

Saturday 29 March 2025

Cadogan Hall
5 Sloane Terrace
London SW1X 9DQ

75TH
ANNIVERSARY



Brahms German Requiem *Poulenc Gloria*

Sophie Bevan Soprano

Roderick Williams Baritone

Kingston Choral Society

Thames Sinfonia

Andrew Griffiths Conductor

Programme: £3.00



CADOGAN HALL



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Kingston Choral Society has over 100 members drawn from southwest London and north Surrey. New members are welcome. The choir performs four concerts a year, usually in All Saints Church, Kingston, and St Andrew's Church, Surbiton. Two of the concerts are with a professional orchestra. Rehearsals are held on Thursday evenings (8-10 pm) at The Hollyfield School, Surbiton, in term-time. Kingston Choral Society also holds regular social and fundraising events and occasional musical workshops.

If you are interested in joining, please talk to any member of the choir during the interval or at the end of the concert. You can also contact the Membership Secretary on 020 8942 2275 or join@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk for more information and arrange to come to a rehearsal.

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~ ~ PROGRAMME ~ ~

POULENC - *GLORIA*

1. Gloria in excelsis Deo
2. Laudamus te
3. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis
4. Domine Fili unigenite
5. Domine Deus, agnus Dei
6. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

~ ~ INTERVAL (30 mins) ~ ~

BRAHMS - *EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM*

- I Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
- II Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
- III Herr, lehre doch mich, daß ein Ende
- IV Wie lieblich sind Deine Wohnungen
- V Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
- VI Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt
- VII Selig sind die Toten

POULENC (1899-1963)

Francis Poulenc was born in 1899, in Paris. His father Emile and his mother, Jenny Royer, had married in 1885. A daughter was born in 1887 but the couple had lost two later children. A son died in his infancy and a baby was stillborn. The arrival of Francis was some seven years after the latter event, when his older sister was 12.

Francis' father was joint-head of his family-owned pharmaceutical firm and his mother, a keen amateur musician, was from a long line of artists and craftspeople. They brought differing attributes to Francis' upbringing. His father's pious Catholic upbringing instilled the importance of a broad education to equip his son for a productive life, whereas his mother, though not anti-religious, had wide artistic interests and was a capable pianist. She ensured her son's exposure to a wide range of music, including what he later referred to as '*adorable bad music*', popular Parisian café tunes.

Francis' schooling was in the educational mainstream, as his father determined, augmented by piano lessons from his mother, from the age of five. Later, more advanced tuition arrived via one of her more musically accomplished acquaintances. Francis took to the instrument easily and performing became a passion. He recalled being excited, aged eight, to hear '*wrong notes*' in Debussy's *Danse Sacrée et Danse Profane* and had hurried to his own piano to recreate the same discordant sounds. Another early memory was of being entranced by the mysterious song entitled, *Die Nebensonnen* (The Mock Suns), from Schubert's song cycle, *Winterreise*.

For a while, Francis imagined a future as a singer but after his voice broke, he was '*left with the composer's typical sorry squeak*'. His love of the voice and of the word dominated and directed his composing career. At 15, he was accepted as a pupil of Ricardo Viñes (1875-1943), a Spanish pianist, famed as an interpreter of Debussy and Ravel. From then on, music assumed an even greater importance. Later, Poulenc claimed that he '*owed everything to Viñes*', who not only influenced his writing for the keyboard and pianistic technique but became his mentor.

In his mid-teens, Poulenc had lost both parents - his mother in 1915 and his father in 1917. Taken in by his older sister and her husband, he lived with them in Paris. He was also supported by Raymonde Linossier (1897-1930). Slightly older, she was a childhood friend with whom he shared a keen interest in the arts. She introduced Francis to her circle, including notable avant-garde writers and poets. He would set some of their works to music, Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) being a prime example.

In such literary company Francis was something of a social butterfly. He delighted in being the centre of attention and went to great lengths to keep his audience entertained. Witty and, at times, risqué in conversation, he was not above engaging in outrageous behaviour, including cross-dressing or even stripping at parties. As far as he could, he ensured he would not easily be overlooked.

For many in his circle, the person they saw told the whole story of who he was. For some, his musical compositions carried the same imprint - witty, charming and spicy, with daring harmonic juxtapositions, but lacking depth and gravitas. Much of his music was lyrical, written for small forces, and lively. An early work to reach the public was *Rapsodie nègre* (Black Rhapsody). It appeared in 1917 and was written for baritone voice, piano, string quartet, flute and clarinet. The following year he produced the popular *Mouvements perpétuels* for piano, as well as two sonatas – one for pianoforte duet and one for two clarinets.

In January 1918, however, Poulenc's musical activities were interrupted when he was conscripted into military service.

From March 23 to August 7 that year, Paris was under German artillery bombardment. However, during his three years of soldiering, Poulenc was never exposed to the horrors of the frontline. After the cessation of conflict, his military attachments were light, permitting him to resume more of his music-making.

Between 1919 and 1929 Poulenc again mixed with established artists and musicians and was making his mark on the Parisian musical scene. In 1919 two new works appeared, *Toréador*, using texts of Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) and *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* (The Bestiary or Procession of Orpheus), a song cycle based on poems by Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), who had died the previous year from the Great Influenza epidemic that had ravaged Europe. In 1920 Poulenc's *Cocardes (Petites Pièces plaisantes)* was published, again deriving from the poetry of Cocteau. These witty pieces, with elements of parody, were generally well received, exerting a fresh and direct appeal. The composer's humour was becoming a recognizable trademark.

Through Viñes Poulenc met and was influenced by Erik Satie (1866-1925) and Georges Auric (1899-1983). Famously, Poulenc banded together with Georges Auric and others to promote music that was a reaction to the emotionalism of France's impressionist composers. The disaffected group, 'Les Six', was more united by friendship than by aesthetic ideals. From 1921 Poulenc's composing style benefitted from the tuition of Charles Koechlin (1867-1950). Over a period of four years he gained mastery of counterpoint, which allowed him to interweave independent musical lines, more or less harmoniously, according to his whim. He put this skill to good use, especially in his choral writing.

