



A B E R D E E N

B A C H

C H O I R

Musical Director: Dr **Paul Tierney**

Lux Aeterna

A programme of French choral and organ music, featuring works by Duruflé, Poulenc, Fauré and Messiaen

Saturday 2 December 2023, 7:30pm
St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

Aberdeen Bach Choir has taken the decision to reduce the programme size from A4 to A5 to minimise our environmental impact.



Before the concert please check that you have switched off your mobile phone.



In an emergency remain seated until given instructions by the stewards.



Photography and recording are not permitted.



Toilets are in the choir vestry at the back of the cathedral and in the Gatehouse.



Please return to your seats promptly after the interval.

Aberdeen Bach Choir
Musical Director – Dr. Paul Tierney

Patrons Professor John Butt O.B.E. and Dame Emma Kirkby

Lux Aeterna

Saturday 2nd December 2023

7.30pm

St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) – *Cantique de Jean Racine*
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) – *O sacrum convivium!*
Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) — *Choral varié sur le thème du*
«Veni Creator» Op. 4
Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) - *Gloria*

INTERVAL

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) — *Requiem*

Heather Ireson (Mezzo-Soprano)
Arthur Bruce (Baritone)
Alison MacDonald (Violoncello)
Kamil Mika (Organ)

Gabriel Fauré – Cantique de Jean Racine (Op. 11) **SATB choir and organ (1865)**

Text and translation

Verbe égal au Très-Haut, Notre unique espérance, Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux, De la paisible nuit, Nous rompons le silence, Divin Sauveur jette sur nous les yeux! Repands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante, Que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix,	Word equal to the Most High, our only hope, Eternal day of earth and sky, Of peaceful night, We break the silence, Divine Saviour cast Thine eyes on us! Cast on us the fire of Thy mighty grace, That all Hell may flee at the sound of Thy voice,
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante, Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois,	Cast sleep from a languishing soul Thou who bears it to the limit of Thy laws,
O Christ sois favorable à ce peuple fidèle	O Christ, look favourably on this faithful people
Pour te bénir maintenant rassemblé, Reçois les chants qu'il offre à ta gloire immortelle Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé!	Who gather now to bless Thee, Receive the songs they offer to Thy immortal glory And Thy gifts which they return manifold!

Fauré composed the now extremely popular *Cantique* in 1865. He was 19 years old and coming to the end of his studies at the École Niedermeyer de Paris. The piece was written as an entry in a school competition for which it won first prize. Although an early work and clearly steeped in the Romantic tradition there are several instances where one can clearly hear the suggestion of Fauré's more mature and 'modern' harmonic language which we come across again in the Requiem. The musicologist Zachary Gates suggests:

"The long sweeping melodies and strong melodic and harmonic appoggiaturas in *Cantique* are a testament to the Romantic side of the piece, but there is a definite contemporary tint to what he's writing, hidden in very minute and well-justified atonal note choices in the harmonic structure and melody".

The work begins with an extended instrumental introduction playing a series of triplet arpeggios. The voices enter in turn, beginning with the basses and the first exposition of the main melodic material is heard. Following this, the other voices enter one after the other, each presenting half a line of text, while the other parts accompany in

homophony. The second section is separated from the first by a short instrumental interlude similar to the introduction, while the third and final section follows immediately as a kind of reprise.

Jean Racine (1639–99) was one of Europe's leading dramatists, and one of the few French classical playwrights to have had any success outside their own country. In 1688 he published translations of a series of Latin hymns for the days of the week, which Fauré uses here as the text for this work. *Verbe égal au Très-Haut* is a free version of *Consors paterni luminis*, the hymn for Tuesday matins, thought to be by St Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan. Matins was sung, at least in strict monasteries, during the night and the words refer to “breaking the night's silence with praise to God, putting to flight dark's evil spirits and driving away sloth”.

Olivier Messiaen – O sacrum convivium! – SATB choir (1937)

Original Latin (punctuation from Liber Usualis)	Translation of original Latin
O sacrum convivium!	O sacred banquet!
in quo Christus sumitur:	in which Christ is received,
recolitur memoria passionis eius:	the memory of his Passion is renewed,
mens impletur gratia:	the mind is filled with grace,
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.	and a pledge of future glory to us is given.
Alleluia.	Alleluia.

“I understand completely your desire to renew the liturgy and your horror of recent hymns—which I share! Unfortunately, I believe my music to be much too complex to be of use to you: it can only be played on the piano, on the organ, and above all by an orchestra, and is intended only for an initiated élite. I think it would be unsingable by a congregation and also by young children.”

Olivier Messiaen (1964)

Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992) was a bit of an enigma. He was a celebrated composer and organist, and an enthusiastic ornithologist. He loved to travel and the places he visited often influenced the music he wrote. He was a dedicated catholic, which also had a significant impact on his compositional output. He entered the Paris conservatoire at age 11 and studied with Paul Dukas amongst others. He was appointed organist at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité, Paris, in 1931, a post he held for 61 years until his death.

