



# THE ITALIAN JOB

Hennessey Brown Music  
Chamber Orchestra  
Conductor: *Jeremy Backhouse*

*Allegri: Miserere mei*  
*Pergolesi: Magnificat*  
*Gabrieli: Jubilate Deo*  
*Monteverdi: Beatus Vir*  
*Handel: Dixit Dominus*

**Vivace**  
Chorus

**Saturday**  
**20 May 2023**  
**at 7.30pm**

Holy Trinity, Guildford

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# The Italian Job

<b>Miserere Mei</b>	<i>Gregorio Allegri</i>
<b>Magnificat</b>	<i>Giovanni Pergolesi</i>
<b>Jubilate Deo</b>	<i>Giovanni Gabrieli</i>
<b>Beatus Vir</b>	<i>Claudio Monteverdi</i>
<b>Dixit Dominus</b>	<i>George F. Handel</i>



<b>Sofia Kirwan-Baez</b>	<i>Soprano</i>
<b>Emilia Bertolini</b>	<i>Soprano</i>
<b>Lexie Moon</b>	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>
<b>Dafydd Jones</b>	<i>Tenor</i>
<b>Daniel Barrett</b>	<i>Baritone</i>



**Vivace Chorus**  
**Hennessy Brown Music Chamber Orchestra**  
**Conductor: Jeremy Backhouse**

## Concert Programme



"Viva il caro Sassone!", cried the Venetian audience on the triumphant first night of Handel's opera *Agrippina* at the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo in 1709: "Long live the dear Saxon!". The young German composer (he was only twenty-four) was already a celebrity, but the opera's sensational score – dynamic, lyrical and expressive, and bringing to life Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani's sensuous, witty, satirical tale of political rivalry and sexual obsession in Imperial Rome – established Handel's reputation as a master of Italian musical style and, in effect, a new member of the great tradition of Italian composers that went back to Monteverdi, Gabrieli and beyond.

When he brought this inheritance to Britain a few years later he was able to exploit the rapidly growing prosperity of the rising imperial power, establish Italian opera as a prestigious

cultural product in London, and become one of the richest and most influential figures in British music. His friend Charles Burney later summed up the impact of Handel's personality in a famous account that attributed to him a god-like energy and volatility, pagan rather than Christian: "He was impetuous, rough and peremptory in his manners and conversation, but devoid of ill-nature or malevolence"; when he smiled "it was his sire, the sun, bursting out of a black cloud. There was a sudden flash of intelligence, wit, and good humour, beaming in his countenance"; and Mozart, commenting on Handel's music, compared him to the king of the gods himself: "when he chooses, he strikes like a thunderbolt".

No wonder, then, that the great Domenico Scarlatti, who allegedly once competed with Handel in a test of keyboard technique, is said to have crossed himself in veneration when speaking about his rival, and even the tempestuous Beethoven acknowledged that he would kneel before Handel's tomb: "He is the master of us all".

The twenty-two year old Handel arrived in Italy in 1707, at the invitation of a member of the Medici family, and was quick to make influential contacts (including Corelli and both Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, father and son), displaying his phenomenal skills and extending his prowess in every aspect of music.

The fact that Pope Clement XI had banned opera in Rome, believing it to stir up dangerous moral, social and even political disorder, did not hamper the development of Handel's gifts: running parallel to this incendiary art-form was the ancient tradition of sacred music, and the psalms of praise, rejoicing, denunciation and entreaty, the dramatic characterisations found in canticles such as the Magnificat, and the biblical stories that could be recreated in cantatas and oratorios, in many ways gave as wide a field for scrutiny of human

emotions and relationships as did the operas. A longing for love or forgiveness, warlike rivalry and jealousy, feelings of tenderness, triumph, reconciliation, penitence – all were being repeatedly dramatized and explored in Italian sacred music.

The works in tonight's concert are superb examples of this. Allegri's famous *Miserere* is a touching meditation on (or rather, a re-enactment of) grief, self-doubt and a hoped-for new relationship with God, while the Pergolesi *Magnificat* is a brief but brilliant "performance" of Mary's reaction to the news that she is to be the mother of Jesus. Giovanni Gabrieli's *Jubilate Deo* expresses the glorious confidence and gratitude of a city-state that believes that its prosperity and power are the result of God's favour as well as of its own energetic enterprise, and Monteverdi's *Beatus vir* sets out a programme for individual happiness framed by the same unhesitating values: be faithful, be virtuous, help others, lend freely and let the wicked grind their teeth in frustration when they see your success.



Long before he became GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL Esqr., as he is called on his magnificent marble monument in Westminster Abbey, grasping a score of *I know that my Redeemer liveth* that would probably weigh a hundredweight or two if the statue ever came to life and lifted it down, the young Handel in Italy - deft, irrepressible, a musical athlete bursting with self-confidence and hope - set *Dixit Dominus*, one of the most astonishingly violent Psalms, dramatizing God's wrath against his enemies - and he did so for

glamorous, dangerous Italy – the Italy that loved him. His music in that work has as much menace, flourishing sensuousness and compelling intensity as even Agrippina, Nero or any of those earlier, native-born Romans could have conceived of, and in at least one movement it reveals the humanity and tragic awareness that one day would mark Handel's profoundest insights and achievements.

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## Miserere mei



## Gregorio Allegri (1582 – 1652)

Allegri's famous *Miserere* has had a curious history, and its enthralling beauty emerges from a mass of myths and misinterpretations that has been patiently disentangled over the last fifty years (there is a cheerfully informative video on YouTube, *How Allegri's Miserere should really sound*, that gives an outline of the key points).

One of the strangest facts about the work is that its most famous feature, the soaring soprano line that rises repeatedly to a high C with thrilling effect, is the result of a transcription error made in the late nineteenth century and based on notes that Felix Mendelssohn made after hearing it performed in 1831, yet it is almost impossible for the work to be heard without it – it has become part of the performing tradition, beautiful in its own terms.

