

Saturday 20 December 2025, 7.30pm

St Andrew's Church
Maple Road, Surbiton KT6 4DS
Open Rehearsal 2.30 – 4pm



The Holy Birth

with carols for choir and audience

Herbert Sumsion – *The Holy Birth*

Gavin Roberts Organ

Andrew Griffiths Conductor

Cocco Sant'Angela



Since its formation in 1949, Kingston Choral Society has earned a reputation for concerts of a high standard and for performing a wide range of music. The Society enjoys singing the familiar favourites of the choral repertoire, but is not afraid of tackling ambitious projects and has, for example, performed a spectacular *Venetian Vespers*, featuring music by Monteverdi and his contemporaries.

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.

~ ~ NEXT KCS CONCERT ~ ~

21st March 2026 at 7.30 pm

Romantic Visions

***Schumann - Nachtlied; Beethoven - Coriolan
Overture; Brahms - Schicksalslied;
Mendelssohn - Die Erste Walpurgisnacht***

Thames Camerata

Andrew Griffiths - Conductor

All Saints Church, Market Place, Kingston KT1 1JP

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



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~ ~ PROGRAMME ~ ~

arr. Willcocks: *I saw three ships* (KCS)

***O come, o come, Emmanuel* (All)**

arr. Vaughan Williams: *The Truth from above* (KCS)

arr. Willcocks: *Resonemus laudibus* (KCS)

arr. Pearsall: *In dulci jubilo* (KCS)

***O little town of Bethlehem* (All)**

arr. Willcocks: *Infant holy, infant lowly* (KCS)

Tate: *Carol, with lullaby* (KCS)

Sumsion: *Prelude on Adeste Fideles* (Organ)

***O come, all ye faithful* (All)**

Rutter: *Shepherd's Pipe Carol* (KCS)

~ ~ INTERVAL ~ ~

Rutter: *Nativity carol* (KCS)

***Good King Wenceslas* (All)**

Daquin: *Noel X - Grand jeu et duo* (Organ)

Sumsion: *The Holy Birth*

1. Unto Us is Born a Son

2. Watts' Cradle Song

3. God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

4. Whence is that Goodly Fragrance Flowing

5. Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen

***Hark the Herald* (All)**

SUMSION (1899-1995)

Little appears to be known about the early life and circumstances of Herbert Sumsion, although his musical career path is well charted. Born in the city of Gloucester, he became a Probationer in the cathedral choir, aged 9. This was under the tutelage of Herbert Brewer (1865-1928), teacher of many prominent musicians and composers.

Sumsion graduated to become a full chorister after two years and sang with the choir until 1914. From 1911 to 1915, he was also organist at Ashleworth, a small village a few miles from Gloucester. Sumsion later wrote of his formative experiences under Brewer: *'Quite soon after my entry into the choir I was singing with the [Three Choirs] Festival Chorus and gradually absorbing the choral music of the great classical composers and the contemporary writers, of whom the giant was certainly Elgar.'*

After Sumsion's treble voice broke, aged 15, he became an articled pupil to Herbert Brewer. This meant a three-year apprenticeship in organ, choral direction and music theory. Former holders of the position included the well-known composers Herbert Howells (1892-1983) and Ivor Gurney (1890-1937). Sumsion passed the Associateship examination of the Royal College of Organists in 1915, adding in the following year, the prestigious Fellowship qualification - FRCO. At the Royal College of Music, at only 17, he won the Turpin prize, with the second-highest marks in the practical component.

During the Great War, from 1917 to 1919, Sumsion served in 16th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles), which involved fighting from the trenches of the Western Front. In 1919, he returned to Gloucester and took up the appointment of assistant cathedral organist to Brewer. Still only 20, Sumsion's duties included serving as accompanist for the famous Three Choirs Festival Chorus.

Sumsion continued in his post at Gloucester until 1922, during that time earning an undergraduate degree in music from Durham University. His move to London was to take up the position of organist at Christ Church, Lancaster Gate. In addition to this role, from 1924 he was Director of Music at Bishop's Stortford College, north of London. He also taught at Morley College, which had been founded for the education of working men and women.

