



Haydn: The Seasons

Sophie Bevan soprano

Xavier Hetherington tenor

Thomas Faulkner bass

Dulwich Choral Society

Meridian Sinfonia

Catherine Martin leader

William Vann conductor

Saturday 21 March 2026, 7.00pm

All Saints Church, Lovelace Road, London SE21 8JY

Programme

The Seasons (Hob. XXI:3)

Sung in an English translation by Michael Pilkington
(The New Novello Choral Edition)

1. Spring
2. Summer

– interval of twenty minutes –

3. Autumn
4. Winter

Refreshments are on sale in the crypt before the concert and during the interval. Orders for interval refreshments can be made before the concert begins.

Please switch your phone to silent before the start of the concert, and refrain from filming or recording.

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809): The Seasons

Programme note

Haydn was not able to travel abroad until he was in his fifties. The demands of his position at the Esterházy court, to which he was appointed in 1761, scarcely allowed him time for a private life, never mind foreign travel. He was, however, allowed to publish his music when his contract was revised in 1779 and he rapidly established an international reputation. Prince Nikolaus Esterházy died on 28 September 1790 and in the following November Salomon arrived to visit him saying: 'I am Salomon from London, and I have come to fetch you'. They set out together from Vienna on 15 December 1790 and arrived in London on 2 January 1791.

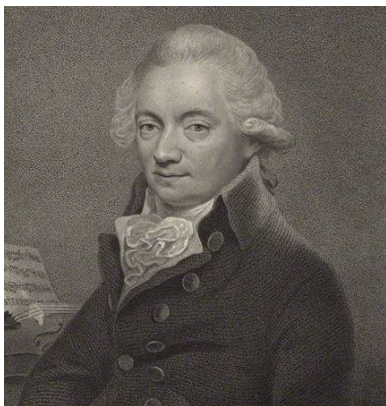
Haydn liked England and the English people; the English people, in turn, liked him. It has been estimated that he earned more in his two London visits, each of 18 months, than he would have done in 20 years at the Esterházy court.

Haydn was impressed by hearing English choirs singing Handel. He attended the Handel Festival in London during May 1791 where he commented '[Handel] is the master of us all'. The celebrations for his honorary doctorate at Oxford in early July 1791 included a three-day music festival where massed choirs sang movements from *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Alexander's Feast*, and *Samson*. A small group of semi-professional sopranos from the industrial North West, 'The Lancashire Witches', were regularly employed to enhance the soprano lines of choruses in London and other major musical centres, so Haydn would have heard Handel sung by choirs with adult female sopranos and male altos. Inspired by hearing Handel sung in the English way, Haydn composed *The Creation* between 1796 and 1798 and *The Seasons* between 1798 and 1801.



Joseph Haydn. This portrait, from a *carte de visite*, was issued 50 years after the composer's death. It is probably based on a portrait from around 1800.

Baron von Swieten – diplomat, court librarian, and musical connoisseur – wrote the libretto for both of the oratorios and also encouraged (encouragement bordering on nagging, it has to be said) Haydn in the work of composition. The text for *The Seasons* is based on one of the most influential literary works of the 18th century. John Thomson (1700–1748) published his hugely long pastoral poem in 1730; in 1798 Wordsworth called it ‘a work of inspiration. It was no sooner read than universally admired.’ A well-known German translation by Brockes had been published in 1745 but Swieten produced his own version, lightening some of Thomson’s darker imagery: the winter traveller dies in the snow in Thomson’s original whereas Swieten’s version has him finding warmth and safety. He then re-translated it into flat-footed, and sometimes incomprehensible, English and the work’s reputation suffered as a result. Haydn was not impressed by the text, notoriously referring to it as ‘frenchified rubbish’ and complaining that he had toiled hard all his life and never actually considered writing a hymn in praise of toil (Autumn: So nature thus rewards his toil).



Johann Peter Salomon (1745–1815). Born in Bonn, Salomon was a violinist who settled in London and is best-known as a concert promoter. He arranged Haydn’s successful visits to London in 1791–92 and 1794–95. Beethoven wrote of him: ‘... a noble-minded man whom I well remember since my childhood’.

In spite of his misgivings, Haydn put all his skill and experience into setting the text. A press review of the first performance referred to ‘the power of expression with which [Haydn] very vividly describes nature in all its guises.’ Swieten provided him with any number of set pieces – a spinning chorus in which the whirring spinning wheels turn more slowly and eventually stop in an anticipation of Schubert’s first great song *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (1814); a storm that is depicted in the proto-romantic harmonic idiom which German-speakers knew as *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress); the magic of a sunrise.

