

# Southend Bach Choir

Presents

# Messiah

Handel

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2024 at 7.00pm

Holy Trinity Church, Southchurch



Programme





# The Southend Bach Choir

Music Director – Roger Humphrey

The Southend Bach Choir began life in 1943 as an evening class of the Municipal College in Southend under the direction of its founder Dr. Harold May, FRCO. Known as the *Municipal College Choir*, it gave its first performance in December of that year. The programme consisted of selections from Handel's "Messiah".

In its early years, the Municipal College Choral and Orchestral Society sponsored the birth of the *College Opera Group*, which became independent in 1950. In this year the choir's name reverted to *The Municipal College Choral Society* and many challenging concerts followed. In 1968, the choir became the *Southend Bach Choir*, and in 1993, under the baton of Gerald Bates (Musical Director 1987-2001), the choir celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a memorable performance of Bach's "B Minor Mass". Upon Gerry's retirement in 2001, the choir welcomed its past Music Director Colin Edwards until 2023.

In 2023, Roger, who had served as our accompanist for 40 years, stepped into the role of Music Director. Under his direction, the *Southend Bach Choir* continues to thrive, building on its rich history and looking forward to many more memorable performances.

Thank you for coming this evening and we hope you enjoy our concert of Handel's "Messiah".

## Why not join us?

We meet for rehearsal every Tuesday evening during school terms at:

***St Andrew's Church  
Southview Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9PW***

Rehearsals commence at 7.30pm and finish at 9.30pm with a short break for coffee and conversation around 8.30pm. No auditions and reading music is an advantage but not a requirement.

***If you are interested in singing with the choir, please speak to any one of us during the interval or after the concert!***

## Our Guest Soloists

**Elizabeth Dunlop (Soprano)** - Elizabeth Dunlop began her vocal training with Margaret Cozens. She then studied Singing with Neil Mackie and Piano with Yonty Solomon at the Royal College of Music, winning both French and Italian language prizes. Awarded the Freda Parry Scholarship in 1987, Elizabeth completed post-graduate vocal studies with Italian opera singer Graziella Sciutti. Elizabeth is a sought-after concert soloist, also performing as part of “The Two Elizabeths” soprano duo, with Elizabeth Upsher, with whom she will sing at their 20th Anniversary Concert on December 1st! Elizabeth has worked as MD with the *Southend Operatic and Dramatic Society* and is currently the musical director of local ladies’ choir, *Cantare*, and leader of the *St Saviour’s Community Singers*. In 2020, Elizabeth completed an MA in Music Therapy at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and is privileged to work as a music therapist with children and teenagers in special schools. Elizabeth is delighted to be performing in “Messiah” this evening with the *Southend Bach Choir*, as it was on hearing this as a young church chorister that first inspired her love of singing.

**Ruby Bak (Mezzo-soprano)** - Nottinghamshire-born mezzo-soprano Ruby Bak is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in vocal performance at the Royal Academy of Music, studying under the tutelage of Marcus van den Akker and Joseph Middleton. Ruby is gratefully supported by *The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music* as one of their scholars for her studies at the Royal Academy and by the *Josephine Baker Trust*. Whilst pursuing an undergraduate music degree at King’s College London, Ruby actively contributed to the *Chapel Choir*, performing in prominent British performance venues and festivals, including St John’s Smith Square, St Paul’s Cathedral and the English Music Festival. As an active oratorio soloist, Ruby has performed the alto solos in Bach’s “St Matthew Passion” under the baton of Jonathan Willcocks, Handel’s “Messiah”, Rachmaninov’s “All Night Vigil”, Bach’s “St John Passion” in Bath Abbey and in the chamber premiere of Holst’s “The Cloud Messenger”, accompanied by the *English Chamber Orchestra*. Beyond choral works, Ruby is deeply involved in opera, embodying roles such as Miss Jessel in Britten’s “The Turn of the Screw”, L’Enfant in Ravel’s “L’Enfant et les Sortilèges” and toured the role of Hansel in Humperdinck’s “Hansel and Gretel” in Venice and neighbouring cities alongside the *King’s College London Symphony Orchestra*. Her most recent opera endeavour saw her portray the role of Fox in Janacek’s “The Cunning Little Vixen” in opera scenes with *Royal Academy Opera*.