The penitential Psalm 51, praying for God's mercy on the sinner and performed in Holy Week in the Sistine Chapel, was set by Allegri, probably in 1638, in a consciously old-fashioned style and to be sung in almost total darkness. This must have enhanced its absorbing combination of gravity, tenderness and exaltation.

Its long-standing reputation for mystery and exclusiveness was strengthened by some poorly-evidenced stories: a papal threat of excommunication if it were copied down (no evidence of such a ban); fourteen year-old Mozart demonstrating his genius by memorising it (it has been pointed out that it could be straightforwardly memorised by a skilful and methodical enthusiast, given its repetitive structure and that its musical materials and embellishments were to a great extent common currency in the eighteenth century) – and so on.

Its real power comes from its careful arrangement of traditional elements, the moving simplicity and directness of *a cappella* (unaccompanied) performance, and the dramatic contrasts of musical texture that are built into the structure of the work.

The verses of the psalm are sung alternately, first in plainchant (men's voices in unison), then in richly harmonised settings that include upper voices. Within this overall structure there is a further element of alternation: the first harmonised verse is sung by a five-part chorus, singing homophonically (the harmonies changing regularly together), then the next one uses four soloists singing more independent lines and elaborating the music with the celebrated *abbellimenti* ("beautifications") that decorate the vocal line – and throughout the performance the plainchant returns to "anchor" the experience and focus the minds of listeners on the austere, timeless progress of the psalm.

At the end the chorus and soloists come together to sing of how God will accept the offered sacrifice of his worshippers, and the voices that have repeatedly risen as if yearning for forgiveness finish on a beautiful major chord.

*Miserere mei, Deus: secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.*

Have mercy upon me, O God: after Thy great goodness.

*Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.*

According to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences.

*Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: et a peccato meo munda me.*

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin.

*Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco: et peccatum meum contra me est semper.*

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

*Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci: ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris.*

Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified in Thy saying, and clear when Thou art judged.

*Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum: et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.*

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me.

*Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.*

But lo, Thou requirest truth in the inward parts: and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

*Asperges me hysopo, et mundabor: lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.*

Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

*Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.*

Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.

*Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis: et omnes iniquitates meas dele.*

Turn Thy face from my sins: and put out all my misdeeds.

*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus: et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.*

Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.

*Ne proicias me a facie tua: et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.*

Cast me not away from Thy presence: and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

*Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui: et spiritu principali confirma me.*

Give me the comfort of Thy help again: and stablish me with Thy free Spirit.

*Docebo iniquos vias tuas: et impii ad te convertentur.*

Then shall I teach Thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

*Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae: et exsultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.*

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou that art the God of my health: and my tongue shall sing of Thy righteousness.

*Domine, labia mea aperies: et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.*

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall show Thy praise.

*Quoniam si voluisses  
sacrificium, dedissem utique:  
holocaustis non delectaberis.*

For Thou desirest no sacrifice,  
else would I give it Thee: but  
Thou delightest not in burnt-  
offerings.

*Sacrificium Deo spiritus  
contribulatus: cor contritum, et  
humiliatum, Deus, non  
despicias.*

The sacrifice of God is a  
troubled spirit: a broken and  
contrite heart, O God, shalt  
Thou not despise.

*Benigne fac, Domine, in bona  
voluntate tua Sion: ut  
aedificentur muri Ierusalem.*

Be favourable and gracious  
unto Sion: build Thou the  
walls of Jerusalem.

*Tunc acceptabis sacrificium  
justitiae, oblationes, et  
holocausta: tunc imponent  
super altare tuum vitulos.*

Then shalt Thou be pleased  
with the sacrifice of  
righteousness, with the burnt-  
offerings and oblations: then  
shall they offer young  
bullocks upon Thine altar.



## **Magnificat**

***Giovanni Pergolesi (1710 -1736) /  
Francesco Durante (1684 1755)***

Like the Allegri Miserere, the “Pergolesi” *Magnificat* has had a disputed history, and it is now generally agreed by music scholars that it was composed by Pergolesi’s teacher, Francesco Durante, who had been a pupil of Alessandro Scarlatti in Naples. Twenty-one early sources attribute it to Durante, and it was accepted as his work throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but one manuscript copy bears Pergolesi’s name, and it was ascribed to him in 1910, then included in a 1942 edition of his work (an edition described by one authority as “notoriously unreliable”).



by Pergolesi ...



or Durante?

Pergolesi died young at twenty-six, and he has arguably a more radical importance in the history of music: for example, his innovatory intermezzo-opera *La serva padrona* was an early work in the tradition of Italian comic opera that led to Mozart and Rossini, so he became a more conventionally "interesting", even "romantic" figure.

Durante's "delightful, sunlit piece", as John Rutter calls the *Magnificat*, embodies something else that is distinctive: the *dolcezza* that in Italian implies elegance and confidence combined with "sweetness", and makes the work touching as well as stimulating, and one in which a genuine musical portrait of Mary is created.

Each of the six movements, however brief, has a distinct character, and they are beautifully contrasted as they illuminate the details of the text. The first movement, *Magnificat*, is built on an ancient Gregorian chant melody, stated in turn by each vocal part while the others elaborate it in

sensationally agile leaps and runs that express Mary's joy; then the music changes pace and structure in order to represent her humility and the decisive power of God.

The *Misericordia* duet for soprano and mezzo ("And his mercy") is heartfelt and serious in mood, and when the chorus make their forceful entrance at *Fecit potentiam* ("He hath showed strength"), the bass line topples rapidly down the stave as God scatters the proud "in the imagination of their hearts" – a simple but effective moment of drama.

The third section, *Deposuit potentes* ("He hath put down the mighty"), moves with increasing forcefulness as the choral entries imitate each other and build to a strong concerted finish.

The bass and tenor duet follows, a lovely moment of lyricism at the heart of the work, its delicately interweaving lines dramatizing the tender, supportive father / son relationship (*Suscepit Israel*) between God and his "son", the whole nation of Israel.