Haydn is famous for his wit and good nature and he has included a number of good jokes to keep the performers amused. In the hunting chorus, for example, the dogs lose the scent and the choir and orchestra mill about in confused harmony and modulations until they finally set off again – ending the movement in entirely the wrong key and possibly following the wrong stag. This passage would have involved Haydn's horn section in the tricky manoeuvre of replacing a piece of tubing in the instrument at speed; modern horn players are spared this indignity. On a more personal and sombre note, Haydn quotes from Mozart's 40th Symphony in the words 'exhausted is thy Summer's strength' (Winter: So understand misguided man) expressing his shock and distress at the early death of his much younger friend and colleague ten years earlier.

It is possible that Haydn was planning to complete a trilogy of oratorios with a work on the Last Judgment. Swieten replaces Thomson's final hymn of universal praise with a chorus describing the steps that need to be taken on the way up to the 'holy hill' of Heaven. However, Haydn's health was affected by the effort of finishing *The Seasons* and although he lived until 1809 he never recovered his energy and it was to be his last major work.

Dr Frances Palmer, former Curator, Royal Academy of Music

The Seasons, Hob. XXI:3

English translation by Michael Pilkington

Spring

1. RECITATIVE

Simon

Behold how surly Winter flies; to polar regions now he goes.
Now follows at his call the savage storm's tumultuous host with all its
dreadful roar.

Lucas

And see, from craggy rocks the snow in muddy streams flows down the
slopes!

Jane

And see how from the South, by mild and gentle winds allur'd, the Spring
again appears.

2. CHORUS OF COUNTRY FOLK

Come, gentle Spring! The gift of heaven, come!
From deathly winter sleep bid Nature now awake!
And now she nears, the gentle Spring, her soft and balmy breath we feel,
and soon will all to life return.
But yet do not too soon rejoice, for oft, enwrapp'd in mist and fog,
the Winter will return and spread o'er bud and flow'r his chilling frost.
Come, gentle Spring! The gift of heaven, come!
Upon our meadows now descend! O come, gentle Spring O come,
return, delay no more!

3. RECITATIVE

Simon

From Aries now the sun shines brightly down on us here.
Now frost and fog retire, and mild mists hover all about;
our mother earth is now revived, enliven'd is the air.

4. ARIA

Simon

With joy th'impatient husbandman sets forth to till the field,
the furrow's length he strides along and whistles as he ploughs.
And then with slow and measur'd step he scatters wide the seed,
by faithful earth preserv'd, it soon will grow to golden com.

5. RECITATIVE

Lucas

The farmer now his work has done, avoiding neither pain nor toil;
the hand of Nature will in time provide reward; for this he pleads and so
he prays to heaven above.

6. PRAYER

Trio and Chorus

Now be gracious, bounteous Heaven, open wide, and pour thy blessings
over all our lands below. Let earth receive the dew's refreshment. Let
rainfall now enrich the furrows. And let thy breezes gently blow, thy sun
send forth his shining rays! To us abundant life will flow, and we will give
thee thanks and praise.

7. RECITATIVE

Jane

Our fervent prayers are heard; the warm west wind arises and fills the
sky above with sailing clouds. The clouds increase; they now descend,
and pour into the lap of earth the pride and wealth of Nature's store.

8. SONG OF JOY

Jane, Lucas and Chorus of Young People

O how lovely is the landscape spread before our eyes! Come, dear
maidens, let us wander o'er the verdant fields! Come, young fellows, let
us wander through the fresh green woods. See the lilies, see the roses,
all the flowers in bloom! See the pastures, see the meadows, see the
open fields! See the mountains, see the rivers, see the sparkling air! All is
living, all is floating, ev'ry creature now astir. See the lambs, how they
are leaping! See the shoals of fishes swimming! See how all the bees are
swarming! See the birds now all aflutter! All is living, all is floating, ev'ry
creature now astir. O what pleasure, what enjoyment swells within our
hearts! Sweetest fancies, gentle charms bring gladness to our souls. That
which touches and delights you is the presence of the breath of God. Let
us honour, let us worship, let us give our praise to him! In resounding
song to thank him raise your voices high!

8a. Trio and Chorus

Wonderful, powerful, merciful God! From thy most blessed table dost
thou provide our food, From streams of joy unending thou givest us to
drink. Glory, laud and praise be thine, wonderful, merciful God!