The year 1922 saw a string of new works - *Quatre Poèmes de Max Jacob*, a *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon* and a *Sonata for Horn, Trumpet and Trombone*. In 1924, at the request of Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), Poulenc composed the ballet score for *Les Biches*, which achieved great success. The premières of Poulenc's *Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano* and of *Chansons gaillardes*, with Pierre Bernac, baritone, took place in 1926.

In 1927, Poulenc retreated to *Le Grand Coteau*, a country home he had purchased with the inheritance from his parents. It allowed him to compose in relative solitude. His *Nocturnes* for solo piano and the ballet music for *Aubade* appeared the following year, having been commissioned by the Vicomte Charles and Vicomtesse Marie-Laure de Noailles. Due to fallout from the Wall Street crash in the 1920s Poulenc had lost the security of additional family monies. He became dependent upon, and was careful to court, wealthy patrons to supplement his direct earnings from performing and composing. Much of the latter derived from the very successful partnership struck between himself and the baritone Pierre Bernac. The two toured internationally and successfully for 25 years.

In 1930 Poulenc's beloved Raymonde had died. Not long before, he had proposed marriage to her, despite being in his first serious homosexual relationship at the time. She was aware of his ambivalent situation and rejected his offer. This resulted in a painful rift between them and Poulenc fell into a depression. In 1934 he was hit by another bereavement. His dear friend, Pierre-Octave Ferroud was killed in a road traffic accident, being decapitated in the process. Details of the horrific event profoundly affected Poulenc. Shortly after hearing the news, visiting the shrine of the Black Virgin at Rocamadour, he experienced a form of religious conversion, or more accurately the rediscovery of his childhood faith.

Subsequently, Poulenc moved away from secular towards religious themes for his compositions. The first result was the *Litanies à la Vierge Noire* (Litany to the Black Virgin), which he began while still at the shrine.

Published in 1936, it evoked a much more profound and serious atmosphere than had his previous compositions. His trademark dissonant harmonies were toned down and the overall effect, being less quirky, was moving and reflective. Poulenc wrote many successful religious works, including *Mass in G Major* (1937) and *Stabat Mater* (1951). He also wrote two very fine operas: *Dialogues des Carmélites* (1957) and *La Voix Humaine* (1958). His *Gloria* (1960), a commissioned piece, has become one of his most celebrated compositions.

Ever keen to appear confident and in effortless control, privately Poulenc was self-critical and perfectionistic. He suffered intermittently from anxiety and depression, often struggling with maintaining self-esteem. At times, he lacked confidence in his own musical abilities and talent. In his adult life he made many romantic attachments, not exclusively with men. In 1946 a rare romantic encounter with a woman, Frédérique Lebedeff, resulted in the birth of Marie-Ange. Never acknowledged publicly as his daughter, she became the principal beneficiary of his will.

Poulenc died of a heart attack in Paris on 30 January 1963. The funeral was at the Catholic church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. He had decreed that none of his own music be played. The only music to be heard was that of JS Bach, which was performed by the virtuoso organist Marcel Dupré (1886-1971). Francis Poulenc is buried in Paris, alongside his family at Père Lachaise Cemetery.

GLORIA

Poulenc was commissioned in 1959 by the Koussevitzky Foundation to compose the *Gloria*. This sacred work is scored for soprano solo, mixed choir and orchestra. The text is in Latin, taken from the Roman Catholic Mass. Its composition was not straightforward nor plain sailing. In a letter to Pierre Bernac, Poulenc complained 'I am working and re-working each bar in every conceivable way'. Of the finished product, he commented that it comprised 'very clear primary colours... rude and violent'. The piece is divided into six movements.

The *Gloria* opens with a powerful fanfare-like motif from the brass. The choir enters, singing in an accented and punctuated manner, adopting the dotted rhythms of the opening motif 'Glo-ri-a'. The music lurches between two home keys (G major and B minor), such an unsettled, bitonal, basis underpinning the whole work.

Laudamus te is lighter in mood. Its jaunty theme repeats. However, the frequent changes of time signature create irregular emphases, rendering the text less intelligible. The listening ear may struggle to make sense of un-speechlike patterns but, following a short reflective central section, the movement ends simply in a celebratory fashion.

After a gentle woodwind introduction, *Domine Deus* is led by the soprano's solo line. Lyrical, it is also haunting and darkly moving. The movement ends with an unexpected final cadence - a chord that signals an imminent change of mood.

The fleeting *Domine Fili unigenite* is light-hearted and short. Its fast tempo and spikey melody suggest a dance at risk of running away with itself. A short-lived passage of rhythmic monotone repetitions in the bass does not disturb its momentum. Having run its course, the movement ends abruptly.

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei opens with the woodwind's other-worldly harmonies. These usher in the soprano soloist who creates an eerie edge to the atmosphere that is also beautiful. The unexpectedly large leaps in pitch of her melodic line exert an alerting effect. Before the movement ends a tentative calm has prevailed.

Unaccompanied voices thunder the opening of *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*, before the orchestra interjects with the fanfare motif. Having been reminded of the work's beginning, its end is finally heralded by the soprano's extended 'Amen'. The chorus joins her, but with a tinge of doubt creeping into its otherwise soothing presence. The final 'Amen' is undecided about a homecoming key. Both B minor and G major chords are sounded simultaneously, the soprano's final, sustained note acting as a fragile and transient bridge between the two.

BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, the second of three children to Johann Jacob and Johanna Christiane. His father, a talented musician, earned meagre wages playing a variety of instruments (flute, horn, violin and double bass) in the city's waterfront dance halls and taverns. Originally from Schleswig-Holstein in Prussia, his mother was 17 years older than her husband. She worked as a seamstress and strove to manage the family's finances, while her husband tended to spend extravagantly. His many money-making schemes, such as the sale of animals bred in the family's small backyard, seldom succeeded.