While at the Royal College of Music, Sumsion was taught by RO Morris (1886-1948), professor of counterpoint and composition. In 1926, famous as an exceptional teacher of counterpoint, Morris left England for the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, inviting Sumsion to accompany him as member of the Institute's academic staff - Professor of Harmony. The famous conductor Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977), a fellow expatriate, was already working there at the time, developing student orchestras. (Stokowski later appeared in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* in 1940, as well as in other films).



Sumsion's agreement to accompany and work alongside Morris was of great consequence, both for his personal life and his career. On board the ship to America, he met a young American woman, Alice Garlichs, having been introduced to her by her uncle. Not long afterwards, in June 1927, Herbert and Alice married in Philadelphia. In March 1928, however, Sumsion's former teacher, Brewer, died suddenly of a heart attack, which left vacant the post of cathedral organist at Gloucester.

As Brewer had expressed the wish that Sumsion succeed him, the position of organist was offered accordingly. He was keen to accept the invitation, but had only recently committed himself to take up the post of organist at Coventry Cathedral. Fortunately for him, the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral, knowing Sumsion from his childhood, had a strong desire to recruit him. Interceding on his behalf, his release from the Coventry contract was successfully negotiated.

In June 1928, Sumsion and his wife duly left America for England, where he immediately assumed leadership of that year's Three Choirs Festival. The programme had already been prepared by Brewer but, as the resident cathedral organist, it was Sumsion who bore the brunt of the conducting. Although some of the composers attending conducted their own works, for example, Edward Elgar and Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967), it fell to Sumsion to conduct many major works, including Verdi's *Requiem*. His ability to shoulder such responsibility, settling in so smoothly and swiftly, won him many plaudits. Sir Edward Elgar (enjoying the wordplay of Sumsion and assumption) is alleged to have quipped, '*What at the beginning of the week [of the festival] was assumption has now become a certainty.*' Elgar clearly endorsed Sumsion's appointment to the festival's most challenging role.

This annual classical music festival rotates between the cathedral cities of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford, originally showcasing the combined choirs of the three counties. Begun in the early 18th century, it is the world's longest-running classical music festival. It features large-scale concerts comprising orchestral and choral music with musicians from home and abroad. A former Sumsion pupil writes that his teacher's '*vision in matters of programme planning together with his skill of direction in a very wide spectrum of works made him one of the most successful conductors*' in the festival's history.

From 1928, until his retirement in 1967, Sumsion was responsible for planning and serving as the principal conductor in 11 of the Gloucester-based events. In his programme planning, Sumsion championed the performance of new English works, such as Gustav Holst's (1874-1934) *Choral Fantasia* (1931), Herbert Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi* (1950), and Gerald Finzi's (1901-1956) *Intimations of Immortality* (1950). In addition, there were multiple works by Elgar and Vaughan Williams. Outside the realm of English music, Sumsion directed works by foreign composers. In addition to those of the standard Baroque and Classical periods, he introduced compositions by Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) and Oscar-Arthur Honegger (1892-1955).

Sumsion maintained personal friendships with many of the composers who frequented the festival, particularly Vaughan Williams, Finzi and Howells. The associated social gatherings, in which Sumsion's wife Alice played a significant role, helped to cultivate and consolidate these relationships. Sumsion was part of Finzi's intimate circle and a frequent guest at the latter's home, their respective families also holidaying together.

Sumsion led an active professional life outside the cathedral. Having begun composing as a young man, he continued to accept commissions when he was well into his 80s. He produced many works for organ and choir, including, *The Holy Birth* (1985). His *Evening Service in G* (1935) had long become a staple of Anglican church worship. In addition, he created much chamber music as well as orchestral pieces and a book of piano exercises.

Privately, Sumsion taught piano, organ, and composition. In his public life, he adjudicated at competitions, accompanied vocalists and played with chamber groups, as well as performing as an organ recitalist. As a teacher and choir trainer, he was said to be demanding yet kind and encouraging, displaying *'that rare gift that made people want to do well for him'*. Sumsion was honoured with a Lambeth Doctorate in 1947 and was appointed CBE in 1961.