Summer

9. RECITATIVE

Lucas

In misty mantle now draws near the gentle morning light;
with limping step at her approach the weary night retires.
To dark and gloomy caves the birds of doom now take their flight,
and with their mournful cries appal the timid heart no more.

Simon

The herald of the new-born day, with sharp and penetrating voice,
to new activity now calls the shepherd from his rest.

10. ARIA

Simon

So now the cheerful shepherd goes to gather all his bleating flock;
to pastures rich he drives them out, slowly o'er the verdant hills.
Towards the East he gazes now, while leaning on his shepherd's crook,
and waits to see the rising sun shed abroad his glorious light.

RECITATIVE: Jane

The rosy dawn breaks forth in light; like wisps of smoke the clouds
disappear; the heav'n is clothed resplendent in blue,
the mountain peaks in fiery gold.

11. TRIO AND CHORUS

And now ascends the sun, he climbs, he nears, he comes, he beams, he
shines. Now shine with glorious pow'r the fires of his majesty.

Hail, O sun, all hail! The source of light and life, all hail!

Thou soul and eye of all the worlds, thou God-like shining star.

We give thee grateful thanks, thou God-like shining star.

For who can tell the jubilation thy gracious presence stirs in us?

Who numbers them, the many blessings that of thy kindness we
receive? The jubilation, who can tell?

Thy blessings, O who numbers them? Who?

All thanks to thee for giving joy. All thanks to thee for giving life.

All thanks to thee for giving health. But more to God who gave to thee
the pow'r thy beams display.

Hail, O sun, all hail! the source of light and life, all hail!

Now praises come from all men, these praises nature joins.

12. RECITATIVE

Simon

And ev'ryone now is stirred into life; a colourful throng spreads over the fields. Before the sunburnt reaper waves a surging ocean of corn. Beneath the scythe now falls the grain; but gather'd up it soon will stand once more erect in sturdy sheaves.

Lucas

The noonday sun now burns above in all his strength, and pours from out the cloudless sky his powerful beams which stream all around. Now o'er the arid plain there hangs in the low haze a blinding sea of light that dazzles all.

13. Cavatina

Lucas

Now nature sinks beneath the weight; wither'd flowers, barren meadows, dried up fountains, all betray the rage of heat, and fainting languish man and beast, outstretch'd upon the ground.

14. RECITATIVE

Jane

O welcome now ye shady groves, where lofty roofs of ancient oak their cool shade and shelter give, and where the slender aspen leaves in whispering murmur sound!

And there the sparkling brooklet flows within its mossy bed, and in confusion swarm around the colour'd butterflies.

The balmy scent of fragrant herbs is borne on Zephir's wing,
And from the neighb'ring thicket sounds the youthful shepherd's pipe.

15. ARIA

Jane

What refreshment to the senses, what a comfort to the heart!
Life through ev'ry vein is flowing, and in stirring ev'ry nerve invigorates the soul. The spirit now awakes to pleasure and to joy; with strength renew'd it lifts the heart to fresh delights.

16. RECITATIVE

Simon

O see! There rises in the sultry air, close by the border of the hills, a pallid fog of mist and vapour form'd. 'Tis small at first, but now expands, and soon black darkness covers all beneath the gloomy sky.

Lucas

Hear, from the vale, how the dull roar announces the storm to come!
See how the baleful cloud with slow progression makes its way and
threatens all the land below!

Jane

In dread foreboding all living nature waits.
No beast, no leaf dares stir itself. A deathly hush is all around.

17. CHORUS

Ah, the thunderstorm comes near! Help us, heaven!
O how the thunder rolls! Now rage the winds about us!
Where shall we fly? Flashes of lightning now streak through the air; the
bolts from the sky now burst the clouds open, to pour down torrents of
rain. Where is safety? Heaven help us! Dreadful roars the storm.
The open sky is aflame. Save us wretches! Crashing, smashing, crack on
crack the thunder rolls with awful noise. Save us! Save us!
The whole world shakes and trembles e'en to the ocean floor.

18. TRIO AND CHORUS

Lucas

And now the storm has passed away; the clouds disperse, the winds die.

Jane

Before the time to set has come the sun looks out once more, and so his
final sparkling rays with pearls adorn the fields.

Simon

Now to its well-accustom'd home, enliven'd and refreshed, the well-fed
herd returns.