Johannes had his first music lessons from his father before he had started elementary school. Learning the cello and horn, he was increasingly drawn to the piano, his prodigious talent being soon evident. He graduated to piano lessons from a prominent local musician, Otto Cossel, before being tutored by the esteemed pianist and composer Eduard Marxsen (1806-1887). Through him Johannes was introduced to the major works of JS Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

Aged 10, the young Brahms gave his first performance as a pianist, playing chamber music by Beethoven and Mozart. Alongside his serious musical studies and performances, Johannes was required to contribute financially to the family. At 13, having left middle school, he was earning money from providing piano lessons. His musical talents were also touted, if not exploited, in some of the same seedy venues where his father had worked. The pay was poor and the hours long and anti-social.

By 15 Brahms had progressed to theatre bands, arranging dance numbers or writing popular drawing-room numbers. Only in his spare time could he compose music of his own liking. Much of this was influenced by his deep interest in Scandinavian sagas and Nordic legends. Under their sway, his early compositions displayed a dreamy and imaginative quality, albeit contained within the orderly structures of 'classicism'. Brahms' early schooling in the great composers of the Baroque and Classical periods led him to eschew the dominant 'romanticism' of his day, as represented by the music of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) and Richard Wagner (1813-1883).

By 1853, entering his 20s, Brahms had already produced several major piano works. These compositions often lacked grace and charm, not being well received and sometimes experienced as turgid. His rigid adoption of the classical forms, in effect, strangled the fluid and creative ideas that fought to find expression. Nevertheless, his works were recognized to derive from a serious musical mind, there being something 'monumental' about them.

Brahms' performing career also took off during his third decade. He travelled beyond his native Hamburg to tour with Eduard Reményi (1828-1898), a highly talented Hungarian violinist and something of a showman. Much less extravert and self-promoting, Brahms was being noticed and praised for his pianistic skills and for his compositions. Through his association with Reményi, he became familiar with Hungarian music and encountered other prominent musicians.

One of the most influential was Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), arguably the finest violinist of the 19th century. The two formed a close and long-term friendship, Joachim championing some of Brahms' compositions and introducing the young composer to Liszt and Robert Schumann (1810-1856).

Schumann was so impressed by Brahms that he extolled his musical virtues in an article for the prestigious music periodical *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. He predicted a wonderful future for the young man. The two had struck up a friendship surprisingly quickly, given their age difference, and Brahms was invited to stay with the Schumann family in Düsseldorf. Having spent Christmas that year back in Hamburg with his own family, Brahms returned to Düsseldorf, early in 1854, on hearing news of Schumann's mental breakdown and hospitalisation. His role was to support Clara and her seven children and he lived with them for the next two years, which greatly curtailed his own performing activities. He continued to compose, however, producing several works for piano and a sketch for a symphony, some of which music he used in later published works.

Although 14 years younger than Clara, Brahms was deeply committed to her throughout the difficult period of her husband's gradual decline. Schumann was confined to a sanatorium for the mentally ill near Bonn, where his wife was not permitted to visit. Brahms became their go-between until Schumann's death from pneumonia in 1856, Clara being eventually allowed to see her husband but only days before the end. Brahms' devotion to and love for her continued for the rest of her life.

Not long after Schumann's death, Brahms took up a part-time post as musical director at the Court of Detmold, many miles to the north, in the small principality of Lippe. In its tranquil environment Brahms taught, performed and composed. His new works included chamber music, piano pieces, songs and waltzes.



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Any inner tranquillity, however, was disrupted by his visit to Göttingen. In 1858 he had fallen in love and come close to marrying Agathe von Siebold. In a passionate letter to her, he expressed his love and confided 'I love you. I must see you again. But I cannot wear fetters...'. She terminated their engagement not long after receiving it.

Brahms never married or settled into an enduring intimate partnership. He was no doubt aware of his own 'natural irascibility', as it has been termed, coupled with difficulty in receiving kindness or sympathy. In a letter to a friend, he wrote, 'I could not bear to have in the house a woman who has the right to be kind to me, to comfort me when things go wrong'. Seldom at ease in social situations, Brahms could be extremely insensitive and provocative to the point of rudeness. It seemed impossible for him to adopt social niceties, to put on a false front. Nor were close friends exempt from the lashes of his sharp tongue. Even the long friendship with Joachim was ruptured at one point, Brahms taking the side of his wife during the breakup of the violinist's marriage. However, it is evident from hundreds of letters written or received by him that Brahms maintained many firm friendships, with both genders. These speak to a genuine warmth that lay behind his gruff exterior.

In 1863, having failed to obtain the post of conductor of Hamburg's Philharmonic Orchestra, which he had long wished for, Brahms decided to make Vienna his home and was soon installed as conductor of the city's 'Singakademie', a fine choral society. He only occupied the post for two years, however, before leaving to concentrate on composing and performing.

During that time, on a visit home in 1864, he found his parents' marriage close to breakdown. His attempted mediation produced no lasting benefit and, within a year, his father had abandoned his wife. Brahms' mother died in 1865 after having suffered a stroke. Despite being deeply affected by this loss, Brahms stayed on good terms with his father and with the young stepmother who was soon on the scene.

In the two years following the death of Brahms' mother, 1865-1867, he worked intermittently on *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Taking a considerable time to complete, its premiere was not until 1869. It was extremely well-received. The work soon featured in concert programmes across Europe, earning Brahms an international reputation. The same year also saw his completion of another major work: the *Alto Rhapsody*, for contralto, male chorus and orchestra. It is a setting of verses by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), from *Harzreise im Winter*. The poem tells of an imagined winter's journey in the mysterious Harz mountains.

It is thought that *Alto Rhapsody* was originally designed as part of Brahms' romantic approach to Julie, one of Clara Schumann's daughters, 24 at the time and 12 years his junior. The work's main character is a misanthropic soul urged on to find spiritual sustenance and to shed his prevailing negative attitudes to humankind. The similarities to Brahms' own character and situation are obvious and striking. In the event, he presented *Alto Rhapsody* to Julie on her marriage to another.