After retiring from Gloucester cathedral in 1967, Sumsion remained in Gloucestershire, continuing to teach and compose. He also helped design the famous Chapel Organ for Ellesmere College after a fire there had totally destroyed the Chapel in 1966. One of his last works was a set of hymns entitled *'Four Hymns'*, to words by Paul Wigmore, published in the autumn of 1995, a few weeks after Sumsion's death. He had died at Frampton-on-Severn in 1995 aged 96.



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PRELUDE NO. 1, ADESTE FIDELES

Most of Herbert Sumsion's compositions for the organ were written with a congregation in mind and not for cognoscenti of the instrument. However, this does not mean his music is simple or undemanding. It contains something that is engaging and deeply compelling, perhaps deriving from his well-developed craftsmanship, both as organist and composer. He achieves a distinctive fusion of various influences.

Based on a foundation of strong counterpoint technique, Sumsion combines echoes of music by the major English figures of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, with the contemporary sound world of Howells and other mid-century organ composers. The effect is approachable music that is imbued with beauty and dignity and conveys the holiness of worship.

Sumsion's '*Four Preludes on Well-Known Carols*' was written for the season of Christmas. The first of the sequence, *Adeste Fideles*, shows off the performer's technical skills in articulating an extemporisation of the original melody. The organist requires light and agile fingering to negotiate the fast-moving scales and arpeggios, while observing the sudden and dramatic shifts in the dynamics. In Sumsion's complete set of four preludes, *Adeste Fideles* is followed by a more reflective meditation on the *Coventry Carol*, a restrained version of *The Holly and the Ivy* and a joyful rendition of *Unto us is born a Son*.

THE HOLY BIRTH

Herbert Sumsion's compositions reflect the influence of his more famous contemporaries, notably Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells and Gerald Finzi. His harmonic style is largely conventional, based on his tuition from RO Morris. However, his choral accompaniments are imaginative. They include subtle shifts between major and minor keys, sometimes moving into earlier *modal* forms. His incorporation of these older note sequences, less familiar to the modern ear, enabled him to create colourings and moods that are especially affecting.

A significant amount of Sumsion's choral output is for church services, much of which was composed after his retirement. These works include his popular *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis in G major* and anthems such as *They that go down to the sea in ships*. Sumsion's writing is sensitive to the chosen text, as well as to the natural declamation of speech. Typically, he writes for SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) choir, aiming for a balanced partnership between voices and accompaniment, most often that of the organ.

The Holy Birth is one of Sumsion's late works, commissioned by Gloucester Cathedral Choral Society in 1985, when he was in his 86th year. It is built around a carol sequence, which is interlinked and embellished by Sumsion's distinctive style of improvisation and harmonisation. The piece displays his trademark elegance. The carols receiving his characteristic treatment are: *Unto Us is Born a Son*; *Watts' Cradle Song*; *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*; *Whence is that Goodly Fragrance Flowing*; and *Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen*.



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DAQUIN (1694-1772)

Louis-Claude Daquin was born in Paris, the son of Claude Daquin, a painter, and Anne Tiersant. One of his grand-uncles had been a professor of Hebrew and another the principal physician of King Louis XIV. His godmother, Elisabeth de la Guerre (1665-1729), was a famed child prodigy, later a most successful composer and harpsichordist. Her husband, Marin de la Guerre (1658-1704), himself a prominent organist, probably provided the young Louis-Claude's first organ lessons. By the age of six, the boy was performing before the court of King Louis XIV.

Progressing so remarkably, Louis-Claude became the pupil of another eminent organist, Louis Marchand (1669-1732). With the latter's musical influence and backing, he was engaged as organist at the Sainte-Chapelle, when only 12 years old. In the following year, the young teenager occupied a similar post at the Church of Petit Saint Antoine.

