

29TH ANNUAL  
**Christmas  
Festival**

St John's Smith Square  
11 - 23 December 2014

European Union Baroque Orchestra  
The Choir of King's College London  
The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge  
Oxford Baroque  
Ex Cathedra  
Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford  
Tenebrae Consort  
The Tallis Scholars  
Ensemble Plus Ultra  
National Youth Music Theatre  
The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge  
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment  
Polyphony



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

# Welcome to the 29th Annual Christmas Festival at St John's Smith Square

Welcome



At the end of a year of reflection and commemoration of the start of World War I, our annual Christmas Festival celebrates themes of rebirth and creation in music which gives us all, whatever our beliefs, faith in an enduring humanity. The Festival continues to thrive in the unique atmosphere of this great venue, attracting the very finest artists, in particular those from the great British choral tradition. Choral music is now more popular than ever, with people recognising its power to move, and we invite you to share that extraordinary gift with us.

This year, The Choir of King's College London present Renaissance masterpieces including Thomas Tallis' iconic *Spem in Alium*. Equally extraordinary, is Schoenberg's 1907 piece *Friede auf Erden* (Peace on Earth) which is performed by The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge. Oxford Baroque return with a festive French programme and Ex Cathedra bring a candlelit sequence of Christmas music old and new, with a special tribute to those involved in the conflict of World War I.

Howard Goodall introduces Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford, and an English Renaissance Feast is served up by The Tallis Scholars with music by Byrd, Turges and Taverner.

This year we extend a warm welcome to three groups new to the Festival: Tenebrae Consort in a concert of carols and Christmas favourites, Spanish music specialists Ensemble Plus Ultra in a programme marking the anniversary of El Greco's death, and the National Youth Music Theatre with 'A Winter Wonderland'. The European Union Baroque Orchestra opens the festival with one of the most electrifying moments in the entire Baroque repertoire, a representation of chaos in a programme culminating in *La Création du Monde*, a suite from three of Rameau's operas.

As we celebrate the 300th anniversary of SJSS, a glorious masterpiece of English Baroque architecture, 2014 also marks another anniversary; 20 years since the first performance of *Messiah* here with Polyphony, now an annual tradition. We are delighted to be working with OAE and some wonderful soloists for this and also Bach's *B minor Mass* with The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge.

With best wishes for a peaceful Christmas and New Year.



Stephen Layton

# European Union Baroque Orchestra

Director: Lars Ulrik Mortensen



## LA CRÉATION DU MONDE

The concert starts with the most shocking moment in the entire baroque repertoire: Rebel's representation of chaos, which opens his suite *Les Eléments*. The darkness before creation is depicted by sounding all the notes of the scale simultaneously, in absolute discord: the individual elements earth, wind, water and fire have not yet emerged and there is utter chaos. As the suite continues, gradually order and structure are imposed on the world.

European Union Baroque Orchestra's programme with Director Lars Ulrik Mortensen continues to paint "La Création du Monde" with more elemental baroque music of astonishing force and intensity, including a

suite from Rameau's operas *Zaïs*, *Les Boréades* and *Platée*.

### Programme includes:

<i>Les Eléments</i>	Rebel
<i>Concerto Grosso XII</i>	Muffat
<i>Les Caractères de la Danse</i>	Rebel
<i>Suite 'La Création du Monde'</i>	Rameau

"Live-wire performances, technically excellent and propelled with exactly the right degree of driving energy by Lars Ulrik Mortensen."

Gramophone

"There's only one way of describing EUBO: simply superb."

The Times



Culture



**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

10% discount for concessions

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**www.sjss.org.uk**

Thursday 11 December 7.30pm

# The Choir of King's College London

Director: David Trendell

Friday 12 December 7.30pm



## SPEM IN ALIUM

The Choir of King's College London return to St John's Smith Square with a rich programme featuring one of the masterpieces of the Renaissance, Tallis' 40-part motet *Spem in alium*, together with one of Lassus' most famous masses, the joyous 8-part *Missa Bel' amfitrit' altera*, and two seasonal motets. These are contrasted with one of the twentieth century's finest settings of the Mass, by Frank Martin, and motets by the French composer Pierre Villette.

