



ABERDEEN  
BACH  
CHOIR

Musical Director  
Paul Tierney



Chichester Cathedral,  
detail from Chagall window

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LAURIDSEN                      BERNSTEIN  
LUXAETERNA      CHICHESTER PSALMS

Barber, Whitacre and Del Tredici

7.30pm, Saturday 6 Dec 2025  
St Machar's Cathedral  
Aberdeen

## Choir Membership



Aberdeen Bach Choir is always keen to recruit new members.  
Follow us on social media to find out more:



@aberdeenbachchoir



@aberdeenbach

Rehearsals for our April 2026 concert begin on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January.

Anyone interested in joining the choir should contact our  
Membership Secretary by emailing [info@aberdeenbachchoir.com](mailto:info@aberdeenbachchoir.com).



[www.aberdeenbachchoir.com](http://www.aberdeenbachchoir.com)

## Aberdeen Bach Choir Musical Director – Dr. Paul Tierney

Andrew Forbes – Organ and Piano

Sharron Griffiths – Harp

Chris Overton – Percussion

## America!

Saturday 6 December 2025

St Machar's Cathedral

7:30 p.m.

*Chichester Psalms* – Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

*Reincarnations* – Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

1. *Mary Hynes*

2. *Anthony O'Daly*

3. *The Coolin*

*Acrostic Song* – David Del Tredici (1937-2023)

## INTERVAL

*Sure on this Shining Night* – Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

*Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* – Eric Whitacre  
(b.1970)

*Lux Aeterna* – Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)

Please switch off mobile phones

In an emergency, remain seated until given instructions by the stewards  
Toilets are in the choir vestry at the rear of the Cathedral and in the Gatehouse

Please return to your seat promptly after the interval

## Chichester Psalms (1965) - Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

In 1965, Leonard Bernstein received an invitation from the Very Reverend Walter Hussey, Dean of Chichester Cathedral, to compose a new choral work for that summer's Southern Cathedrals Festival — a gathering of the choirs of Chichester, Winchester and Salisbury. Hussey was a passionate advocate for contemporary sacred art, having previously commissioned works from Benjamin Britten, Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. He wrote to Bernstein hoping for something “tuneful, direct and simple,” and Bernstein responded in exactly that spirit.

The resulting *Chichester Psalms* is one of the most radiant and uplifting works in Bernstein's output — a joyful fusion of faith, theatre and dance. It is written for a boy (or countertenor) soloist, mixed chorus and orchestra and in a ‘reduced’ version for organ, harp and percussion (which we perform tonight). The work sets six texts from the Hebrew Book of Psalms in their original language. It was first performed not at Chichester, but in New York, where Bernstein conducted the New York Philharmonic in the premiere on 15 July 1965. The British premiere at Chichester Cathedral followed soon after.

Bernstein was at the height of his fame in the 1960s, celebrated worldwide as conductor, composer, pianist and educator. Yet at the time he began *Chichester Psalms*, he was weary and disillusioned after struggling with the demands of public life. He had just abandoned work on an ambitious but darkly modernist symphony, *Kaddish*, and was searching for something that could reconnect him with joy and simplicity. In a letter to Hussey, Bernstein described what he hoped to achieve:

*“This will be a sort of easy-going piece — old-fashioned tonality and interesting rhythms. It's quite popular in feeling, even a bit Broadwayish at times. It's all very young and open-hearted.”*

That description captures the essence of *Chichester Psalms*: tonal, rhythmic, accessible and brimming with optimism. It draws on Bernstein's distinctive musical language — blending the sacred intensity of the synagogue with the rhythmic vitality of jazz and the sweeping melodic freedom of Broadway. The result is music that feels both ancient and unmistakably modern, devotional yet alive with the pulse of the 20th century.

The work is in three movements, each combining contrasting Psalms to form a dramatic and emotional journey — from exuberant praise, through conflict and struggle, to serenity and unity.

### I. Psalm 108:2 & Psalm 100

*“Urah, hanevel, v'chiner”* — “Awake, psaltery and harp!”  
*“Hari'u l'Adonai kol ha'arets”* — “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

The opening movement begins with an exultant cry in the organ and percussion: a bold, irregular 7/4 rhythm drives the choir's call to awaken the instruments and praise God. The music is exhilarating, dance-like and full of Bernstein's characteristic syncopations.