Between 1872 and 1875 Brahms was the Music Director of Vienna's 'Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde' (Society of Friends Music), conducting its orchestra and chorus. He programmed historic works by JS Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Schumann. In addition, he promoted works of his contemporaries, notably, Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904). Like Brahms, both were significantly influenced by the folk music of their respective nations.

Overall, audiences viewed Brahms' programmes as excessively serious and too intellectually demanding. Disappointed with their reception, he resigned his post in favour of composing and touring, performing as piano soloist, accompanist or conductor of his own works.

Brahms often composed works in pairs, whether instrumental, orchestral or vocal. As he wrote the first, due to his solving the inherent compositional problems, the seeds of a second would be germinating. His long-gestated first symphony is a prime example. This large-scale work took Brahms two decades to complete, by which time he was 44 years old. In 1876, its highly successful première seemed to unleash a torrent of other great works, among them: the Violin Concerto (1879); B-flat Piano Concerto (1881); Third Symphony (1883); Fourth Symphony (1885); Concerto for Violin and Cello (1887).

Brahms' total output was huge and varied. There were four symphonies; concertos for piano, for violin and for violin and cello; other orchestral works, including two overtures, two serenades and a set of variations; chamber music, comprising three for violin and piano, two for cello and piano and two for clarinet and piano, and many others for different combinations of instruments; and innumerable pieces for pianoforte, too many to categorise. Of his vocal music, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* is the grandest, being a work for two soloists, chorus and full orchestra. At the other extreme, he wrote for unaccompanied voices, including 117 German folk songs for four-part chorus. Solo songs with piano number more than 200.

Later in life, unlike Beethoven whose music displayed an ever-increasing intensity and daring, Brahms' music became more tender, contemplative and personal. Some late piano music incorporates the Nordic influences infusing his earliest compositions. His 'voice' remained an individual one. Some saw it as backward-looking and overly conservative. His immense emotional reserve meant a disinclination to embrace the romantic. Nor was he tempted to experiment with the emerging modernist trends exemplified by the works of Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) or Richard Strauss (1864-1949).

In Brahms' last works there is a hint of melancholy, perhaps anticipating his own death. His 1896 composition *Vier ernste Gesänge* (Four Serious Songs), was inspired by his beloved Clara's worrying state of ill health. Its texts are taken from the Luther Bible. The first three concern the transience of life, the fourth with faith, hope and love. At her funeral, in June 1896, Brahms is reported to have said *'Today, I have buried the only person I truly loved'*. At that time he was slowly wasting away from a cancer that spread to affect his liver. In March 1897 Brahms was dragging himself from his sickbed to hear his Fourth Symphony conducted by Hans Richter (1843-1916). It received a tumultuous ovation. Within a month, Brahms was dead. He is buried in the Vienna Central Cemetery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Tonight's performance would not have been possible without the generous support of Tony Kerslake, whose wife Veronica has sung soprano with KCS for 15 years.

Tony writes: "Kingston Choral Society is a fantastic choir which consistently excels itself and meets the challenging demands of Andrew Griffiths, their highly talented conductor. It gives huge amounts of pleasure both to the participants and those fortunate enough to be in the audience at their concerts.

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A GERMAN REQUIEM

In 1865, the year Brahms' mother died, in a letter to Clara Schumann, Brahms refers to one movement of 'a kind of *German Requiem*' being composed. Shortly afterwards, there is mention of its first two movements. The next record of the composition, however, is not until February 1866. At that time he was working on six of the final seven movements, I-IV and VI, VII, which are recorded as being completed by the summer of that year.

The fifth movement was, almost certainly, inspired by the death of Brahms' mother. It could have been written contemporaneously with the other movements, but it was not sent for publishing until 1868. Curiously, in December 1867, the work's first three movements alone, had been performed. They received mixed reviews from a small Viennese audience. On Good Friday of the following year, however, a six-movement version was premiered in Bremen and received very positively. Having at last inserted the fifth movement, Brahms' completed work was premiered in February 1869. Performed in Leipzig by the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Chorus, under the baton of Carl Reinecke (1824-1910), it was met with great critical acclaim.

Brahms' choice of title, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem), is potentially misleading. The work is not based on the Roman Catholic Mass for the dead, nor is it in Latin, and it is not suitable for liturgical purposes. It focuses much less on the deceased and the souls of the departed than does the Catholic Mass, in favour of a focus on providing comfort to the bereaved.

Brahms had chosen the work's texts himself and with care. As the title suggests, they are in his native German. They derive from the Luther Bible, Brahms having been baptised and confirmed into the Lutheran Church. Despite the texts' Biblical origins, the composer always asserted that he had no faith. As an adult, Brahms considered himself to be agnostic, a free thinker and humanist. For him, the Bible was essentially the repository of the words he needed to express his musical purpose.

Despite the *Requiem's* movements being composed and performed piecemeal, the work is conceived as a whole and is tightly constructed. Essentially, the piece is symmetrical, there being close similarities (both textual and musical) between the first and last, second and sixth, and third and fifth movements. At its centre, the fourth is the textual pinnacle of the whole composition, representing the peace and tranquillity of an afterlife in heaven.

In the first movement a quiet instrumental introduction evokes a hushed atmosphere, into which the choir enters, singing of the blessedness of those that mourn '*Selig sind, die da Leid tragen*'. The music, for a period, gradually becomes more animated but then calms to reiterate the initial words of blessing, '*Selig sind...*' (*Matthew 5:4; Psalm 126: 5-6*).

The slow second movement starts in the form of a funeral march, in 3/4 time. It derives from the unpublished symphony Brahms began during the period of Schumann's long hospitalisation. The text reminds listeners of the nature of human life '*Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras*' (*For all flesh is as the grass*). From its initial minor key, the movement develops more optimistically to the major, the text urging patience with the passage of earthly life.

The third movement features a baritone soloist, who utters the words '*Herr, lehre doch mich...*' (*Lord, teach me that I must have an end...*). The singer questions the meaning of human life. In quiet accompaniment the choir echoes the words of his poignant solo passages.