Lucas

The quail already calls his mate.

Jane

The cricket chirps from out the marsh.

Simon

The frog is croaking in the marsh.

All

The distant curfew tolls.

The evening star shines from above, inviting us to soft repose.

Chorus

Maidens, young men, women, come! Soothing sleep awaits us now, for
this is granted honest hearts and healthy bodies after toil.

We come. We follow you.

Autumn

19. RECITATIVE

Jane

What with all its blossoms was promis'd by the Spring, what the warmth of Summer to welcome ripeness brought, Autumn with its fullness shows to the farmer now.

Lucas

For there on heavy loaded carts th'abundant harvest home is borne. The plenty that the fields provide his massive barns can scarce contain.

Simon

With cheerful eye he looks around, and measures all the bounteous produce there, and pleasure floods into his heart.

20. TRIO WITH CHORUS

So Nature thus rewards his toil; she calls, she smiles at him, encouraging his hopefulness, she willing gives her aid; she works for him with pow'r and strength. From thee, O toil, comes ev'ry good.

The cottage where we dwell, the clothing that we wear, our daily bread to eat, are blessings all by thee bestow'd. O toil, O noble toil, from thee comes ev'ry good. In thee all virtues grow, and manners rude are overcome. By thee the heart of man is cleans'd and purified. From thee all courage comes, that duty and good may fill our daily life.

21 and 22 omitted

23. RECITATIVE

Simon

Now on the bare denuded fields some uninvited guests appear, that on the stalks found nourishment, and wander seeking further food.

These little thefts do nought to harm the farmer, he can leave them be, unless excessive losses come that he can ill afford.

Then action that can this prevent he sees as benefit, and willing enters on the hunt that gives his master such delight.

24. ARIA

Simon

Look there upon the open field! The hound is moving through the grass. He searches there to find the scent and then will tireless follow it. But over eager now he runs, he heeds his master's orders no more: he hastens on forward, then sudden stops, and stands unmoving as a stone.

The startl'd bird now takes to flight in hope the danger to avoid: but all his speed will not avail. The gun is fired, he is struck by the shot that drops him dead from the sky to earth.

25. RECITATIVE

Lucas

The hares from out their beds are driven by the closing ring.
Now press'd about on ev'ry side they find there's no escape, and soon they fall, to be laid out as trophies of the hunter's sport.

26. CHORUS OF PEASANTS AND HUNTERS

Hark, hark, a sonorous sound is through the forest ringing!
What a clamorous din is heard throughout the wood!
It is the horn with its thrilling call, the ravenous hounds are now baying.
The startled stag leaps up and away', pursuing are huntsmen and eager dogs.

He flies, he flies. O see how he bounds!

See how he leaps! See how he bounds!

Then from the coppice he breaks for the fields, and hastens across to the thickets beyond. He now has bewilder'd the hounds, at fault they range and go astray. The hounds are now at fault; they wander here and there. Tallyho!, tallyho!, tallyho!

The huntsman calls, and blows his horn to gather them once again.

Ho, ho, ho, tallyho! With redoubled ardour now the pack recovers the scent of the fleeing prey. Thus overtaken by his foes, his courage and his vigour lost, exhausted now the deer will fall.

Proclaiming that his end is come the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Blow mort now.

Proclaiming that the stag is dead the jubilant song of sounding brass announces the hunters' victory. Ha-la-li.

27. RECITATIVE

Jane

The shining grapes are fully ripe upon the branches of the vine, they call the happy vintner out to gather them without delay.

Simon

Already tubs and vats below the hill are set, and from their houses villagers stream, and gather ready the welcome work to do.

Jane

See how the mountainside with swarming folk is cover'd! And hear how joyful sounds from ev'ry quarter echo.

Lucas

The work is eased by humorous talk from morn until the evening comes, and then the sparkling juice of the grape will raise the mirth to shouts of joy.

28. CHORUS

Joho, johoh, the wine is here, the barrels now are fill'd;
so let us merry be and johoh, johoh, jo! From open throats we shout!
Let us drink then! Drink up, brothers, let us merry be!
Let us sing then, all must sing now, let us merry be! Johoh, Johoh, jo!
All hail to the wine. All hail to the land that brings it forth!
All hail to the vat that gives it strength! All hail to the bowl from whence
it flows! Brothers come and fill the tankards, drain the mugs and let us
merry be! The pipes are now playing, the tabor is beating, the fiddle is
screeching and buzzing the zither, the bagpipes now drone. The children
are skipping, and leaping the youngsters. Now foot all the maidens,
embrac'd by their lovers, the steps of the dance.
Heisa, hopsa, we are skipping. Heisa, hei, johoh, jo, heisasa, ho!
All hail to the wine, the noble wine, that trouble and grief removes! His
praises sing we loud and high, exalting him a thousandfold.