Having married Denise-Thérèse Quirot in 1722, his musical profile in Paris continued to develop. By 1727, he was organist at the Church of Saint Paul, appointed ahead of another candidate, Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), regarded by many as the most influential French composer of the 18th century. Five years later, Daquin succeeded his erstwhile teacher, Marchand, as organist at the Church of the Cordeliers, before becoming organist to Louis XV at the Chapelle Royale in 1739. Daquin's keyboard skills remaining much in demand, aged 61 he succeeded Guillaume-Antoine Calvière (c.1695-1755) as organist at Notre-Dame Cathedral.

Daquin was celebrated throughout 18th century France for his dazzling virtuosity on the keyboard, as reflected in his series of prestigious appointments. Courted by the aristocracy, his keyboard expertise at the harpsichord, as well as the organ, drew large audiences to hear him. Critics appreciated his technique for its "*unfaltering precision and evenness*". His refined and joyful style shines through many of his compositions. His later works include, *Nouveau Livre de Noël*s (A New Book of Christmas Carols), four harpsichord suites, a cantata, an 'air à boire' (drinking song) and much sacred music, including two *Masses*.

NOEL X - GRAND JEU ET DUO

Noel X is one of Daquin's famous Christmas organ works. Published in his *Nouveau Livre de Noels*, 1757, it is part of a set of 12. *Noel X* is one of the most popular among contemporary organists. It is an elaborate arrangement of an older Christmas hymn, called *Quand Dieu naquit à Noël* (When God was born at Christmas) or *Bon Joseph , écoutez-moi* (Good Joseph, hear me). 'Grand jeu' and 'Duo', indicate the main performance instructions to be followed by the organist.

The composer of pipe organ music usually has in mind a particular set or sets of pipes ('ranks') to be deployed, singly or in combination. These ranks are incorporated into the piece via knobs or levers ('stops') on the instrument's console. Each rank creates its own tone colour, hence there is a huge number of possible combinations. An extremely rich palette of tonal colourings is available with which to create the desired musical atmosphere or mood.

At the console the organist operates the controls, 'pulling out the stops', before the piece starts and, if necessary, as it proceeds. Rapid and nimble pulling and pushing movements by one hand may be observable to the audience. Often, this action is at the same time as the other hand is continuing to finger the notes of the keyboard. Such dextrous activity is in addition to the organist's footwork. The feet may be simultaneously depressing one or more of the instrument's pedals, those that sound its deepest and darkest notes!

As stated in the work's title, Daquin's *Noel X* makes prominent use of 'Grand jeu' and 'Duo' effects to achieve its bold and dramatic improvisation around the original carol melody. The former term refers to the use of the loudest pipe ranks, among which are the 'reed' and 'trumpet'. 'Duo' recognises that sometimes two melodic lines are to be played simultaneously and with equal importance. This can be on the same keyboard or 'manual' or on a separate one. (Unlike the pianoforte, a large church organ often accommodates more than one manual, most commonly two or three, very rarely more than five).

The sight of the organist at the console and the tremendous sound of the instrument guarantee an enthralling 21st century rendition of Daquin's 18th century masterpiece. Happily, the 'mod cons' of the St Andrew's organ require of the performer less energetic lunging at organ stops than was the case in the composer's day.

Programme notes courtesy of Kingsley Norton

Saturday 21 March 2026 at 7.30 pm

Romantic Visions

Schumann: *Nachtlied*

Beethoven: *Coriolan Overture*

Brahms: *Schicksalslied*

Mendelssohn: *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*

Romantic themes of heroism, idealism, the imagination and dreams inspire this music. **Brahms' *Schicksalslied*** (*Song of Destiny*) contrasts the

bliss of the gods with the sorrows of the human condition, while

Schumann's *Nachtlied* evokes the serene world of sleep.

Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture* portrays the fall of a once supreme

hero and **Mendelssohn's *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*** is a dramatic

and haunting musical rendition of the clash between Druidic
tradition and Christianity.