The fifth movement, *Sicut locutus est* ("As He promised"), is marked *maestoso*, "majestically", and leads directly into the expansive *Gloria*. This comes across almost as a direct comment on the lively characterisation of Mary that has been created – delightedly thanking God for her beauty, modesty and vitality.

The finale, *Sicut erat in principio* ("As it was in the beginning") follows Baroque convention in repeating the material of the first movement, with variations, and so embodies a familiar, devout musical witticism – it really is "as it was in the beginning" – and the canticle ends with a cheerfully triumphant sense of closure.

## I Magnificat

*Magnificat anima mea  
Dominum. Et exultavit spiritus  
meus: in Deo salutari meo.*

*Quia respexit humilitatem  
ancillae suae:*

*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me  
dicent omnes generationes.*

*Quia fecit mihi magna qui  
potens est: et sanctum nomen  
eius.*

## II Et misericordia

*Et misericordia eius in  
progenies et progenies  
timentibus eum.*

*Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:  
dispersit superbos mente cordis  
sui.*

## III Deposuit potentes

*Deposuit potentes de sede: et  
exaltavit humiles.*

*Esurientes implevit bonis: et  
divites dimisit inanes.*

## Chorus

My soul doth magnify the  
Lord: and my spirit hath  
rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the  
lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth:  
all generations shall call me  
blessed.

For he that is mighty hath  
magnified me: and holy is his  
Name.

## Soprano and Alto soli, Chorus

And his mercy is on them that  
fear him: throughout all  
generations.

He hath shewed strength with  
his arm: he hath scattered the  
proud in the imagination of  
their hearts.

## Chorus

He hath put down the mighty  
from their seat: and hath  
exalted the humble and  
meek.

He hath filled the hungry with  
good things: and the rich he  
hath sent empty away.

#### **IV Suscepit Israel**

*Suscepit Israel puerum suum:  
recordatus misericordiae suae.*

#### **V Sicut locutus est**

*Sicut locutus est ad patres  
nostros: Abraham, et semini  
eius in saecula.*

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto;*

#### **VI Sicut erat in principio**

*Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,  
et semper, et in saecula  
saeculorum. Amen*

#### **Tenor and Bass Duet**

He remembering his mercy  
hath holpen his servant Israel :

#### **Chorus**

As he promised to our  
forefathers, Abraham and his  
seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to  
the Son: and to the Holy  
Ghost;

#### **Chorus**

As it was in the beginning, is  
now, and ever shall be :world  
without end. Amen.



#### **Jubilate Deo**

#### **Giovanni Gabrieli (1557? – 1612)**

"... so good, so delectable, so rare, so admirable, so super-excellent, that it did even ravish and stupifie all those strangers that never heard the like", was the Devonshire traveller Thomas Coryat's comment on hearing Gabrieli directing the music at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice in 1608.

Gabrieli had been composing for the confraternity of San Rocco (a charitable guild dedicated to mutual help and public service), and for the great Basilica of San Marco, since the 1580s, and his career overlapped with that of the extraordinary Mannerist painter Tintoretto, whose work covered the walls of



the Scuola, headquarters of the confraternity, and had the same flamboyant energy, dramatic effects of light and shade, muscularity and command of extravagant but disciplined gesture as Gabrieli used to “stupify” his audiences. The combination on that occasion must have been overwhelming.

*Jubilate Deo* was not published until after Gabrieli's death, and it is not dated, but it is likely that it belongs to the period after 1605 when reductions in funding at San Marco meant that the complex polychoral works for which he was famous, with singers and instrumentalists positioned around the great church to produce carefully calculated effects, had to be cut back.

It is in the form of a litany, made up of texts from the Psalms that are intended to help the listeners to confirm their faith by focusing on profound, simple truths: God loves us and will bless us if we revere and obey him; unity, under the protection and guidance of God, will bring peace and prosperity; God helps those who rejoice in his goodness; willing service is the path of virtue.

A single verse with a theme of marriage, taken from the Book of Tobit, suggests that *Jubilate Deo* may have been composed for the Sposalizio del Mare, the annual Marriage to the Sea, when the Doge travelled to the Lido in his vast gilded barge, the Bucintoro, and cast a golden ring into the Adriatic, symbolically confirming the relationship between Venice's sea-power and the republic's commanding position as a trading empire.

The music's miraculous structure, with eight vocal parts combining, dividing, echoing and pursuing each other, endlessly complex yet transparent, until they come together in glorious harmony at the end on the word *laetitia*, "joy", would in that case be a magnificent celebration of the city's unity-in-diversity, as well as of the turbulent fertility of the sea itself.

*Jubilate Deo omnis terra, quia  
sic benedicetur homo qui  
timet Dominum.*

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye  
lands, for thus shall the man  
be blessed that feareth the  
Lord.

*Jubilate Deo omnis terra,*

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye  
lands.

*Deus Israel conjungat vos et  
ipse sit vobiscum,*

May the God of Israel unite  
you and himself be with you.

*Mittat vobis auxilium de  
sancto, et de Sion tueatur vos.*

May he send thee help from  
the sanctuary, and strengthen  
thee out of Sion.

*Jubilate Deo omnis terra,*

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye  
lands

*Benedicat vobis Dominus ex  
Sion, qui fecit caelum et  
terram.*

The Lord that made heaven  
and earth give thee blessing  
out of Sion.

*Jubilate Deo omnis terra*

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye  
lands.

*Servite Domino in laetitia!*

Serve the Lord with gladness.

## Beatus vir



## Claudio Monteverdi (1567 – 1643)

Monteverdi's motet *Beatus vir* was published in 1641, but was probably written some ten years earlier. The title of the collection of his sacred music in which it appeared is *Selva Morale e Spirituale*, "The Moral and Spiritual Forest", and the metaphor of a forest not only implies a disciplined and productive space – seventeenth century forests were strictly managed for hunting, stock-rearing

and the controlled exploitation of natural resources – but also suggests a place of luxuriance, mystery and transformation (Shakespeare explored this in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It* and elsewhere).