Winter

29. RECITATIVE

Simon

Now pale, the year begins to fade, and cold the mists form round about.
They wrap the mountains in their fogs, and lastly cover all the land, and
e'en at noon the sun is hid in all-pervading gloom.

Jane

The Winter with his dismal storms now rushes forth from Lapland's
caves, and his approach doth freeze all Nature, fill'd with anxious care.

30. CAVATINA

Jane

Light and life are both enfeebled, warmth and joy alike have vanish'd.
Gloomy, mournful days now follow nights of seeming endless darkness.

31 RECITATIVE

Lucas

The lake lies bound in grip of frost, the passage of the stream chok'd
with ice. The waterfall plunging from tow'ring cliff is silent now and
flows no more. No sounds are heard within the wood; the fields lie
white, the valleys fill'd with monstrous drifts of heavy snow. The face of
earth is now a grave, where Nature's charms quite buried lie, a deathly
colour sadly rules, and wheresoe'er the gaze may roam it finds no more
than desert wastes.

32. ARIA

Lucas

The trav'ler stands perplex'd, uncertain and unsure which way his
wand'ring steps to turn. In vain he strives to find the road, but neither
track nor path appear. In vain he struggles on his way, and wading
through the drifting snow he finds himself still more astray.

Now all his courage fails, and fear o'ercomes his heart, he sees the day
will soon be gone, and weariness and cold turn all his limbs to stone.
But suddenly his searching eye discovers shining lights at hand.
With life restor'd to him, and joyful beating heart, he runs in haste to
reach the house, where, stiff and cold, he hopes relief.

33. RECITATIVE

Lucas

As he draws near, into his ears, till now by the howling winds oppress'd,
comes the sound of clear voices.

Jane

In the warm room he happy finds a gathering of friends from nearby
dwelling-places, who with light work and chatter make short the drawn-
out evening hours.

Simon

Around the blazing stove the fathers talk of youthful days; their sons in
cheerful groups are gather'd too, repairing traps and baskets with fresh
willow wands. The mothers work at the distaff, their daughters at
spinning wheels seated, and all their work is cheer'd by artless song and
melody.

34. SONG WITH CHORUS

Whirring, humming, rumbling, all the wheels are turning!
Little wheel, please twist about, twist a slender thread for me,
for the veil you're spinning. Weaver, weave it soft throughout,
weave the veil so skilfully, for the fair that's coming.
Pure within and fair without ought the maiden's breast to be,
worthy then the veiling. Pure within and fair without,
work and prayer and modesty sets brave lads a-wooing.

35 and 36 omitted

37. RECITATIVE

Simon

From out the East there comes an icy blast with piercing cold. Harsh and
cutting to the bone, it gathers up the fog, and steals the breath from
man and beast. This tyrant, full of rage, the Winter now has vict'ry won,
and voiceless in her fear the whole of Nature lies aghast.

38. ARIA

Simon

So understand, misguided man, the picture of thy life is here.
Thy Spring was short and now is gone, exhausted is thy Summer's
strength. For now are come thine Autumn years, while Winter pale
already nears, and shows to thee the open tomb.
Where now those hopes of joy and gladness, those lofty schemes and
plans? Misfortune's heavy burdens, the vain desire of fame?

Where are they now, those times of plenty, once spent in luxury?
And where those cheerful evenings and nights of revelry?
Where are they now? Where? They all are vanish'd as a dream!
Only virtue stays.

RECITATIVE

Simon

Alone she stays and leads us on, unchangeable, through passing days
and years, through good or evil fortune, to reach the highest goal of life.

39. TRIO AND DOUBLE CHORUS

Then comes the great and glorious morn; the word of the Almighty Lord
calls us to second life, from pain and death for ever free.

The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears.

There stands the house of God where peace and freedom dwell.

But who may pass between those gates?

The man whose life was incorrupt. And who may climb the holy hill?

The man whose lips spoke only truth. And who may make that house his
dwelling? The man who help'd the poor and weak.

And who shall joy and peace delight in? The man who saved the
innocent. O see, the glorious morn is near. Behold, the splendid light!