The second section, a setting of Psalm 100, maintains the sense of rhythmic vitality but turns more melodic and lyrical. It's a jubilant expression of worship, evoking the sound of ancient psalmody filtered through Bernstein's distinctly American musical voice. The movement closes as it began — bright, exuberant and full of life.

### II. Psalm 23 & Psalm 2

*“Adonai ro'i”* — “The Lord is my shepherd.”  
*“Lamah rag'shu goyim”* — “Why do the nations rage?”

The central movement is the emotional heart of the work. A solo alto voice introduces the serene melody of Psalm 23, a tender, flowing lullaby. The accompaniment rocks gently like a pastoral dance, creating one of Bernstein's most beloved melodies — simple, radiant and deeply touching.

This peace is soon shattered by the men's voices declaiming the furious words of Psalm 2: “Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” Their fierce, angular rhythms and harsh dissonances create a stark contrast with the soloist's innocent song. Gradually, these two musical worlds — the pastoral and the violent — collide, intertwine and finally dissolve into a quiet reconciliation.

### III. Psalm 131 & Psalm 133:1

*“Adonai, lo gavah libi”* — “Lord, my heart is not haughty.”  
*“Hineh mah tov”* — “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

The final movement begins in hushed tones, a gentle statement of humility and trust. Bernstein's music here is simple and sincere, unfolding in warm, flowing lines. Gradually, the mood broadens into a vision of harmony and peace with the words of Psalm 133: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

The closing pages bring the work to a tranquil and radiant conclusion. A final “Amen” drifts away into silence — not in triumph, but in contentment. It is as if, after the joy and the struggle of the earlier movements, the soul has found rest.

*Chichester Psalms* stands apart in Bernstein’s output for its sincerity and spiritual warmth. It is a celebration of faith in its most open-hearted form — joyful, human and inclusive. Though rooted in Bernstein’s Jewish heritage, the music transcends religious boundaries. Its rhythms and melodies speak of humanity’s shared longing for peace, its beauty lying in its blend of exuberance and humility.

By choosing to set the Psalms in Hebrew rather than in translation, Bernstein preserved their original rhythmic character and connection to ancient chant. Yet the music remains unmistakably American, infused with syncopation, energy and dramatic contrast. The fusion of these worlds — the ancient and the modern, the sacred and the theatrical — is what makes *Chichester Psalms* so compelling and enduring.

Bernstein’s original sketches even included musical ideas left over from *West Side Story* and other stage works. In this sacred context, those rhythms and melodies take on new meaning: the exuberance of praise, the innocence of faith and the yearning for unity.

In the decades since its premiere, *Chichester Psalms* has become one of the cornerstones of the choral repertoire. It is both a concert work and a prayer — a testament to Bernstein’s belief that all music, sacred or secular, should “*reach out and touch people.*”

The final blessing, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” feels as resonant today as ever — a musical vision of peace, compassion and shared humanity.

## **Reincarnations (1937–40) - Samuel Barber (1910–1981)**

1. Mary Hynes 2. Anthony O’Daly 3. The Coolin

Samuel Barber’s *Reincarnations* stands as one of the masterpieces of 20th century American choral literature — a work of exquisite craftsmanship and profound emotional depth. Composed between 1937 and 1940, these three unaccompanied choral settings represent Barber at the height of his lyrical powers. The cycle reflects his ability to fuse a deep sensitivity to poetry with a rich, modern harmonic language rooted in traditional tonality.

The texts come from the Irish poet James Stephens, who ‘reincarnated’ verses by the 18th century Gaelic poet Anthony Raftery. Stephens’ English translations are more than simple renderings, they are poetic reimaginings — transforming Raftery’s spirit into new language and form. Barber’s title, *Reincarnations*, thus carries a double meaning, referring not only to the rebirth of the older poetry through Stephens, but also to the composer’s musical transformation of those texts into a new and living art form.

The first movement, *Mary Hynes*, is a burst of vitality and joy. The poem describes an encounter with the most beautiful woman in Ireland, and Barber captures that radiance through rapid, dance-like rhythms and brilliant harmonies. The music mirrors the narrator’s dazzled excitement — quick exchanges between voice parts, sudden dynamic contrasts and luminous textures create an atmosphere of youthful excitement.