The variety and profusion of Monteverdi's collection is pre-echoed in words sung by *Musica*, a character personifying his art, at the beginning of his opera *Orfeo*: she says that she can "inflame the coldest minds, sometimes with love, sometimes with noble anger ... charm the ears of mortals, and make their souls aspire towards the resounding harmony of Heaven".

This profusion and potential for transformation is illustrated in the structure and the theme of *Beatus vir*: The six vocal lines interweave, then divide into brief duets, trios or quartets, then re-form in different combinations or come together in outbursts of splendour for the whole chorus.

The moral aim of the motet also involves transformation. The text of Psalm 112 conveys energetic approval of virtue in action, listing and bringing to life the deeds that make a man a force for good as well as bringing blessings on him: giving and

lending, remaining stalwart in bad times and generous in prosperity, showing compassion, lighting up the world while despising the wicked. Meanwhile, throughout the piece, the phrase that defines him as favoured by God is sung over and over again - *Beatus Vir*, "That man is blessed" – and urges us all to become like that man.

There is an element of transformation in the violin melody too. It comes from Monteverdi's love-duet, *Chiome d'oro*, in his seventh book of madrigals. Now, with its beautiful dance-rhythm, the same melody helps to maintain the captivating liveliness of the sacred-and-moral motet, underpinned by the steady progress of the repeated "ground bass" that propels the piece towards the grand concerted *Gloria* at the end.

*Beatus, beatus vir, beatus vir, qui  
timet Dominum: in mandatis eius  
volet nimis.*

Blessed is the man that feareth  
the Lord: he hath great delight in  
his commandments.

*Beatus, beatus vir,*

Blessed is the man

*Potens in terra erit semen eius;  
Generatio rectorum benedicetur.*

His seed shall be mighty upon  
earth: the generation of the  
faithful shall be blessed.

*Beatus, beatus vir,*

Blessed is the man

*Gloria et divitiae in domo eius; et  
justitia eius manet in saeculum  
saeculi.*

Riches and plenteousness shall  
be in his house: and his  
righteousness endureth for ever.

*Beatus, beatus vir,*

Blessed is the man

*Exortum est in tenebris lumen  
rectis: misericors, et miserator et  
justus.*

Unto the godly there ariseth up  
light in the darkness: he is  
merciful, loving, and righteous.

*Beatus, beatus vir, beatus vir, qui timet Dominum*

*Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat: disponet sermones suos in judicio:*

*Quia in aeternum non commovebitur: In memoria aeterna erit justus.*

*Ab auditione mala non timebit. Paratum cor eius sperare in Domino;*

*Confirmatum est, cor eius: Non commovebitur, Donec despiciat inimicos suos.*

*Dispersit, dedit pauperibus: Justitia eius manet in saeculum saeculi, Cornu eius exaltabitur in gloria.*

*Beatus, beatus vir, beatus vir, qui timet Dominum*

*Peccator videbit, et irascetur; Dentibus suis fremet et tabescet. Desiderium peccatorum peribit.*

*Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum.*

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord:

A good man is merciful, and lendeth: and will guide his words with discretion.

For he shall never be moved: and the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

He will not be afraid of any evil tidings: for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord.

His heart is established, and will not shrink: until he see his desire upon his enemies.

He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor: and his righteousness remaineth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord:

The ungodly shall see it, and it shall grieve him: he shall gnash with his teeth, and consume away; the desire of the ungodly shall perish.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord:

*Glória Patri, gloria, et Filio, gloria  
et Spiritui Sancto,*

Glory be to the Father, and to the  
Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

*Gloria sicut erat in principio,  
gloria et nunc, et semper, gloria  
et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen*

As it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be: world without  
end. Amen.

## Interval (20 minutes)

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## Dixit Dominus

**George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)**



*Dixit Dominus* is thought to have been performed in the Church of Santa Maria in Montesanto, Rome, in 1707, and was possibly commissioned by the Colonna family, one of whose members had been made a cardinal the previous year. The text of the psalm, seen as complex and in parts obscure by biblical scholars, is treated by Handel as a rousing account of God's uncompromising support, political, military and moral, for King

David ("my Lord", to whom "the Lord" spoke), and by extension, prophetically, for the Messiah (who for eighteenth century Christians is, of course, Jesus, who will at the end of time have all of his enemies at his feet).

The work is divided into nine sections, corresponding to the eight verses of the psalm and the *Gloria* at the end, and the character of the music is overwhelmingly militant and fierce, with some beautiful episodes in a gentler manner even when the theme remains one of conquest and power.

The opening chorus, introduced by violent downward arpeggios and the repeated word *Dixit*, "He said", used as a kind of musical dagger against God's enemies, has a ferocious energy that is reinforced by the *cantus firmus*, the ancient plainchant melody first stated by the sopranos at *Donec ponam* ("Until I place in subjection"), then taken up by the other voices in turn and woven through the elaborate patterns of threats and promises that define this extraordinary music.

Handel is showing off his brilliant command of complex counterpoint, and the difficulty of the score is a deliberate challenge to both performers and listeners.

The second and third sections, *Virgam virtutis* ("The rod of thy strength") and *Tecum principium* ("The day of thy power") show David / the Messiah settled on his throne, confident in his authority, with eloquent, propulsive melodies to express a mood of conscious nobility. The beautiful triplets and dancing  $\frac{3}{4}$  time of the third movement have an immediately recognisable Handelian delicacy and fluency.

The mood soon becomes more aggressive in the next movement, *Juravit Dominus* – the Lord has sworn, making grand declarations of his power followed by tempestuous assertions that he will not change his mind, as if exasperated by the very thought of doing so.