The gates of heaven are open'd wide, the holy hill appears.

Now are they gone, for ever past, the days of woeful suff'ring,
the winter storms of living. For Spring eternal reigns, and everlasting
happiness is virtue's true reward. May we alike reward deserve!

Let us labour, let us struggle. Let us struggle, and continue our attempt
that prize to gain. Direct us in thy ways, O God, and make us strong and
brave. Then shall we sing, we shall ascend into the glorious realm of
Heaven. Amen.

Biographies

Soloist: soprano – Sophie Bevan

Biography

Sophie Bevan is recognised as one of the leading lyric sopranos of her generation. She was made an MBE for services to music in 2019.

She works regularly with leading orchestras including the LPO, Bergen Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, English Concert, the SCO, Concertgebouw, OAE and Swedish Radio Orchestras and has appeared regularly at both the Edinburgh and the BBC Proms Festivals. An acclaimed recitalist she performs at venues including the Concertgebouw and Wigmore Hall.

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*, Tèlaïre *Castor and Pollux* and one of the lead sopranos in *The Seven Deaths of Maria Callas* for ENO, Melisande *Pelleas et Melisande* for Dresden Semperoper and at the Aldeburgh Festival, 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.

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

Soloist: tenor – Xavier Hetherington

After reading Classics at St John's College, Cambridge, British tenor Xavier Hetherington took his Master's degree at the Royal College of Music as a Dr Prince Donatus and Princess Heidi Von Hohenzollern Scholar. He graduated in 2020 with Distinction and moved on to the Mascarade Opera Studio in Florence, and then the Centre de Perfeccionament at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia. Xavier was a semi finalist in the 2026 Viñas Competition.

Recent and future engagements include the title role in Jonathan Dove's *Itch* and Alfred Die *Fledermaus* (Opera Holland Park), Prologue/Peter Quint *The Turn of the Screw* (Deborah Warner Season at the Ustinov Studio, Bath), Brighella *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Nederlandse Reisopera), Nemorino *The Elixir of Love* (Wilton's Music Hall), Nemorino and Lensky *Eugene Onegin* (Wild Arts including performances at Opera Holland Park), Ruggero *La Rondine* (Fidelio Cafe, London), Don José *Carmen* (Paisley Opera and Waterperry Opera Festival); Philip Fork *Pass the Spoon*, Scrofulous/Toady/Seer/Saul in Purcell/Pountney's *Masque of Might*, Dick Dauntless *Ruddigore*, Shepherd and cover *Orpheus* (Opera North); Lieutenant Kotler in the World Premiere of *A Child in Striped Pyjamas* (Echo Ensemble); Shepherd *La liberazione Di Ruggiero Dall'isola D'Alcina* and cover Ferrando *Così fan tutte* (Longborough Festival); Lensky, Tebaldo *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and Don Ramiro *La Cenerentola* in scenes at La Fenice; and the trio from Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* at the Palau de les Arts, Valencia.

Recent concert performances include Pilade *Ermione* (The Monteverdi Choir), Ahasuerus in Handel's *Esther* with The English Concert (West London Synagogue, London and a Recording) and with Solomon's Knot (Wigmore Hall, Halle Händel-Festspiele and Musikfestspiele Saar); Mozart's *Requiem* (Wurzburg Mozart Festival); Tenor solo *Singalong Messiah* (Reisopera); Soldato 1/Valletto/Mercurio/Famiglari 3/Littore/Consoli *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* with Harry Bicket and The English Concert Orchestra (Auditorio Nacional, Madrid and Palau de la Musica, Barcelona); Verdi's *Requiem* (Royal Albert Hall); concerts with Opera Prelude and the Royal Philharmonic Society, an opera gala at the 20th anniversary of the Encuentro de la Música in the Palacio de Festivales, Santander.

Xavier has benefited from the generous support of the King-Farlow Trust and Mr and Mrs McGowan Stuart and is an Opera Prelude Young Artist.