In striking contrast the second movement, *Anthony O’Daly*, plunges into deep lamentation. The poem mourns a man unjustly executed, whose death has left the natural world itself desolate: “*There is nothing but grief... and the blackbird sings no more.*” Barber’s setting unfolds as a slow, heavy progression from quiet sorrow to searing anguish. Dense, dissonant harmonies accumulate until they break into a powerful, anguished climax — one of the most devastating moments in all of Barber’s choral writing — before subsiding into a hollow, grief-stricken silence.

The final movement, *The Coolin*, restores calm and intimacy. The poem is a tender love lyric, filled with stillness and contemplation. Barber writes long, arching phrases and suspended harmonies that seem to hover in space. The effect is meditative — an expression of love not as passion, but as enduring devotion. The cycle ends in serenity, suggesting the transcendence of love and beauty beyond death.



### **Acrostic Song (from *Final Alice*, 1974-75) - David Del Tredici (b. 1937)**

David Del Tredici is one of the major American composers of the late 20th century whose return to tonality and lyricism helped re-energise art music in the post-serialism era. His deep fascination with the works of Lewis Carroll, particularly *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, became a defining thread of his career. The large-scale work *Final Alice* (1974-75), for soprano (amplified), folk-group and large orchestra, is a major milestone of that “Alice” series. *Acrostic Song* appears in the concluding aria of *Final Alice*, and subsequently the piece has been arranged for many forces, including SATB chorus.

The term ‘acrostic’ refers to the poetic form of the underlying text: the initial letters of each line of the seven-verse epilogue poem spell out ALICE PLEASANCE LIDDELL, referring to the real-life Alice for whom Carroll wrote.

The text is drawn from Carroll’s epilogue to *Through the Looking-Glass*. In musical form, Del Tredici sets the poem as a kind of lullaby or farewell — the culmination of the Alice-works’ narrative arc. The effect is both whimsical and poignant: the imagery evokes night, dreams, departure and transformation, and the acrostic form gives an additional layer of reflection and memory.

Although the piece has its roots in a major orchestral-solo work, the music is direct, lyrical and deeply expressive. Del Tredici’s embrace of tonality (rather than strict modernist atonality) allows for warmth, clarity and emotional immediacy. Indeed, his comment (in other works) that he “*couldn’t imagine setting a Carroll text to dissonant music*” points to his deliberate return to melody and tonality as expressive tools.

In *Acrostic Song*, the choral writing flows as if suspended between a dream state and a hymn-like calm. The harmonies are rich but never heavy-handed; melodic lines intertwine, the text is sensitively declaimed and there is a strong sense of arching line and resolution. For the choir, balancing blend, dynamic subtlety and the sense of unfolding narrative is essential.

*Acrostic Song* offers an opportunity for the choir to engage with 20th century American composition that is lyrical and accessible, yet sophisticated. It connects literature (Carroll’s poem), poetic form (the acrostic) and music in a meaningful way. While technically approachable for many skilled choirs, it invites a depth of interpretation and musical sensitivity — phrasing, dynamics and text-understanding all matter.

For the audience, the piece evokes wonder, nostalgia and a gentle but profound farewell. It speaks of a journey, of memory, of transformation — all set in a musical world that combines clarity with emotional depth.

### INTERVAL

### **Sure on this Shining Night (1938) - Samuel Barber**

As we have heard in *Reincarnations*, Samuel Barber is one of the most lyrical and expressive voices in 20th century American music. Rooted in the Romantic tradition yet unmistakably modern in harmony and emotional depth, Barber's music often combines rich sonorities with a deep sensitivity to text. *Sure on this Shining Night* is among his most beloved choral works, admired for its simplicity, warmth and quiet radiance.

Originally composed in 1938 as an art song for voice and piano within Barber's *Four Songs*, Op. 13, *Sure on this Shining Night* sets a poem by American writer James Agee. The text, brief but evocative, reflects on compassion and the wonder of human experience "*on this shining night.*" Barber's choral setting, written later (1938–1940) and arranged for SATB choir, retains the intimacy of the original while expanding its expressive range.

The music unfolds in long, arching lines and lush harmonies, creating an atmosphere of stillness and awe. The gentle interplay of voices captures both the personal and universal dimensions of Agee's text — a meditation on beauty, kindness and the fleeting, luminous moments that connect us.

At once nostalgic and hopeful, *Sure on this Shining Night* exemplifies Barber's gift for crafting music that feels timeless: deeply American yet resonant with the emotional clarity of the Romantic masters he admired. It remains a favourite among choirs for its tender lyricism and its quiet affirmation of the human spirit.