**Samuel Kibble (*Tenor*)** - Samuel Kibble is a British tenor based in London. He graduated from the Opera School at the Royal Academy of Music in 2023 and now enjoys a varied career as a performer of opera, oratorio and song. Recent oratorio highlights include Bach's "St John Passion" with *Greenwich University Choir*, Handel's "Messiah" with *Guildford Chamber Choir* and Mozart's "Requiem" with *Sudbury Choral Society*. Recent opera engagements include Count Almaviva in Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" with *Cardiff Opera* and *Bradford Opera Festival*, Second Attendant (cover) in John Harbison's "A Full Moon in March" with the *Royal Opera Covent Garden*, Brighella (cover) in Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos" with *Garsington Festival Opera*, Don Basilio in Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" with *Royal Academy Opera*, and Sellem in Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress" with *Royal Academy Opera*. Originally from Norwich, Samuel came to singing after graduating from the University of Durham with a degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

**David Townend (*Bass*)** - David Townend started singing as a chorister at Holy Trinity Church, Southchurch, and in the *Southend Boys' Choir*. In 1985, he took a place to read Law at the University of Sheffield and became a Songman of Sheffield Cathedral. He sang with the Cathedral for 20 years. He has studied singing with Richard Hill and Martin Hindmarsh. As a soloist, David's repertoire includes Bach's "St John Passion" and "St Matthew Passion", Britten's "Canticle IV", Delius's "Appalachia", Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius", "King Olaf" and "The Apostles", Handel's "Judas Maccabeus" and "Messiah", Haydn's "Creation", Mendelssohn's "Elijah" and "St Paul", Orff's "Carmina Burana", Puccini's "Messa di Gloria", Rossini's "Petite Messe Solennelle", Schutz's "St Matthew Passion", Tippett's "A Child of Our Time", Vaughan Williams's "Serenade to Music", "Five Mystical Songs" and "The Pilgrim's Progress", and Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast". He particularly enjoys early 20th century English and French songs, and has given many recitals from that repertoire as well as recitals of Schubert's "Die schöne Müllerin". One of his most recent recitals was a programme of settings of Shakespeare songs, including the premiere of settings by Ronald Law.

## Our Accompanist

**Stephen King (*Organist*)** - Stephen King has been organist of Brentwood Cathedral for over 30 years. He studied at Trinity College of Music and subsequently with John Birch. Distinguished composers with whom he has worked include John Rutter, Bob Chilcott and Colin Mawby. He has performed the organ concertos of both

John Gardner and Andrew Carter (giving the second UK performance of the latter's work), and, to mark his first 25 years at Brentwood Cathedral, he commissioned "Carillon" from Philip Moore. He has also worked closely with Diana Burrell, whose "Missa Brevis" was composed in 2016/17 for *Brentwood Cathedral Choir*. He has appeared as organist with the *Southend Boys' Choir* and *Southend Girls' Choir* on numerous overseas tours, at Australian, American, Canadian and various European venues, including St Peter's Basilica, Rome, and, last year, Amsterdam. He also works regularly with other Essex choirs, including *Hutton and Shenfield Choral Society* and the Brentwood based choir *Bravissima*. Over the last year, he had a particularly busy recital schedule in South and South East England, along with performing Poulenc's "Organ Concerto" and Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto no 5". He is a trustee of the *Royal College of Organists*.

## Our Music Director

**Roger Humphrey** - Roger studied organ, piano and conducting at the Royal College of Music, London and University of London. Post graduate work included studies at the City of London University and Guildhall School of Music. He has held positions of Director of Music at *Southend High School for Boys* and lecturer in Performing Arts at *South Essex College*. Currently Roger teaches part time at the Westcliff High Schools. In addition to conducting the *Southend Bach Choir*, Roger is musical director of *Southend Choral Society* and Director of Music at Holy Trinity Church, Southchurch, with whom he has taken the choir to many cathedrals across the UK. Roger is the founder and Musical Director of *Southend Girls' Choir* and Director of *Southend Boys' Choir*, positions he has held for over 30 years. Roger has taken these choirs on many overseas concert tours to Poland, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Canada, US, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and Seychelles. These tours have included performances in The Sydney Opera House, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Cathedrals in Paris, New York, Chicago, Washington, Milan, The Seychelles, Florence, St Peter's Basilica, Rome, St Mark's, Venice and many other major venues and concert halls across Europe, Canada, US, Singapore, and Australia. Roger has conducted the choirs in major London concert halls, including Royal Festival Hall and Barbican, and prepared the choirs for many performances at the BBC Proms. Roger directed performances of Britten's "Noye's Fludde" during the centenary year of Britten's birth, involving over 450 musicians of all ages performing in Southend, Tilbury Cruise Terminal and Southwark Cathedral. For several years Roger was Musical Director of the *Seychelles Festival of Music*.

# Handel's Messiah

One of the most beloved choral works of all time, "Messiah" was composed in 1741 by George Frideric Handel, a German-born composer who became one of the greatest figures in Baroque music. Known for his operas, oratorios and instrumental works, Handel's career flourished in London, where he embraced the English oratorio as a new form of musical expression.

This English-language oratorio presents a musical depiction of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Divided into three parts, "Messiah" explores themes of prophecy and fulfillment in Part I, focusing on the coming of Christ and the Nativity; sacrifice and redemption in Part II, centered on the Passion and Crucifixion; and ultimate triumph and salvation in Part III, celebrating the Resurrection and eternal life.

