

DARTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY



and a selection of choral pieces including
God so loved the world - Bob Chilcott
Easter Hymn - Pietro Mascagni

Soprano Soloist:	Janette Cattell
Alto Soloist:	Richard Decker
Tenor Soloist:	James Micklethwaite
Organist:	Francesca Massey
Conductor:	Richard Decker

Saturday 12th April 2025
at 7.30pm

St Michael's Church
Wilmington
DA2 7EH

Tickets: £12
(£10 for Patrons, £5 for students)



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www.dartfordchoral.org.uk
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PROGRAMME

Hosanna to the Son of David *Orlando Gibbons*
Ride on *Grayston Ives*
Wash me throughly.....*Samuel Sebastian Wesley*
Christus factus est..... *Anton Bruckner*
God so loved the world*Bob Chilcott*
Easter Hymn..... *Pietro Mascagni (arr Richard Decker)*

INTERVAL

Messiah Part II*George Frideric Handel*

Behold the Lamb of God *Chorus*
He was despised*Alto aria*
Surely he has borne our griefs *Chorus*
And with his stripes *Chorus*
All we like sheep *Chorus*
All they that see him, laugh him to scorn *Tenor recitative*
He trusted in God that he would deliver him *Chorus*
Thy rebuke hath broken his heart *Tenor recitative*
Behold and see if there be any sorrow *Tenor aria*
He was cut off out of the land of the living *Tenor recitative*
But thou did'st not leave his soul in hell *Tenor aria*
Lift up your heads, O ye gates *Chorus*
Unto which of the angels said he at any time *Tenor recitative*
Let all the angels of God worship him *Chorus*
Thou art gone up on high*Alto aria*
How beautiful are the feet*Soprano aria*
Their sound is gone out *Chorus*
He that dwelleth in heaven *Tenor recitative*
Thou shalt break them..... *Tenor aria*
Hallelujah! *Chorus*

PROGRAMME NOTES

When programming tonight's concert, I considered the fact that we are performing in a beautiful church on the eve of Palm Sunday, and more generally, Holy Week: one of the most important and fruitful weeks of the year, not just liturgically, but musically too. So many composers have drawn inspiration from texts and prayers used in this week, and for our first half we will perform six anthems which tell the story of Jesus' Passion, from Palm Sunday right the way through to Easter Day. We begin with Orlando Gibbons' rousing ***Hosanna to the Son of David***, a passage from Luke's Gospel which has been set by various composers over the years, with the crowds chanting as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Gibbons' setting relies on the main theme of a perfect 5th, often associated with royal fanfares, perfect for heralding 'The King of the Jews'. This is followed by another setting of a popular Palm Sunday hymn: ***Ride on*** (in majesty), this setting by 20th century composer Grayston Ives. This, like the Gibbons, also relies heavily on the interval of a perfect 5th, though Ives sets it in a much more subdued way, with the upper voices taking on the roles of the angels who look down as Jesus rides towards his eventual crucifixion. The piece ends with all voices singing a repeated 'A' in unison; a foreshadowing of Jesus' long walk to Calvary, perhaps?

We then move to Maundy Thursday, the day when Christians remember the last supper, and Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet. Wesley's anthem ***Wash me thoroughly*** was composed around 1840, and uses verses of psalm 51 (commonly known as the 'Miserere'), and it has now become a staple for choirs across the world for their Passiontide services. This piece is followed by a text from Paul's letter to the Philippians: ***Christus factus est pro nobis***. Originally, this text would have been sung by monks on Maundy Thursday, though nowadays it is used just as frequently on Good Friday.