### **Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine - Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)**

**Text by Charles Anthony Silvestri**

Eric Whitacre's *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* (2001) is one of the most imaginative choral works of the 21st century — a vivid sonic portrait of Leonardo da Vinci as inventor, artist and dreamer. Commissioned by the American Choral Directors Association and premiered by the Brigham Young University Singers, it completes Whitacre's so-called "Dream Trilogy," alongside *Sleep* and *Lux Aurumque*.

Charles Anthony Silvestri's libretto is written partly in English and partly in Italian, drawing upon Leonardo's notebooks to evoke both his analytical mind and his poetic vision. The English narration depicts the restless inventor "*tormented by his vision*" as he sketches and constructs, while the Italian passages — "*Ma che bel sogno di volare!*" ("What a beautiful dream, to fly!") — give voice to Leonardo's inner imagination. The result is a text that feels both historical and dreamlike.

Whitacre's music turns the choir into Leonardo's machine itself: breathy effects and rhythmic repeated patterns imitate the whirring of gears, the flutter of experimental wings and the mechanical rhythm of invention. Against this, sweeping melodic lines rise from the texture, expressing the yearning of flight and the fragile beauty of Leonardo's dream. Whitacre's lush yet open harmonies — built from close clusters and parallel chords — create a sense of weightlessness, as if the sound itself is defying gravity.

The work builds to an ecstatic climax as the chorus exclaims "*E vola!*" ("And he flies!"). In that moment, Leonardo's dream is realized and the music soars with radiance and momentum. But the triumph is brief, the machine's hum returns, fading into the same mysterious murmurs that began the piece. The cycle of dreaming and creation begins anew.

More than a portrait of a Renaissance genius, *Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine* is a meditation on the human spirit — on invention, imagination and the longing to transcend our earthly limits. Through the fusion of Silvestri's text and Whitacre's evocative harmonies, we are invited to experience Leonardo's vision from within: the delicate, dazzling moment when dream becomes flight.

## Lux Aeterna (1997) – Morten Lauridsen (b.1943)

- |                                |                                     |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Introitus: Requiem aeternam | 2. In Te, Domine, Speravi (Te Deum) | 3. Nata Lux |
| 4. Veni, Sancte Spiritus       | 5. Agnus Dei – Lux Aeterna          |             |

*“All of my music is about love, in its many forms — romantic love, spiritual love, the love of nature, and the love of light. Lux Aeterna is about the comforting light that always shines, even in our darkest hours.”* — Morten Lauridsen

Morten Lauridsen’s *Lux Aeterna* (“Eternal Light”) was composed in 1997 and quickly became one of the most loved choral works of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its serene beauty, glowing harmonies and radiant sense of peace have made it a modern classic — often described as a spiritual companion to Fauré’s Requiem or Duruflé’s Requiem, though its voice is unmistakably Lauridsen’s own.

Lauridsen’s mother, who had introduced him to music as a child, was gravely ill when he composed the piece. The theme of light — as symbol, prayer and promise — runs throughout the work, offering consolation and hope. Lauridsen later described *Lux Aeterna* as *“an intimate meditation on light, a universal symbol of illumination, transcendence and comfort.”*

Commissioned and premiered by the Los Angeles Master Chorale under Paul Salamunovich, *Lux Aeterna* cemented Lauridsen’s reputation as one of the foremost choral composers of his generation.

*Lux Aeterna* is a continuous five-movement work for choir and orchestra (or organ), setting a carefully chosen sequence of Latin texts that all refer to light — from the comforting *“Lux aeterna luceat eis”* (“Let perpetual light shine upon them”) of the Requiem Mass to the radiant doxologies of the Te Deum. The movements unfold as a single arc, progressing from darkness toward light, from mourning to serenity.

The work opens with a gentle invocation: *“Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine”* (“Grant them eternal rest, O Lord”). The music is hushed, unfolding in the rich, luminous harmonies that are Lauridsen’s hallmark. The mood is contemplative, the lines smoothly interwoven and the harmonies suspended in a timeless calm. The first mention of *“lux perpetua”* (“perpetual light”) glows softly in the upper voices — the image of light as both spiritual and musical illumination.

Without pause, the second movement offers a prayer of confidence and praise. The text, taken from the Te Deum, begins “In you, O Lord, I have trusted; let me never be confounded.” The music here is more animated, with flowing, contrapuntal lines and rhythmic vitality that recall Renaissance polyphony. Lauridsen’s modern tonality however, keeps the texture warm and luminous rather than austere.