At the outbreak of World War II, Messiaen was drafted into the French army as a medical auxiliary rather than an active combatant due to his poor eyesight. He was captured at Verdun and imprisoned at Stalag VIII-A, where he met clarinetist Henri Akoka, cellist Étienne Pasquier and violinist Jean le Boulaire. He wrote a trio for them, which he gradually developed into a more elaborate and ambitious work, *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (Quartet for the End of Time). The work was first performed in January 1941 to an audience of prisoners and prison guards, with the composer playing a poorly maintained upright piano and the trio playing poor quality instruments available in the camp. The title's "end of time" alludes to the Apocalypse, and to the way that Messiaen, through rhythm and harmony, used time and the modes of limited transposition in a manner completely different from his predecessors and contemporaries, thus highlighting his individualistic style and musical character.

O sacrum convivium is a short, unusually structured 35 bar motet for SATB choir written in 1937. Messiaen composed the work at the request of a clergyman, Abbé Brun. Messiaen himself was a devoted catholic and much of his music is directly linked to his religious beliefs without necessarily setting or referring to specific pieces of liturgical text. Indeed, this is the only piece that Messiaen wrote specifically for liturgical use.

Messiaen's music is often categorized as being ‘difficult’ to listen to or make sense of and in some ways, it seems that he felt this way too. This work is uncharacteristically simple for the composer of such extended masterpieces as *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (Quartet for the End of Time), *La transfiguration de notre seigneur Jésus-Christ* (The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ) and *Saint-François d'Assise* (Saint Francis of Assisi).

Analysts argue over whether the work is truly in the key of F-sharp major as it first appears, or in one of Messiaen's own modes of limited transposition. Modes of limited transposition are particular modes or scales that have a specific set of criteria relating to their symmetry and the repetition of their intervallic groups. They can be transposed to all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, but at least two of these transpositions must result in the same pitch classes or intervallic relationships, thus their transpositions are limited. Messiaen compiled and published these modes in his book *La technique de mon langage musical* (The Technique of my Musical Language). Cases for both analytical approaches could be made. Interestingly, Messiaen is

believed to have said that F-sharp major was his favourite key because it expresses the “mystical experience of superhuman love”.

This 35-bar piece is scored for four-part mixed chorus. Messiaen said that four unspecified solo voices could also be a suitable scoring for the piece, along with an optional accompaniment of an organ (*ad libitum*), which is unusually flexible for him. The tempo indication at the beginning of the piece is *lent et expressif* (slow and expressive) and performers are asked to count eighth notes, as no time signature is provided (as became usual in future Messiaen compositions). The number of eighth notes per bar varies greatly making the piece feel free and flowing when executed correctly.

Maurice Duruflé - Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié sur le thème du «Veni Creator» Op. 4. (1930)

Maurice Duruflé was born on 11 January 1902 in Louviers. From the age of ten, he attended the choir school attached to Rouen cathedral, where he both sang in the choir and learned the organ. His daily routine whilst in Rouen included studying Gregorian chant, which became the primary structural element in his compositions. In 1920, noted organist and composer Charles Tournemire arranged for his admission to the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied organ with Tournemire, Louis Vierne and Eugène Gigout, harmony with Jean Gallon, fugue with Georges Caussade, accompaniment with Cesar Abel Estyle and composition with Paul Dukas. Olivier Messiaen was one of his classmates.

Duruflé went on to become an outstanding student, winning several prizes in composition, accompaniment, fugue and harmony. He was strongly influenced by many other French composers of the older generation, such as Franck and Saint-Saëns. He also became a renowned organist and harmony teacher. In 1920 he was appointed assistant to Tournemire at St. Clothilde, a temporary position. In 1927 he became assistant to Vierne at Notre-Dame, also a temporary position. In 1930 he was appointed organist at St. Etienne-du-Mont, where he remained for the rest of his life. From 1943 to 1970, he was Professor of Harmony at the Paris Conservatoire.

Duruflé toured Europe, the United States and the Soviet Union as a concert organist and was in great demand as an orchestral organist. In 1939 he gave the world premiere of Poulenc's organ concerto and worked closely with Poulenc on the registrations. Duruflé married his student, Marie-Madeleine Chevalier, 20 years his junior in 1953. They embarked upon international recital tours together that made them

both the toast of the organ world until 1975, when they were seriously injured in a car accident in the south of France. Madame Duruflé eventually recovered sufficiently to perform again, but Maurice could no longer perform and rarely left his home after that time. He died in 1986.

Duruflé published only thirteen works, among them his beautiful *Requiem*, the *Messe cum Jubilo* and the *Quatre motets sur des thèmes Grégoriens*. Musicologists suggest that a notorious amount of self-criticism as well as excessive revisions may have reduced the number of works he completed and published.