The Choir of King's College London is one of the finest mixed-voice choirs in England. In addition to singing weekly services in the College Chapel, the choir has made a number of recordings of sixteenth-century

Spanish, English and Italian music to critical acclaim and has recently given concerts in the USA, France, Italy and St Petersburg.

### Programme includes:

<i>Mass for double choir</i>	Martin
<i>Hymne à la vierge</i>	Villette
<i>Missa Bel' amfitrit' altera</i>	Lassus
<i>Alma redemptoris mater</i>	Lassus
<i>Spem in alium</i>	Tallis

*"David Trendell's fine choir glows with warmth and commitment."*

The Observer

*"A choir as passionate as it is disciplined."*

BBC Music Magazine

**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

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**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

# The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge and The Dmitri Ensemble

Director: Graham Ross



## LUX DE CAELO: MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS

Graham Ross and The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge return to St John's Smith Square alongside The Dmitri Ensemble to perform much-loved Christmas repertoire from around Europe. The performance includes two major Christmas works of the 20th century: Arnold Schoenberg's extraordinary *Friede auf Erden* and Britten's ever-popular *A ceremony of carols*. The concert marks the official launch of *Lux de caelo*:

*Music for Christmas*: the latest recording in The Choir of Clare College's much-celebrated series of works for the church year.

Since the founding of a mixed voice choir in 1971, The Choir of Clare College has gained an international reputation as one of the leading university choral groups in the world. In addition to its primary function of leading services three times a week in the College chapel, the Choir keeps an active schedule recording, broadcasting, and performing throughout the UK and the world.

### Programme includes:

<i>The Shepherd's Farewell</i>	Berlioz
<i>Riù, Riù, Chiiù</i>	Traditional
<i>Es ist ein Ros entsprungen</i>	M Praetorius
<i>Personent hodie</i>	John Rutter
<i>A babe is born</i>	Mathias
<i>A ceremony of carols</i>	Britten

*"Graham Ross knows exactly how to get the best out of his singers. I find it hard to imagine that the music has ever been better sung than this."*

MusicWeb International

*"The singing and, above all, direction, are of such consummate musicianship."*  
Gramophone

**Tickets: £30, £25, £20, £10**

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**  
**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

**Saturday 13 December 7.30pm**

# Oxford Baroque

Director: Jeremy Summerly

Monday 15 December 7.30pm



## IN NATIVITATEM DOMINI CANTICUM

Following the success of their debut recording of Marc-Antoine Charpentier's sacred music, Oxford Baroque return to the Festival for a third successive year, with a suitably festive French baroque programme. The performance includes the familiar Charpentier favourite, the *Messe de minuit*, with its joyous dancing Christmas 'noëls', alongside the beautifully evocative oratorio-motet *In nativitatem Domini canticum*, which brings to life the wonder and joy of the shepherds and angels of the Christmas story. These are drawn together by the stylish *Noëls sur les instruments* for flutes, strings and continuo, as intended by the composer.

Rapidly gaining attention as one of the most exciting early

music ensembles active today, Oxford Baroque has marked out a characteristically vibrant sound. Set to be an especially magical concert, this is the perfect introduction to get you in the Christmas spirit.

### Programme includes:

Charpentier  
*Messe de minuit pour Noël*  
*In nativitatem Domini canticum*  
*Noëls sur les instruments*

*"Ablely directed by Jeremy Summerly, whose scholarship, musicianship and enthusiasm permeated the performance ... an exciting set-up of young, professional early music specialists ... Oxford Baroque is one ensemble to watch closely."*

Bachtrack

Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10

Box Office: 020 7222 1061  
[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

# Ex Cathedra

Director: Jeffrey Skidmore



## CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT

Alexander Mason *organ*  
Lynda Sayce *guitar*

This concert is aimed at the heart of Christmas. With a sequence of music both old and new, and readings to make you smile – and reflect – our popular Christmas concerts have become an SJSS tradition, and a uniquely magical way to begin your festive season. This year there is an international flavour and a special tribute to those involved in the conflict of World War I.

Ex Cathedra believes in the power of singing to change lives. We aim to explore, research and commission the finest choral music, nurture talent, and set the highest standards of excellence in performance and training.