Scored for unaccompanied choir, the central movement, *O nata lux de lumine* (“O light born of light”), is the emotional and spiritual heart of the work. One of Lauridsen’s most famous and beloved compositions, it is often performed on its own. Here, Lauridsen achieves an almost mystical stillness. The overlapping voices shimmer like light itself, each phrase unfolding with perfect clarity and balance. The text, a hymn to Christ as the Light of the World, encapsulates the entire work’s theme of transformation through illumination.

The fourth movement invokes the “sweet light” of the Holy Spirit: “Come, Holy Spirit, and send out from heaven the ray of your light.” The tone is more expansive and flowing, filled with rhythmic motion and gentle crescendos that suggest the spreading of divine light and warmth. Lauridsen’s orchestration is translucent — harp, strings and winds interweave around the choral texture like shifting beams of light.

The final movement brings together several textual sources, combining the Agnus Dei from the Mass with verses from the Communion of the Requiem (*“Lux aeterna luceat eis”*) and the Veni, Sancte Spiritus. This synthesis of texts mirrors the musical integration of earlier themes: motifs from the opening Introitus and O nata lux return in transformed form, creating a sense of cyclical completion. The closing pages are among the most moving in modern choral music. The phrase *“et lux perpetua luceat eis”* is repeated with gentle insistence, fading into stillness — a final affirmation of eternal light and peace.

Lauridsen’s music is often described as ‘Neo-Renaissance’ or ‘Neo-Impressionist,’ but his compositional style is deeply individual. His harmonic language, rich in suspended chords and gentle dissonances, creates a sound world of extraordinary warmth and clarity. Influences from Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony and French composers such as Fauré, Ravel and Duruflé can be heard, yet Lauridsen’s approach is modern in its harmonic pacing and emotional restraint.

He writes for the voice with exceptional sensitivity, balancing technical precision with an abiding sense of lyricism. The result is music that feels both ancient and new — timeless in its serenity and universal in its message.

### **Andrew Forbes – Organ and Piano**

Andrew Forbes is an innovative Scottish organist, who celebrates classic works whilst exploring new possibilities for the organ — particularly in his frequent collaborations with composers. Appointed as Director of Music at Glasgow Cathedral aged 21, his playing creates ‘a symbiosis between artist and instrument’ (The Montrealer), earning him invitations to perform at venues including Philharmonie de Paris and St Paul’s Cathedral (London).

Andrew advocates for the organ’s place in modern society; in 2023 he was invited to join the board of Scotland’s Churches Trust, where he chairs their Music Committee, and he is a founder of Sowne of Organe, a project surveying Scotland’s most significant historic organs ([www.sowneoforgane.com](http://www.sowneoforgane.com)). Away from the console, Andrew directs the critically acclaimed Glasgow Cathedral Festival — ‘a minor miracle’ (VoxCarnyx) — with bold programming that brings life to the city’s oldest building. He teaches at Glasgow University and RCS, is a frequent guest with ensembles including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and is in demand as a collaborative pianist, sound engineer and producer.

Andrew has learned with teachers including Dame Gillian Weir, Jan Waterfield and Hans Fagius, supported by awards from the Hope Scott Trust and the McGlashan Charitable Trust. He is a First Prize winner of the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition, a finalist at St Albans International Organ Competition, an Associate of the Royal College of Organists and winner of the RCS Prize for Early Music. Andrew loves food, drink, and spending any free time with friends — preferably near water or up a hill.



### **Sharron Griffiths - Harp**

Sharron Griffiths started playing the harp at the age of ten in her native Wales. She has pursued a diverse and varied career as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician in recitals on the concert platform, in recordings and in radio broadcasts.

Currently Guest Principal Harp with Scottish Opera, Sharron works regularly with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Sharron is in great demand as a soloist and chamber musician. She is a member of the innovative Bardic Trio with tenor Jamie MacDougall and guitarist Matthew McAllister, the trio Flute Viola Harp with flautist Ruth Morley and violist Scott Dickinson and the Clyde Duo with flautist Aisling Agnew. Sharron has appeared as concerto soloist with the Royal Northern Sinfonia and in recitals across the country, including at the St Magnus Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Lammermuir Festival, Sound Festival, T in the Park and Celtic Connections.