Prélude, Adagio et Choral varié sur le thème du « Veni Creator » Op. 4 is the second major organ work by Maurice Duruflé, written in 1930. It is a vast encomium to the Holy Spirit, being completely based upon phrases of the Gregorian plainchant hymn *Veni Creator* appointed for the second vespers on Pentecost.

It has been suggested that the *Prélude and Adagio* were composed later than the *Choral varié* – Duruflé performed a piece entitled *Variations sur l'hymne Veni Creator* at two recitals in 1926, four years before the composer entered the work now known as Op. 4 in the *Concours de composition des amis de l'orgue* on 20 June 1930.

The full Gregorian plainchant does not appear in the first two movements. The *Prélude* opens with the beginning of the third section of the melody and a further short segment of the plainchant appears later in bars 48-51. The *Adagio* begins with the opening line of the melody and there are indirect references to other parts of the plainchant, but no direct quotations.

The final movement *Choral varié* presents the Gregorian melody in its entirety. Duruflé begins the initial section by setting *Veni Creator* (*Come Holy Spirit*) as a five-voice chorale with the chant in the top voice. Four variations follow the chorale, each employing all four phrases of the melody.

The first variation is a trio where the theme appears in the pedals on a reed stop *Cromorne*, whilst the right hand plays the third phrase of the chant supported by the flute accompaniment in the left hand.

The second variation is for manuals only and set for two keyboards. Both flowing parts have different rhythms (three against two) and contrasting organ registrations. The melody of the chant appears in the triplets of the right hand.

A canon appears in the third variation between the top voice and the pedals. The registration specified uses a flute 4' in the pedals (the highest pitch) and *voix celeste* (a celestial voice) for manuals.

The final variation is a brilliant toccata, introducing the theme in canon between right hand and pedals. The music winds up to a glorious climax concluded by the plainsong *Amen* in the pedals on full organ.

Francis Poulenc – Gloria – SATB choir, soprano soloist and organ (1960)

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

Choral singing in France has never been as popular a pastime as it is here in the United Kingdom. In France, particularly at the start of the twentieth century, the arts were considered to be largely for experts and consequently carried with them a certain degree of perceived sophistication. There seems to have been a reluctance on the part of French composers to write for choral forces and this may relate to the lack of opportunity for repeated, good quality performances. When voices were used they were treated more instrumentally: consider Debussy's use of the wordless female chorus in the *Nocturnes*. It is surprising then, that Poulenc's *Gloria* is considered one of his most important and significant works.

The *Gloria* was completed in 1960. It was commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation in honour of Sergei Koussevitzky and his wife Natalia. The foundation had originally approached Poulenc in 1959 to write a symphony but he had replied to them saying that this was not his "type of thing". They persevered and suggested instead an organ concerto. Poulenc dismissed this idea also as he had already written one! The foundation tried again, offering Poulenc a fee of \$2000 for a piece of his own choosing. He accepted this offer, and the *Gloria* was the result.

Francis Poulenc was largely a self-taught composer. He came under the influence of Satie early in his life and became a member of the breakaway group of French composers known as Les Six. The other composers in this group were Georges Auric (1899–1983), Louis Durey (1888–1979), Arthur Honegger (1892–1955), Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) and Germaine Tailleferre (1892–1983). The common aims of the members of this group were simplicity and clarity within their music –

a revolt against more formal and traditional Germanic influences as well as the impressionism in the music of their own country. They actively tried to avoid pretentiousness, focusing on the creation of melodic lines of extreme simplicity, exploring the use of irregular and unexpected rhythmic devices and manipulating harmony that at times was simple and at others complex.

Of all the composers in the group, Poulenc was the only one who really excelled in the field of choral music, perhaps with the exception of Honegger who produced two significant choral works: *Le roi David* (King David) and *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* (Joan of Arc at the Stake).

The familiar liturgical text of the *Gloria*, taken from the greater Doxology of the Mass, are set in a joyful yet sincere and in places humble manner. Upon initial hearings critics labelled the work as sacrilegious. Poulenc disputed this and answered them in saying, "While writing it I had in mind those Crozzoli frescoes with angels sticking out their tongues, and also some solemn-looking Benedictine monks that I saw playing football one day". It is thought that the second movement of the work (*Laudamus Te*) was particularly inspired by this ad hoc football match!

The first movement opens with a great, strident chordal motif reminiscent of Stravinsky and Shostakovich. The chorus then enters singing in an accented and declamatory manner. The introduction begins in G major and modulates to a G minor chord, the first considerable harmonic shift that characterizes the entire work. The chorus enters in double-dotted rhythms, reminiscent of the brass fanfare, in the key of B minor, accompanied by B minor triads over a pedal G in the bass. This juxtaposition of G major and B minor is an important one that returns throughout the piece.