The music's intensity builds to a climax, which is followed by a fugue in D major, sung to the text '*Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand...*' (*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God...*). The four different voices of the choir, in taking up and developing the theme, separately and sequentially, bring the movement to a suitably comforting conclusion (*Psalm 39:4-7; Wisdom of Solomon: 3:1*).

The central fourth movement is predominantly in the form of a chorale, being sung simply as befits a sacred song. The chorus wonders at the beauty of the house of the Lord '*Wie lieblich sind Deine Wohnungen...*' (*How beautiful are your dwellings...*). The soul is longing for a heavenly residence. A short fugal section follows, based on the phrase '*... die loben Dich immerdar...*' (*They praise You forever more ...*), before the first theme and structure return to close the movement (*Psalm 84: 1, 2, 4*). As the *Requiem's* centrepiece, this movement itself is symmetrical.

Mirroring the work's third movement, the fifth introduces a solo voice, this time it is the soprano '*Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit...*' (*You now are sorrowful ...*). The choir offers soothing words '*Ich will euch trösten, wie einen seine Mutter tröstet*' (*I will console you, as a mother consoles her child*). It is Brahms at his most tender, his own mother not far from his mind. Beautiful and unobtrusive modulations of key produce music to inspire belief that there will be release from grief's strong grip (*John 16:22; Isaiah 66:13; Ecclesiasticus 51:35*).

Like the funereal second, the sixth movement begins at a slow tempo but, via a march-like rhythm, in 4/4 time. It conveys a restless atmosphere, reflecting the uncertainty expressed by the text '*Denn wir haben hier keine bleibende Statt...*' (*For here we have no permanent place...*). Led by the baritone soloist, this unsettled mood is dissipated and replaced by one of defiance and triumph '*Denn es wird die Posaune schallen und die Toten werden auferstehen unverweslich...*' (*For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise up incorruptible...*). Aptly placed in the overall scheme of the work, the movement's bolstering message to the bereaved is heralded loudly and clearly (*Hebrews 13:14; I Corinthians 15: 51, 52, 54, 55; Revelation 4:11*).

In the last movement the musical motif of the first '*Selig sind...*' reappears in fugal form. This time, the text is referring to the departed, not the mourners. It uses an inversion of the first movement's musical motif. Its modulation to a new key serves to elaborate the text, introduced by the words '*Ja, er Geisdt spricht...*' (*Yea, the Holy Spirit speaks...*). This reiterates the blessedness of the dead and God's promise that the faithful will find eternal rest from their earthly labours '*... daß sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit...*' (*Revelation, 14:13*).

Ein Deutsches Requiem contains some of Brahms' most gentle but also powerfully dramatic and exhilarating music. The two extremes are sometimes abruptly juxtaposed, as in the grieving process. With his texts carefully chosen and with those dear ones he had lost in his mind, the work is an intensely personal one, despite its grand scale. After more than 150 years, its impact on today's audiences is no less powerful than was its first performance on those who were fortunate enough to experience it in Leipzig.

Programme notes courtesy of Kingsley Norton



WIMBLEDON CHORAL

HAYDN NELSON MASS

Saturday, 5 April 2025, 7.30pm

Dobrinka Tabakova *Centuries of Meditations*
Grace Williams *Sea Sketches*

City of London Sinfonia

April Frederick *Soprano*

Angelina Dorlin-Barlow *Contralto*

Benjamin Durrant *Tenor*

Ed Grint *Bass*

Daniel Mahoney *Conductor*

Michael Higgins *Organ*



CADOGAN HALL

5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ

Tickets from £10 (transaction fees apply)

Box office: 020 7730 4500
cadoganhall.com

GLORIA

1. Gloria in excelsis Deo

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.*

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men of good will

2. Laudamus te

*Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.*

We praise you. We bless you.
We adore you. We glorify you.
We give you thanks for your great glory.

3. Domine Deus, Rex caelestis

*Domine Deus, rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.*

O lord God, king of heaven,
God the Father almighty.

4. Domine fili unigenite

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.

Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

5. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei

*Domine Deus, agnus Dei, Filius Patris, rex
caelestis,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.*

Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father, king
of heaven,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.

6. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.*

You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you only are holy.
You only are Lord.
You only are most high, Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

GERMAN REQUIEM

I 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.
They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
They that go forth weeping,
bearing precious seed,
And return with joy,
carrying their sheaves.

II Chorus

*Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
und alle Herrlichkeit des Menschen
wie des Grases Blumen.
Das Gras is verdorret
und die Blume abgefallen.
So seid nun geduldig, lieben 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.*

III Chorus with Baritone Solo

*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.*

IV 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.*

For all flesh is as grass,
and the glory of mankind
is as the flower of grass.
The grass is withered,
and the flower is fallen.
Therefore now be patient, dear brethren,
until the coming of the Lord.
Behold, the ploughman waits
for the precious crop of the earth,
and is patient for it,
until he receives the morning and evening rain.
But the word of the Lord endures forever
The redeemed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with exultation;
they shall be crowned with everlasting joy.
Joy and gladness shall seize them,
and sorrow and sighing must be banished.

Lord, teach me
that I must have an end,
and that my life has a span, and I must depart.
Behold, my days are
as a hand's breadth to you,
and my life is as nothing.
Alas, all men are as nothing,
however securely they live.
They go around like shadows,
and trouble themselves in vain;
they amass riches and do not know
who will receive them.
Now Lord, how can I console myself?
My hope is in you.
The souls of the righteous are in the hand of
God, and no distress shall ever trouble them.

How lovely are your dwellings,
Lord of hosts!
My soul longs and yearns
for the courts of the Lord;
my body and soul rejoice
in the living God.
Blessed are they that dwell in your house,
they praise you forever.