Anton Bruckner actually set this text three times. The first was as a gradual as part of a mass setting, while the second involved a double choir and trombones! This third setting that we will perform tonight, however, is much calmer, and indeed seems in direct contrast to Bruckner's grand, and perhaps overbearing, orchestral works (Brahms once described Bruckner's symphonies as 'boa constrictors'!). Of course, a Good Friday music selection would not be complete without the famous passage from John 3:16 – **God so loved the world**. The most famous musical setting of this is surely John Stainer's haunting rendering in his Crucifixion, but tonight, you will hear Bob Chilcott's more contemporary composition. It is still just as beautiful, with a simple, lilting melody, and a soprano solo floating over the top. I first encountered this piece as a boy treble, aged 10, and instantly fell in love with it, and I hope you will as well! We arrive at Easter Sunday with a quick trip to the opera. Although not perhaps Italy's most prolific opera composer, Pietro Mascagni is most certainly a household name thanks to his masterpiece *Cavalleria Rusticana*. This rousing **Easter Hymn** is sung in Act 1 by a double chorus, along with Santuzza, the heroine of the opera. The arrangement performed tonight has been specially written for Dartford Choral Society, with the double (and sometimes triple) choir parts being reduced to an SATB format, alongside a soprano soloist. The translation is also new, too, and aims to give a more literal interpretation of the original Italian libretto by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti than existing translations perhaps do.

Handel's **Messiah**, and specifically Part II, is, along with Bach's Passions and Stainer's Crucifixion, one of the most instantly recognisable and important large-scale works for Passiontide. The story of the Messiah's swift composition is well-known and well-documented: Handel received the final libretto and began work on the 22nd August 1741. By 28th August, Part I had been fully

outlined, and eight days later, Part II was drafted too, with Part III then six days thereafter. Several revisions were then made before the work's first performance in Dublin on the 13th April, 1742. It received its London première at the Covent Garden Theatre, a year later, and although many criticised the performance of a liturgical work in a theatre, rather than a church, the Hallelujah Chorus was said to have moved King George II so much that he stood up. Whilst there is much debate over the truth of this, it nonetheless is a practice still adopted by audiences today, and we invite you to join us in standing as we conclude our evening with this rousing chorus. Part II of the Messiah is often subject to several cuts when performed nowadays; a practice we have tried to avoid as much as possible tonight (with three exceptions). As such, you will hear the famous choruses: 'He trusted in God' and 'All we like sheep' alongside lesser known movements 'Let all the angels of God' (which we at DCS affectionately call 'The Antiques Roadshow piece' – you'll hear why!) and the beautiful, and hugely underrated alto aria 'Thou art gone up on high'. We hope you will enjoy hearing these lesser-known movements alongside the old favourites, as much as the choir has enjoyed learning them!

The Messiah holds a very special place in my heart as both a countertenor and conductor. It was the first piece I ever sang the solos in professionally as a young singer, nearly ten years ago now. I was also due to conduct this work with singers and orchestra in the beautiful Basilica di San Lorenzo in Florence, in May 2020. Sadly, a certain global pandemic put paid to these plans, but I am over the moon, five years later, to finally have the opportunity to conduct this glorious piece, with an amazing choir, organist and soloists. I hope you enjoy listening to it as much as I will!

Richard Decker – April 2025

Hosanna to the Son of David - Gibbons

Hosanna to the Son of David
Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord
Blessed be the King, blessed be the King of Israel
Blessed be the King, blessed be the Kingdom
that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heav'n and glory in the highest places
Hosanna in the highest heavens

Ride on - Ives

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry,
thy humble beast pursues his road
with palms and scattered garments strowed

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die,
O Christ thy triumph now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The wingèd squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wond'ring eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Wash me thoroughly – Wesley

(soprano soloist: Rachel Miles)

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness,
and forgive me all my sin

For I acknowledge my faults
and my sin is ever before me.

Christus Factus est - Bruckner

Christus factus est pro nobis
obediens usque ad mortem,
mortem autem crucis.

Propter quod et Deus exaltavit
illum et dedit illi nomen,
quod est super omne nomen.

*Christ became obedient for us
unto death,
even to the death, death on
the cross.*

*Therefore God exalted Him
and gave Him a name
which is above all names.*

God so loved the world – Chilcott

(soprano soloist: Barbara Toft)

God so loved the world,
That he gave his only begotten son
that whoso believeth in him
should not perish but have everlasting life.