The second movement is the most active, opening with a strange, quick instrumental introduction. A light tune repeats throughout this movement along with an often-changing time signature, moving the emphasis of certain key parts of the text to unusual and unexpected parts of the bar. The last line of the text, beginning *Gratias agimus...* is in a sombre chromatic mode, which provides a more ethereal and contemplative characteristic to the middle section before the return of the original musical material to close the movement.

The third movement is led by the extremely dramatic and declamatory solo soprano line after an instrumental introduction. The movement ends with an unexpected raised third, preparing the way for the more joyful and optimistic fourth movement.

The fourth movement is the shortest and resembles the second movement in the joyful nature of the instrumental phrases, but also contains some of the accented, rhythmic nature of the first movement in the chorus parts. The melodic lines are often pentatonic, and the quick tempo and spiky rhythmic figures are reminiscent of a dance, grounded by the constant return of the main melodic theme.

The fifth movement resembles the third with the return of the soprano soloist as leader. The music is darker and more mysterious, due in part to the inclusion of two particularly angular intervals: an augmented fourth and an augmented fifth in the soprano's opening melodic line. The movement finishes with an E-flat minor chord, a fifth lower than the beginning B-flat minor, creating a slightly unsettled, mysterious feeling to the end.

The sixth movement begins with alternating a cappella chorus and interjections of the organ intoning the chordal fanfare theme from the first movement. After the introduction, the main setting of the text is reminiscent of the first movement. The final section is preceded by a solo *Amen* from the soprano, echoed by the chorus. The chorus proceeds to repeat the text, this time over a mixture of B minor and G major chords in the accompaniment. The fanfare theme from the first movement returns one final time before the final *Amen*, triumphantly slower and grander than before. The final *Amen* intoned by the soprano on a D relates to both the B minor and G major chords played simultaneously, bringing the work to a satisfying conclusion.

INTERVAL

Maurice Duruflé – Requiem – SATB choir, mezzo-soprano, baritone, violoncello soloists and organ (1947)

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Introit (Requiem aeternam) | 2. Kyrie Eleison |
| 3. Offertory (Domine Jesu Christe) | 4. Sanctus and Benedictus |
| 5. Pie Jesu | 6. Agnus Dei |
| 7. Communion (Lux aeterna) | 8. Libera Me |
| 9. In Paradisum | |

The Requiem began life as a set of organ pieces based on the Gregorian chants used in the Mass for the Dead. Duruflé had already sketched out this suite of pieces when he received a commission from his publisher, Durand, to write a Requiem. Initially, Duruflé had intended to go in a

different direction with the work but encouraged by his publisher and the eminent organist Marcel Dupré, Duruflé used those sketches as the basis for the work we know today. This work, dedicated to his father, is thought to be influenced by his study of the music of Ravel, Debussy, Dukas and especially the Requiem of Fauré, to which it pays homage. Duruflé emphasizes the serenity, tranquillity and peace of the Fauré, rather than the apocalyptic carnage of the dramatic settings of Verdi and Berlioz. Originally performed in 1947, the Requiem was first scored for orchestra and organ, then orchestra alone, then organ alone, which is the version we are performing today. Duruflé wrote:

“This Requiem is entirely composed on the Gregorian themes of the Mass for the Dead... (It) is not an ethereal work which sings detached from worldly anxiety. It reflects, in the unchangeable form of the Christian prayer, the anguish of man facing the mystery of his last ending...”

Introit

The Requiem begins with gentle, running semiquavers in the organ that seem as if they have been flowing for centuries before we finally hear them. On top of this, one bar later, Duruflé first uses the ancient Gregorian melody on which the entire work is based.

The Gregorian melody unfolds, one phrase at a time, punctuated by the “ahs” of the women’s voices. A brief second section provides contrast. Here the chant is intoned first by sopranos, then altos, to a very simple organ accompaniment.

The opening organ semiquavers return for the third section and the full choir sings in harmony for the first time. The movement concludes quietly as the repeating semiquavers slow down, little by little, and lead straight to the next movement.

Kyrie

The first section begins with the simple exposition of the theme. The Gregorian melody is heard in the bass and alto voice parts first, with counter melodies sung by the sopranos and tenors. After all four parts enter, Duruflé superimposes the chant melody in the organ although in a much slower tempo.

The middle section is more flexible and expressive with the sopranos and altos both pleading for mercy. Then, with great emotion, the sopranos and altos build up to the stunning, rich and resonant re-entry of the basses and tenors.

Domine Jesu Christe

Intended for the Offertory of the Mass, this is by far the longest movement of the piece. The movement begins in a dark, mystical world conjured up by the organ. The altos enter with a rich chant-like melody before suddenly the whole ensemble bursts into action.