Soloists:

Alexandria Moon - Mezzo-soprano

To be confirmed - Tenor

Edward Birchinall - Bass-baritone

Thames Camerata

Conductor: Andrew Griffiths

**All Saints Kingston, Market Place,
Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1JP**

For further details contact the Box Office on 07722 422741

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Friday 13 February 2026 at 7.30pm

Londinium

FIREWORKS

Londinium celebrates its **20th birthday** with a spectacular selection of favourite choral works exploring the power of music and the human voice. The programme includes the world première of **Nico Muhly's *Abidyne***, glorious motets by **Monteverdi** and **Byrd**, showpieces by **Walton**, **Stanford**, **Leighton**, **Ravel** and **Elliot Carter**, and fine recent music by **Gabriel Jackson** and **Will Harmer**. The programme is crowned by **Schoenberg's** mighty ***Friede auf Erden***, one of the great summits of a *cappella* singing.

Conductor: Andrew Griffiths

Tickets available at
<https://www.londinium-voices.org.uk/events>

**St John's Church, 73 Waterloo Road,
London SE1 8TY**

I saw three ships come sailing in

I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas day in the morning.

Our Saviour Christ and his lady
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Pray whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas day in the morning.

Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the angels in heav'n shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the angels in heav'n shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice, amain!
On Christmas day, on Christmas day,
Then let us all rejoice, amain!
On Christmas day in the morning.

The Truth from above

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love,
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate
Is that God did man create;
The next thing which to you I'll tell
Woman was made with man to dwell.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose;
And so a promise soon did run
That he would redeem us by his Son

And at that season of the year
Our blest Redeemer did appear;
He here did live, and here did preach,
And many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,
To show us how we must be saved;
And if you want to know the way,
Be pleased to hear what he did say.

Resonemus laudibus

*Resonemus laudibus
Cum jocunditatibus
Ecclesiam fidelibus.
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.*

*Deus fecit hominem
Ad suam imaginem
Et similitudinem.
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.*

*Deus fecit omnia:
Caelum, terram, maria
Cunctaque nascentia.
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.*

*Ergo nostra concio
In chordis et organo
Benedicat Domino.
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.*

*Et Deo qui venias
Donat et laetitias
Nos eidem gracias.
Apparuit quem genuit Maria.*

Let us resound with praise
with rejoicing
faithful to the Church.
He appeared whom Mary bore.

The Lord created man
in His image
and likeness.
He appeared whom Mary bore.

The Lord created everything:
heaven, earth, sea,
and everything that was born.
He appeared whom Mary bore.

Therefore, our conscience
with heart and organ
shall praise the Lord.
He appeared whom Mary bore.

And to the Lord,
who came and gave us gladness,
let us offer thanks to Him.
He appeared whom Mary bore.

In dulci jubilo

*In dulci jubilo
Let us our homage shew:
Our heart's joy reclineth
In praesepio,
And like a bright star shineth,
Matris in gremio.
Alpha es et O!*

*O Jesu parvule!
I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee,
O Puer optime!
My prayer let it reach thee,
O princeps gloriae!
Trahe me post te!*

In sweet rejoicing
Let us our homage shew:
Our heart's joy reclineth
In a manger,
And like a bright star shineth,
In his mother's lap.
He is our alpha and omega!

O tiny Jesus!
I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee,
O best of boys!
My prayer let it reach thee,
O prince of glory!
Make me follow you.

O Patris caritas,
O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina;
But thou hast for us gained
Coelorum gaudia.
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, where,
If that they be not there?
There are Angels singing
Nova cantica;
There the bells are ringing
In Regis curia.
O that we were there!

O love of the Father,
O gentleness of the newborn Son!
Deeply were we stained
Through our crimes,
But thou hast for us gained
The joys of heaven.
O that we were there!

