hymn to the Virgin’, with works by Victoria, Poulenc and Panufnik, and two Christmas discs. Another disc, ‘*In the Gloom of Whiteness*’, features work by Colin Riley, Fraser Trainer and Keith Roberts. The live recording of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies’s *Step by Circle* and *Two Latin Motets* is available on MaxOpus.

Members of Canticum

Sopranos

Sapphire Armitage
Lucy Bray
Anna Finnegan
Mary Forkgen
Janet Hales
Sophie Lark
Susan Porter-Thomas
Elizabeth Scott Plummer

Altos

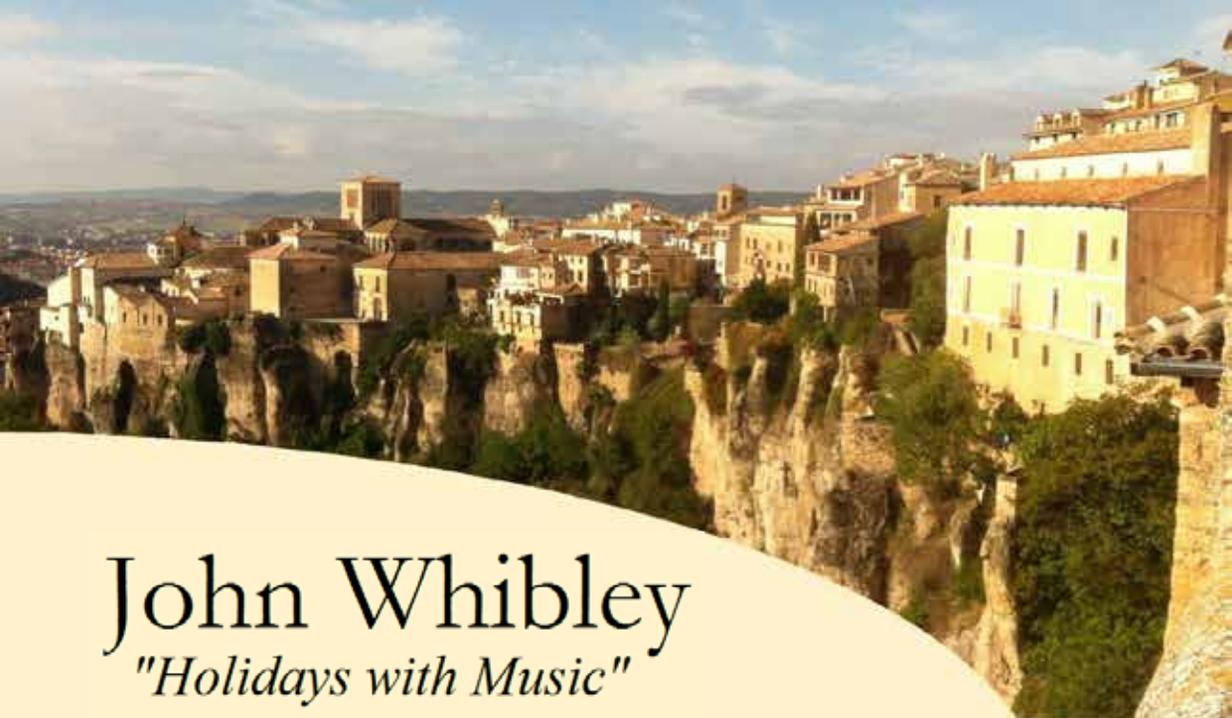
Nancy Buchanan
Ilona Bushell
Georgie Day
Hannah Emanuel
Ashlee Godwin
Jean Innes
Hilary Norman
Ally Stewart
Claire de Thierry
Jan Trott

Tenors

Edward Allen
Edward Davison
Harry George
Richard Houston
Oliver Kelham
Richard O’Neill
Nicholas Pyke

Basses

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Southbank Sinfonia is an orchestra of young professionals described by *The Independent* as 'a hugely talented young ensemble whose performances are always theatrical'. It is internationally recognised as a leading orchestral academy, each year bringing together 33 of the world's most promising graduate musicians to provide a much-needed springboard into the profession.

Its annual fellowship provides unparalleled opportunities to gain crucial experience in orchestral repertoire, chamber music, opera, dance and theatre – often in partnership with leading performing arts organisations including the Royal Opera and Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields. From giving the first ever performance of Mozart's Requiem at Notre-Dame to taking centre-stage in the National Theatre's acclaimed production of *Amadeus*, Southbank Sinfonia ensures new generations uphold a venerable tradition, but also asks anew what orchestras have the power to communicate in the modern world.

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Founded in 2002 by Music Director Simon Over, the orchestra is proud to be based at St John's Waterloo, in the heart of London, where its musicians bring their own exploratory impulse to bite-sized Free Rush Hour Concerts. By virtue of their youth, energy and excellence, Southbank Sinfonia players not only bring fresh resonance to the stage but are also ideally placed to act as role-models who inspire many younger musicians on London's Southbank and beyond.

Enabling players to devote themselves fully to the experience, every place is free and every player receives a bursary. Making this possible is a family of supporters – trusts, organisations and individuals like you – who recognise the players' potential and relish following their remarkable progress and the spirit they exude in performances. To find out how you can support the orchestra and discover more about its next performances, visit southbanksinfonia.co.uk.

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Marie Lestrelin
Arda Karakaya
Vanessa Chan
Patrizia Lichtscheidl
Emma Lisney
Ronald Long
Annabel Drummond
Sue In Kang
Usman Peguero

2nd Violin

Emily Groom
Heather Stewart
Rebecca Köhler Baratto
Lydia Caines
Adéla Ševčíková
Jane Kim
Jessica Coleman

Viola

Anita Kurowska
Rachel Maxey
Katie Perrin
Marsailidh Groat
Anna Barsegjana
Lily Rogers

Cello

Daniel Pini
Hee Yeon Cho
Melody Lin
Carola Krebs
David Råberg-Schrello

Bass

Samuel Beck-Johnson
Declan Birchall
Jack Hewetson

Flute

Hugues Roberts
Jack Welch

Piccolo

Taylor MacLennan

Oboe

Alex Fryer
Tim Keasley

Cor Anglais

Laura Campbell

Clarinet

Lily Molnar
Sean Lim

Bass Clarinet

Greg Hearle

Bassoon

Charlotte Cox
Antonia Lazenby

Contra Bassoon

Christina Marroni

French Horn

Joel Roberts
Máté Tözsér
Stephen Craigen
Helena Jacklin

Trumpet

Peter Athans
Cameron Johnson
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London Concert Choir

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London Concert Choir greatly appreciates the financial contribution of its regular supporters in helping the choir to maintain its position as one of London's leading amateur choirs. However, we cannot promote our concerts at major venues with professional performers of the required calibre unless we receive income from sources other than ticket sales.

The choir runs a Supporters' Scheme and also offers opportunities to sponsor soloists or orchestral players and to advertise in our concert programmes.

To find out more, please email treasurer@londonconcertchoir.org

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London Concert Choir welcomes new members, who are invited to attend a few rehearsals before an informal audition. If you are interested in joining the choir, please fill in your details online at londonconcertchoir.org

Mailing List

If you would like to receive advance information about our concerts, you can join the choir's free mailing list by clicking on the link on the home page of the website.

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