Monteverdi Choir & Orchestras and John Eliot Gardiner:

From his farm in Dorset, conductor Gardiner has devoted more than 50 years to the study of period instrument performance practice from the baroque to romantic repertoire. He created the Monteverdi Choir in 1964 for a groundbreaking performance at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, of Monteverdi's *Vespers*. For the past half a century, the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists have set new standards, shaped opinions and breathed fresh energy into both forgotten and established repertoire. A major highlight was a performance of Monteverdi's *Vespers* at St Mark's Basilica in Venice.

A towering achievement was marking Bach's 250th anniversary in 2000 by performing and recording all 198 of JS Bach's sacred cantatas on the appropriate feast day in more than 60 churches across Europe. The Gardiners subsequently set up the company's record label, Soli Deo Gloria to release the entire cycle which was hailed as "one of the most ambitious musical projects of all time" by Gramophone magazine. In 2014, Sir John Eliot Gardiner brought out a new biography on Bach entitled "Music in the Castle of Heaven".

The Choir has been a fertile training ground for generations of choral and solo singers who have gone on to shine internationally. In 2007, Gardiner established the **Monteverdi Apprenticeship Programme** to further develop future generations. The Choir has over 150 recordings to its name and has won numerous prizes. The Financial Times described their most recent album of Bach's B Minor Mass as *"This is Bach at its most glorious and uplifting".*

Sir John Eliot Gardiner was recently appointed President of the Bach Archive in Leipzig.