Where be joys
If that they be not there
There are angels singing
New songs
There the bells are ringing
At the king's court
O that we were there.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Infant holy, infant lowly
For His bed a cattle stall
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ, the babe is Lord of all
Swift are winging, angels singing
Nowells ringing, tidings bringing
Christ, the babe is Lord of all
Christ, the babe is Lord of all

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story
Tidings of a gospel true
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow
Praises voicing greet the morrow
Christ, the babe was born for you
Christ, the babe was born for you

Carol, with lullaby

Lulla, lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby.
My sweet little baby,
what meanest thou to cry?
A King is born, they say,
which King a king would kill;
*Oh wo, oh wo, oh woful, heavy day
when wretches have their will.*

And shepherds heard the song
which angels bright did sing,
All giving glory unto God,
for coming of this King:
Which must be made away,
King Herod would him kill.
*Oh wo, oh wo, oh woful, heavy day
when wretches have their will.*

And thou shalt live and reign,
Who was in a manger laid,
As all the prophets prophesy,
as sybils have foresaid;
Whom caitiffs ne'er betray,
whom tyrants none can kill;
*Oh joy, oh joy, oh joyful happy day
when wretches want their will.*

Shepherd's Pipe Carol

Going through the hills
on a night all starry
On the way to Bethlehem,
Far away I heard a shepherd boy piping
On the way to Bethlehem.

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
"Dance and sing for joy that
Christ the newborn King is come
to bring us peace on earth,
and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem."*

"Tell me, shepherd boy piping
tunes so merrily
On the way to Bethlehem,
who will hear your tunes
on these hills so lonely
On the way to Bethlehem?"

Angels in the sky...

"None may hear my pipes
on these hills so lonely
On the way to Bethlehem;
But a King will hear me
play sweet lullabies
When I get to Bethlehem."

*Angels in the sky came down from on high,
Hovered o'er the manger where the babe was
lying cradled in the arms of his mother Mary,
sleeping now at Bethlehem.*

"Where is this new King,
shepherd boy piping merrily,
Is he there at Bethlehem?"
"I will find him soon
by the star shining brightly
In the sky o'er Bethlehem."

Angels in the sky ...

"May I come with you,
shepherd boy piping merrily,
Come with you to Bethlehem?
Pay my homage too
at the new King's cradle,
Is it far to Bethlehem?"

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
"Dance and sing for joy that
Christ the infant King
is born this night in lowly stable yonder,
born for you at Bethlehem."*

Nativity Carol

Born in a stable so bare,
Born so long ago;
Born 'neath light of star
He who loved us so.

Refrain

*Far away silent he lay
Born today, your homage pay;
For Christ is born for aye,
Born on Christmas Day.*

Cradled by mother so fair,
Tender her lullaby;
Over her son so dear
Angel hosts fill the sky.

Refrain

Wise men from distant far land,
Shepherds from starry hills
Worship this babe so rare,
Hearts with his warmth he fills.

Refrain

Love in that stable was born
Into our hearts to flow;
Innocent dreaming babe
Make me thy love to know.

Refrain

SUMSION - THE HOLY BIRTH

1. *Unto Us is Born a Son*

Unto us is born a son,
King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know,
Becradled in a manger.

This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.

Of his love and mercy mild
This the Christmas story;
O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory!

O and A, and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino.

2. *Watts' Cradle Song*

Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heav'nly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe; thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide;
All without thy care and payment:
All thy wants are well supplied.

Soft and easy is thy cradle;
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When his birthplace was a stable
And his softest bed was hay.

See the lovely babe addressing;
Lovely infant, how he smiled!
When he wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the Holy Child.

Lo! he slumbers in his manger,
Where the hornèd oxen fed;
Peace, my darling! here's no danger,
Here's no ox a-near thy bed.

May'st thou live to know and fear him,
Trust and love him all thy days;
Then go dwell for ever near him,
See his face, and sing his praise!

Hush! my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed!
Heav'nly blessings without number
Gently falling o'er thy head.

3. *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:

Refrain:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;*

O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father
a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name:

Refrain

Now when they come to Bethlehem,
Where our dear Saviour lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
The Blessed Virgin Mary
Unto the Lord did pray:

Refrain

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
all other doth deface:

Refrain

4. Whence is that Goodly Fragrance Flowing

Whence is that goodly fragrance flowing,
Stealing our senses all away?
Never the like did come a-blowing,
Shepherds, in flow'ry fields in May,
Whence is that goodly fragrance flowing,
Stealing our senses all away?