Sharron teaches the harp at the Junior Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, universities of St Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh, St Mary’s Music School and Douglas Academy Music School. She is a regular harp tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and the West Scotland Schools Symphony Orchestra, and leads the harp course for the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland’s Training Ensembles.



### Chris Overton - Percussion

Chris Overton started playing timpani and percussion in his grammar school days, studying with an ex-wartime ENSA band drummer. After qualifying in engineering, he moved to Scotland for his 'day job', where he continued musical studies in Edinburgh under the renowned ex-Aberdeen percussion teacher Dr Andrew Shivas.

Over the years, Chris has played for the Edinburgh Grand Opera, Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra, Aberdeen Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Sinfonia, Haddo House Opera Orchestra and Edinburgh Festival Symphony Orchestra, amongst others. He performs regularly in pit orchestras in His Majesty's Theatre and Aberdeen Arts Centre Theatre, as well as freelance playing.

Chris also spends some of his time as a sound recording engineer with commercial recordings of choirs and instrumental soloists released in UK, America and Germany, and (somehow) he combines his musical and recording activities with his part-time 'day-job' in engineering.



### 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 Herinx, Cate Hughes, Irene Drummond, Margaret Cable and Stephen Varcoe. In 2005, he was awarded the Ellie Pirie award by Aberdeen Bach Choir and 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 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 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 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. In June 2011 his percussion concerto *Landscape from a Dream* was performed by the Inverurie Orchestra. He recently presented a paper on the influence of Far Eastern music on the music of Benjamin Britten at the conference 'Britten 100: An American Music Centenary' at Illinois State University, Bloomington, USA.

Paul was musical director and conductor of the Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society from 2017-2025 and musical director of the Inverurie Orchestra from 2007-2019. With Haddo, performances included *Elijah* by Mendelssohn, *Nelson Mass* by Haydn, *Te Deum* by 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 conducted performances of Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Octandre* by Varese. 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), conducting the Hallé Choir in a masterclass performing Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Paul has been musical director of Aberdeen Bach Choir since 2022 and is currently the Curriculum Manager for Performing Arts and Animation at the North East Scotland College in Aberdeen.

## Aberdeen Bach Choir Singers

### Soprano 1

Hanne Gadegaard  
Cathy Guthrie  
Anna Hamilton † Δ  
Pamela Hoy  
Clare Johnson  
Margaret Macaulay  
Nina MacDonald-Lewis \*  
Hannah Ratcliffe  
Tayla Sanders  
Marta Visocchi  
Hazel Wilkins

### Soprano 2

Aimee Alcock  
Margaret Heald  
Anne Henderson  
Julia House  
Jane Jones  
Alice Ronsberg  
Angela Slater  
Alyson Smith  
Karen Smith  
Janet Wendes

### Soloists from Choir

\* Bernstein  
+ Whitacre  
Δ Del Tredici

### Rehearsal Pianist

Ben Marsden

### Alto 1

Alison Cook  
Barbara Crane  
Althea Dickens  
Becky Docea  
Isobel Ford  
Phyllis Garden  
Alison Gathercole  
Kate Graham  
Jean Gulston  
Lorna Herbert  
Ruth Howarth  
Kate Mason  
Lesley Mowat  
Akintunde Obisean \*  
Sheila Robertson  
Dawn Smith  
Doreen Taylor

### Alto 2

Kiran Angadi  
Libby Brand  
Alison Campbell  
Ailsa Cantlay  
Helaena Fine \* †  
Helen Goodyear  
Penny Heaton  
Muriel Knox  
Jane McAllister  
Louise Page  
Tracey Robinson  
Sarah Stevens  
Rebecca Tanner  
Val Thomas

### Tenor 1

Mercedes Acevedo  
Brian Caswell  
Paul Davison  
Bruce Irvine  
Janet Ogilvie

### Tenor 2

Robert Black  
Peter Cserne  
James Millar  
Alan Scott †  
Alex Wallace

### Bass 1

John Cook  
Ian Downie  
Mel Gulstan  
Duncan Hart  
Jim Hunter  
Graham Mountford  
Mike Radcliffe \*

### Bass 2

Mark Edwards  
Jim Hardy  
Roger Hessing  
Mike Longhurst  
Mark Rodgers  
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 in D, 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 is mit 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, Vesperae Solennes de Confessore
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. Anyone interested in joining the ranks of the choir should contact our membership secretary, Sandra Massey at [info@aberdeenbachchoir.com](mailto:info@aberdeenbachchoir.com).

