



London Choral Day

South Kensington

Monday 27 June 2022 (LI 390)

Price: £220 per person

Our London Choral Days present some of the country's finest professional vocal ensembles in the uplifting setting of beautiful and appropriate buildings. They take the form of a day-long sequence which includes three concerts, talks, a good lunch and refreshments, with the audience moving between the venues on foot.

The Choral Days are conceived not simply as three discrete concerts but as an integrated, over-arching musical experience in which the individual parts illuminate and enlarge upon what has gone before. Usually there is some connection between the venues and the music performed in them, which may be chronological – music of the same period as the building – or associational, a specific historical link between music and building.

Some of London's best-known cultural and academic institutions are situated in South Kensington. At various points during this day we are only a stone's throw from Imperial College, the Royal College of Music, the V&A, Natural History Museum and the Science Museum. (And Harrods.) Here also are some of the grandest and most handsome residential terraces in the capital, lining thoroughfares or in tranquil garden squares.

A number of very fine churches arose to cater for the spiritual needs of the predominantly well-heeled if diverse residents and visitors. It would be hard to find a group of neighbouring churches in London which architecturally differ so markedly than the three we have selected for this Choral Day.

The Concerts

Siglo de Oro at St Columba's

We begin (at 11.15am) at St Columba's in Pont Street, where Scandinavian modernism with a nod towards Byzantium and a hint of post-war austerity unite in the service of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It was built 1950–55, after its predecessor was bombed, to designs by Sir Edward Maufe, architect of Guildford Cathedral. White without and white within, it is filled with light and is far from dour.

Siglo de Oro is one of the leading vocal ensembles of its generation, praised for its golden tone, seamless blend and innovative programming. Since starting life in 2014, the



London Oratory, Sanctuary.

group has performed in Britain, including Wigmore Hall, as well as Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Malta and, imminently, the USA, and they have made four critically acclaimed recordings. Artistic Director and conductor Patrick Allies learnt his craft in cathedral and college choirs in England.

The programme, *Light in the Darkness*, moves between the Renaissance – Byrd, Gallus, Praetorius, Willaert, Peebles – and recent decades: Tavener, Weir and MacMillan. Half the programme is by Scottish composers.

Choir of the London Oratory, at the Oratory

A startlingly persuasive monument to Baroque Italy, the contrast – liturgical, doctrinal, aesthetic – with the previous venue could hardly be greater. The London home to the Congregation of the Oratory of St Philip Neri, it possesses the full panoply of broad vaulted nave, capacious side chapels, high dome, polychromatic marble revetment, gilded highlights and over-life-size figure sculpture in carrara and stucco. The set of Apostles was made for Siena Cathedral in the 1680s.

The Plymouth-bred, Dublin-based, Catholic convert architect Herbert Gribble was chosen by competition in 1878 and the church was

largely complete before the end of the century.

Founded in 1852, the Choir of the London Oratory is the UK's senior professional Catholic church choir and sings for all the major Latin liturgies at the Oratory. Comprising some of London's leading ensemble singers, the choir is internationally renowned. Its working repertoire covers all aspects and periods of music for the Latin Rite from Gregorian chant to the present day. The Director of Music, Patrick Russill, is also Head of Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

The programme is based on the Roman tradition of the 16th and early-17th centuries and includes pieces by Clemens non Papa, Lassus, Palestrina, Monteverdi, Allegri, L'Héritier and Rosso. Some of these composers were known personally to San Filippo Neri.

Recordare at Holy Trinity, Prince Consort Road

The final church of the day can be claimed to be the London swansong of the Gothic Revival. Holy Trinity was also G.F. Bodley's last great work; he lived just long enough to see it completed in 1907 (his monument is here), though outfitting continued for several more years. Serene and undemonstrative, the architecture is a world away from the muscular High Victorian Gothic style that prevailed a

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continued

generation earlier. The carving of the reredos, choir stalls, pulpit and other furnishings is of supreme sensitivity, and the glass by Burlison & Grylls glows with rich autumnal hues.

Recordare is an exciting young professional vocal ensemble founded in 2018 by conductor Harry Bradford and sopranos Danni and Kirsty O'Neill. There were some live performances in London before the onset of the pandemic, after which they were active online. Harry is recognised as one of the most talented choral conductors of his generation and has already won several awards and international recognition.

The programme is centred around the concept of love and loss. Contemporary composers are featured (Healy Willan, Eleanor Daley, Janet Wheeler, Ola Gjeilo) as well as Renaissance ones (Byrd, Tallis, Ramsey, Aleotti, Bertolusi) and some of the greats of the 20th century (Finzi, Vaughan Williams, Holst).

Practicalities

Start: 11.15am at St Columba's Pont Street.

Finish: before 6.00pm at Holy Trinity, Prince Consort Road.

Walking: between churches and refreshment places there are walks at a leisurely pace of between 3 and, at most, 20 minutes.

Price: £220. This includes all three concerts, lunch, afternoon refreshments, the assistance of MRT staff and a programme booklet.

Lunch and refreshments. The audience is divided across three good restaurants for lunch. Afternoon refreshments are at a private institution with Victorian Doulton interiors.

Audience size: c. 100–150.

Booking: you do not need to complete a booking form for this event. Please call us to book and pay over the telephone, or reserve a space online at www.martinrandall.com (we will then contact you for payment).