Easter Hymn – Mascagni (arr R Decker)

(soprano soloist: Janette Cattell)

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia;	<i>Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven; Alleluia!</i>
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,	<i>He whom thou wast meet to bear; Alleluia!</i>
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia:	<i>As He promised hath arisen; Alleluia!</i>
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.	<i>Pour for us to God thy prayer; Alleluia!</i>

O rejoice that the Lord has arisen,
He has conquer'd the power of the grave.
O rejoice that the Lord has arisen,
in the power and glory of heav'n

O rejoice that the Lord has arisen,
He has broken the bonds of his prison.
He has arisen in glory, in the glory of heav'n!
Alleluia, Alleluia! O rejoice in the Lord!

I N T E R V A L

Messiah Part II – Handel

(please refrain from showing your appreciation until the very end)

Janette Cattell – Soprano Soloist

Richard Decker – Alto Soloist

James Micklethwaite – Tenor Soloist

i. Behold the Lamb of God *Chorus*

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.

ii. He was despised *Alto aria*

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

iii. Surely he has borne our griefs *Chorus*

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows!
He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

iv. And with his stripesChorus

And with His stripes we are healed.

v. All we like sheep.....Chorus

All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way.
And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

vi. All they that see him, laugh him to scorn Tenor aria

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn;
they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

vii. He trusted in God that he would deliver him..... Chorus

"He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him,
if He delight in Him."

viii. Thy rebuke hath broken his heart Tenor aria

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart:
He is full of heaviness.
He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man,
neither found He any to comfort him.

ix. Behold and see if there be any sorrow*Tenor aria*

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

x. He was cut off out of the land of the living.... *Tenor recitative*

He was cut off out of the land of the living:
for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.

xi. But thou did'st not leave his soul in hell.....*Tenor aria*

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell;
nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

xii. Lift up your heads, O ye gates*Chorus*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord
mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

xiii. Unto which of the angels *Tenor recitative*

Unto which of the angels said He at any time: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?"

xiv. Let all the angels of God worship him *Chorus*

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

xv. Thou art gone up on high *Alto aria*

Thou art gone up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even from Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

xvi. How beautiful are the feet *Soprano aria*

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

xvii. Their sound is gone out *Chorus*

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

xviii. He that dwelleth in heaven..... *Tenor recitative*

He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh them to scorn;
The Lord shall have them in derision.

xix. Thou shalt break them..... *Tenor aria*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in
pieces like a potter's vessel.

xx. Hallelujah!..... *Chorus*

(please feel free to stand during the Hallelujah chorus)

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord,
and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Hallelujah!

Richard Decker – Conductor & Alto Soloist



Richard is a countertenor and conductor from Sidcup, who trained at the Royal College of Music and previously St John's College, Cambridge, where he read Italian and French with linguistics whilst also being a choral scholar. As a singer, Richard was a finalist in the 2024 Kathleen Ferrier Awards at the Wigmore Hall, and has been hailed as a 'countertenor star of the future' (OperaNow) with an 'exquisite tone' (SpyintheStalls). Operatic highlights range from Arsamene (Serse) and The Sorceress (Dido and Aeneas), to more modern roles including Lucifer (The Fall of Lucifer – Burgon) and Nicholas Lear (The Anthem – Jasper Eaglesfield), and he has worked with leading opera companies including HGO and Tête à Tête. His recent concert work includes Handel's Messiah, Bach's Christmas Oratorio and Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, as well as giving song recitals across the UK and Italy, ranging from English lute song to world premières of new song cycles.

As a conductor, Richard has held Choir Director positions at St Mark's English Church, Florence and All Saints' Church, Orpington. He is currently Director of Music at St Augustine's, Tooting, where he runs a Community Choir. He also trains the choristers at the King's Chapel of the Savoy, where he was himself a boy treble. As an orchestral conductor, last year he worked as Assistant Conductor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields Orchestra for their concert at the Cambridge Summer Music Festival, and has conducted three operas, most recently a production of Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2023. He is delighted to be conducting his first concert as MD of Dartford Choral Society, and can't wait for many fun and exciting projects in the future!