### Programme includes:

<i>Xicochi conetzintle</i>	Fernandes
<i>Matais de Incêndios</i>	C17 Brazil
<i>Padre nosso</i>	Lobo de Mesquita
<i>Stille Nacht</i>	Gruber
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Barber
<i>Pastorcito Santo</i>	Rodrigo
<i>The Call</i>	Panufnik
<i>In the stillness</i>	Beamish
<i>And lo, the angel of the Lord</i>	MacMillan
<i>Child of Son</i>	Roth

*"Brilliantly virtuosic and committed."*  
The Telegraph

*"A phenomenal feat of musicianship."*  
The New Yorker

Ex Cathedra is supported by



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Birmingham City Council**

This concert is sponsored by

**RW Blears**

Solicitors

**Tickets: £35, £28, £22, £14**

10% discount for concessions

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

**Tuesday 16 December 7.30pm**

# Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford

Director: Stephen Darlington

Wednesday 17 December 7.30pm



## A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

Introduced by Howard Goodall

The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, was founded just under 500 years ago by Thomas Wolsey and Henry VIII. Now world famous in its own right for the excellence and versatility of its singing, the Choir tours worldwide and undertakes a prodigious recording schedule as well as singing daily in the cathedral. Additionally, the Choir collaborates with a number of orchestras, recently recording Goodall's *Eternal Light: A Requiem* for EMI, which won a Classical Brit Award.

What better way to get into the festive spirit than with this programme of some of the most-loved and beautiful Christmas music ever written, performed by

one of the greatest cathedral choirs in the world. The concert is presented by Howard Goodall in informative and entertaining festive form.

**Programme includes:**

<i>Once in Royal David's City</i>	Pearsall
<i>In dulci jubilo</i>	Howells
<i>A spotless rose</i>	Darke
<i>In the bleak midwinter</i>	Warlock
<i>Bethlehem Down</i>	Ives
<i>Little star of Bethlehem</i>	Bob Chilcott
<i>Twelve days of Christmas</i>	

*"Hugely appealing ... natural, spacious, rich, expressive performances."*

The Sunday Times

*"Superb tour de force under its insightful and disciplined director."*

International Record Review

**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

# Tenebrae Consort

Director: Nigel Short



## WHAT SWEETER MUSIC

The repertoire for this programme falls into three categories: traditional carol arrangements, original pieces composed for Christmas and some lighter close-harmony arrangements of Christmas favourites. From the scene-setting simplicity of the Plainsong *O come, O come Emmanuel* to the stark beauty of Poulenc's *Quatre motets pour Noël*, this selection of music captures the true spirit of Christmas in all its various guises.

Tenebrae Consort is an outstanding group of musicians, with singers hand-picked from the award-winning chamber choir Tenebrae. Known for their instinctive ensemble skills, the singers are directed by Nigel Short who leads the group to attain music making of the highest quality. Tenebrae Consort aims to shed new interpretative light on works through the combination of both passion and precision, creating an intimate and unique concert experience.

### Programme includes:

<i>Alleluia</i>	Wishart
<i>Lullaby</i>	Byrd
<i>The Wassail Song</i>	Vaughan Williams
<i>What sweeter music</i>	John Rutter
<i>The Bethlehem star</i>	Bob Chilcott
<i>Away in a manger</i>	arr. Nigel Short

*"Devastatingly beautiful"*

Gramophone

*"Tenebrae are special ... these were exemplary performances, lucid, and so commanding it seemed as if singing perfectly in tune was the most natural thing in the world."*

The Guardian

**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

Thursday 18 December 7.30pm

# The Tallis Scholars

Director: Peter Phillips

Friday 19 December 7.30pm



## AN ENGLISH RENAISSANCE FEAST

Our programme includes some of the greatest (and most difficult) music written in England in the 16th century. Encased by two giant settings of the Magnificat, Byrd's *Mass for Five Voices* is one of his most intense compositions, though the simple beauty of his *Ave verum* is just as famous. However nothing written in the whole period can rival the astonishing *Magnificat* by Turges. Like the fan vaulting in late 15th-century buildings, the decoration in this music could go no further. It is the spectacular end of an era.

