CONCERTS AT SAINT THOMAS

2011/2012
14 OCTOBER 2011 FRIDAY AT 7:30 PM
WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR, UK
Peter Stevens, Organ Scholar
Martin Baker, Master of Music

10 NOVEMBER 2011 THURSDAY AT 7:30 PM
MUSIC FOR REMEMBRANCE
Dona nobis pacem; Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus – R. Vaughan Williams
Fear no more the heat o' the sun – G. Finzi / Requiem of 1605 – T. L. de Victoria
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys with Orchestra of St. Luke's
Stephanie Tennill, soprano Jesse Blumberg, baritone
John Scott, conductor

6 & 8 DECEMBER 2011 TUESDAY & THURSDAY AT 7:30 PM
MESSIAH – G. F. Handel
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys with Concert Royal
Lianne Coble, soprano Ian Howell, countertenor
Steven Caldicott Wilson, tenor Harold Wilson, bass
John Scott, conductor

15 DECEMBER 2011 THURSDAY 5:30-6:30 PM
A CEREMONY OF CAROLS – Benjamin Britten
DANCING DAY – John Rutter
The Boys of Saint Thomas Choir with Anna Reinersman, harp
John Scott, director

30 MARCH 2012 FRIDAY AT 7:30 PM
SAINT JOHN PASSION BWV 245 – J. S. Bach
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys with Concert Royal
Rufus Müller, Evangelist Douglas Williams, Christus Mischa Bouvier, Pilate
Sherezade Panthaki, soprano Ryland Angel, countertenor Lawrence Jones, tenor
John Scott, conductor

2 APRIL 2012 MONDAY 6:30-7:30 PM (donation requested)
SEI GEGRÜSSET, JESU GÜTIG BWV 768 – J. S. Bach
ELEVEN CHORALE PRELUDES OP. 122 – J. Brahms
Frederick Teardo, organ

3 APRIL 2012 TUESDAY 6:30-7:30 PM (donation requested)
MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI – D. Buxtehude
Jolle Greenleaf and Molly Quinn, sopranos Geoffrey Williams, countertenor
Steven Caldicott Wilson, tenor Craig Phillips, bass
The Sinfonia Players, Kevin Kwan and Hank Heijink, continuo
John Scott, director

11 MAY 2012 FRIDAY AT 7:30 PM
BACHFEST: ST. THOMAS IN LEIPZIG
Motets: Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf, bwv 226; Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, bwv 225 – J. S. Bach / Jubilate in C– B. Britten / Libera nos, salva nos – J. Sheppard
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys
Frederick Teardo, organ
John Scott, conductor

18 MAY 2012 FRIDAY AT 7:30 PM (donation requested)
COPENHAGEN ROYAL CHAPEL CHOIR
Ebbe Munk, director
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys is considered by many to be the leading ensemble in the Anglican choral tradition in the United States. Directed since 2004 by John Scott, formerly Organist and Director of Music at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, the choir performs regularly with period instrument ensembles, Concert Royal and Sinfonia New York, or with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s as part of its own concert series. Its primary raison d’être, however, is to provide music for five choral services each week. Live webcasts of all choral services and further information including recordings of the choir may be found at www.saintThomasChurch.org

Supplementing its choral services and concert series over the past three decades, the choir has toured throughout the United States and Europe with performances at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, Kings College, Cambridge, Windsor, Edinburgh, St. Albans and the Aldeburgh Festival. In 2004, the choir toured Italy, and performed for a Papal Mass at the Vatican. During 2007, the choir performed Bach’s Saint Matthew Passion for the opening concert of the Mexico Festival in Mexico City as well as at Saint Thomas Church. More recent concerts have included the Bach Mass in B Minor; the Monteverdi Vespers of 1610; a Henry Purcell anniversary concert; Rachmaninoff Vespers; the U.S. premiere of John Tavener’s Mass; a concert of American composers featuring works by Bernstein and Copland as well as a composition by Saint Thomas chorister, Daniel Castellanos; the first modern performance of Richter’s Missa Hyemalis, the world premiere of Scott Eyerman’s Spires and a concert of music by Benjamin Britten. Most recently the choir has been invited to perform in the Thomaskirche at the Leipzig BachFest on June 15, 2012.

The Men of the Saint Thomas Choir are professional singers; the Boy choristers attend Saint Thomas Choir School. Founded in 1919, it is the only church related boarding choir school in the United States, and one of only a few choir schools remaining in the world. The Choir School offers a challenging pre-preparatory curriculum, interscholastic sports, and musical training for boys in grades three through eight. The Choir School is committed to training and educating talented musicians without regard to religious, economic, or social background. Choristers are sought from all regions of the country. Details of admissions procedures and audition requirements are available at www.ChoirSchool.org

John Scott was born in 1956 in Wakefield, Yorkshire, where he became a Cathedral chorister. While still at school he gained the diplomas of the Royal College of Organists and won the major prizes. In 1974 he became Organ Scholar of St. John’s College, Cambridge, where he acted as assistant to Dr. George Guest. His organ studies were with Jonathan Bielby, Ralph Downes, and Dame Gillian Weir. He made his debut in the 1977 Promenade Concerts in the Royal Albert Hall; he was the youngest organist to appear in the Proms.