Janette Cattell – Soprano Soloist



Janette's love of singing began at an early age, encouraged by her mother who was a keen dancer and singer. Her school careers' adviser, however, said she should become either a doctor or a lawyer and, disliking the sight of blood, she chose the latter. She has managed to combine a career as a

City solicitor with performing as a soloist with many operatic and choral groups in London and the South East, including most recently Aquarian Opera, Erith Operatic Society, Gravesham Choral and the Old Bailey Choir, whilst also bringing up the next generation of singer (and conductor), her son Richard Decker.

Janette's stage roles have been as diverse as Mozart's Queen of the Night and the Mother Superior in Sister Act, together with all of the Savoy operas. She also performed at the 2023 Edinburgh Fringe Festival as Madame Goldentrill in Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor with Richard conducting. Her solo choral repertoire includes Handel's Messiah, Faure's Requiem, Haydn's Nelson Mass and Vivaldi's Gloria. She is delighted to be making her debut with Dartford Choral with Richard again waving the baton.

James Micklethwaite – Tenor Soloist



James Micklethwaite grew up in Leeds, where he had early experience performing with Opera North. He was a member of The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, before studying at the Royal College of Music. Highlights include: Delmonte in *Un Giorno di regno*, and Flute (Cover) in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, both for Garsington Opera; tenor soloist in the Albert Hall for the Really Big Chorus' *Messiah* from Scratch; Gastone (Cover) in *The Dead City* for English National Opera, and Slender in *Sir John in Love* for British Youth Opera at Opera Holland Park.

Recent concert engagements include: Bach's *B Minor Mass* and *St John Passion* (Evangelist); Haydn's *Creation*; Mendelssohn's *St Paul*, and Handel's *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea* and *Samson*.

This summer, James will return to Garsington Opera, as Tchapliksy in *The Queen of Spades*, and Grimoaldo (Cover) in *Rodelinda*, before performing as Apollo in *Semele* for Waterperry Opera Festival.

Francesca Massey - Organist



Francesca is a vastly experienced accompanist, having worked with a multitude of ensembles including The BBC Singers, broadcasting on TV and Radio, as well as playing on numerous recordings with various choirs. She was described as a ‘hugely gifted accompanist’ by Gramophone Magazine.

Born in Birmingham, Francesca was educated at Cambridge University (as Organ Scholar at Gonville and Caius College), and the Royal Northern College of Music, where she won the Organ Prize and was awarded a prestigious ABRSM Scholarship and Musicians’ Benevolent Fund Ian Fleming Award. She held organist positions at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, and at Manchester, Peterborough, Durham and Rochester Cathedrals, before embarking on a varied portfolio career.

Francesca performs extensively as an organ recitalist throughout the UK and abroad and works as a liturgical musician in a number of prestigious London churches and chapels. She has four critically-acclaimed solo recordings to her name. Francesca also works as a choral conductor (she is the Musical Director of Cranbrook, Gravesham and Upchurch Choral Societies), instrumental teacher, continuo player, pianist and examiner (for The Royal College of Organists Diplomas).

More information can be found at www.francesca-massey.org

Next Concert: June 21st 2025

Dartford Choral Society will be performing **Joanna Forbes L'Estrange** new composition "**A Season to Sing**". The society is one of 55 choirs to have **co-commissioned the work** together with the RSCM and will be **the first to perform it in Kent**, with only 20 choirs having performed the work this year prior to the Society's June concert.

A Season to Sing is a choral re-imagining of Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" for the 300th anniversary which falls in 2025. The instrumental music of Vivaldi's work has been adapted for choir by adding vocal parts to the existing melodies and harmonies. The text is from poems and the bible on the subject of spring, summer, autumn and winter. The 40 minute work is arranged for mixed voices and organ.