## Charitable Support

Aberdeen Bach Choir supports musical education in Aberdeen through its ongoing donations to the following organisations:

### North East of Scotland Music School

### Aberdeen Bach Choir Scholarship



In 1988 a fund was established in memory of Elizabeth Pirie LRAM ARCM ARCO, who was a long-standing accompanist for the choir. The resulting Ellie Pirie Scholarship, recently rebranded as the Aberdeen Bach Choir Scholarship, is still awarded annually on merit to a full-time student of secondary age or above, covering the cost of monthly music lessons over an academic year. This scholarship is kindly administered by the North East of Scotland Music School (NESMS).



Eve Begg, 2025-26 Aberdeen Bach Choir Scholar

University of Aberdeen Department of Music  
**Final Year Undergraduate Prize**  
**The James Lobban Prize for Musicology**



The James Lobban Prize for Musicology, instituted in 2012, is awarded annually to the University of Aberdeen student who achieves the highest mark in the Honours dissertation on Music. It is funded by a legacy left by James Lobban, a graduate of the University of Aberdeen and conductor of Aberdeen Bach Choir from 1969 until 2005.



The charity Sistema Scotland helps children and young people living in disadvantaged communities realise their full potential through music. Currently working with over 800 children and young people in Torry, from babies to around 14 years old, the charity organises engaging, age-related sessions including tuition, healthy snacks and provision of instruments free of charge. Sessions take place in local nurseries and primary schools and include after-school and holiday clubs.

Key to the success of Big Noise are the trusting relationships built by consistent regular contact between the staff musicians and the children. In Torry, the 21 staff musicians are not only highly skilled educators, but also compassionate mentors and inspiring role models who work in partnership with teachers, social workers, health visitors and community workers to ensure children and young people are fully supported and nurtured to fulfil their potential.



ABERDEEN  
BACH  
CHOIR

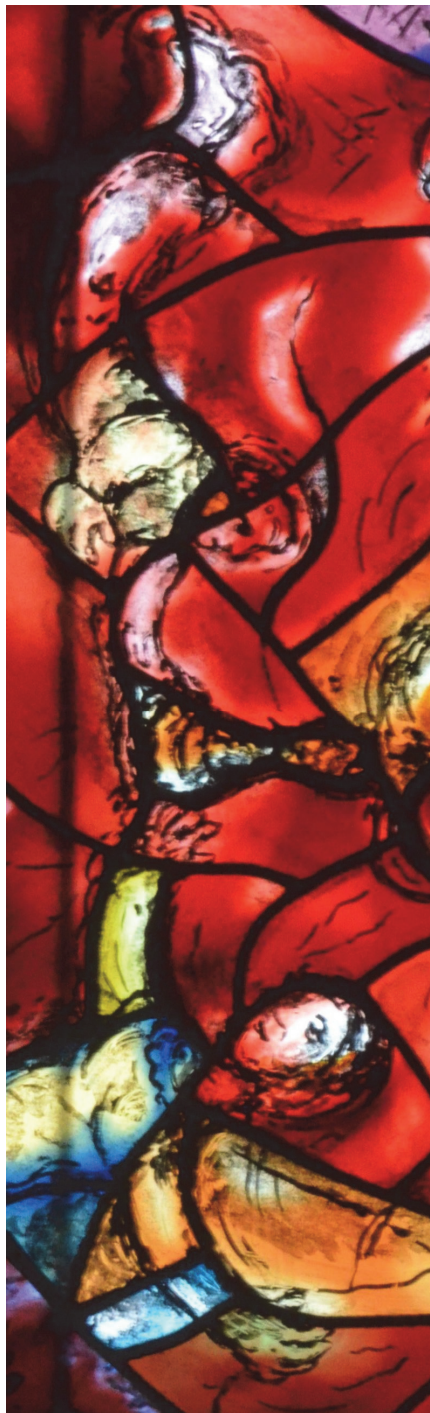
## A Feast of Choral Favourites

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## Christmas Oratorio J. S. Bach

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2026

7.30pm  
St Machar's Cathedral  
Old Aberdeen



Aberdeen Bach Choir  
is a proud supporter of  
Big Noise Torry



*Proud members of*



WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

THIS CONCERT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY  
THE JAMES LOBBAN LEGACY

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