What is that light so brilliant, breaking
Here in the night across our eyes?
Never so bright, the day-star waking,
Started to climb the morning skies!
What is that light so brilliant, breaking
Here in the night across our eyes?

Bethlehem! there in manger lying,
Find your Redeemer, haste away.
Run ye with eager footsteps hieing!
Worship the Saviour born today.
Bethlehem! there in manger lying,
Find your Redeemer, haste away.

5. Up! Good Christen Folk, and Listen

Ding-dong, ding:
Ding-a-dong-a-ding:
Ding-dong, ding-dong:
Ding-a-dong-ding.

Up! Good Christen folk, and listen
How the merry church bells ring,
And from steeple bid good people
Come adore the new-born King:

Tell the story how from glory
God came down at Christmastide,
Bringing gladness, chasing sadness,
Show'ring blessings far and wide,

Born of mother, blest o'er other,
Ex Maria Virgine,
In a stable ('tis no fable),
Christus natus hodie.

Ding-dong, ding:
Ding-a-dong-a-ding:
Ding-dong, ding-dong:
Ding-a-dong-ding.

Kingston Choral Society needs your support

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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.

GAVIN ROBERTS - Organ



Gavin Roberts enjoys an extraordinarily varied career as a pianist, organist, conductor, director and coach. He has appeared at venues and festivals in the UK and abroad including Barbican Hall, Wigmore Hall, The Royal Festival Hall, *Oundle International Festival*, *Dartington International Festival*, *The Ludlow Weekend of English Song*, *The Ryedale Festival*, *Oxford International Song Festival*. He is a professor and staff pianist at the *Guildhall School of Music & Drama* and is the Artistic Director of *Song in the City*.

Gavin has collaborated with numerous singers, conductors, instrumentalists and ensembles including Lucy Hall, Andrew Watts, Rosamund Shelley, Madeleine Holmes, Eleanor Rolfe Johnson, Donna Lennard, Amanda Pitt, Carolyn Sampson, Robin Tritschler, Ailish Tynan, Jess Dandy, Samantha Crawford, David Greco, Gareth Brynmor John, Angus Meryon, Alan Hacker, Clare Hoskins, Libby Burgess, Graham Johnson, Roger Norrington, Richard Hickox, *The BBC Singers*, *The BBC Symphony Chorus*, *The Academy of Ancient Music*, *The National Youth Choir*, *Schola Cantorum of Oxford*, *The Joyful Company of Singers*, *Constanza Chorus*, *Kingston Choral Society* and *Fulham and Hammersmith Choral Society*, often appearing on radio broadcasts and recordings. Recent highlights include a recital of songs by Lili Boulanger in Antwerp with regular recital partner soprano Lucy Hall, and a performance in the *Monodrama Festival*, Luxembourg, with countertenor Andrew Watts.

Gavin is an experienced and creative concert programmer, including five successful seasons as Artistic Director of *The St Marylebone Festival*. His work is often characterised by collaborations with other artistic disciplines. Recent work includes a choreographed performance of Schubert's *Wintereise* at *Rambert*, a *London Fashion Week* show for designer Patrick McDowell at *Guildhall School*, and a Welsh tour of *Novello & Son* with Rosamund Shelley. He has been Artistic Director of *Song in the City* since 2011 for which he has devised more than 150 concerts often on socially-engaged themes, and has pioneered 'Creative Minds in Song' commissioning composers to create new songs on the poems of mental-health service users. Passionate about working with composers he has given numerous premieres of new works, as well as composing a small number of works himself. A recent project was a recording of London-themed song commissions 'Voices of London' for *Song in the City* by composers Raymond Yiu, Joseph Atkins, James Lark and Graham Ross.

Gavin was Organist and Director of Music at St Marylebone Parish Church from 2014-2022. He gained a Masters (distinction) in piano accompaniment from *Guildhall School*, and previously read Music and held the organ scholarship at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and a Master's degree (distinction) from King's College London. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and a Trustee of *The Finzi Friends*.

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