"...simply beautiful choral writing by someone who knows, from a singer's perspective, how to compose music which every choir will want to sing." - SIR JOHN RUTTER CBE, composer

JOIN DARTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

for Our Summer Concert Season!

Are you passionate about singing and eager to perform captivating choral works? Dartford Choral Society invites you to become part of our vibrant community as we prepare for an exciting summer concert season.

REHEARSALS:

When: Monday evenings, 7.30pm

Where: The Mick Jagger Centre, Shepherds Lane,
Dartford

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES:

Joseph Haydn's *'The Seasons'*

Experience the beauty of nature through Haydn's evocative choruses.

Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's *'A Season to Sing'*

Be part of one of the first performances of this contemporary choral re-imagining of Vivaldi's 'The Four Seasons', celebrating its 300th anniversary

Whether you're an experienced singer or new to choral music, we welcome all voice parts to join us. Come along to a rehearsal or reach out to our committee for more information.

CONTACT US: secretary@dartfordchoral.org.uk

DARTFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Musical Director: Richard Decker

Sopranos

Radhika Ananthan
Elaine Clark
Pat Everington (Chairman)
Pamela Hunt
Margaret Martin
Rachel Miles
Julia Noakes
Barbara Toft

Altos

Rosie Benns
Marilyn Davey
Jane Foong
Nicky Garland
Claire Michele
Stephanie O'Neil
Louise Peterken
Gwen Rumble
Chris Settle
Kate Stock
Mary Webb

Tenors

Vernon Creek
Paul Grimmer (Secretary)
Andrew Lewis
Mike Michele

Basses

Andrew Dey
Tunde Dipita-Williams
Alan Hunt
Steve Jones
Michael Sears (Treasurer)

The Dartford Choral Society rehearses on Monday evenings, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm, (except July & August) at the Mick Jagger Centre, Shepherds Lane, Dartford. New members are always welcome.

Please contact the Hon. Secretary, Paul Grimmer
01342 833911 (Daytime) 01322 227994 (Evenings).
Email: secretary@dartfordchoral.org.uk

President

The Mayor of Dartford - Councillor Andy Lloyd

Vice Presidents

Mrs Audrey Ash
Mrs Ruth M Fricker
Mr and Mrs Bill Collier
(in memory of David Collier)

Patrons

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The Dartford Choral Society is dependent upon financial assistance to continue giving public concerts.

The Dartford Choral Society greatly appreciates the financial assistance kindly given to us by our Patrons.

Dartford Choral Society Patrons

The support and encouragement Dartford Choral Society receives from Patrons is invaluable in enabling the choir to expand its repertoire and make choral music more widely available to the people of Dartford and the surrounding areas. Over the years many members, past members, and friends of the Society have felt able to support us in this way.

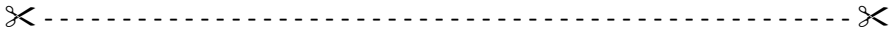
For an annual subscription of £30, or £50 per couple, Patrons receive advance notification of the concert dates and programme for the season, have their name listed in each programme, and receive a reduction of £2 on the price of admission to each concert.

If you would like to support us by becoming a Patron please complete the form on the back of this programme. Alternatively, contact the Patrons Secretary, Andrew Dey – Tel.01322 555406
Email - andrew.dey@live.co.uk.

For your diaries please note:-

**NEXT CONCERT: A SEASON TO SING - Joanna Forbes L'Estrange
 A selection from THE SEASONS – Joseph Haydn
 SEASONS – a song cycle by Jonathan Whiting**

**SATURDAY 21ST JUNE 7.30pm
St Michaels, Wilmington**



Dartford Choral Society Patrons

To: Andrew Dey, DCS, 18 Sandringham Drive, Dartford, Kent DA2 7WB

I would like to become a Patron of DCS / purchase a subscription for a friend *[delete as appropriate]*.

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