What follows is one of the most dramatic sections of the whole work. As the chorus cries out that the souls of the departed be saved from the horrors of Hell, the organ is heard playing a virtuosic and spiky accompaniment. After a ferocious climax, the music subsides and eventually arrives at an ethereal, other worldly section. A variety of delicate instrumental colours accent this section concluding with the comforting *Quam olim Abrahae* sung by the sopranos and altos.

The next section is also highly colourful and imaginative. After a brief instrumental interlude the men enter, mysteriously, in unison. This section, too, subsides in a most mysterious manner. The section and the whole movement concludes with the returning, comforting refrain of the sopranos and altos, *Quam olim Abrahae*.

Sanctus

After the dark third movement, the rich transparency of this famous Sanctus is most appealing. Against the rippling organ ostinato the chant melody is heard in three part chords in the women's voices.

The Sanctus is sung three times: piano, mezzo forte, then forte. The music calms down considerably before the build-up begins. The first hushed Hosanna is sung by the altos. The sopranos enter, a bit higher but still pianissimo. The tenors charge in, mezzo-forte, in another key with a whole new accompaniment. Then the basses join the ensemble before the final cataclysmic crescendo ushers in the calm and serene opening material.

Pie Jesu

The Pie Jesu, coming in the center of this Requiem, is the only solo movement of the work scored for two soloists, a mezzo-soprano and a cellist. Many consider this movement to be the commentary of a mature person who has experienced the joys and sorrows of life. It is intense and very personal with a sense of deep sorrow and loss, but also consolation.

Agnus Dei

Amidst this instrumental accompaniment, Duruflé presents the haunting Agnus Dei chant in various voices, in various keys, and sometimes accompanied by newly composed melodies of the most beautiful nature. Rather than a plea for mercy as is more common in the Agnus Dei, this one is imbued with an inner serenity that is both hopeful and longing.

Lux Aeterna

The Lux Aeterna is a personal and intimate movement. It begins with a beautiful, simple organ solo followed by an unaccompanied choral section. The sopranos' melody rests on top of chords sung on "oo" by the rest of the choir. Another organ solo follows, this time a fifth higher. Then the choir, again a fifth higher than the previous melody.

Following this initial chant-like section the sopranos and tenors intone, on a single note, the words *Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine et lux aeterna luceat eis* (Lord, give them eternal rest and let perpetual light shine on them). The organ music appears again, more extended this time, followed by a short abbreviation of the unaccompanied choral material before the single note theme reappears, now in a lower, richer key for the altos and basses.

Libera Me

The Libera Me (Deliver me from eternal death) provides the last great dramatic moments of the Requiem. The basses sing a plaintive melody, with an underpinning of urgency and uncertainty in the accompaniment. The tenors enter, next the altos and then the sopranos. The music becomes still more frantic and chaotic until it reaches a brief fortissimo.

The Dies Irae follows, at first sung only by the men, then by the whole chorus with huge organ sounds rumbling underneath.

This music eventually calms down and we find ourselves in a very different sound world. Sopranos intone the chant, *Requiem aeternam*. After a brief organ interlude, the full chorus sings the main Libera Me melody, in unison. The movement comes to a serious and content close.

In Paradisum

The first organ chord of the final movement transports us to another world. We have left the turmoil of the previous movements and have journeyed somewhere altogether different. Single voices enter singing the chant before the full choir bring the work to a satisfying but questioning conclusion.

Kamil Mika – Organ

Kamil Mika took his Master's degree in Organ Performance at the Academy of Music in Cracow under Prof. Andrzej Białko. He continued his music studies at the Hochschule für Musik in Mainz with Prof. Gerhard Gnann and took part in several organ masterclasses with such professors as: Olivier Latry, Daniel Roth, Ben van Oosten, Wolfgang Zerer, Harald Vogel, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Guy Bovet, Pieter van Dijk, David Titterington, Jane Parker-Smith and Christophe Mantoux.

Kamil won first prize in the X International Organ Competition in Castellana Grotte (Italy, 2011) and third prize in the I National Competition of Organ and Chamber Music “Per Artem ad Astra” in Krasnobrod (Poland, 2007).

He has performed in music festivals in Austria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Ukraine and Wales as a soloist and an ensemblist. The concerts took place at venues including:

Chapel of Royal Palace, Madrid, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, Arctic Cathedral, Tromsø; the cathedrals of Barcelona, Salamanca, Cagliari, Tallinn, Fulda; the universities of Glasgow and St Andrews, and churches in Budapest, Padova, Prague, Seville and Vienna.

Together with the Orchestra of Uzghorod Philharmonic and conductor Victoria Savlyavchyk-Tsanko he performed Mieczysław Surzyński's Organ Concerto in G minor at the Uzghorod Philharmonia in Ukraine. In 2013 he recorded a CD *Spanische Barockorgel an der Hochschule für Musik Mainz* on a new Spanish organ by Joaquín Louis Cabello from Castile.

In 2019 he was awarded a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in Poland for the Polish Organ Music Festival project in Cracow.