### Programme includes:

<i>Magnificat a 5</i>	Taverner
<i>Mass for five voices</i>	Byrd
<i>Ave dei patris filia</i>	Taverner
<i>Ave verum</i>	Byrd
<i>Magnificat</i>	Turges

*"The rock stars of Renaissance vocal music."*

The New York Times

*"The sound coming from The Tallis Scholars almost surpassed the humanly possible."*

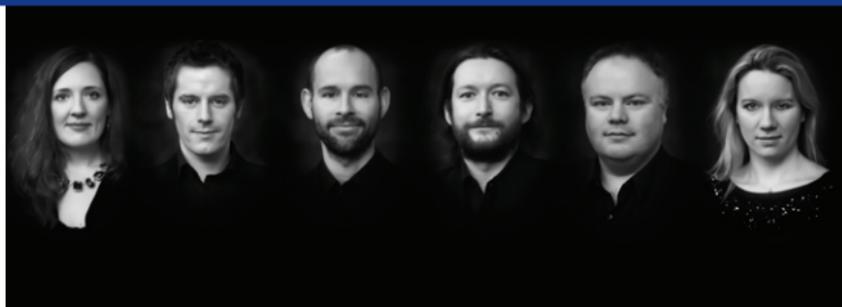
The Telegraph

Preceded at 6.00pm by a free 45 minute concert - open to all - by the ensemble Renaissance (director Ben Rowarth) who were singled out for their performances of Renaissance polyphony at the London International A Cappella Choir Competition 2014 held at St John's Smith Square. A programme of Christmas music by the Tudor Greats, William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, set alongside earlier carols of the medieval period and festive works of the twentieth and twenty first centuries, inspired by these sixteenth century gems.

Tickets: £35, £28, £22, £14

Box Office: 020 7222 1061  
[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

# Ensemble Plus Ultra



## FROM SPAIN TO ETERNITY

The award winning Ensemble Plus Ultra make their St John's Smith Square debut with a programme of music from the "Siglo de Oro".

With works from their new album on Deutsche Grammophon, marking the 400th anniversary of El Greco's death, they perform music from the Primatial Cathedral in Toledo. These were composed during the years El Greco lived and worked in that city, by Cristóbal de Morales, Alonso Lobo and Alonso de Tejada.

Ensemble Plus Ultra was formed in 2001 and has become one of the world's leading exponents of the music of Renaissance Spain. They have toured widely in Europe and North America, and their 10-disc

box set of music by Tomás Luis de Victoria won the Gramophone Award for early music.

### Programme includes:

<i>Missa prudentes virgines</i>	Lobo
<i>Rex autem</i>	Tejada
<i>O magnum mysterium</i>	Morales

*"The sound of quiet wonder and authentic mystery."*

The Boston Globe

*"A crack squad of the finest British early music singers."*

Early Music Today

*"They embrace the performances with the enthusiastic sense of anything being possible."*

Gramophone

**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

10% discount for concessions

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

Saturday 20 December 7.30pm

# National Youth Music Theatre

Sunday 21 December 7.30pm



## A WINTER WONDERLAND

Established in 1976 by Jeremy James Taylor, OBE, the National Youth Music Theatre's productions have been seen throughout the UK and abroad, winning numerous accolades and awards. A commitment to new writing has seen over 40 new works commissioned and performed from writers and composers such as Alan Ayckbourn, Howard Goodall, Dougal Irvine and Richard Stilgoe. This year, with the support of Arts Council England, NYMT commissioned *Brass* by Benjamin Till to commemorate the Great War centenary.

The NYMT represents the very best in work with young people through musical theatre, leading Andrew Lloyd Webber to dub it "the finest youth music theatre in the world".

### Programme includes:

*Seasonal readings, music and staged extracts performed by:*

The NYMT 2014 Company & Alumni  
The NYMT Orchestra

*"In its illustrious 37-year history ... it is difficult to imagine that the National Youth Music Theatre has ever been on better form."*

British Theatre Guide

**Tickets: £25, £20, £15, £10**

10% discount for concessions

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

# The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and OAE

Conductor: Stephen Layton



## B MINOR MASS

The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge has established itself as one of the leading mixed-voice choirs in the world. In addition to singing the liturgy in the College Chapel, the Choir enjoys a programme of high-profile performances and recordings, international tours and regular broadcasts.

After the sell-out success of its recent Festival performances, the Choir again joins forces with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, this time for the B Minor Mass, one of Bach's greatest choral works. Stephen Layton conducts and they are joined by four outstanding soloists.

