

NEWS

***St Matthew Passion* dedicated to families and victims of Brussels atrocity**

Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists will perform in Brussels tonight in the presence of Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, Didier Reynders.

23 March | BOZAR, Brussels | 20:00pm
Erbarme dich | Klarafestival



Klarafestival's decision for tonight's performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Bozar in Brussels to go ahead has been endorsed by Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Didier Reynders, who will be attending the performance himself. The performance will be dedicated to the memory of the victims, their families and the people of Belgium following yesterday's tragic events.

The festival has said: "The *Matthew Passion*, with its message of love and solace, is a powerful symbol. It is precisely in these tragic circumstances when the need for solidarity is at its greatest and when a performance of this unifying piece by Bach is so befitting."

The performance will be live-streamed by Radio Klara and Musiq3 from 20:00pm at the Bozar in Brussels as part of the Klarafestival 2016. It is now likely to be the final event of this year's international music festival in Brussels themed "Erbarme dich", turning passion into compassion. The organisers said that the people of Brussels are determined to continue as normal both as an act of remembrance and defiance.

J.S. BACH *St Matthew Passion*, BWV 244

Monteverdi Choir
English Baroque Soloists
Sir John Eliot Gardiner *conductor*
Kati Debretzeni *leader*
Mark Padmore *Evangelist, tenor*
Stephan Loges *Christ, baritone*
Hannah Morrison *soprano*

Further soloists from the Monteverdi Choir: Eleanor Minney, Reginald Mobley, Richard Wilberforce, Clare Wilkinson, Alex Ashworth, Nicholas Mogg, Jonathan Sells, Ashley Riches.

About Sir John Eliot Gardiner, the Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists



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

Sir John Eliot Gardiner was appointed President of the Bach Archive in Leipzig in 2014 and has recently received the Concertgebouw Award in Amsterdam.



<http://www.monteverdi.co.uk>

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The Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists are under the grateful patronage of HRH the Prince of Wales.

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