V Chorus with Soprano Solo

*Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit;
aber ich will euch wieder sehen,
und euer Herz soll sich freuen,
und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen.
Ich will euch trösten,
wie einen seine Mutter tröstet.
Sehet mich an: Ich habe eine kleine Zeit
Mühe und Arbeit gehabt
und habe großen Trost gefunden.*

For now you are sorrowful;
but I will see you again,
and your heart will be glad,
and no one will take your joy from you.
I will console you,
as a mother consoles her child.
Behold me: I have had for a little time
toil and torment,
and have found great consolation.

VI Chorus with Baritone Solo

*Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt,
sondern die zukünftige suchen wir.
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.
Dann wird erfüllet werden das Wort,
das geschrieben steht:
Der Tod is 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.*

For we have here no abiding city,
but we seek the one which is to come.
Behold, I tell you a mystery.
We shall not all sleep,
but we shall all be changed;
and that suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye,
at the sound of the last trumpet.
For the trumpet shall sound,
and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.
Then shall be fulfilled the word
that is written:
Death is swallowed up in victory.
Death, where is your sting?
Hell, where is your victory?
Lord, you are worthy
to receive praise and honour and power,
since you created all things,
and through your will they have their being
and are created.

VII 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
who from now on die in the Lord.
Yes, the Spirit says,
they will rest from their labours,
for their deeds follow them.

ANDREW GRIFFITHS – Musical Director



A musician of rare versatility, Andrew Griffiths combines his role as Head Coach at the National Opera Studio with a busy freelance career in the worlds of opera and choral music.

A graduate of the Royal Opera's Jette Parker Young Artist Programme, he has conducted productions for The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Opera Theatre Company, Opera Collective Ireland, Early Opera Company, Mid Wales Opera, Bampton Classical Opera and Iford Festival Opera. He has appeared in concert with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Swan, Southbank Sinfonia and Orpheus Sinfonia, and he is regularly engaged to broadcast and record with the BBC Singers.

Andrew has worked at Glyndebourne, ENO, Scottish Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, and with the BBC Symphony and Scottish Symphony Orchestras, and regularly joins the music staff at The Royal Opera, working alongside such conductors as Pappano, Bychkov, Gardiner and Mackerras. He is often engaged for projects outside the standard operatic canon, and is particularly experienced in Baroque repertoire and the music of the last 50 years. He is much in demand as a vocal coach, and works regularly with the Young Artists at The Royal Opera, as well as overseeing the training of the Young Artists at the National Opera Studio.

In constant demand as a choral conductor, Andrew appears regularly with the BBC Singers, for whom his engagements have included the world première of John Pickard's *Mass in Troubled Times*, recordings of Brahms, Hassler, Barber, Ives and Giles Swayne, and broadcasts of Howells, MacMillan and Martinů, as well as a Barbican debut directing music from the Flemish Renaissance. He is Musical Director of Kingston Choral Society and chamber choir Londinium, whose recordings have received wide critical acclaim. He regularly conducts for the Music Summer School at Gresham's, and has appeared as a guest conductor with the BBC Symphony Chorus, the choirs at Dartington, New London Chamber Choir, and Hong Kong's Tallis Vocalis.

A pianist, viola player and singer by training, Andrew began his musical education as a Quirister and Scholar at Winchester College, and read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he held a Choral Exhibition. He studied conducting under Martyn Brabbins in Glasgow, and trained as a répétiteur at the National Opera Studio and at Scottish Opera. He is a former principal viola of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, and a founder member of vocal consort Stile Antico.

Engagements during the current season include conducting contemporary opera scenes at the National Opera Studio directed by Keith Warner, a return to Bampton Classical Opera for Salieri's *La locandiera*, Handel's *Israel in Egypt* at Gresham's, assistant conductor for *Il trovatore* at The Royal Opera, and chorus-master for Boulez's *Cummings ist der Dichter* with the BBC Singers.

SOPHIE BEVAN - Soprano



Recognised as one of the leading lyric sopranos of her generation Sophie Bevan studied at the Royal College of Music where she was awarded the Queen Mother Rose bowl for excellence in performance. She was the recipient of the 2010 Critics' Circle award for Exceptional Young Talent, The Times Breakthrough Award at the 2012 South Bank Sky Arts Awards, Young Singer award at the 2013 inaugural International Opera Awards and was made an MBE for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019.

She works regularly with leading orchestras worldwide and with conductors including Sir Antonio Pappano, Daniel Harding, Andris Nelsons, Edward Gardner, Laurence Cummings, Sir Mark Elder, Ivor Bolton and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. Recent and future highlights include *Ah! Perfido*, *The Seasons*, Knussen Whitman settings and Ryan Wigglesworth's *Augenlieder* all with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Strauss' *Four Last Songs* with the Philharmonia, *Les Illuminations* with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Aurora Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Fauré *Requiem* and Haydn *Nelson Mass* with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Schubert *Mass no 6* and the *St Matthew Passion* with the Concertgebouw, *Alexander's Feast* in Madrid and Vienna with The King's Consort, *St Matthew Passion* at the Royal Festival Hall, *Messiah* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Handel's *Saul* at the Edinburgh Festival, an evening of Viennese repertoire with the BBC Concert Orchestra at the 2020 BBC Proms Festival, Knussen's *Songs and a Sea Interlude* with the Swedish Radio Orchestra, Mahler 4 and the world premiere of Wigglesworth's *Magnificat* with the Hallé Orchestra, concert performances of *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the BBC Scottish Symphony, Poulenc *Gloria* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Mahler 4 and a world premiere with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, as well as concerts with the London Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, BBC Scottish and BBC Philharmonic Orchestras, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. An acclaimed recitalist she has appeared with pianists including Julius Drake, Malcom Martineau, Ryan Wigglesworth, Christopher Glynn and Graham Johnson at venues including the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Aldeburgh Festival, Oxford Lieder Festival and appears regularly at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Sought after for her work in opera Sophie's recent and future engagements include Ilia *Idomeneo*, Sophie *Der Rosenkavalier*, Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, Dalinda *Ariodante*, Pamina *Die Zauberflöte* at the Royal Opera House, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte* for Welsh National Opera, Ellen Orford *Peter Grimes* for the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, Hermione in Ryan Wigglesworth's *The Winter's Tale*, Têlaire *Castor and Pollux* and one of the lead sopranos in *The Seven Deaths of Maria Callas* for ENO, Mélisande *Pelléas et Mélisande* for Dresden Semperoper, Asteria *Tamerlano* for The Grange Festival, Freia *Das Rheingold* at Teatro Real, Madrid, and Governess *The Turn of the Screw* in the acclaimed production for Garsington Opera. She made her debut at Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Michal *Saul* and at the Salzburg Festival and Metropolitan Opera as Beatriz in Thomas Adès' *The Exterminating Angel*.