**Katherine Watson** *soprano*  
**Iestyn Davies** *countertenor*  
**Gwilym Bowen** *tenor*  
**Neal Davies** *bass*

*"Virtuoso is the right word. I for one can't immediately think of any more appropriate way of describing singing of such staggering accomplishment."*

BBC Music Magazine

*"Spectacular ... Stephen Layton has inspired his singers to heights of magnificence."*

International Record Review

*"A heavenly experience."*

The New York Times

**Tickets: £30, £25, £20, £10**

10% discount for concessions

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**

**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

Monday 22 December 7.30pm

# Polyphony and OAE

Conductor: Stephen Layton

Tuesday 23 December 7.30pm



## MESSIAH

This year sees the 20th anniversary of the first performance of *Messiah* at St John's Smith Square by Stephen Layton and Polyphony. We are immensely proud that this annual performance is considered to be one of the superlative interpretations. A formidable lineup of soloists joins Stephen Layton and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for what promises to be an exhilarating performance.

*"No-one, but no-one performs Messiah better every year than the choir Polyphony under the conductor Stephen Layton."* Evening Standard

*"Wow! Words are inadequate to convey the sheer brilliance of Polyphony and of Layton's conducting."*  
Early Music Today

*"There are few finer exponents of this great oratorio than Polyphony and Stephen Layton whose annual St John's Smith Square performances are a highlight of the season."*  
Classic FM Magazine

### **Katherine Watson** soprano

*"The lovely soprano Katherine Watson brought a rosy voice and alluring phrasing to the role."*  
The New York Times

### **Iestyn Davies** countertenor

*"One of the most glorious countertenor voices in the world today."*  
The Independent

### **Gwilym Bowen** tenor

*"Outstanding throughout ... raised the neck-hairs."*  
Birmingham Post

### **Neal Davies** bass

*"One of the world's leading Handelian basses."* Opera News

**Tickets: £55, £48, £39, £19**

**Box Office: 020 7222 1061**  
**[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)**

# Booking and venue information

St John's Smith Square, London SW1P 3HA

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Booking for all concerts opens to Friends of St John's on 14 July and to the General Public on 21 July.

## BOX OFFICE

By telephone 020 7222 1061

Online [www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

Booking fees per transaction: £2.00 by telephone / £1.50 online

## OPENING TIMES

The Box Office is open from 10am-5pm (until 6pm on concert days) Monday to Saturday. Advance bookings cannot be made after 6pm or on Sundays/bank holidays. The Box Office will open at 6.30pm on Sunday 21 December to personal callers for that evening's concert only.

## SMITH SQUARE CAFÉ AND RESTAURANT

is open for lunch Monday to Friday and on concert days from 5.30pm for dinner and licensed refreshments as well as post-concert suppers during December. Bookings: 020 7222 2779 or [stjohns@leafi.co.uk](mailto:stjohns@leafi.co.uk)

## FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Please inform the Box Office at the time of booking if you will be using a wheelchair. All wheelchair spaces must be reserved at time of booking.

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

29TH ANNUAL

Box Office  
Tel: 020 7222 1061  
www.sjss.org.uk

# Christmas Festival

St John's Smith Square  
11 - 23 December 2014

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Thurs 11 December	European Union Baroque Orchestra
Fri 12 December	The Choir of King's College London
Sat 13 December	The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge
Mon 15 December	Oxford Baroque
Tues 16 December	Ex Cathedra
Weds 17 December	The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford
Thurs 18 December	Tenebrae Consort
Fri 19 December	The Tallis Scholars
Sat 20 December	Ensemble Plus Ultra
Sun 21 December	National Youth Music Theatre
Mon 22 December	The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge
Tues 23 December	Polyphony

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*"The No. 1 British Christmas Festival."* BBC Music Magazine

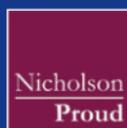
*"With so much festive music to choose from, the consistent quality of Stephen Layton's choral festival is hard to beat."* Time Out

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ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Director: Richard Heason



Festival Management:  
Nicholson Proud Ltd  
[www.nicholsonproud.com](http://www.nicholsonproud.com)  
Media and PR  
ElevenTenths  
[www.eleventenths.co.uk](http://www.eleventenths.co.uk)

Design: Aubrey Kurlansky Design  
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