"Messiah" was first performed in Dublin in 1742, as part of a charitable concert. Its success quickly spread, but it gained even greater acclaim in London, where annual performances for charity helped establish it as a cornerstone of the choral repertoire.

The piece it is best known for is the "Hallelujah" chorus, a powerful declaration of joy and praise. With its dramatic arias, richly textured choruses, and masterful orchestrations, "Messiah" continues to captivate audiences, blending spiritual depth with musical brilliance in a deeply moving experience.



# Programme

## Part I

Sinfonia – Overture

Comfort ye my people *(Recit.)*

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted *(Aria)*

And the glory of the Lord *(Chorus)*

But who may abide the day of his coming? *(Aria)*

And he shall purify *(Chorus)*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive *(Recit.)*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion *(Aria & Chorus)*

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth *(Recit.)*

The people that walked in darkness *(Aria)*

For unto us a child is born *(Chorus)*

'Pifa' (Pastoral symphony)

There were shepherds abiding in the field *(Recit.)*

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them *(Recit.)*

And the angel said unto them *(Recit.)*

And suddenly there was with the angel *(Recit.)*

Glory to God *(Chorus)*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion *(Aria)*

Then shall the eyes of the blind *(Recit.)*

He shall feed this flock *(Aria)*

His yoke is easy, and his burthen is light *(Chorus)*

## **INTERVAL**

***Please join the choir for light refreshments during the interval.***



## **Part II**

Behold the lamb of God	<i>(Chorus)</i>
He was despised	<i>(Aria)</i>
Surely he hath borne our griefs	<i>(Chorus)</i>
And with his stripes we are healed	<i>(Chorus)</i>
All we like sheep have gone astray	<i>(Chorus)</i>
All they that see him laugh him to scorn	<i>(Recit.)</i>
He trusted in God	<i>(Chorus)</i>
Thy rebuke hath broken his heart	<i>(Recit.)</i>
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow	<i>(Aria)</i>
He was cut off out of the land of the living	<i>(Recit.)</i>
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell	<i>(Aria)</i>
Lift up your heads, O ye gates	<i>(Chorus)</i>
How beautiful are the feet	<i>(Aria)</i>
Why do the nations so furiously rage together?	<i>(Aria)</i>
Hallelujah	<i>(Chorus)</i>

## **Part III**

I know that my redeemer liveth	<i>(Aria)</i>
Since by man came death	<i>(Chorus)</i>
Behold, I tell you a mystery	<i>(Recit.)</i>
The trumpet shall sound	<i>(Aria)</i>
Worthy is the lamb that was slain	<i>(Chorus)</i>

***Thank you for joining us at our concert tonight.***

***We hope you enjoyed it! 🎵***

***We look forward to seeing you at our concerts throughout the year.***

# Have you thought about becoming a Patron?

*Are you a regular attendee at our concerts?  
Ever felt you'd like to support the choir but don't want to take up a singing position?  
Do you like attending our social events?*

If so, the Southend Bach Choir Patron scheme may be for you. There is no fixed fee to join this scheme, though Patrons may make a donation if they wish. Patrons receive regular updates about choir events and activities and an invitation to continue their patronage. They will also receive a complimentary ticket to every concert and be invited to other choir events including the AGM.

If you are interested in becoming a patron or would simply like further information, then please speak to any choir member or contact us via email on:

[membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk)

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## For further information about the Southend Bach Choir please contact:

[secretary@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:secretary@southendbachchoir.org.uk)

visit our website:

[www.southendbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.southendbachchoir.org.uk)

or social media pages:



Southend Bach Choir



southendbachchoir

*Singing in a Choir not only very enjoyable, but a chance to make new friends, learn to sing wonderful music and experience the health and mental benefits of choral singing. Whether you are an experienced singer or a musical beginner, you will be warmly welcomed!*

## OUR PATRONS

Mrs J. Restorick   Mr K. Treverton  
Mr S. Burford   Mr T. Harding   Mr J. Wall   Mr D. Smith  
Miss C. Kirkham   Mrs J. Bliss   Mr M. Bliss   Mr R. Hair  
Mr P. Hepworth   Mr M. Luxford

*Southend Bach Choir is very grateful to the Patrons  
for their continued encouragement and support*

**For details of the Patron Scheme:**

**Email: [membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:membership@southendbachchoir.org.uk)**

## OUR NEXT CONCERT

🎄 **A Carol Concert in aid of HARP** 🎵

*Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2024, 7pm*

St Andrews Church, SS0 9PW, Westcliff-on-Sea

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our concerts in the coming year will take place on:

*12<sup>th</sup> April 2025   🎵   12<sup>th</sup> July 2025*

*15<sup>th</sup> November 2025   🎵   20<sup>th</sup> December 2025*



**Southend Bach Choir**

Registered Charity  
No. 274370