The next three sections are extraordinary – a kind of compressed battle scene, with first a warrant for action – *Tu es sacerdos* ("Thou art a priest for ever") – in which a mysterious priest-king of Salem in the Book of Genesis, who brought bread and wine as a tribute to Abraham, is seen as guaranteeing the rights of conquest for both David and his descendant Jesus.

The confident fugal entries of the chorus, and their excited chatter about the endless line of authority that is being granted, have an energy that it would be dangerous to oppose.

The soloists launch the next scene, as if flying to the battlefield – *Dominus a dextris tuis* ("The Lord at thy right hand"): here God himself is a prompt ally in battle, ready to "break" – *confregere* – the enemy in the day of his wrath.

Finally, in the seventh movement and the last scene of battle, *Judicabit in nationibus* ("He will judge among the heathen"), destruction is allotted to the enemy in broad, doom-laden phrases, and there follows a massacre that fills the ruins with bodies as complex vocal lines once again chase and entangle

with each other. Surely one of the most chilling moments in the score comes when the music pauses, draws breath, then moves brutally on to trample on the dying in a series of crushing chords, horribly unstoppable and prolonged, and the word *conquassabit*, "He will shake to pieces", itself breaks apart into what could even be interpreted as merciless laughter: *Conquas - sa - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - bit*.

Handel was so pleased with this effect that years later he used it again for another biblical battle scene, in an anthem that he composed for the Duke of Chandos, Paymaster for Queen Anne's Forces Abroad.

The eighth movement, *De torrente in via bibet* ("He shall drink from the brook in the way") is another moment of calm, with a softly pacing accompaniment, touchingly resembling a moment in Vivaldi's Winter in *The Four Seasons*, while an unspecified "he" refreshes himself. Biblical experts say that this may refer to the warrior after battle, the Messiah strengthened by God's grace, or Jesus drinking the cup of suffering – no-one knows for certain.

The heart-rending lines of the singers rise sadly above, as if, after the passages of fury and brutality, Handel is now composing a lament for the suffering of all humanity. The twenty-two year old can be heard reaching forward to touch the sound-world of his greatest future work.

The Italian commission must end, however, with the expected splendour, and "il caro Sassone" supplies it, with even more exhilarating and astonishing vocal leaps and runs, and a sensationally complex and triumphant fugue.

**All programme notes © Jon Long 2023**

## **I Dixit Dominus**

*Dixit Dominus Domino meo:  
Sede a dextris meis, donec  
ponam inimicos tuos  
scabellum pedum tuorum.*

## **II Virgam virtutis**

*Virgam virtutis tuae emittet  
Dominus ex Sion: dominare in  
medio inimicorum tuorum.*

## **III Tecum principium**

*Tecum principium in die  
virtutis tuae splendoribus  
sanctorum. Ex utero ante  
luciferum genui te.*

## **IV Juravit Dominus**

*Juravit Dominus et non  
paenitebit eum:*

## **V Tu es sacerdos**

*Tu es sacerdos in aeternum  
secundum ordinem  
Melchisedech.*

## **VI Dominus a dextris tuis**

*Dominus a dextris tuis,  
confregit in die irae suae  
reges.*

## **Chorus**

The Lord said unto my Lord:  
Sit thou on my right hand,  
until I make thine enemies  
thy foot-stool.

## **Alto solo**

The Lord shall send the rod  
of thy power out of Sion: be  
thou ruler, even in the midst  
among thine enemies.

## **Soprano solo**

In the day of thy power shall  
the people offer thee free-  
will offerings with an holy  
worship. From the womb  
before the morning star have  
I begotten thee.

## **Chorus**

The Lord swore, and will not  
repent:

## **Chorus**

Thou art a priest for ever  
after the order of  
Melchisedech.

## **Soli and Chorus**

The Lord upon thy right  
hand, shall wound even  
kings in the day of his wrath.

## VII Judicabit in nationibus

*Judicabit in nationibus,  
Implebit ruinas, conquassabit  
capita in terra multorum.*

## Chorus

He shall judge the nations, fill  
the places with destruction,  
and shatter the skulls in the  
land of the many.

## VIII De torrente in via bibet

*De torrente in via bibet,  
propterea exaltabit caput.*

## Soli and Chorus

He shall drink of the brook in  
the way, therefore shall he lift  
up his head.

## IX Gloria Patri

*Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto. Sicut erat in principio,  
et nunc, et semper, et in  
saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

## Chorus

Glory be to the Father, and to  
the Son, and to the Holy  
Spirit. As it was in the  
beginning, is now; and ever  
shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

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# End

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<https://www.vivacechorus.org/vc/newsletter>

## Sofia Kirwan-Baez

Soprano

Anglo-Venezuelan soprano Sofia Kirwan-Baez began vocal tuition at 16 in France.

Since then, operatic roles have included Fire (Ravel, *L'enfant et les Sortilèges*), Elle (Poulenc, *La Voix Humaine*), Eurydice (Offenbach, *Orpheus in the Underworld*), Adina (Donizetti, *L'elisir d'amore*), Venus (Gagliano, *La Dafne*), Juno (Purcell, *The Fairy-Queen*), Papagena (Mozart, *The Magic Flute*) and creations by Marco Galvani and Toby Young.



Photo © Broadway Studios

Other solo work comprises Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (in a staged production), Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, and Monteverdi's *Vespers*. Sofia holds a Music Bachelor's degree (Oxford University). Rotary International supported her Master's degree (Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama).

A 2021 winner of the Royal College of Music's Concerto Competition, Sofia is currently a Sybil Tutton Opera Award Holder and Huffner Scholar, supported by the Sir Gordon Palmer Scholarship. She will be performing as Adina & Gianetta in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* with Wild Arts this Summer.

All tonight's soloists have been sponsored by the Josephine Baker Trust. Vivace Chorus would like to thank the Trust for their generous support of these young artists.

## Emilia Bertolini

## Soprano



Photo © Dan Nunan

Emilia Bertolini is an Australian soprano of Irish and Italian heritage currently undertaking a Master of Arts (vocal) at the Royal Academy of Music, where she is the recipient of the Julien Scholarship, and studies with Nuccia Focile and James Baillieu.

