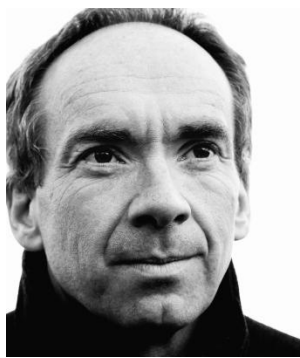


The Bach Choir continue their remarkable *St. Matthew Passion* tradition on 7 April



**Sunday 7 April**  
**Part I: 11:00am**  
**Part II: 2:15pm**  
Royal Festival Hall

**Bach** *St. Matthew Passion*

**James Gilchrist** Evangelist  
**Matthew Rose** Christ  
**Sophie Bevan** soprano

**Hilary Summers** contralto  
**Ed Lyon** tenor  
**Neal Davies** baritone

**The Bach Choir**  
**Florilegium**  
**David Hill** conductor

***"probably the finest independent choir in the world"***  
Evening Standard

On **Sunday 7 April**, **The Bach Choir** and conductor **David Hill** perform **Bach's *St Matthew Passion*** at the **Royal Festival Hall** with **Florilegium**. The Choir's conductor **David Hill** was recently made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year Honours for his services to music. The performance comes **125 years** after the Choir first performed the *St Matthew Passion*. **James Gilchrist** returns to the role of the Evangelist and **Matthew Rose** sings Christ alongside **Sophie Bevan**, **Hilary Summers**, **Ed Lyon**, and **Neal Davies**.

First performed in the prodigious Good Friday services of 1727/9 and 1736, **Bach's *St Matthew Passion*** is a work of monumental scale and devotion. The work was most famously revived with astonishing success by Mendelssohn in 1829, heralding in the revival and canonisation of the composer's music that persists to this day.



**The Bach Choir** was founded in 1876 to give the first English performance of Bach's *B Minor Mass*, and has firmly established itself as a key player in the Bach revival. The Choir gave its first *St Matthew Passion* performance on 15 March 1894 under the baton of the distinguished Charles Villiers Stanford 125 years ago, and maintains its Bachian origins today with annual performances of the *St Matthew Passion*, now at Baroque pitch with **Florilegium**.

The annual performance now begins at **11am**, breaking for a long lunch at the moment where the congregants in Bach's own Thomaskirche would have heard their Good Friday sermon, between the two parts. The Choir sings in English, in the recent translation by tenor Neil Jenkins, conveying the directness and the drama as found in the German-texted original.

Members of the Bach Choir now return to the work year on year with a sense of devotion and unbroken tradition that recalls the zeal of the amateur societies that first unearthed and began to perform Bach's works nearly 200 years ago.



On **10-12 May**, the Bach Choir record **Herbert Howells' 1953 *Missa Sabriensis***, with the **BBC Concert Orchestra** and soloists **Sally Matthews, Christine Rice, Ben Hulett, and Roderick Williams**. An extended and complex setting of the Latin Mass for soloists, chorus and orchestra, the *Missa Sabriensis* was named after the River Severn.

The Choir return to the **Royal Festival Hall** on **28 June** to perform another monumental religious work, **Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis***, with the **Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment** and soloists **Sarah**

**Fox, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Toby Spence, and Roderick Williams.** On **17 October**, the Choir will commence their new season with the world premiere of **Roxanna Panufnik's *Four Choral Seasons***.

## Listings

**Sunday 7 April**

**Part I: 11:00am**

**Part II: 2:15pm**

Royal Festival Hall

**Bach** *St. Matthew Passion*

**James Gilchrist** Evangelist

**Matthew Rose** Christ

**Sophie Bevan** soprano

**Hilary Summers** contralto

**Ed Lyon** tenor

**Neal Davies** baritone

**The Bach Choir**

**Florilegium**

**David Hill** conductor

**10-12 May**

**Recording**

Watford Colosseum

**Howells** *Missa Sabrinensis*

**The Bach Choir**

**BBC Concert Orchestra**

**Sally Matthews** soprano

**Christine Rice** mezzo-soprano

**Ben Hulett** tenor

**Roderick Williams** baritone

**28 June, 7:30pm**

Royal Festival Hall

**Beethoven** *Missa Solemnis*

**The Bach Choir**

**Orchestra of the Age of**

**Enlightenment**

**David Hill** conductor

**Sarah Fox** soprano

**Catherine Wyn-Rogers** mezzo-soprano

**Toby Spence** tenor

**Roderick Williams** baritone

**17 October**

Royal Festival Hall

**Roxanna Panufnik** *Four Choral Seasons* **WORLD PREMIERE**

**Bloch** *Schelomo*

**Delius** *Sea Drift*

**Debussy** *La Mer*

**The Bach Choir**

**Philharmonia Orchestra**

**David Hill** conductor

## The Bach Choir

Founded in 1876, The Bach Choir is recognised as one of the world's leading choruses, building upon a tradition that combines musical excellence with creativity and innovation.

From the first performance in Britain of Bach's *Mass in B minor* 142 years ago to the soundtrack for Ridley Scott's epic *Prometheus*, the Choir's musical heritage is as rich as it is diverse. Directed by David Hill, one of the country's most eminent conductors and choir trainers, the Choir regularly performs and records across London and the UK in prestigious venues, from the Royal Albert Hall to Abbey Road Studios.

Described by the London Evening Standard as 'probably the finest independent choir in the world', the Bach Choir values the freedom that its independence brings, allowing it to work with the very best orchestras and soloists, and to choose the music it performs. To date the Choir has sung over 400 works in more than 120 venues, and continues to share its work with audiences around the world. Following an invitation from the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the Choir gave two performances of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Hong Kong's Cultural Centre just before Easter 2014, and it gave further concerts in Shanghai and Hangzhou. In October 2017, the Choir gave six concerts in the Netherlands of *a cappella* music and works for choir and organ, one of which was broadcast on Dutch radio. Plans are under way for a tour to the US in 2020.

With a strong commitment to new music, the Bach Choir has commissioned works from some of the world's leading composers including Sir John Tavener, Bob Chilcott, Jonathan Dove, Will Todd and Carl Rütti. In June 2017 the Choir gave the world premiere performance of James MacMillan's *Blow the trumpet in the new moon*, and it has commissioned Roxanna Panufnik to write a new work – *Four Choral Seasons* - which the Choir will perform in October this year.

The Bach Choir has always been characterised by the commitment of its members. With over 250 talented singers coming from all walks of life, an international touring schedule, and a pioneering outreach programme, *Vocalise!*, that takes its passion for music into inner-city schools, the Choir takes pride in performing, recording and sharing music for all to enjoy.

[thebachchoir.org.uk](http://thebachchoir.org.uk)

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**For more information on any of the above, please contact:**

**Nicky Thomas Media**

101 Bell Street, London NW1 6TL

+44 (0)20 3714 7594 | +44 (0)20 7258 0909

[info@nickythomasmedia.com](mailto:info@nickythomasmedia.com)

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