His last project of the organ series Bach & Mendelssohn took place at St James Episcopal Church in Aberdeen where he performed six concerts with the complete organ sonatas by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Kamil is currently Vice-President of Aberdeen & District Organists' Association and member of the committee of the International Association of Organists “Organ in Progress” in Italy.

Kamil is based in Aberdeen where he teaches organ and serves as an organist at St James Episcopal Church and regularly assists at the King's Chapel at Aberdeen University.

Alison MacDonald — Violoncello

Alison MacDonald studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with Sharon McKinley and Douglas Cummings. She graduated with distinction and was the recipient of the college string prize. Alison appeared as a freelance cellist with the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, Sinfonia Cymru and the Charlie Barber Band. She was also a member of the Sentica Piano Trio, Junior Fellows in chamber music at RWCMD. The group performed extensively including recitals at St Paul's Covent Garden, St John's College Oxford, Halifax Square Chapel Festival and Highgrove. The trio also undertook concert tours in Colombia, Venezuela and Portugal.

Alison moved to Aberdeen in 2005. She is now principal 'cello of Aberdeen Sinfonietta, a member of the Cargill Piano Trio and performs regularly with the Aberdeen Chamber players. She teaches at Aberdeen City Music School, St Margaret's School for Girls and Robert Gordon's College.



Heather Ireson - Mezzo-Soprano

Scottish mezzo-soprano Heather Ireson studied Music at the University of Aberdeen gaining a First Class Honours degree. She then went on to achieve a Master's of Music in Solo Performance, with Distinction at the Royal Northern College of Music.



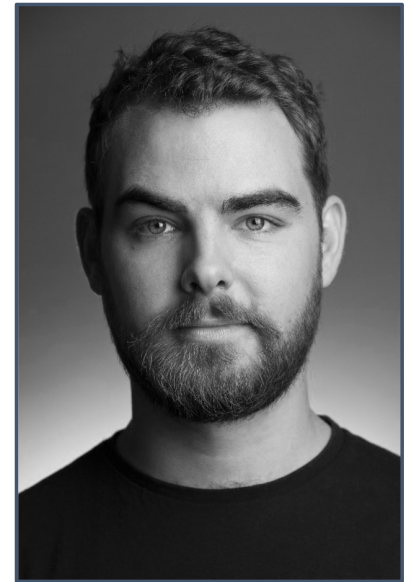
Heather was a Scottish Opera Associate Artist for the 2019/20 season, covering Nancy T'ang (First Secretary to Mao), Nixon in China. Previous engagements for Scottish Opera have included: role of La Suora Infermiera and cover La Suora Zelatrice, Il Trittico, cover Witch/Mother, Hansel and Gretel, Scottish Opera Highlights Spring Tour 2019 and chorus for Eugene Onegin, L'elisir d'amore, Falstaff and Don Giovanni. She was also a recipient of the Scottish Opera John Scott Benevolent Fund Award in 2019.

Other professional engagements include: Cherubino for Opera Bohemia, Mamma Lucia for Paisley Opera, chorus for Glyndebourne Opera Tour 2017 and 2015, chorus for Wexford Festival Opera 2017, Karolka, Jenůfa for Grange Park Opera 2017 and chorus for Glyndebourne Festival Opera 2016 and 2015.

Heather has now relocated to Scotland permanently. Future engagements for Heather include chorus and cover Mercédès, Carmen for Scottish Opera in 2023.

Arthur Bruce - Baritone

Scottish baritone Arthur Bruce is a former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, a Samling Artist, and a Britten—Pears Young Artist. He is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Alexander Gibson Opera School, and English National Opera's Opera Works programme. In 2018 Arthur was in the final round of the “Concorso per il Biennio di perfezionamento per cantanti lirici” at the Accademia Teatro alla Scala, Milan.



Recent engagements include covering the Gamekeeper in Rusalka (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Belcore in L'elisir d'amore (Longborough Festival Opera); Moralès in Carmen (Waterperry Opera Festival); covering the title role in Don Giovanni, Schaunard in La Bohème, Guglielmo in Così fan Tutte, Starveling in A Midsummer Night's Dream, all for Scottish Opera, and Wolfram in Tannhäuser (Saffron Opera Group).

Next year Arthur is looking forward to returning to the Royal Opera House, as well projects with Chelsea Opera Group and a recording with Retrospect Opera.

Dr Paul Tierney – Musical Director

Paul was born in Edinburgh in 1984 but grew up in Hawick in the Scottish Borders. He graduated from the University of Aberdeen in 2006 with a first-class BMus (Hons.) degree and in 2012 with a PhD in composition, also from the University of Aberdeen. He has taken part in numerous masterclasses with singers such as Donald Maxwell, Raimund Herincx, Cate Hughes, Irene Drummond, Margaret Cable and Stephen Varcoe. In 2005, he was awarded the Ellie Pirie award by Aberdeen Bach Choir and the North East of Scotland Music School. In 2006 Paul was awarded the first Derek Ogston Postgraduate Music Scholarship from the University of Aberdeen.