Soloist: bass – Thomas Faulkner

Thomas Faulkner has a busy opera career in Europe, singing a repertoire varied in style, period and language. Recently he has performed Swallow (*Peter Grimes*) in Vienna, Lyon, and Frankfurt, Osmin (*Entführung*) in Hamburg and Frankfurt, Julio (*Exterminating Angel*) in Paris, Fasolt (*Rhinegold*) in Basel and Erl, Doktor (*Wozzeck*) in Lyon, Masetto (*Don Giovanni*) at Covent Garden, Zuniga (*Carmen*) in Munich, Berlin, and Cologne, and Vodnik (*Rusalka*) in Erl. He has been a house soloist at Oper Frankfurt since 2014, where his roles this season include Banquo (*Macbeth*), Timur (*Turandot*), Rangoni (*Boris Godunov*), and Latino in *Amor vien dal Destino* by Steffani. Other major roles in Frankfurt are Claggart (*Billy Budd*), Kothner (*Meistersinger*), Gremin (*Onegin*), Alidoro (*Cenerentola*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Elviro (*Serse*). In concert, as well as *Creation* and *Messiah* with Dulwich Choral Society, he has sung Verdi *Requiem* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Beethoven *Ninth Symphony* with the Dresdner Philharmonie, Bruckner *Te Deum* with the Orchestra del Teatro Massimo di Palermo, Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* and Haydn *die Jahreszeiten* with the Nürnberg Sinfoniker, and Mozart *C minor mass* at Les Grands Concerts Salle Metropole with Maestro Bertrand de Billy and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne. Before moving to Germany, he studied at Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music, sang in the Glyndebourne Chorus, and performed a number of roles with Wexford Festival Opera. While on tour in Scottish Opera's production of *Macbeth*, Shetland News wrote of his Banquo: "That man could walk on and sing the telephone directory and still be enthralling." A generous review of his Claggart claimed: "Faulkner's opulent, cavernous bass heralds a true successor to the likes of John Tomlinson and Richard van Allan in the role." He is prouder still of his reception on tour in Scottish Opera's production of *Macbeth*, when Shetland News wrote of his Banquo: "That man could walk on and sing the telephone directory and still be enthralling."

William Vann: conductor

William Vann was appointed Musical Director of Dulwich Choral Society in March 2020. A multiple-prize winning and critically acclaimed choral, orchestral and opera conductor and song accompanist, he is particularly renowned for his revival performances and recordings of lost and lesser-known works of vocal and choral music by British composers and has performed with a host of renowned singers, instrumentalists and orchestras across the world.

Born in Bedford, he was a Chorister at King's College, Cambridge and a Music Scholar at Bedford School. He subsequently read Law alongside a Choral Scholarship at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and studied piano accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music with Malcolm Martineau and Colin Stone. His extensive discography includes over twenty-five recordings for Albion, Champs Hill, Chandos, Delphian, Etcetera, Navona and SOMM with artists including Mary Bevan, Katie Bray, Dame Sarah Connolly, Sarah Fox, Jack Liebeck, Nicky Spence, Kitty Whately, Roderick Williams, Britten Sinfonia and the London Mozart Players. His world premiere recording of Hubert Parry's *Prometheus Unbound* was awarded Gramophone Recording of the Month in October 2023 and subsequently shortlisted for a 2024 Gramophone Award. Recent performances have included appearances at Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, the Royal Opera House, at the Aldeburgh and Edinburgh Festivals and abroad in France, Germany (on live ZDF television), Ireland, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa (National Arts Festival) and Sweden.

He is the Director of Music at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, Musical Director of The London Chorus, an Associate of the RAM, a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, a Trustee of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, the Chairman of Kensington and Chelsea Music Society, a conductor and vocal coach at the Oxenfoord International and Grasmere Summer Schools and the founder and Artistic Director of the London English Song Festival. In 2024 he took up the role of Chorus Master at The Grange Festival, where he will return this summer for productions of *La bohème* and *Eugene Onegin*, and

in February 2026 he conducted opera scenes at the Royal College of Music. www.williamvann.com

Meridian Sinfonia

Violin 1: Alice Evans (Leader), Joseph Lowe, Javier Montañana, Giovanni Melchiori, Lewis Lee

Violin 2: Rose Wainwright, William Thorp, Olivia Danielewicz, Charlie Cross

Viola: Thomas Kettle, Geoff Irwin, Sharada Mack

Cello: Chris Suckling, Carina Drury, Lucy Scotchmer

Bass: Tim Amherst

Lute: Matthew Nisbet

Flute: Liz Walker, Beth Stone

Oboe: James Eastaway, Adrian Rowland

Clarinet: Liz Drew, Lewis Graham

Bassoon: Alex Thornlow, Hayley Pullen

Contra Bassoon: Robert Percival

Horn: Anneke Scott, Richard Lewis

Trumpet: Richard Thomas, Edward Maxwell

Trombone: Stephanie Dyer, Steve Thompson, Adam Crighton

Timpani: Robert Kendell

Keyboard supply: David Wright

Chamber Organ: Joshua Ryan

Meridian Sinfonia is a dynamic and highly flexible professional ensemble, drawing on players from both the period instrument and modern orchestral worlds. The players of the Meridian Sinfonia are highly sought after throughout the UK and Europe as performers, soloists and teachers. The range of the orchestra encompasses the Renaissance through to the contemporary, having given first modern revivals of long-lost works and the first performances of contemporary compositions.