On leaving Cambridge, he was appointed Assistant Organist at London’s two Anglican Cathedrals: St. Paul’s and Southwark. In 1985 he became Sub-Organist of St. Paul’s Cathedral, and in 1990 he succeeded Dr. Christopher Dearnley as Organist and Director of Music.

As an organist, John Scott has performed in five continents, premiered many new works written for him, and worked with various specialist ensembles. He is a first-prize winner from the Manchester International Organ Competition (1978) and the Leipzig J.S. Bach Competition (1984). In 1998 he was nominated International Performer of the Year by the New York Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He is a past President of the Incorporated Association of Organists. He has been a member of a number of international competition juries, including those in Manchester, Dublin, Chartres, Dallas, St. Albans and Erfurt. Recent highlights of his career have included recitals in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Notre Dame in Paris, the Aarhus Organ Festival in Denmark, Cologne Cathedral, Disney Hall in Los Angeles and London’s Royal Albert Hall.

In addition to his work as a conductor and organist, John Scott has published a number of choral compositions and arrangements and he has jointly edited two compilations of liturgical music for the Church’s year, published by Oxford University Press.

In 2004, after 26 years at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, John Scott moved to take up the post of Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York, where he directs the renowned Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys. He was awarded the LVO (Lieutenant of the Victorian Order) in The New Year’s Honours of 2004 – a personal gift from HM Queen Elizabeth II, in recognition of his tenure at St Paul’s Cathedral. In 2007, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Nashotah House Seminary in Wisconsin.
Westminster Cathedral Choir is acclaimed as one of the world’s great choirs. Since its foundation in 1903 it has occupied a unique position at the forefront of English church music, not least because of the ground-breaking work of its first Master of Music, Richard Terry, who revived the great works of the English and continental Renaissance composers. Innovation continued under George Malcolm who pioneered the development of the choir’s sound along continental lines, resulting in a choir that was truly revolutionary in both what and how it sang. The choir continues these traditions under its present Master of Music, Martin Baker, and it remains the only Catholic Cathedral choir in the world to sing daily Mass and Vespers. The choir’s acclaimed recordings on the Hyperion label include the Palestrina Lamentations and a sequence of music from Advent to Epiphany featuring music written for the choir. In 1998 the choir was awarded the Gramophone Awards for “Best Choral Recording of the Year” and “Record of the Year” for the performance of Frank Martin’s Messe and Pizzetti’s Requiem, Westminster Cathedral Choir appears frequently on radio and television. The Choir will perform a varied program of sacred choral works from the 16th century to the present.
No work of sacred choral music has won the hearts of audiences and performers like Handel’s *Messiah*. Since its 1742 premiere, *Messiah* has been a centerpiece of Christmas and Easter celebrations around the world. At Saint Thomas, it is a much-loved Christmas tradition. The *New Yorker* notes that the Saint Thomas Choir offers a “Messiah of impeccable musicality and taste.”

In her *New York Times* review, music critic Vivien Schweitzer writes:

> The annual Saint Thomas version (of Messiah) is a king among the innumerable performances in New York, admired for the pure sound of the Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys and the spirited playing of Concert Royal, a period-instrument ensemble.

We invite you to join us this joyous holiday season for a performance of *Messiah* in the glorious setting of Saint Thomas Church.

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A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

**Benjamin Britten**

DANCING DAY

**John Rutter**

**MESSIAH**

**G. F. Handel**

**6 & 8 DECEMBER 2011**

**TUESDAY AND THURSDAY AT 7:30 PM**

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys with Concert Royal

Lianne Coble, soprano

Ian Howell, countertenor

Steven Caldicott Wilson, tenor

Harold Wilson, bass

John Scott, conductor

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

**Benjamin Britten**

**15 DECEMBER 2011**

**THURSDAY 5:30–6:30 PM**

The Boys of Saint Thomas Choir

Anna Reimersman, harp

John Scott, director

A CEREMONY OF CAROLS

**Benjamin Britten**

**S**cored for the unusual pairing of treble (boy soprano) voices and harp, *A Ceremony of Carols* is a sequence of nine carols based on texts by anonymous 15th and 16th century writers. Deeply felt, both elegiac and energetic, it is a masterpiece for boys’ voices. In his review for *The New York Times*, Anthony Tommasini wrote:

> The 24 boys of St. Thomas’s respected choir school were ideal performers. The angelic voices of the young trebles blended perfectly with the richer voices of older altos, some of whom were almost twice as tall as their youngest choirmates. The boys are already complete musicians who hold pitch true even in close-spaced harmonies and are not rattled when contrapuntal lines become crisscrossed in agitated passages. For all the sweetness in the music, Britten also conveys rambunctious, boyish energy, which this performance captured, with the fine harpist Anna Reinersman and Mr. Scott conducting.