Sophie lives in Oxfordshire with her husband, three children and two cocker spaniels.

RODERICK WILLIAMS - Baritone



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, Michel van der Aa, Robert Saxton and Alexander Knaifel. Recent and future engagements include *The Traveller / Death in Venice* for Welsh National Opera, the title role in *Eugene Onegin* and *Yeletsky / Pique Dame* for Garsington, Papageno for Covent Garden, Sharpless / *Madame Butterfly* for ENO and van de Aa's *Upload* with Cologne

Opera, Bregenz Festival and the Dutch National 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, London 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 2022/23 season he takes the position of Composer in Association of the BBC Singers

He performed the three Schubert song cycles around the UK 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, was 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 and sang at the Coronation Service of King Charles III in May 2023, as well as composed a choral work for the event.

Kingston Choral Society needs your support

It takes lots of resources – talent, volunteers and financial support – to allow the Society to continue to perform and maintain high quality performances.

All donations would be gratefully received. They help us to pay for music, equipment, such as music stands, concert venue hire and professional musician fees.

It's easy to donate by clicking the *Make a Donation* button on our website www.kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk.

Or, to discuss a donation or bequest, please email info@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk

THAMES SINFONIA

Thames Sinfonia, sister orchestra to the period instrument Purcell Orchestra, is comprised of professional players from London's most prestigious orchestras and ensembles. With London performances in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, St John's Smith Square and Cadogan Hall, it has also performed at venues throughout the South of England. The orchestras have accompanied Kingston Choral Society for over 40 years, initially under the baton of Musical Director, Robin Page.

Outreach and community work are centred around the orchestra's home base in Carshalton, South London, where they collaborate with the professional Carshalton Opera company and Sutton Music Trust, to deliver enriching musical experiences for audiences of all ages. Recent highlights include *Carmen*, *Peter and the Wolf*, and 'Oaks and Beeches', a specially curated programme of Stravinsky's 'Dumbarton Oaks' and a newly commissioned companion piece by Matthew Taylor, 'Carshalton Beeches'.

Thames Sinfonia is delighted to join the choir in celebrating their 75th Anniversary at Cadogan Hall tonight.

First Violin

Alison Strange (Leader)

Daniel Pukach
Harry Kerr
Eleanor Bartlett
Victoria Barnes
Simon-Philippe Allard
Christiane Eidsten Dahl

Second Violin

Rebecca Allfree
Nicole Stokes
Eleanor Gilchrist
Sarah Hill
James Widden
Emma Martin

Viola

Rachel Robson
Laurie Anderson
Nina Kopinska
Diana Mathews

Cello

Clare O'Connell
Chris Allan
Colin Alexander
Ben Michaels

Double Bass

Alice Kent
Rupert Ring

Flute

Emma Williams
Carolyn Hope

Piccolo

Nicky Summerscales

Oboe

Fraser MacAulay
Richard Lines-Davies

Cor Anglais

Charis Lai

Clarinet

Stuart King
Stephanie Yim

Bass Clarinet

Rachel Elliot

Bassoon

Alexandra Davidson
Alison Anderson

Contrabassoon

Rosemary Cow

Horn

Martin Grainger
Danielle Flarty
Hugh Sisley
Jane Hanna

Trumpet

Cameron Todd
Oscar Wight
Tom Thornton

Trombone

Ryan Hume
Jonny Watkins

Bass Trombone

Joe Arnold

Tuba

Andy Kershaw

Timpani

Tim Gunnell

Harp

Sally Pryce

Orchestra Manager

Natasha Hale

Director,
Thames Sinfonia

Elizabeth Andrews

Artistic Director,
Thames Sinfonia

Robin Page



Kingston Choral Society 'Choruses & Cake'

Fauré *Requiem* - Singing Workshop

3rd April 2025 from 7.10pm

Led by Andrew Griffiths with
Accompanist Gavin Roberts

Please join KCS at **St Andrew's Church, Surbiton KT6 4DS** for one of our popular singing workshops to explore two of the best-loved works of the choral repertoire – Fauré's glorious *Requiem* and his *Cantique de Jean Racine*.

Guests can be sure of a warm welcome and an inspirational musical experience. If you already love this music, or would like to get to know it, or if you just want to give singing with KCS a try, please do come along.

The ticket price includes music hire for those without scores and an interval drink and cake. The evening also features mouth-watering home-made cakes and a raffle.

This will be a popular event, so book in advance to reserve a place at <https://kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk/concerts/come-sing-faure-requiem/> as soon as possible and we will email you with further details

Any questions, please contact us on info@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk.

Event details:

Thursday, 3rd April 2025 7.10pm arrival for 7.30pm start; ends 10.00pm
St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton KT6 4DS

Tickets:

Adults: £14 (non-members); £10 (members & Friends of KCS)

Full-time students & Under 18s (Accompanied): £6

Recipients of Jobseeker's Allowance/Universal Credit/Pension Credit: £6

There will be a limited number of tickets on sale on the night from 7.10pm

Box Office: 07722 422741

~ ~ NEXT KCS CONCERT ~ ~

28th June 2025 at 7.30 pm

Kerry Andrew - *Rhymes & Charms for Flyaway Things*

John Rutter - *The Sprig of Thyme*

A selection of madrigals

Libby Burgess - Piano

Andrew Griffiths - Conductor

St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton KT6 4DS

For further details contact the Box Office on 07722 422741

If you would like advance notice of concerts by email,
please phone 020 8942 2275 or email info@kingstonchoralsociety.org.uk

CADOGAN HALL HISTORY

First opened in 1907, the New Christian Science Church regularly seated 'capacity' congregations of 1,600 in its heyday, however, like most other churches; there was a decline in attendances. In the 1980s there was a congregation of barely 150. By 1996 the congregation was no longer able to cope and sold the building, which then fell into disuse, languishing in uncertainty, neglect and rapid decline.