Emilia is supported by the Josephine Baker Trust, and is a proud member of both the Academy's Song Circle and Bach series. This year, Emilia joined the choir of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for performances of Bach's *Mass in B minor* in London and in Poland, and is looking forward to returning to the Ryedale Festival to perform the role of Cupid in John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.

In 2022, Emilia made her debut at Wigmore Hall where she performed the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's *Combat of Joseph della Reina and the Devil* with the Nash Ensemble.

Other highlights for this year included singing as the soprano soloist in Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and *The Creation*, taking part in several of the Academy's Bach concerts, performing the role of Gretel from Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* in the Royal Academy of Music Vocal Faculty scenes, singing the premiere of Duncan Fraser's *Be Loved: A Passion* at St James's Piccadilly, and performing the role of Corydon in the Ryedale Festival production of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

## Lexie Moon

## Mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Lexie Moon is a postgraduate student at the Royal College of Music in London, studying with Professor and Chair of Vocal Performance Janis Kelly. She is the recipient of the London Women's Clinic Foundation Scholarship and is generously supported by the Countess of Munster Trust and the Josephine Baker Trust.



Photo © Olivia Da Costa

She most recently debuted for British Youth Opera at Opera Holland Park as Mistress Ford in Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love* to mark his 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and made her principal operatic debut as the Older Woman in the RCM Opera Studio's summer production of Jonathan Dove's *Flight*. She has also appeared in masterclasses with Dame Sara Connolly and Nicky Spence. Lexie made her professional stage debut in 2019 at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in collaboration with the English National Opera in their production of Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, starring in the 'Gossips' ensemble.

Recent competition successes in 2022 include 1<sup>st</sup> prize and Best Undergraduate Performance in the Brooks-van der Pump English Song Competition at the RCM, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the Somerset Song Prize and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in the RCM's Joan Chissell Schumann Competition.

Concert highlights include Mendelssohn *Elijah* (Broadstone Choir); Rossini *Petite Messe Solenne* (Grantham Choral Society); Beethoven *Symphony no. 9* (Vivace Chorus) and Vivaldi *Gloria* (Christchurch Choral Society).

Forthcoming projects include a joint recital for the London Song Festival and another joint lecture recital for the Oxford Lieder Festival.

## Dafydd Jones

## Tenor



Photo © Julian Guidera

Welsh tenor Dafydd Jones recently made his international debut as Clotarco in Haydn's *Armida* at the Bregenzer Festspiele. During the 2022 season, he also made his debut as Pastore in John Caird's highly acclaimed production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* for Garsington Opera as an Alvarez Young Artist.

Other operatic roles include the title role in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Il Principe in *La Bella dormiente nel Bosco*, L'Arithmétique & La Rainette in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (RCM Opera Studio) and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (OPRA Cymru).

Dafydd was recipient of the Prix Thierry Mermod at the Verbier Festival as member of their 2019 Academy Atelier Lyrique. Other accolades include winning the prestigious Osborne Roberts Memorial Prize – The Blue Riband – at the 2019 National Eisteddfod of Wales.

Currently studying for his Master's degree under the tuition of Nicky Spence and Caroline Dowdle at the RCM, he is generously supported as an Ivor Llewellyn Foster scholar, and by a Leverhulme Trust Arts Scholarship. He is also supported by the Munster Trust, Ryan Davies Memorial Trust, Josephine Baker Trust and is the most recent recipient of the Opera Europa Eva Kleinitz Scholarship.

Upcoming engagements see him in the title role in *Barnum's Bird* for the RCM Opera Studio and a recital at the Wigmore Hall as part of their French Song Exchange Programme in September.

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**CHERRY TREES**  
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## Daniel Barrett

## Baritone



Photo © Gerard Collett

Daniel Barrett is a baritone aged 24 from Glasgow, who is currently in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a Master's course at the Royal College of Music, and studies with Russell Smythe. Daniel is delighted to be a Drapers' de Turckheim Scholar and a Drake Calleja Trust Scholar, and is also an associate artist with the Josephine Baker Trust, and a Samling Artist.

His achievements include: the Molly Robb Award (2018), 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Leonie Kayser Song Competition, winner in the Hugh S Robertson Memorial Award for Scots Song (2018/19), highly commended in the Elgar Spedding Memorial Lieder Competition (2021), and he was one of 4 finalists in the Governer's Recital Prize (2021). In January 2022 Daniel won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize at the RCM's Lieder Competition, claiming the Ted Moss and Bertha Taylor-Sach Prize. He most recently claimed 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize in RCM's Brooks-van der Pump English Song competition 2022.

Since moving to London in September 2021, Daniel's most notable engagement has been to sing the baritone solo in Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, performed by the RCM Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Thomas Zehetmair. Daniel was delighted to be an Atelier Lyrique singer at the Verbier Festival, where he was involved in numerous masterclasses with world-renowned artists. He also played the role of Sam in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* on the Verbier Festival main stage, alongside a stellar cast including current Royal Opera House artist Freddie de Tommaso, under the baton of Gianandrea Noseda.

## Hennessey Brown Music Chamber Orchestra

Jonny founded Hennessey Brown Music with Cressida Wislocki in September 2019. He believes passionately in creating opportunities for musicians of all beliefs, ages, genders identities, and socio-economic backgrounds. He is a long term campaigner for mental health awareness and has raised thousands of pounds for mental health charities through the Hennessey Brown Music Concert Series.



Hennessey Brown Music fixes orchestras for concerts and recordings. Its roster of artists includes Emma Johnson, Raphael Wallfisch, the Queen's Six and Dominique Le Gendre, who was the first ever composer in residence at the Royal Opera House.