The period instrument branch of the Meridian Sinfonia covers pitches from Renaissance A440 and A465, through the Baroque A415 and the Classical A430. The choice of the instruments used is carefully considered to bring the most authentic realisation of sounds the composers would have expected. The Meridian Sinfonia has had the pleasure of working for the North London Chorus, Waltham Singers, Skolia, Stondon Singers, Southend Festival Chorus, Milton Keynes Chorale and Kings Lynn Festival Chorus.

DULWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

Honorary President **Rt Hon Baroness Harman KC**

Musical Director **William Vann**

Chairman **Dr Rosemary Leonard MBE**

Treasurer **Aziz Panni**

Accompanist **Joshua Ryan**

Membership Secretary **Jane and Michael Palmer**

Chief Operating Officer **Barney Rayfield**

1st Sopranos

Margaret Bailey, Helen Bang, Ann Blackburn, Melissa De Haldevang,
Didi Edwards Greig, Angela Finch, Cora Goldie, Charlotte Harris,
Kassy Luto, Susie Nicklin, Felicity Peddle, Lydia Swift, Cathy Wearing,
Gracita Woods

2nd Sopranos

Nicky Adamson, Caroline Craig, Pippa Grayson, Amber Hawksely,
Cecilia Hill, Juliana Kirby, Kate Lennard, Morven Main, Carmo Ponte,
Stephanie Prior, Sarah Terrazas

1st Altos

Zina Boykova, Marilyn Checkley, Liz Davies, Joanna French,
Ellen Hanceri, Gill Hancock, Jill Harris, Julie John, Claire Johnston,
Elsa Kenningham, Bryony Mycroft, Jane Palmer, Frances Steele

2nd Altos

Sonia Butler, Miranda Collinge, Liz Day, Grainne Gleeson,
Helen Graham, Jo Haynes, Kahryn Hughes, Sarah Hughes, Jenny Kay,
Helen Lall, Rosemary Leonard, Vicky Peel, Sue Ramsden,
Susan Robinson, Philippa Tudor, Sladjana Vuckovic-Grant,
Caroline Wedmore

1st Tenors

Forbes Bailey, Giles Craven, Richard Fergusson, Peter Frost,
John Greig, Steve Harrison, Elliot Smith, Charlie Stevenson,
Katharine St-John Brooks

2nd Tenors

Christopher Barrat, Nick Bolt, Tim Finch, George Cherry,
Robert Foster, Michael Palmer, Peter Rae

1st Bases

Alec Barton, Wulstan Berkeley, Christopher Braun, Theo Finkel,
Joe Garratt, Alan Grant, Yan Hawkins, Iain Johncock, Peter Main,
Kieran Murphy, Aziz Panni, Tim Pearce, Duncan Pratt,
Barney Rayfield, Peter Smith

2nd Bases

Michael Faulkner, Stephen Frost, Bruce Gregory, Joe Haines,
Alex Hamilton, Greville Healey, Tom O'Grady, Chris Putt,
Mike Shepherd

Dulwich Choral Society

Registered Charity No. 264764

www.dulwichchoral.com

Forthcoming events

Saturday 13 June 2026, 7pm

Summer concert: Deo Gratia

Works by J S Bach, Brahms, Bruckner, Górecki, Ockeghem and Purcell
St Stephen's Church, College Road, Dulwich

Saturday 10 October 2026, 10am–4pm

Come and Sing Day

All are welcome to participate. £20, members £15, under 16s £10

Saturday 21 November 2026, 7pm

Autumn concert with Dulwich Symphony Orchestra

Works by Boulanger, Fauré, Holst, Ravel, Sibelius and Vaughan Williams
All Saints Church, West Dulwich

Monday 14 December 2026 (to be confirmed), 7pm

Christmas concert

Saturday 20 March 2027, 7pm

Spring concert with the Meridian Sinfonia

Bach: St John Passion

All Saints Church, West Dulwich