Therefore, it was Cadogan Estate that took the plunge, purchasing the building in 2000 to safeguard its future. Through their connection with Opera Holland Park, Cadogan discovered that the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra was looking for a permanent base in London. Cadogan Hall was an excellent opportunity for the Orchestra to benefit from Cadogan's aim to bring the former church back into useful life in a manner befitting its character and civic presence.

On one level the conversion of this large relatively modern listed building into a performance space seems straightforward. After all, there was a ready-made auditorium with a raked floor, a stage, a proscenium and a gallery. Unfortunately, modern expectations of comfort and facilities, let alone the requirements of building and licensing regulations, meant extensive and fundamental changes had to be made.

Public safety is a crucial consideration. The existing spaces and stairs now have modern fire-resisting construction backed up by sophisticated fire detection and alarm systems. These combine with a management regime to ensure safety.

The acoustics of the building were the next big issue both in terms of environmental acoustics, the control of sound break-out from the building and performance acoustics within the auditorium. Secondary glazing was installed to the large windows in the auditorium.

The ceiling and the roof over the auditorium had to be re-detailed to provide acoustic insulation. Tuned resonator tubes were installed on the main ceiling and the walls under the gallery and the undersides of the tip-up seats in the stalls also have a pattern of absorption holes to retain the Hall's acoustic character.

Modern standards of heating and ventilation would have been undreamed of by the overcoated congregations of the past. Refurbished original radiators in their original locations – supplemented by some new radiators in the offices – complete the heating system through out the building. The new performance lighting and sound systems in the auditorium include the computer-controlled theatrical lights on the ceiling. These provide lighting for rehearsals but really come into their own when they are programmed to rotate, change light beam colours and patterns and provide other special effects for performances. A large screen for films and visual presentations can be lowered and allows performances elsewhere to be relayed live by satellite or online.

The organ installed in 1911 was carefully dismantled and put into store to await re-installation in its new home in a church in the Midlands. The organ casing, an integral part of the character of the auditorium along with timber panelling and balustrading from the platform, was also put into store. When the organ screen was re-assembled and nearly a century of dirt was removed it was found that each of the column capitals and each of the carvings around the arching balustrade are unique – a surprise discovery that added to the richness of the building.

Despite the scale of the auditorium, the combined effects of the stage, the steeply raked stalls and the low gallery create a surprisingly intimate venue where the audience experiences a very real feeling of being part of the performance.

The Stained Glass

The stained glass was designed by a Danish nobleman. Baron Arild Rosenkrantz had learnt the art of stained glass whilst working with Tiffany in New York. The designs for Cadogan Hall were said to exhibit *"artistic simplicity of patterning and to provide efficiency of lighting and economy consistent with dignity"*. There are no allegorical images and only one window has text. All the windows were removed and taken by a specialist to workshops for painstaking restoration. Although the Celtic knot motifs are simple and the use of colour restrained, the dramatic effect of the restored glass was another pleasant surprise during the refurbishment process.

The refurbishment and conversion of such a distinctive listed building for as demanding a new use as a concert hall necessarily involved a high level of commitment from Cadogan Estate, its consultants and contractors. Together as a team with other specialists and the assistance and advice of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's officers it was possible to bring about this seemingly effortless renaissance of the building, retaining and enhancing its character and integrity whilst respecting and acknowledging its history and original purpose.

A history of the church written in 1931 (to which we are much indebted) expressed the aspiration that the building would be *"able to respond to the call of progress"*. I hope you will agree that Cadogan Estate's vision and investment in the fabric and infrastructure has fulfilled this wish and should ensure that Cadogan Hall will continue to play a major part in the civic and cultural life of Chelsea and London for the next 100 years

Cadogan Hall notes courtesy of Calvin Bruce of Paul Davis and Partners

KINGSTON CHORAL SOCIETY

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Lois Aiken
Deborah Albon
Ann Antrich
Karen Au-Yeung
Claudia Bandini
Elizabeth Bawdon
Chrissie Bestley
Kim Betty
Veronica Birley
Ruth Bolton
Clare Clarke
Ann Cooke
Corinne de Berry
Marie Denivelle
Janet Evans
Kathy Goodman
Dee Hipwell
Christine Hough
Jeanette Hull
Alison Jennings
Coe Kong
Meg Lewis
Samantha Little
Anne Miller
Sarah Moreton
Louise Nason
Susi Neale
June Pearson
Emma Powell
Fiona Ryder
Veronica Skates
Patricia Smith
Lorna Syrus
Lucy Thomas
Amy Thompson
Elizabeth Tofts

TENORS

René Barclay
Eric Brunner
David Chan
Elizabeth Chan
Michael Cox
Nick Harris
Theresa Hitching
Tim Holmes
Joshua Lee
Scott Milligan
Kingsley Norton
Rod Pearson
Hafeez Rajabali
Andy Reed
Michael Sevvitt
Richard Siberry
Gabriel Steer
Neil Varey
Cynthia Wakefield

BASSES

William Allberry
Jeremy Antrich
John Bassett
Rod Bellamy-Wood
Alan Brough
John Hadley
Alastair Harris
Edmund Hosker
Chris Jacob
Alistair Jones
James Laming
Jonathan Law
Marco Liviero
Julian Meers
Alex O'Regan
Marcus Petrat
Aminur Rahman
Luke Reader
Jim Sleightholme
David Syrus
Peter Taunton
Peter Wickenden
Fraser Wigley



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