### **First Violin**

Sophie Langdon\*  
Malcolm Allison\*  
Jon Truscott  
Ralph Broadbent

### **Second Violin**

Sophie Durant\*  
Dave Williams\*  
Gill Austin  
Catherine Lett

### **First Viola**

Rob Spriggs#  
Oakki Lau<sup>!</sup>

### **Second Viola**

Sophie Sirota  
Emily Frith

### **Cello**

Lou Dearsley#  
Jonathan Hennessey-Brown<sup>!</sup>

### **Double Bass**

Daniil Margulis

### **Organ continuo**

George Castle

\* = Leader  
+ = Co-Leader  
# = Principal  
! = Co-Principal

## Jeremy Backhouse

## Conductor



Photo © Ash Mills

Jeremy Backhouse is one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He began his musical career in Canterbury Cathedral where he was Senior Chorister.

Jeremy has been the sole conductor of the internationally-renowned chamber choir, Vasari Singers, since its inception in 1980. Since winning the prestigious Choir of the Year competition in 1988, the Vasari Singers has performed regularly at major concert venues and cathedrals throughout the UK and abroad. Jeremy and the Vasari Singers broadcast frequently on Classic FM and BBC Radio 3 and have a discography of over 25 CDs on EMI, Guild,

Signum and Naxos. Their recordings have been nominated for a Gramophone award, received two Gramophone Editor's Choice awards, the top recommendation on Radio 3's "Building A Library" and two recent CDs both achieved Top Ten status in the Specialist Classical Charts. He is totally committed to the performance of contemporary music and, with Vasari, he has commissioned over 25 new works.

In January 1995 Jeremy was appointed Music Director of the Vivace Chorus. Alongside the standard classical works, Jeremy has conducted the Vivace Chorus in some ambitious programmes including Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Mahler's "*Resurrection*" *Symphony*, Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*, then Mahler's "*Symphony of a Thousand*" and Verdi's *Requiem* in the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Until July 2022, Jeremy was also the Music Director of the Salisbury Community Choir. In 2013 the choir celebrated its 21st Anniversary with a concert in Salisbury Cathedral, premiering a specially-commissioned work by Will Todd, *The City Garden*, which they toured to Lincoln (2014) and Guildford (2015) cathedrals. A new work from Alexander L'Estrange was premiered in Winchester Cathedral in November 2018.

Jeremy has also worked with a number of the country's leading choirs, including the BBC Singers, the London Symphony Chorus, the Philharmonia Chorus, and the Brighton Festival Chorus.

## About Vivace Chorus

Jeremy Backhouse

*Music Director*

Francis Pott

*Accompanist*

Peter Norman

*Chairman*



Vivace Chorus at the Royal Albert Hall, May 2014

Photo © Ash Mills

Vivace Chorus is a flourishing, ambitious and adventurous choir based in Guildford, Surrey. We enjoy singing traditional choral classics alongside the challenge of contemporary and newly-commissioned music – there's something for everyone at Vivace!

The choir began in 1946 as the Guildford Philharmonic Choir and was rebranded as Vivace Chorus in 2005. We have an enviable reputation for performing first-class concerts across a wide range of musical repertoire. Particular successes include a sell-out performance in May 2011 of Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*, the "*Symphony of a Thousand*", at the Royal Albert Hall, a highly acclaimed performance in November 2012 of Britten's *War Requiem* and another Royal Albert Hall success in May 2014 when we performed the Verdi *Requiem*. In 2017 we celebrated our 70th birthday with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall and 2018 saw a sell-out performance at G Live Guildford for our "*Concert for Peace*".

Vivace thrives under the exceptional leadership of this evening's conductor, Jeremy Backhouse. Jeremy's passion for choral music and his sheer enthusiasm for music-making are evident at every rehearsal and performance. He is supported by Francis Pott, who is an academic and composer of international repute and an accomplished concert pianist – who better to accompany our rehearsals?



During the pandemic, we made considerable efforts to keep singing. Jeremy ran weekly Zoom sessions, Francis shared his encyclopaedic knowledge of composers, and we put together two online films and a virtual Christmas Concert, raising money for the Mayor of Guildford's chosen charity.

We had a very successful tour of northern Spain in June 2022 (postponed from 2020 because of the pandemic), adding to our list of foreign trips, which have so far also included singing in France, Italy, Germany, Austria and the Baltic States.

We are always happy to welcome new members, so if you would like to try us out, do come along to any of our regular rehearsals on Monday evenings at 7.15 in the Guildford Baptist Church, Millmead, Guildford.

Just contact our membership secretary Becky Kerby at **[membership@vivacechorus.org](mailto:membership@vivacechorus.org)** or pay a visit to our website, **[vivacechorus.org](http://vivacechorus.org)**. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter - **@VivaceChorus**.

## Vivace Chorus Patrons

*The Vivace Chorus is extremely grateful to all patrons for their support.*

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## Vivace Chorus Singers

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Sandra Adamson  
Mary Broughton  
Jo Haviland  
Isobel Humphreys  
Becky Kerby  
Fran MacKay  
Suzie Maine  
Sue Norton  
Robin Onslow  
Barbara Tansey  
Joan Thomas

### SECOND SOPRANO

Jacqueline Alderton  
Sarah Badger  
Scarlett Close  
Ann Fuller  
Isabel Mealar  
Alex Nash  
Alison Palmer  
Gill Perkins  
Kate Peters  
Mary Somerville  
Valerie Thompson  
Olwyn Westwood  
Christine Wilks

### FIRST ALTO

Barbara Barklem  
Jackie Bearman  
Marion Blair  
Jane Brooks  
Philippa Curtis  
Fiona Davidge  
Valentina Faedi  
Sheila Hodson  
Lis Martin  
Charlotte Mathieson  
Penny McLaren  
Christine Medlow

Rosalind Milton

Lilly Nicholson  
Linda Ross  
Marjory Stewart  
Julia Stubbs  
Hilary Trigg  
Maggie Woolcock