DANCING DAY – JOHN RUTTER

**Dancing Day** is a cycle of traditional Christmas Carols. The work celebrates Christmas with a tapestry of familiar carols and old texts dating back as far as the 14th century. Several of these songs are “people’s music”— merry medieval dance tunes with religious texts having one foot in the church door, and the other foot in the village square. This amalgam of secular experience and religious story retell the central event of Christmas with vivid imagery and affecting simplicity. Through them all runs the sense of wonder and danceable joy.
To strip human nature until its divine attributes are made clear, to inform ordinary activities with spiritual fervor, to give wings of eternity to that which is most ephemeral; to make divine things human and human things divine; such is Bach, the greatest and purest moment in music of all time. – Pablo Casals

As we enter the season of Passiontide, John Scott leads the Saint Thomas Choir and the period instrument orchestra, Concert Royal, in a performance of Bach’s dramatic setting of the Passion according to Saint John. Please join us to hear what James R. Oestreich of The New York Times described as “a marvel of true, pliant, rich tone and crisp and flexible rhythms” in the gothic splendor of Saint Thomas Church.

Conceptually rooted in the chorale fantasies of Johann Sebastian Bach’s predecessors, the chorale partita is a set of variations that presents a hymn tune in several different forms and was likely utilized liturgically as interludes between verses of the chorales themselves. Bach composed four such sets of variations; the set on the Passiontide chorale Sei gegrüsset, Jesu gütig is the largest and most carefully conceived. The work exists in several versions, and scholars believe it was written before 1710 at different points during Bach’s tenure in Arnstadt and Weimar. The large scale of the work, consisting of the chorale theme and eleven variations, and the great extent to which Bach employed his imaginative and complex variation techniques, are a testament to the high regard Bach held for this particular chorale.

Johannes Brahms completed his Eleven Chorale Preludes for organ in 1896, near the end of his life. They were his very last compositions, published posthumously in 1902. Based on nine separate Lutheran chorales (several of which are for Passiontide or contain death as a subtext), the work is a profound final musical statement by Brahms whose life was ending due to cancer. The Eleven Chorales Preludes pay tribute to J.S. Bach who mastered the tradition of setting Luther’s chorales, making the pairing of Bach’s Sei gegrüsset and Brahms’s own settings a fitting musical offering for Holy Week.
Dietrich Buxtehude was one of the greatest composers of his generation, and an important influence on Johann Sebastian Bach. Composed in 1680, *Membra Jesu nostri* (The limbs of our Jesus) is a remarkable cycle of seven cantatas each addressing a different part of Christ’s crucified body: feet, knees, hands, side, chest, heart, and head. The text, *Salve mundi salutare*, also known as the *Rhythmica oratio*, was written by Medieval poet Arnulf of Louvain. *Membra Jesu nostri*, considered to be the first Lutheran oratorio, represents the peak of 17th century northern German vocal music. Come and listen to this Holy Week meditation offered by some of New York’s finest chamber musicians.

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys has been invited to perform at the BachFest on June 15, 2012 in Leipzig’s famed Thomaskirche (St. Thomas Church), home of Germany’s Thomanerchor which was founded in 1212, and the final resting place of J.S. Bach, who served as its cantor from 1723 until his death in 1750. This evening’s concert program draws on the one that the choir will perform at the BachFest. It features motets by Bach as well as by Johann Kuhnau who preceded Bach as Thomaskirche’s cantor and by Johann Adam Hiller who served in that post from 1769 until 1801. The program also includes works from the 16th century to the present day by noted British composers, Sheppard, Gibbons, Byrd, Britten, Jonathan Harvey and James MacMillan.

If you would like to join the choir on its Tour to Germany and Denmark from June 11-25, details are available from Amanda Slattery at: (914) 245-8825 or amanda@tvtemporium.com. The itinerary planned to date includes the Frauenkirche in Dresden, the Stiftskirche in Stuttgart, the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, and Denmark’s Copenhagen Cathedral. We hope you will consider joining us on this most exciting adventure.
The Concert Series would not be possible without contributions from our Friends of Music. Even the Messiah concerts, with their large audiences, cannot be financed through ticket sales alone. The Concert Series is expected to pay all expenses for dress rehearsals and concert performances by the orchestra, soloists, choir, conductor, and organists as well as for the cost of brochure mailings, concert programs, tickets, and WQXR publicity. Contributions from Friends of Music are therefore vital to continuing our tradition of excellence in presenting the great sacred choral works performed by our Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys and by distinguished visiting choirs.

Friends of Music receive priority seating and many other benefits described on page 16. Please join us and give as generously as you can. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent provided by law, and may be made in memory of a family member, friend or person you wish to honor.

A very special thank you to the 2010/2011 Friends of Music leadership donors for their help in making our concerts possible.

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**30 March 2012 Friday at 7:30 PM**<br>St. John Passion – J.S. Bach

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**11 May 2012 Friday at 7:30 PM**<br>BachFest

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“The Choir of Saint Thomas Church produces a polished, powerful and balanced sound that for sacred music is about the best that New York has to offer.” – Allan Kozinn

*The New York Times*