As a soloist, Paul has performed with many groups including Aberdeen Choral Society, University of Aberdeen Choral Society and Chapel Choir, Concordia String Orchestra, Aberdeen Orpheus Choir, Peterhead Choral Society, Inverurie Choral Society, Roxburgh Singers and the Queens Cross Charity Concert. He has also performed with the Hereford International Summer School Chorus in the role of Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Paul has also performed with the Gustavus Adolphus New Music Ensemble in Minneapolis, USA. He also gives numerous recitals of English Song and Lieder and gave the first Scottish performance of *To a Poet* by Gerald Finzi. He has also received rave reviews for his performances of *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* of Schubert; 'Tierney's singing was a revelation!' Paul has recently recorded *Winterreise* with Roger Williams at the piano.

Paul is active as a conductor and composer and has studied with Alasdair Nicholson, Sally Beamish and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies as part of the first St. Magnus Composers Course. His piece *Threnody* was premiered by the Kreisler ensemble at the St. Magnus Festival. Paul's music has also been performed by the Edinburgh Quartet, members of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Gemini Ensemble and Lontano Ensemble. Paul's work, *Gallowgate Lard*, based on the painting by Ken Currie, was commissioned as part of the 2009 Sound Festival and was given its first performance by Roberto Fabricciani, Tadej Kenig and Rohan De Saram. Paul was also featured as principal guest composer at the Dana School of Music New Music Festival XXVII at Youngstown State University, Ohio, USA in May 2011. Paul has recently presented a paper on the influence that music of the Far East had on the creative output of Benjamin Britten at the conference *Britten 100: An American Music Centenary* at Illinois State University, Bloomington, USA.

Paul is currently musical director of Aberdeen Bach Choir and conductor of the Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society. With Haddo, performances have included *Elijah* by Mendelssohn, *Nelson Mass* by Haydn, *Te Deum* of Dvorak and *Samson* by Handel in the presence of the society's patron HRH Prince Edward. Paul was the founding director of the University of Aberdeen New Music Group and has also conducted the University of Aberdeen Chapel Choir, the Learig Orchestra, Aberdeen Sinfonietta and University of Aberdeen Gilbert and Sullivan Society. He has recently conducted performances of Maxwell Davies *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Varese *Octandre*, Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's Third Symphony. Paul has taken part in numerous choral conducting masterclasses working with conductors such as Stephen Layton (Polyphony), Neil Ferries (BBC SO) and Matthew Hamilton (Hallé). Most recently Paul conducted the Hallé Choir in a masterclass performing Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Aberdeen Bach Choir Singers

Soprano 1

Ruth Ahmed
Lucy Bailey
Caroline Franco
Yvonne Gray
Cathy Guthrie
Veronica Hansmann
Kathleen Haw
Julia House
Pamela Hoy
Clare Johnson
Kerstin Kröger
Margaret Macaulay
Sandra Massey
Mairi McHattie
Margaret Nicholson
Marta Visocchi
Hazel Wilkins
Catherine Wilkinson

Soprano 2

Gill Bishop
Molly Brown
Clare Carden
Wilma Geddes
Kate Graham
Anne Henderson
Ruth Howarth
Jane Jones
Fiona Leslie
Elaine Miller
Alison Purvis
Jane Shanks
Angela Slater
Alyson Smith
Dawn Smith
Karen Smith
Ros Studd
Janet Wendes

Rehearsal Pianist

Ben Marsden

Alto 1

Alison Cook
Christian Cooper
Barbara Crane
Althea Dickens
Becky Docea
Isobel Ford
Alison Gathercole
Jean Gulston
Isabella Hanna
Lorna Herbert
Anne Lemon
Janet MacDonald
Lindsey Mountford
Lesley Mowat
Lea Øvrevik
Adele Perry
Sheila Robertson
Margaret Spence
Kristin Speidel
Doreen Taylor

Alto 2

Kari Rist Aasen
Kate Anderson
Kiran Angadi
Libby Brand
Ailsa Cantlay
Rosemary Feilden
Helen Goodyear
Muriel Knox
Isobel Malcolm
Louise Page
Sarah Stevens
Val Thomas

Tenor 1

Paul Davison
Alison Garnett
Bruce Irvine
Gbemileke Majekodunmi
Paul McKay
Janet Ogilvie

Tenor 2

Ian Lovegrove
James Millar
Alan Scott
Leofric Studd

Bass 1

George Cameron
Ian Downie
David Goodban
Mel Gulston
Mike Harding
Stefan Horsman
Jim Hunter
George Lawrence
Graham Mountford
Mike Radcliffe
Finlay Smith
David Way