### SECOND ALTO

Evelyn Beastall  
Mary Clayton  
Sheena Ewen  
Valerie Garrow  
Liz Hampshire

Pauline Higgins

Lois McCabe

Catherine Middleton

Val Morcom

Pamela Murrell

Sheila Rowell

Jo Stokes

Rosey Storey

Pamela Usher

Esther Van Rooyen

June Windle

### FIRST TENOR

Bob Bromham

Bob Cowell

Andrea Dombrowe

Rosie Jeffery

Nick Manning

Martin Price

John Trigg

Susie Walker

### SECOND TENOR

Simon Dillon

Geoff Johns

Stephen Linton

Charles Martin

Peter Norman

Jon Scott

### FIRST BASS

Phil Beastall

Richard Broughton

Michael Dudley

Brian John

Jeremy Johnson

Jon Long

Malcolm Munt

Chris Newbery

Robin Privett

Andrew Skinner

Philip Stanford

Rob Walker

Kieron Walsh

### SECOND BASS

Peter Andrews

James Garrow

Stuart Gooch

Chris Peters

Phil Tudor

Richard Wood



*Guildford Chamber Choir*

# *Songs for Summer*

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm *United Reformed Church Guildford*

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 4pm *St Mary's Church Chiddingfold*

*British Folk Songs including works by*

*Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst and John Rutter*

For more information [www.guildfordchamberchoir.org.uk](http://www.guildfordchamberchoir.org.uk)



## Vivace Chorus dates for your diary

### A concert for Cherry Trees

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 7pm**

**Holy Trinity Church, Guildford**

In July we will be putting on a very special concert, raising money for Cherry Trees – a local children's charity we've supported before. Join us for some classic sacred choruses, including Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, and selections from the Verdi, Mozart and Fauré requiems. We will finish with Parry's *I was glad* – a rousing way to end a summer evening's music-making.

### Vivace's Victorian Parlour

**Saturday 11th Nov. 2023 7:30pm**

**St Catherine's School, Bramley**

You're invited to share an evening of musical delights – exactly as our Victorian families might have performed in their parlours! You'll be treated to oratorio choruses from *Messiah* and *Elijah*, part-songs from Elgar and Gilbert & Sullivan, and madrigals including Orlando Gibbons' *The Silver Swan*. All that, plus solos, piano duets and the hugely popular *Albert and the Lion* poems. Join us in the comfortable, modern theatre at St. Catherine's School, Bramley, for a light-hearted evening that's bound to make you smile!

### The Mayor of Guildford's Carol Concert

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 7:00 pm** Holy Trinity Church, Guildford

One of the highlights of the Christmas season in Guildford is the Mayor of Guildford's annual Carol Concert, in support of this year's selected charity. As always, there will be your favourite audience carols, plus a wonderful selection of traditional and contemporary carols sung by the choir. With wine, soft drinks and mince pies in the interval, this is the perfect way to start your countdown to Christmas.

**Further details at [vivacechorus.org](http://vivacechorus.org)**

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Vivace Chorus is a Registered Charity No. 1026337

A detailed painting of a Victorian parlour. In the foreground, a woman in a white dress sits at a piano, playing. Another woman stands behind her, looking on. In the background, a man and a woman are seated at a table, engaged in conversation. The room is filled with ornate furniture, including a large piano, a table with a patterned cloth, and various decorative items like vases and plants. The lighting is warm and focused on the central figures.

( VIVACE'S )  
**VICTORIAN**  
PARLOUR

Part Songs and Piano Duets  
Recitations and Rhymes  
**SOLOS AND POPULAR CHORUSES**

Conductor:  
*Jeremy Backhouse*

**Saturday**  
**11 Nov 2023**  
**at 7.30 pm**

**Vivace**  
Chorus



St Catherine's  
School  
Anniversary Halls,  
Bramley

Tickets: £23, students and U18 £10, plus booking fee.  
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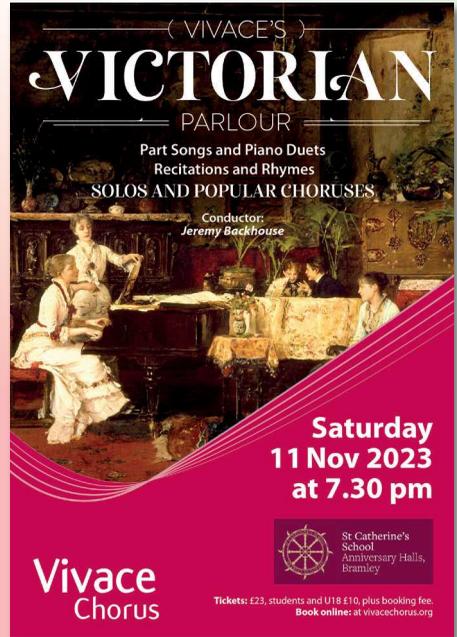
**Saturday  
1 July 2023  
at 7pm**

Holy Trinity, Guildford

[vivacechorus.org](http://vivacechorus.org)  
Registered Charity No. 1030317

Tickets: £10, students and U18 £5, plus booking fee.  
Book online: at [vivacechorus.org](http://vivacechorus.org)

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( VIVACE'S )  
**VICTORIAN**  
PARLOUR

Part Songs and Piano Duets  
Recitations and Rhymes  
**SOLOS AND POPULAR CHORUSES**

Conductor:  
*Jeremy Backhouse*

**Saturday  
11 Nov 2023  
at 7.30 pm**

**Vivace Chorus**

 St Catherine's  
School  
Anniversary Halls,  
Bramley

Tickets: £23, students and U18 £10, plus booking fee.  
Book online: at [vivacechorus.org](http://vivacechorus.org)

## Would you love to sing?

Are you commuting less? More time to enjoy yourself? We rehearse on Mondays at 7.15pm in central Guildford. We're an active, friendly choir and apart from singing locally we tour abroad, have parties and a walking group. We work hard but we aim to enjoy ourselves.

Email: [Becky.membership@vivacechorus.org](mailto:Becky.membership@vivacechorus.org) to ensure that we are ready to welcome you.