Bass 2

Mark Edwards
Jim Hardy
Roger Hessing
Jason Hobbs
Mike Longhurst
Alastair McKinlay
Adam Pushkin
Mark Rodgers
John Watson
Brian Wilkins

Aberdeen Bach Choir

Founded as the Aberdeen Bach Society by Charles Sandford Terry in 1913, and reconstituted as the Aberdeen Bach Choir in 1956, the choir usually performs two main concerts a year, in April and December. The repertoire of the choir is comprehensive and drawn from a wide variety of cultures, styles and periods. Past concerts have included the following works:

J.S. Bach	Christmas Oratorio, Easter Oratorio, St Matthew Passion, St John Passion, Magnificat, Mass in B Minor
Beethoven	Mass in C
Bernstein	Chichester Psalms
Bruckner	Mass in F, various motets
Buxtehude	Nimm von uns Herr du treuer Gott, Jesu, meines Lebens Leben, Der Herr ist mir
G. Gabrieli	Hodie Christus Natus Est, O Magnum Mysterium, Salvator Noster, Beata es Virgo
M. Haydn	Missa Trinitatis, Missa Sanctae Theresiae
Jenkins	The Armed Man
Lassus	Missa Bell'Amfitrit Altera, Domine Exaudi
Liszt	Missa Choralis
Monteverdi	Vespro Della Beata Virgine 1610, Dixit Dominus, Confiteor, Beatus Vir
McLeod	Chronicle of St Machar (Bach Choir commission)
Mozart	Missa Brevis in D, Missa Brevis in F, Requiem, Great Mass in C Minor, Vespers
Praetorius	Magnificat Quinti Toni
Purcell	Te Deum, Ode to St Cecilia
Rutter	Magnificat, Gloria, Requiem
Schubert	Mass in G, Mass in E-Flat
Stravinsky	Symphony of Psalms
Vierne	Messe Solennelle
Vivaldi	Beatus Vir, Domine ad adiuvandum me Festina, Gloria
Walton	Te Deum, The Twelve

Aberdeen Bach Choir is always keen to recruit new members.

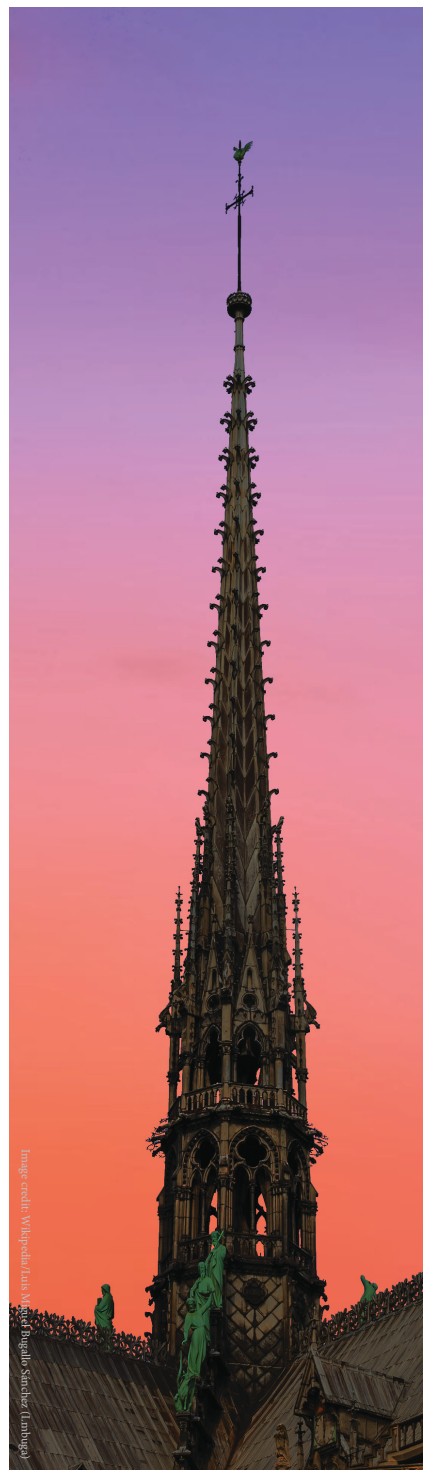
If you are interested in joining the ranks of the choir, please contact our Membership Secretary, Sandra Massey, by emailing info@aberdeenbachchoir.com.

Next Concert
J.S. Bach Mass in B Minor
Sunday 28 April 2024, Aberdeen Music Hall 7:30 p.m.
Aberdeen Bach Choir
Musical Director Paul Tierney

Elinor Rolfe Johnson - Soprano
Tom Lilburn - Countertenor
Nathan Vale - Tenor
Jerome Knox – Baritone

Tickets are now on sale from Aberdeen Box Office priced at £20 and £16. Under 26s will be £7 and Under 16s free. Prices include the APA booking fee.

A limited number of tickets will be available later through members of Aberdeen Bach Choir



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